

**Ivan Illich**  
**The Church, Change  
and Development**

Edited by Fred Eychaner

URBAN TRAINING CENTER PRESS • HERDER AND HERDER

# CONTENTS

<b>Introduction</b>	7
<b>Preface</b>	10
<b>Author's Note</b>	13
<b>Section I</b>	
The Church, Change and Development	17
The Seamy Side of Charity	23
Dear Father Kevane	33
Dear Mary: Letter to an American Volunteer	42
Yankee, Go Home: The American Do-Gooder in South America	45
Between Jail and Campus: The Chaplain's Halfway House	54
The Vanishing Clergyman	61
<b>Section II</b>	
Mission and Midwifery	
Part I: Missionary Formation Based on Missiology	85
Part II: Selection and Formation of the Missioner	98
Missionary Poverty	112
Missionary Silence	120

## INTRODUCTION

The time has arrived for someone to bring together a thematic collection of Ivan Illich's speeches, unpublished manuscripts, letters and articles, and it is appropriate that the Urban Training Center do so. For the past several years, people at the two centers, Cuernavaca and Chicago, have each worked at defining the problems of Christian ministry in the context of social action, and since 1967 this parallel research and training has been united — *con mucho gusto* — in twenty-four hour conversations every two or three months. Such are the themes of these writings, battled out in Chicago between Illich (invariably perched on a classroom table) and Center trainees and staff. Above all else, this book is the grateful response of friends to a friend.

The papers span the '60s, reaching in one instance as far back as 1957, with the majority between 1965-69. They address the problems of the mission of the Church in a period of accelerating technological change: in relation to controversy and revolutionary action, in the midst of community and national development — all major questions on the theological agenda of the decade. In each case Illich's answer is against the mainstream. Illich stands apart from the dominant style of social action advocated by the churches: first, by insisting upon a clear *distinction* between Christian mission and any particular social program — no matter how close the two may appear to be. Second, by warning that the Church's self-understanding (let alone her witness in the world) will come into grave peril if ever her unique mission on the one hand, and a program of action on the other hand, are simply *identified* one with the other.

Thanks to the current idolatry of "relevance" often this is just what has happened. Many of the writings and pronouncements of Church-sponsored action programs of the mid-60s read like naive or dishonest bids for partisan support because of their failure to acknowledge this fundamental distinction. Small wonder the fat is in the fire now! Nor should anyone be surprised that the Church is undergoing a systematic public purgation of

cash and confidence by inquisitors drawn one day from the radical left and the next day from the silent majority.

It is at this juncture that a paradoxical man like Illich may speak a word capable of keeping the future open, a new word that perhaps now, for the first time, it is possible to hear (although he consistently spoke this same word throughout the 60's); and a word of hope that perhaps can *transcend* the current impasse wherein the Church is equated with one political or racial group or ideological position against all other groups and positions, and at the same time *honor* the claim that a man's partisan allegiance is nourished precisely by his understanding of the Gospel.

In short, to a Church that is increasingly polarized, perhaps only a man who is himself deeply committed to revolutionary change and yet rooted in a perception of the church that transcends party lines for a deeper unity, indeed for a common table to which a man comes from the barricades to break the joyful bread with his tactical opponent, perhaps it is this kind of man at this moment in history who can speak to the Church.

A final word. Although Illich's latest and "notorious" speeches engage the immediate and most obviously painful aspects of the dilemma at hand, the earlier papers provide a theoretical structure which may prove in the long run to be the deeper resource. The very possibility that reflections for an esoteric and numerically insignificant part of the Church (the final lectures in section II were first given to nuns) could provide a greater service to the whole is a hint piercing to the center of Illich's thinking.

Contrary to enthusiastic attempts to mirror the Gospel in the current popular milieu — whether the "secular" and self-confident rationality of systems analysis and team problem-solving of 1965, or the "religious" playfulness of this year's groovy/hairy/scented festivals — Illich uses the apophatic logic of classical negative theology to mark the consistency of revelation. Parallel to the enigma of the burning bush and Israel's utter impotence in the two Passovers, from slavery in Egypt and from death on the Cross, Illich constructs a grammar in which *silence* is the highest mode of communication, *poverty* the vehicle for carrying the most meaningful, creative and richest act, and



*powerlessness* the means for demonstrating authoritative control; a language finally in which the autonomy of the *spontaneous and the surprising* is established over against the planned, of the *ludicrous* as opposed to the useful, and of the *gratuitous* in the face of the purposeful.

One returns full circle when the words of this perhaps mysterious language can be recognized as those distinctive marks of Christian mission in the midst of the planned and purposeful programs of social development. More, one returns made richer by a surprising discovery: what was offered first a decade ago as a very special case — the training of a nun to anticipate creatively the culture shock of living as a stranger among an adopted people — may be the needed key for every man and group and institution in 1970.

If the base reality for the last years of this century is an unprecedented degree of change whereby each of us stands on a moving frontier dividing environments and peoples and disciplines and epochs and cultures — if, in comparison with our fathers and even with our own childhoods, each of us necessarily will lead multiple and parallel “lives” because we live in multiple times — what becomes a necessity is the learning of a praxis of *respect for the other* who like oneself is also a stranger, of *tact* based on the acceptance that I will never be fully understood nor capable of fully understanding, of *wonder* which can see in the other something truly new, a never before seen aspect of the mystery of the Church.

No computer can do this job. It is a task for the heart, informed only, in Illich's word, with the discovery that the revelation of the living God can be relevant to our universe of concepts, if we are willing to blast this universe open in a new dimension.

James P. Morton, Director  
The Urban Training Center  
for Christian Mission

Pentecost 1970

## PREFACE

Ronald Laing wrote in 1967 that "Few books, today, are forgiveable." With this first publication of the new UTC Press, the Urban Training Center is deeply conscious of the need to avoid increasing the flood of academic and theological publications, for we all run the risk, as a cynical scholar noted, of perishing in our publications.

But through the UTC Press we hope to facilitate circulation of important religious and social texts which for reasons of time, economics or manpower would not be available as quickly, if at all, through normal commercial channels. We also hope to publish in convenient accessible form a variety of materials from the UTC curriculum for the use of UTC students and other training groups around the country.

This first book-length publication of Ivan Illich's essays, speeches and articles serves both functions remarkably well. Doubleday and Company plans to publish this fall a collection of Illich's essays on broader social topics, titled *Celebration of Awareness: A Call for Institutional Revolution*. We strongly recommend it to readers of this volume.

The book is divided into two sections. The first deals with the imperialism of American missionary efforts, the role of the clergy on campus and the future of the institutional Church. The second section examines missiology as the theology of church development and discusses the social and linguistic roles of the missionary. All of the chapters are derived from materials Illich prepared for specialized audiences in the past, but few of the essays have been available to the general public.

The title chapter, "The Church, Change and Development," was written for the Christian Social Relations Conference of the Episcopal Church in San Juan, Puerto Rico, on April 12, 1967.

"The Seamy Side of Charity" was written in December, 1966, and published in *America* in January, 1967, coinciding with a Council on Inter-American Cooperation (CICOP) meeting presided over by Richard Cardinal Cushing. In light of an upcoming *Ramparts* article on CIA infiltration of voluntary agencies, Illich

wanted to make clear that the volunteer organizations did in effect support American imperialism although most individual volunteers were unaware such was happening, overtly or covertly.

"Dear Father Kevane" is a letter sent by Illich to Father Raymond A. Kevane, national director of the Papal Volunteers in Latin America (PAVLA) on April 27, 1965. Attempts were made to suppress the letter but Illich circulated it widely and reproduced it for use at a workshop on intercultural sensibility development in January, 1966.

"Dear Mary: Letter to an American Volunteer" is Illich's response to a young American girl seeking advice on volunteer work in Latin America. "Yankee, Go Home: The U.S. Do-Cooder in Latin America" is derived from a talk April 20, 1968, to the Council of Inter-American Student Programs (CIASP).

"Between Campus and Jail: The Chaplain's Halfway House" is a tightly edited version of Illich's speech to a spring, 1968, consultation at the Urban Training Center; in revised form, it was delivered to a group of college chaplains meeting in Cuernavaca in 1969.

Illich first drafted "The Vanishing Clergyman" in the summer of 1959; he expanded it in 1962 while hospitalized with hepatitis and delivered it in Brooklyn at the invitation of Fr. Edmund Burke to a group of clergymen considering leaving the priesthood. The article also appeared in the June-July, 1967, issue of *The Critic*.

"Mission and Midwifery" is modified from Illich's presentation to a meeting of diocesan representatives in Wurtzburg, Germany, in 1962 at the invitation of Praelat Dossing. The essay was revised in 1964 as CIDOC's presentation to a Berlin meeting of institutions specializing in the training of technical assistance personnel, sponsored by the German Government Foundation for Technical Assistance.

Illich delivered the original text of "Missionary Poverty" in 1956 to his first training course in Puerto Rico for New York clergy and sisters; it has been reworked several times since. "Missionary Silence" was written in 1960 and given to Illich's first group of trainees in Cuernavaca in 1961.

A number of good biographical articles about Illich are available, including Francine du Plessix Gray's *New Yorker* profile, "The Rules of the Game" (April 25, 1970), since published in book form with additional essays on Daniel and Philip Berrigan, as *Divine Disobedience: Profiles in Catholic Radicalism* (Knopf, 329 pages).

I owe particular thanks to Dolores Sidlik, Anthony Dean, Toni Hall and Florence at Toffenetti's for help with the manuscript. Jim Morton provided the original inspiration for this collection and much of the necessary encouragement. Ivan Illich has been most patient and understanding with the necessities of preparing these essays for book publication.

Fred Eychaner

Chicago, June, 1970

## AUTHOR'S NOTE

Dear Jim,

As anyone of my generation, I am aware of my lack of power to protect my privacy, especially the privacy of conversation between a teacher and his pupils. For a generation which wants to save time and effort the recorder has ceased to be a means for indiscreet prying and has become an extension of the pencil. Mercilessly faithful quotations of the teacher's voice go rampant out of context. Some of the pieces which you publish are transcripts of tapes of spontaneous sharing of nascent ideas which take form in the feedback of listening faces. I am unable to ready them for "publication" because frequently they are the records of a man climbing who searches for his way rather than reports from the mountaintop.

These papers were meant for an audience, for people into whose faces I could look at your Center. Each attempted to lead them beyond their accustomed thoughts, and conversation often led us far beyond the start. Each of the papers was an attempt to question the value of a context within which we think, rather than the effort to state and solve a puzzle within a shared context. If we succeed in questioning an accepted context we thereby outgrow its bondage, but this does not mean that we either answer any puzzles, old or new, nor that we define a new setting or paradigm for future thought. We only open a horizon on which new paradigms for thought can appear. We leave home on a pilgrimage. But it is not the pilgrimage of the West which leads over a travelled road to a famed sanctuary. It is the pilgrimage of the Christian East which does not know where the road might lead and the journey end.

The content and style of these papers record a mood and a view which for us at UTC belong to the past. This should be made clear to the readers with whom we now share them. But I am equally unwilling to censor the papers with hindsight. I do hope in their printed form they will help some readers grasp my gropings as what they are, especially if these readers are

now confused by faithful quotations from tapes taken out of context.

You know that during these last years I have been always very grateful to you for allowing me to discuss my ideas and puzzlements with the students of your Center. I hope that you will continue to invite me from time to time. I know of no other circle in the Church where I would rather come to know her deeper in that special sense of "knowing" which is proper to the Hebrew of the Bible.

Ivan

## The Church, Change and Development

Only the Church can "reveal" to us the full meaning of development. To live up to this task, the Church must recognize that she is growing powerless to orient or produce development. The less efficient she is as a power the more effective she can be as a celebrant of the mystery.

This statement, if understood, is resented equally by the hierarchy who wants to justify collections by increasing his service to the poor, and by the rebel-priest who wants to use his collar as an attractive banner in agitation. Both make a living off the social service the Church renders and both in my mind symbolize obstacles to the specific function of the Church, which is the annunciation of the Gospel.

This specific function of the Church must be a contribution to development which could not be made by any other institution. I believe that this contribution is faith in Christ. Applied to development, faith in Christ means the revelation that the development of humanity tends towards the realization of the kingdom, which is Christ already present in the Church. The Church interprets to modern man development as a growth into Christ. She introduces him to the contemplation of this mystery in prayer and to its celebration in her liturgy.

I believe that the specific task of the Church in the modern world is the Christian celebration of the experience of change. In order to fulfill this task the Church will have to renounce progressively the "power to do good" she now has, and see this power pass into the hands of a new type of institution: the voluntary and ever controversial embodiments of secular religion.

Later, I will explain what I mean by the progressive renunciation of power and the growth of secular religion. Now I will explain what I mean by the celebration of change.

We have ceased to live against a rigid framework. All-enveloping, penetrating change is the fundamental experience of our age, which comes as a shock to those brought up for a different age. In the past the same experience was exceptional

and had many appearances: exile, migration, imprisonment, overseas assignment, education, hospitalization. All these traditionally represent the sudden loss of the environment which had given form to a man's feelings and concepts. This experience of change is now faced as a life-long process by every individual in technological society.

In Cuernavaca we have set up a center at which we train persons to feel with others what change means to their heart. What happens to the intimacy of a person when his familiar surroundings suddenly disappear, and with them the symbols he reveres? What happens when the words into which he was taught to pour the stream of his life lose their accustomed meaning? What happens to the feelings of a mountain Indian thrown into a factory? What anguish does the Chicago missionary feel when he is suddenly exposed to the mountains of Bolivia, and finds himself used as a cover-up for Napalm-bombs? What happens to the heart of a nun who leaves the convent? These questions are precise and elusive: each must be fitted to the one heart it opens.

What threat and what challenge does social change represent to this individual or to that social group? How does this heart or that common mood react to a change in setting? We speak about threat and about challenge, because the reaction to transition is very ambiguous. It can allow for new insights, can open new perspectives and therefore face the person with new awareness of choice. Development can be a setting for salvation which leads to resurrection. But transition can reduce a bewildered individual into defensive self-centeredness, into dependence and aggression; it can lead into the agony of a lived destruction of life, straight into hell.

Neither efficiency nor comfort nor affluence are criteria for the quality of change. Only the reaction of the human heart to change indicates the objective value of that change. All other measures of change which disregard the response of the human heart are either evil or naive. Development is not judged against a rule but against an experience. And this experience is not available through the study of tables but through the celebration of shared experience: dialogue, controversy, play, poetry; in short: self-realization in creative leisure.



The Church teaches us to discover the transcendental meaning of this experience of life. She teaches us in liturgical celebration to recognize the presence of Christ in the growing mutual relatedness which results from the complexity and specialization of development. And she reveals to us the personal responsibility for our sins: our growing dependence, solitude, and cravings which result from our self-alienation in things and systems and heroes. She challenges us to deeper poverty instead of security in achievements; personalization of love (chastity) instead of depersonalization by idolatry; faith in the other rather than prediction.

Thus the Church does not orient change, or teach how to react to it. It opens a new dimension of specific faith to an ecumenical experience of transcendent humanism. All men experience; the Christian knows what it means. What the Church contributes through evangelization is like the laughter in the joke. Two hear the same story, but one gets the point. It is like the rhythm in the phrase which only the poet catches.

The new era of constant development must not only be enjoyed, it must be brought about. What is the task of the Church in the gestation of the new world? The Church can accelerate time by celebrating its advent, but only by abstaining from engineering its shape.

The future has already broken into the present. We each live in many times. The present of one is the past of another, and the future of yet another. We are called to live knowing that the future exists, and that it is shared, when it is celebrated. The change which has to be brought about can only be lived. We cannot plan our way to humanity. Each one of us and each of the groups with which we live and work must become a model of the era we desire to create. The many models which will develop should give to each one of us an environment in which we can celebrate our creative response to change with others who need us.

Let the Church be courageous enough to lead us in the celebration by highlighting its depth. Let the Church discern the spirit of God wherever charismatic gifts call the future into the present and thus create a model to live. Let the Church be *mater et magistra* of this play. Accentuate its beauty, let her teach us to

live change because it is meaningful and not just produce it, because it is useful.

Awareness of change heightens the sense of personal responsibility to share its benefits. Awareness of change therefore does not only lead to a call to celebration but also to a call to work; to the elimination of obstacles which make it impossible for others to free themselves for toil and illusion.

Social change always implies a change of social structure, a change of formalized values and finally a change of social character. These three factors constrain invention and creativity, and action against these constraints becomes a responsibility of those who experience them as shackles. Hence, social change involves a triple reaction: (1) the reorganization of social structure, which is felt as subversion or revolution; (2) the attempt to get beyond public illusions justifying structures, which implies the ridicule of ideologies and which is felt as ungodliness or as education; and (3) the emergence of a new "social type," which is experienced by many as utter confusion.

Through history the Church has participated constantly in the shaping of social change: either as a force of conservation or as a force of social promotion. She has blessed governments and condemned them. She has justified systems and declared them as unholy. She has recommended thrift and bourgeoisie values and exsacrated them.

We believe that now the moment has come for the Church to withdraw from specific social initiative taken in the name of church structure. Let us follow the example of the Pope: have the courage to allow churchmen to make statements so ephemeral that they could never be construed as being the Church's teaching. Who would take the International Fund for a Catholic dogma?

This withdrawal is very painful. The reason is precisely that the Church still has great power and has used this power in socially relevant fashion in recent generations. If the Church at present in Latin America does not use the power she has accumulated for fundamental education, labour organization, cooperative promotion and political orientation, she leaves herself open to criticism from without, of creating a power-

vacuum, and from within, in the terms "if anybody, the Church can bear having power, because she is self-critical enough to renounce its abuse!" But if the Church uses the power-basis she has (think of education) then she perpetuates her inability to witness to that which is specific in her mission.

Societal innovation is becoming an increasingly complex process. Innovative action must be taken with increasing frequency and sophistication. This requires men who are courageous, dedicated, willing to lose their career. This innovative action will increasingly be taken by groups committed to radically humanist ideals, and not Gospel authority, and should therefore not be taken by Churches.

The modern humanist does not need the Gospel as a norm; the Christian wants to remain free to find through the Gospel a dimension of effective surprise beyond and above the humanistic reason which motivated social action. The social-action group needs operational freedom: the freedom to let convenience or opportunism dictate choice of priorities, objectives, tactics and even strategy. The same social goal might be intended by two opposed groups: one choosing violence, one non-violence as a method.

Social action by necessity divides tactical opponents. If organized around deeply held, radically human, secular-religious tenets, it also acts as a powerful catalyst for new forms of secular ecumenicism: the ecumenicism of action springing from common radical conviction. Social action organized around secular-religious (civic-religious) ideas, therefore, frees the Church from the age-old dilemma of risking its unity in the celebration of faith in favour of its service to controversial charity.

The Christian response has been deeply affected by the acceleration of time; by change, development and growth having become normal and permanence the exception. Formerly the king could be on the opposite pole of the priest, the sacred of the profane, the churchly of the secular, and we could speak about the impact which one would have on the other.

We stand at the end of a century long struggle to free man from the constraint of ideologies, persuasions and religions as guiding

forces in his life. A non-thematic awareness of the significance of the incarnation emerges: an ability to say one great "yes" to the experience of life. A new polarity emerges: a day-by-day insight into the tension between the manipulation of things and the relationship to persons. We become capable of affirming the autonomy of the ludicrous in face of the useful; of the gratuitous as opposed to the purposeful; of the spontaneous as opposed to the rationalized and planned; of creative expression made possible by inventive solution.

We will need ideological rationalizations for a long time to achieve purposefully planned inventive solutions to social problems. Let consciously secular ideology assume this task.

I want to celebrate my faith for no purpose at all.

## The Seamy Side of Charity

U.S. Catholics in 1961 undertook a peculiar alliance for the progress of the Latin American Church. By 1970, ten percent of more than 225,000 priests, brothers and sisters would volunteer to be shipped south of the border.\* But by 1966, the combined U.S. male and female "clergy" in South America has increased by only 1,622. Halfway is a good time to examine whether a program launched is still sailing on course, and more importantly, if its destination still seems worth-while. Numerically, the program was certainly a flop. Should this be a source of disappointment or of relief?

The project relied on an impulse supported by uncritical imagination and sentimental judgment. A pointed finger and a "call for 20,000" convinced many that "Latin America needs YOU." Nobody dared state clearly why, though the first published propaganda included several references to the "red danger" in four pages of text. The Latin America Bureau of the National Catholic Welfare Conference attached the word "papal" to the program, the volunteers and the call itself.

A campaign for more funds is now being proposed. This is the moment, therefore, at which the call for 20,000 persons and the need for millions of dollars should be re-examined. Both appeals must be submitted to a public debate among U.S. Catholics, from bishop to widow, since they are the ones asked to supply the personnel and pay the bill. Critical thinking must prevail. Fancy and colorful campaign slogans for another collection, with appeals to emotion, will only cloud the real issues. Let us coldly examine the American Church's outburst of charitable frenzy which resulted in the creation of "papal" volunteers, student "mission crusades," the annual CICOP mass assemblies, numerous diocesan missions and new religious communities.

I will not focus on details. The above programs themselves continually study and revise minutiae. Rather, I dare to point out

\*This article was written in 1966. See preface.

some fundamental facts and implications of the so-called papal plan, part of the many faceted effort to keep Latin America within the ideologies of the West. Church policy makers in the United States must face up to the socio-political consequences involved in their well-intentioned missionary ventures. They must review their vocation as Christian theologians and their actions as Western politicians.

Men and money sent with missionary motivation carry a foreign Christian image, a foreign pastoral approach and a foreign political message. They also bear the mark of North American capitalism of the 1950's. Why not, for once, consider the shady side of charity; weigh the inevitable burdens foreign help imposes on the South American Church; taste the bitterness of the damage done by our sacrifices? If, for example, U.S. Catholics would simply turn from the dream of "ten percent," and do some honest thinking about the implications of their help, the awakened awareness of intrinsic fallacies could lead to sober, meaningful generosity.

But let me be more precise. The unquestionable joys of giving and the fruits of receiving should be treated as two distinctly separate chapters. I propose to delineate only the negative results that foreign money, men, and ideas produce in the South American Church, in order that the future U.S. program may be tailored accordingly.

During the past five years, the cost of operating the Church in Latin America has multiplied many times. There is no precedent for a similar rate of increase in Church expenses on a continental scale. Today, one Catholic university, mission society or radio chain may cost more to operate than the whole country's Church a decade ago. Most of the funds for this kind of growth came from outside and flowed from two types of sources. The first is the Church itself, which raised its income in three ways:

- (1) Dollar by dollar, appealing to the generosity of the faithful, as was done in Germany and the Low Countries by *Adveniat*, *Misereor* and *Oostpriesterhulp*. These contributions reach more than \$25 million a year.

- (2) Through lump sums, made by individual churchmen, such as Cardinal Cushing, the outstanding ex-

ample; or by institutions, such as the NCWC, transferring \$1 million from the home missions to the Latin America Bureau.

(3) By assigning priests, religious and laymen, all trained at considerable cost and often backed financially in their apostolic undertakings.

This kind of foreign generosity has enticed the Latin American Church into becoming a satellite to North Atlantic cultural phenomena and policy. Increased apostolic resources intensified the need for this continued flow and created islands of apostolic well-being, each day farther beyond the capacity of local support. The Latin American Church flowers anew by returning to what the Conquest stamped her: a colonial plant that blooms because of foreign cultivation. Instead of learning either how to get along with less money or close up shop, bishops are being trapped into needing more money now and bequeathing an institution impossible to run in the future. Education, the one type of investment that could give long-range returns, is conceived mostly as training for bureaucrats who will maintain the existing apparatus.

Recently, I saw an example of this in a large group of Latin American priests who had been sent to Europe for advanced degrees. In order to relate the Church to the world, nine-tenths of these men were studying teaching methods (catechetics, pastoral theology or canon law) and thereby not directly advancing their knowledge of either the Church or the world. Only a few studied the Church in its history and sources, or the world as it is.

It is easy to come by big sums to build a new church in a jungle or a high school in a suburb, and then to staff the plants with new missionaries. A patently irrelevant pastoral system is artificially and expensively sustained, while basic research for a new and vital one is considered an extravagant luxury. Scholarships for non-ecclesiastical humanist studies, seed money for imaginative pastoral experimentation, grants for documentation and research to make specific constructive criticism all run the frightening risk of threatening our temporal structures, clerical plants and "good business" methods.

Even more surprising than churchly generosity for churchly



concern is a second source of money. A decade ago, the Church was like an impoverished grande dame trying to keep up an imperial tradition of almsgiving from her reduced income. In the more than a century since Spain lost Latin America, the Church has steadily lost government grants, patrons' gifts and, finally, the revenue from its former lands. According to the colonial concept of charity, the Church lost its power to help the poor. It came to be considered an historical relic, inevitably the ally of conservative politicians.

By now, almost the contrary seems true, at least at first sight. The Church has become an agent trusted to run programs aimed at social change. It is committed enough to produce some results. But when it is threatened by real change, it withdraws rather than permit social awareness to spread like wildfire. The smothering of the Brazilian radio schools by a high Church authority is a good example.

Church discipline assures the donor his money does twice the job in the hands of a priest. It will not evaporate, nor will it be accepted for what it is: publicity for private enterprise and indoctrination to a way of life that the rich have chosen as suitable for the poor. The receiver inevitably gets the message: the "padre" stands on the side of W.R. Grace and Co., Esso, the Alliance for Progress, democratic government, the AFL-CIO and whatever is holy in the Western pantheon.

Opinion is divided, of course, on whether the Church went heavily into social projects because it could thus obtain funds "for the poor," or whether it went after the funds because it could thus contain Castroism and assure its institutional respectability. By becoming an "official" agency of one kind of progress, the Church ceases to speak for the underdog who is outside all agencies but who is an ever-growing majority. By accepting the power to help, the Church necessarily must denounce a Camilo Torres, who symbolized the power of renunciation. Money thus builds the Church a "pastoral" structure beyond its means and makes it a political power.

Superficial emotional involvement obscures rational thinking about American international "assistance." Healthy guilt feelings are repressed by a strangely motivated desire to "help" in



Vietnam. Finally, our generation begins to cut through the rhetoric of patriotic "loyalty." We stumblingly recognize the perversity of our power politics and the destructive direction of our warped efforts to impose unilaterally "our way of life" on all. We have not yet begun to face the seamy side of clerical manpower involvement and the Church's complicity in stifling universal awakening too revolutionary to lie quietly within the "Great Society."

There is no foreign priest or nun so shoddy in his work that through his stay in Latin America he has not enriched some life, and there is no missionary so incompetent that through him Latin America has not made some small contribution to Europe and North America. But neither our admiration for conspicuous generosity nor our fear of making bitter enemies out of lukewarm friends must stop us from facing facts. Missioners sent to Latin America can make (1) an alien Church more foreign, (2) an over-staffed Church priest-ridden and (3) bishops into abject beggars. Recent public discord has shattered the unanimity of the national consensus on Vietnam. I hope that public awareness of the repressive and corruptive elements contained in "official" ecclesiastical assistance programs will give rise to a real sense of guilt: guilt for having wasted the lives of young men and women dedicated to the task of evangelization in Latin America.

Massive, indiscriminate importation of clergy helps the ecclesiastical bureaucracy survive in its own colony, which every day becomes more foreign and comfortable. This immigration helps to transform the old-style hacienda of God on which the people were only squatters into the Lord's supermarket, with catechisms, liturgy and other means of grace heavily in stock. It makes contented consumers out of vegetating peasants, demanding clients out of former devotees. It lines the sacred pockets, providing refuge for men who are frightened by secular responsibility.

Churchgoers, accustomed to priests, novenas, books and culture from Spain (quite possibly to Franco's picture in the rectory), now meet a new type of executive, administrative and financial talent promoting a certain type of democracy as the Christian ideal. The people soon see that the Church is distant,

alienated from them, an imported, specialized operation, financed from abroad, which speaks with a holy, because foreign, accent.

This foreign transfusion, and the hope for more, gave ecclesiastical pusillanimity a new lease on life, another chance to make the archaic and colonial system work. If North America and Europe send enough priests to fill the vacant parishes, there is no need to consider laymen to fulfill most evangelical tasks; no need to re-examine the structure of the parish, the function of the priest, the Sunday obligation and clerical sermon; no need for exploring the use of the married diaconate, new forms of celebration of the Word and Eucharist and intimate familial celebrations of conversion to the gospel in the milieu of the home. The promise of more clergy is like a bewitching siren. It makes the chronic surplus of clergy in Latin America invisible and it makes it impossible to diagnose this surplus as the gravest illness of the Church. Today, this pessimistic evaluation is slightly altered by a courageous and imaginative few, non-Latins among them, who see, study and strive for true reform.

A large proportion of Latin American Church personnel are presently employed in private institutions that serve the middle and upper classes and frequently produce highly respectable profits; this on a continent where there is a desperate need for teachers, nurses and social workers in public institutions that serve the poor. A large part of the clergy are engaged in bureaucratic functions, usually related to peddling sacraments, sacramentals and superstitious "blessings." Most of them live in squalor. Unable to use its personnel in pastorally meaningful tasks, the Church cannot even support its priests and the 670 bishops who govern them. Theology is used to justify this system, canon law to administer it, and foreign clergy to create a world-wide consensus on the necessity of its continuation.

A healthy sense of values empties the seminaries and the ranks of the clergy much more effectively than a lack of discipline and generosity. In fact, the new mood of well-being makes the ecclesiastical career more attractive to the self-seeker. Bishops then turn servile beggars, become tempted to organize safaris, and hunt out foreign priests and funds for constructing such

anomalies as minor seminaries. As long as such expeditions succeed, it will be difficult, if not impossible, to take the emotionally harder road: to ask ourselves honestly if we need such a game.

Exporting Church employees to Latin America masks a universal and unconscious fear of a new Church. North and South American authorities, differently motivated but equally fearful, become accomplices in maintaining a clerical and irrelevant Church. Sacralizing employees and property, this Church becomes progressively more blind to the possibilities of sacralizing person and community.

It is hard to help by refusing to give alms. I remember once having stopped food distribution from sacristies in an area where there was great hunger. I still feel the sting of an accusing voice saying: "Sleep well for the rest of your life with dozens of children's deaths on your conscience." Even some doctors prefer aspirin to medical surgery. They feel no guilt having the patient die of cancer, but fear the risk of applying the knife. The courage needed today is expressed by Daniel Berrigan, S.J., writing of Latin America: "I suggest we stop sending anyone or anything for three years and dig in and face our mistakes and find out how not to canonize them."

From many years' experience in training hundreds of foreign missionaries assigned to Latin America, I know that real volunteers increasingly want to face the truth that puts their faith to test. Superiors, who shift personnel by their administrative decisions but do not have to live with the ensuing deceptions, are emotionally handicapped facing these realities.

The U.S. Church must face the painful side of generosity: the burden that a life gratuitously offered imposes on the recipient. The men who go to Latin America must humbly accept the possibility that they are useless or even harmful, although they give all they have. They must accept the fact that a limping ecclesiastical assistance program uses them as palliatives to ease the pain of a cancerous structure, the only hope that the prescription will give the organism enough time and rest to initiate a spontaneous healing. Much more probably, the pharmacist's pill will both stop the patient from seeking a surgeon's

advice and addict him to the drug.

Foreign missionaries increasingly realize that they heeded a call to plug the holes in a sinking ship because the officers did not dare launch the life rafts. Unless this is clearly seen, men who obediently offer the best years of their lives will find themselves tricked into a useless struggle to keep a doomed liner afloat as it limps through uncharted seas.

We must acknowledge that missionaries can be pawns in a world ideological struggle and that it is blasphemous to use the gospel to prop up any social or political system. When men and money are sent into a society within the framework of a program, they bring ideas that live after them. It has been pointed out, in the case of the Peace Corps, that the cultural mutation catalyzed by a small foreign group might be more effective than all the immediate services it renders. The same can be true of the North American missionary, close to home, having great means at his disposal, frequently on a short-term assignment, who moves into an area of intense U.S. cultural and economic colonization. He is part of this sphere of influence and, at times, intrigue. Through the U.S. missionary, the United States shadows and colors the public image of the Church. The influx of U.S. missionaries coincides with the Alliance for Progress, Camelot and CIA projects and looks like a baptism of these! The Alliance appears directed by Christian justice and is not seen for what it is: a deception designed to maintain the status quo, albeit variously motivated. During the program's first five years, the net capital leaving Latin America has tripled. The program is too small to permit even the achievement of a threshold of sustained growth. It is a bone thrown to the dog, that he remains quiet in the backyard of the Americas.

Within these realities, the U.S. missionary tends to fulfill the traditional role of a colonial power's lackey chaplain. The dangers implicit in Church use of foreign money assume the proportion of caricature when this aid is administered by a "gringo" to keep the "under-developed" quiet. It is, of course, too much to ask of most Americans that they make sound, clear and outspoken criticisms of U.S. socio-political aggression in Latin America, even more difficult that they do so without the

bitterness of the expatriate or the opportunism of the turncoat.

Groups of U.S. missionaries cannot avoid projecting the image of "U.S. outposts." Only individual Americans mixed in with local men could avoid this distortion. The U.S. missionary of necessity is an undercover agent, albeit unconscious, for U.S. social and political consensus. But, consciously and purposely, he wishes to bring the values of his Church to South America; adaptation and selection seldom reach the level of questioning the values themselves.

The situation was not so ambiguous ten years ago, when in good conscience mission societies were channels for the flow of traditional U.S. Church hardware to Latin America. Everything from the Roman collar to parochial schools, from the Confraternity of Christian Doctrine to Catholic universities, was considered salable merchandise in the new Latin American market. Not much salesmanship was needed to convince the Latin bishops to give the "Made in U.S.A." label a try.

In the meantime, however, the situation has changed considerably. The U.S. Church is shaking from the first findings of a scientific and massive self-evaluation. Not only methods and institutions, but also the ideologies that they imply, are subject to examination and attack. The self-confidence of the American ecclesiastical salesman is therefore shaky. We see the strange paradox of a man attempting to implant, in a really different culture, structures and programs that are now rejected in the country of their origin. (I recently heard of a Catholic grammar school being planned by U.S. personnel in a Central American city parish where there are already a dozen public schools.)

There is an opposite danger, too. Latin America can no longer tolerate being a haven for U.S. liberals who cannot make their point at home, an outlet for apostles too "apostolic" to find their vocation as competent professionals within their own community. The hardware salesman threatens to dump second-rate imitations of parishes, schools and catechisms, out-moded even in the United States, all around the continent. The traveling escapist threatens to further confuse a foreign world with his superficial protests, which were not viable even at home.

The American Church of the Vietnam generation finds it

difficult to engage in foreign aid without exporting either its solutions or its problems. Both are prohibitive luxuries for developing nations. Mexicans, to avoid offending the sender, pay high duties for useless gifts sent by well-meaning Americans. Gift-givers must think not only of the immediate need but also of a full generation of bad effects. They must ask if the global value of the gift in men, money and ideas is worth the price the recipient will pay. Fr. Berrigan suggests the rich and powerful can decide not to give; the poor can hardly refuse to accept. Since almsgiving conditions the beggar's mind, the Latin American bishops are not entirely at fault in asking for misdirected and harmful foreign aid. A large measure of the blame lies with the underdeveloped ecclesiology of U.S. clerics who direct the "sale" of American good intentions.

The U.S. Catholic wants to be involved in an ecclesologically valid program, not in subsidiary political and social programs designed to influence the growth of developing nations according to anybody's social doctrine, be it even described as the Pope's. The heart of the discussion is therefore not how to send more men and money, but rather WHY they should be sent at all. The Church, in the meantime, is in no critical danger. We are tempted to shore up and salvage structures rather than question their purpose and truth. Hoping to glory in the works of our hands, we feel guilty, frustrated and angry when part of the building starts to crumble. Instead of believing in the Church, we frantically attempt to construct it according to our own cloudy cultural image. We want to build community, relying on techniques, and are blind to the latent desire for unity that is striving to express itself among men. In fear, we plan OUR Church with statistics, rather than trustingly search for it.

Dear Father Kevane

Cuernavaca, April 27, 1965

Rev. Raymond A. Kevane  
National Director, PAVLA

Dear Father Kevane:

On my return from Brazil last week, I found a letter waiting from Mr. David O'Shea, in which he inquired how many of 75 Papal Volunteers we could accept for our courses this fall. After careful consultation, O'Shea's request leads me to review the gist of our six-hour conversation Holy Saturday in Quito, Ecuador. In this open letter to you and all the PAVLA directors, I wish to make explicit once again the Center for Intercultural Formation (CIF) policy toward the program known as PAVLA (Papal Volunteers in Latin America.) I do so, in the hope of helping PAVLA to re-think its institutional purposes; of protecting CIF from unenlightening attacks by those who criticize the acceptance of individual PAVLA volunteers into our program, and finally, of avoiding any misunderstanding of our institutional policies by PAVLA officers.

First let me state what I wish to avoid in this letter:

A. I want to avoid criticism of the manner in which PAVLA has implemented its program during the last five years, PAVLA's policies in the area of program planning, selection of directors and volunteers, the services actually rendered by the volunteers, or the impact of the program on the United States or Latin American Church.

B. I want to avoid detailed comments on the image and reputation of PAVLA volunteers held by significant Latin American groups of my acquaintance, and among that sector of the United States public opinion with which I am in closest contact.

C. I want to avoid discussion of peripheral programs conducted around PAVLA, such as summer vacation missions, student crusades, and large scale travel by United States priests in Latin America.

D. I want to avoid making speculations on unpublished PAVLA plans.



I only want to answer three of your questions — which are the following:

- I. Why do I consider PAVLA's stated principal purpose prejudicial to the Church in 1965?
- II. What positive recommendations can I make for PAVLA's future?
- III. In view of my answer to the first two questions: Why does CIF accept PAVLA trainees into its Cuernavaca and Petropolis programs?

I. Why do I consider PAVLA's stated principal purpose prejudicial to the Church in 1965?

It is my opinion that by 1966, PAVLA will be superfluous. Furthermore, the continuation of this program as it stands today will be misleading to generous United States Catholics and an affront to the Latin American public. I say this for the following reasons:

1. The specific purpose of the existence of a PAVLA program has been explained along the following line:

- To motivate United States Catholics to volunteer services to the Church in Latin America.
- To elicit request for such United States personnel from Latin American Church authorities.
- To raise in the United States the necessary cash for the implementation of this program. Costs are estimated from \$2,500.00 to \$4,000.00 yearly for each volunteer, a figure which includes the expenses created by public relations, education of volunteers, supervision, travel, insurance and maintenance.

2. Through the implementation of this program PAVLA aims to achieve a variety of goals which it has in common with many other organizations: religious benefits for the volunteer, his sponsors and those he works with; cross-cultural understanding, education of the United States volunteer for the future tasks in the United States through temporary service in Latin America, and, at times, explicit participation in the struggle against communism.

3. It seems to me, also, that PAVLA has engaged in the



organization of financing of activities which lie outside the purpose of the organization (above) such as procurement of scholarships, public relations for Latin American fund raising activities in the United States, support of some Latin American temporary volunteers, support of some Latin American Church activities, and increasing the interest for Latin America in the United States.

I take issue neither with the general goals of the PAVLA program (2, above) nor with the incidental benefits derived from its implementation (3, above). But, at your request, I am forced to state my opinion, which is this:

by 1966, the organization founded for the implementation of the specific program of PAVLA (1, above) should either be discontinued, or be changed fundamentally, so that a new specific corporate purpose will be substituted for the original one.

During the past four years we have all become aware of the real cost to the United States Church of a PAVLA volunteer, regardless of the length of the individual's stay in Latin America and of the real value of his contribution. Latin American employers of PAVLA volunteers have been able to verify this cost, as well as the additional cost to them of maintaining, consoling and orienting inefficient, temporary voluntary help.

For a fraction of the cost of a volunteer, local personnel could be employed. Persons with greater usable experience and with higher professional qualifications are available in Latin America. There are persons who intend to dedicate many years of their lives to the task and who would work for the Church for a reasonable salary. Latin American bishops are anxious to employ them. Most PAVLA volunteers do poorly in jobs which local regular employees would be willing and better able to perform at family salaries of \$800 to \$2,000 a year. There are very few PAVLA volunteers who are doing work that would demand a salary for highly qualified local professionals of \$3,500 a year, the estimated overall cost of any United States volunteer.

Volunteers are tolerated, accepted or requested by Latin American Church officials who are truly acquainted with the program, for reasons which have never been presented to the

United States public which supports the program:

a) Volunteers are accepted out of kindness or delicacy toward misguided United States generosity in the hope of contributing to the development of the United States Church.

b) Volunteers are requested in the hope of using their presence in Latin America for public relations and fund raising in the United States.

c) Volunteers are sometimes welcomed because it seems less expensive to use local funds exclusively for the maintenance of a volunteer while the United States Church pays the multiple overhead, than to use the limited local funds to pay proper professional salaries to local employees. There are some cases where unemployment was actually caused by the importation of PAVLA volunteers, especially in the field of teaching.

There is a very good test for the validity of my assertion: Ask an experienced employer of PAVLA volunteers which he would prefer: a volunteer or a cash grant of \$1,500 restricted to payment of a local professional doing the same job. Ask him in such a way that he can be certain that he will not violate the basic law of hospitality and kindness toward stranger by his choice. I doubt that even one would choose the volunteer, unless he needed persons in these categories: native English-speaking secretarial help, or teacher of English, or persons with post-doctoral experience.

Most PAVLA volunteers are accepted because no charitable alternative is offered to the receiver. There is, in fact, a sentiment growing in Latin America that the PAVLA organization imposes young North Americans in search of higher meaning in their lives on Latin American churchmen, already overburdened with other problems.

United States Catholics who contribute to this program are not aware that their money is being spent to impose high-cost volunteers on hospitable Latin American churchmen who would prefer receiving a fraction of their cost to train the local faithful to be the future leaders of the Latin American Church by employing them in stable, fulltime church work. United States Catholics are led to believe that through the PAVLA program they are providing a service needed and requested by the Latin American Church.

The appeal to the United States public for support of PAVLA was excusable between 1960 and 1965 because too few Latin American bishops were sufficiently aware of the program to formulate an opinion, and because PAVLA directors were unacquainted with Latin American realities and incapable of grasping the weight of this same argument in 1961.

Today there is no excuse for not informing the United States Catholic public that PAVLA has outlived itself. The good it could do, it has done. Most volunteers have become superfluous. What Latin America needs now are highly qualified professionals who will emigrate to Latin America. The specific program of PAVLA has become irrelevant. PAVLA should either dissolve itself (having achieved its purpose) or transform its goodwill and money raising ability to implement a task different from that of sending United States Church volunteers to Latin America.

This statement is difficult to make. Several hundred North Americans have given new meaning to their lives by working with and for PAVLA. It is not necessary to evaluate whether or not their contribution in the past was meaningful or significant. We must maintain the good will and interest in Latin America of these men and women for the significant task ahead.

We must now face the fact that what the United States public understands PAVLA to be and the definition you gave me in Quito (for the principal reason for the existence of the PAVLA program) is now irrelevant, misleading and even offensive. With this I have answered your first question: why do I consider PAVLA's stated purpose to be prejudicial to the Church in 1965.

II. What positive recommendations can I make for PAVLA's future?

The future of PAVLA depends on the courage with which the PAVLA directors will disassociate themselves from the originally stated purpose of the organization.

PAVLA will either maintain its original basic idea, or it will change its principal purpose. I sincerely doubt that the third alternative of dissolving the organization is open to you because of the considerable image, money and the lives invested in it. If you choose to maintain the original program and purpose (as

stated above, in I) I foresee a few years of splendid vegetation for the organization. Organizations do not die, they vegetate; and they need a certain amount of time before they are complex enough to vegetate in splendor. PAVLA will become more effective under your able administration, through greater centralization and with better selection of personnel; more effective in persuading generous United States Catholic laymen into getting an interesting education in Latin America while thinking that they are contributing their lives to God. Effective also in imposing unwarranted demands on the time of key Latin American churchmen to orient the program and engage themselves in the pastoral care of foreign volunteers. In short, efficient in performing an irrelevant task.

If, on the other hand, you succeed in offering a specifically new program to the many persons attracted by the PAVLA ideal, United States Catholics will consider PAVLA as having led them to a new level of maturity and a deeper understanding of the complexities of our time. Continuing in the line of our Quito conversation, I therefore suggest as one possible new purpose for PAVLA's fund raising ability the following: PAVLA as a foundation.

1. United States Catholics must understand that by 1966 the usefulness of all but exceptional United States Catholic temporary volunteers in the Latin American apostolate will have ended. Only those United States Catholics are welcome who willingly invest ten or more years in Latin America, and do so as unsponsored individuals. English teachers, native English-speaking office workers and persons with post-doctoral experience are the exception.

2. Latin American bishops need salaries to pay lay workers ranging from catechetical instructors and organizers (\$500 to \$1,200 a year) to sociologists and certified accountants (\$1,000 to \$3,500 a year). They want to employ local personnel to whom they can offer a career and around whom they can build their Church.

3. United States Catholics should feel that they have contributed through PAVLA in creating this awareness on the part of the Latin American bishops, even if the positive contribution of

PAVLA in this area was very small.

4. Let United States Catholics rejoice at this ability of Latin America to reject the generous United States volunteers. Let them understand that they can render a very significant service by helping Latin American bishops to pay salaries to their own laymen, preferably local citizens, foreigners only if for the same cost or if no Latin American is available.

5. For this purpose I recommend that you establish a foundation to channel PAVLA funds to Latin American bishops who wish to employ lay assistants in clearly specified areas and under clearly specified conditions.

6. Let United States Catholics understand that just as the Latin American Church has become independent of United States volunteers in a five-year period, so it could become independent of United States financial help for local salaries within ten or fifteen years. American parishes committing themselves to support a layman in Latin America would know this is not a permanent engagement, but one for five, ten or fifteen years.

7. Please take this step, or any other step by which you demonstrate that the Church has outgrown the need for Papal Volunteers, while you can yet make the change as a free decision. The situation is urgent. I foresee that very soon the present existing primary purpose of PAVLA will not only be publicly criticized but ridiculed. The initiative for this change should come from within the organization. It is with this deep concern that I talked with you and have summarized my argument here.

III. Why does CIF consistently accept PAVLA trainees into its program? In view of our policy (explained above) this question has often been raised in sentiments ranging from surprise to indignation.

1. CIF has six departments somewhat comparable to each other in operational importance, and in number and quality of fulltime personnel. Only two of these departments (one in Cuernavaca, one in Petropolis) are specifically set up to offer two 17-week courses yearly. The courses attempt to develop intercultural sensitivity among foreign technical assistants bound for

Latin America to serve in specific areas of development. We spare no effort to give the best possible course.

The concept of intercultural formation as a specific kind of preparation for effective technical assistance was rather new when CIF began. It is slowly gaining broad acceptance and professional recognition. CIF has planned from the beginning to pioneer in striving for excellence in this field, in promoting continued research on possible improvements and careful evaluation of its results.

Recently, leaders in intercultural formation met in Berlin. Our representative, Miss Stancioff, observed with satisfaction both the establishment of other quality institutions dedicated to intercultural sensitivity-training, and the degree to which the fundamental ideas originally proposed by CIF were being consciously accepted.

Applicants, especially for our fall courses, far exceed our ability to accept them. We must choose them. We have been forced to develop criteria for giving preference to individual applicants, no matter who the sponsor is. In the only previous communication which we have sent to all PAVLA directors ("CIF Puzzle — 1961") we explained in great detail the criteria we had then established.

2. From these remarks about our program you see how we can combine the admission of PAVLA trainees to our 17-week courses with the opinion about the PAVLA program which you have solicited and which we hold.

a) We actively seek to register in our course foreign professionals on their way to Latin America. We prefer persons with advanced qualifications, experience, maturity and high stability; if possible, persons who would like to commit the rest of their lives to Latin America. We want to specialize in offering courses for persons destined for sensitive positions in the pastoral renewal of the Latin American Church and for those qualified to gain insight into the ideological transformation taking place in Latin America, their impact on socio-economic and socio-cultural options.

b) We gladly accept qualified lay people, priests or sisters truly requested by the Latin American Church, even if they do not

intend to spend significant time on their mission. We believe that having them as our guests in a CIF course will motivate them to seek close integration with the local clergy and possibly to decide to stay among us in Latin America for life.

c) We believe that we cannot (at least for the time being) exclude from our courses Catholic volunteers who are going to Latin America without a potentially significant function in Latin America, as long as they meet minimum human criteria. They are on their way, with or without a CIF course. We cannot give them preference in admission, but experience has taught us that a carefully guided formation before assignment to Latin America is even more crucial for them than for those mentioned above. Painfully, we have learned how to help such volunteers shed their misguided missionary zeal and begin to prepare themselves for a limited stay in Latin America during which they will learn much which they will be able to contribute, later, to the United States Church. Not infrequently, the spontaneity and personal generosity of such trainees has added much enjoyment to a CIF course.

We have had PAVLA volunteers in our courses who fall into each of these categories. Under all circumstances we assume that every PAVLA applicant is a generous, well-meaning individual on his way to Latin America. If we can and do admit them to our courses, they are welcome guests on equal footing with all other students, highly technically qualified, experienced applicants, who are preparing for permanent service in Latin America.

I hope that I have been able to make my point in such a way that my concern and interest is clear to you and to the PAVLA directors.

Yours fraternally,

Ivan D. Illich



**Dear Mary: Letter  
to an American  
Volunteer**

Dear Mary,

When you came to see me I really do not believe you meant to be admitted to CIF: I had the clear impression you used the pretext of "interested in CIF" only because you wanted to seek more clarity about your own vocation in life. I am happy this became clear early in our conversation: thus we could get down to the basic issue.

You say that you feel attracted to Latin America, that you would like nothing more than to work there, that you hate office work, that you work with people rather than with things, and that you like to feel useful. How well I can understand you. All this only shows that you are healthy.

After all you are a lucky girl. You have had a decent education, you have a rather uncommon specialty, and you are on indefinite leave of absence from a strong and stable company which is so satisfied with your past performance that it is willing to return you to your former well paid job whenever you apply for it. You have financial security whenever you would want it and in the meantime you can do whatever you like without feeling that you are cutting off all ties with your past.

You are almost thirty, are not engaged, and do not see any reason why you should be going out of your way to find a husband.

You feel free to do just about what you would most like to do. You tell me you have faced the possibility of giving yourself (mark this, yourself, not just your time and your work!) to God by joining a religious or lay community, but for the moment this question presents itself just as little as the question of marriage. I know you much too little to say whether you should or should not now settle this question of your total gift once and for all.

For the moment you wish to postpone the questions of marriage to a man and of total consecration to God and do what you would most enjoy. Since you asked me, I think you might



have a right to do this: to postpone, and risk spiritual and human spinsterhood. Just to repeat it: I rightly understand what you would enjoy most would be some meaningful and useful job in Latin America, traveling and coming to know things, working with people in some capacity which would be useful to them. This would satisfy your desire to learn, to have human contacts, to feel that you are useful and to know you are free. You are looking for an attractive job and would love at the same time to feel that you are doing something for God whom you love and people with whom you love to be.

After some careful exploration on your part of how to get such a job, you felt the best and perhaps the only place where you will get what you are looking for would be work for the Church in Latin America: you could be useful, at the service of not only a good cause but of God, work with people and under superiors whom you would expect to be exceptionally good men and women. You would keep a certain freedom because after all you would work as a volunteer and it is always easier for a volunteer to call the shots than for an employee.

You therefore have now come to the decision to commit yourself for a year's work as a catechist and general helper in a parish in Argentina. This past year's experience as an English teacher in a convent here in Mexico makes you believe that for the moment you have seen enough of this country.

After explaining these points to me we were interrupted: you had asked whether I believed you were using the Church, whether you were being a Pharisee. I am writing you now to answer that question.

No, Mary, I do not believe you are acting wrongly (I equally know you much too little to say that you are acting rightly, that you are really living up to the graces God wants to give to you rather than stumbling toward a life of frustration). I do believe you are within your rights to do what you plan with the intentions you have.

You have a right to use the Church; after all the Church too is getting something from you. There is nothing wrong with doing volunteer work for some poor parish in Argentina for a year, just because this is the nicest way in which you believe you can

spend your time. There is nothing wrong in considering Church work as fulfilling as any other equally satisfying job. You want to do what you most like to do, for as long as you want to do it and as long as some pastor is satisfied of having you help under these terms. As long as the terms are clear you are in the clear. Let no misguided enthusiast tell you that you are doing wrong because nobody should work at the service of the Church who does not do so for one reason exclusively: to love God.

But please do not imagine yourself a saint or a "missioner" because you "volunteer" your services to the Church! Payment is not made in dollars alone. You forego adequate compensation in dollars because there are things you value more. For the services you offer you get exactly what you want most. You are a volunteer in the sense in which every ideal employee is one: you do what you do because you would rather do this than something else.

The principal danger I can see in your decision to accept employment by the Church under the conditions you seek it is that you fool yourself, that you believe yourself to be what you are not: a totally dedicated, totally consecrated woman.

Mary, thank God you have good sense and get what I am telling you.

Sincerely,

Ivan Illich

## **Yankee, Go Home: The American Do-Gooder in Latin America**

It is very difficult to speak tonight because about twenty or thirty of us have already had five hours of conversation earlier today, and there are others with whom I have been talking in private. It seems as if all of us are looking in the same direction and seeing a different thing. If I rightly understood the seminar with which I met this morning, it is not the theme of this conference to determine how you should prepare yourselves for the summer you might spend in '68 or '69 in Mexico, but rather, to pinpoint changes and revisions required in the structure, in the organization, in the ideology, in the doctrine, in the rules, and the financing of CIASP. I hope that we have reached agreement: only radical change could possibly justify a decent human being in 1969 continuing his association with CIASP. However, in the conversations which I have had today, I was impressed by two things, and I want to state them before I launch into my prepared talk.

I was impressed by your insight that the motivation of U.S. volunteers overseas springs mostly from very alienated feelings and concepts. I was equally impressed by what I interpret as a step forward among would-be volunteers like you: openness to the idea that the only thing you can legitimately volunteer for in Latin America might be voluntary powerlessness, voluntary presence as receivers, as such, as hopefully beloved or adopted ones without any way of returning the gift.

I was equally impressed by the hypocrisy of most of you: by the hypocrisy of the atmosphere prevailing here. I say this as a brother speaking to brothers and sisters. I say it against many resistances within me; but it must be said. Your very insight, your very openness to evaluations of past programs make you hypocrites because most of you have decided to spend this next summer in Mexico and therefore are unwilling to go far enough in your reappraisal of your program. You close your eyes because you want to go ahead and could not do so if you looked at some facts.

It is quite possible this hypocrisy is unconscious in most of you, but not in all, of this I am very certain. Intellectually, you are ready to see that the motivations which could legitimate volunteer action overseas in 1963 cannot be invoked for the same action in 1968-69. "Mission-vacations" among poor Mexicans were "*the thing*" to do for well-off U.S. students earlier in this decade: sentimental concern for newly-discovered poverty south of the border combined with total blindness to much worse poverty at home justified such benevolent excursions. Intellectual insight into the difficulties of fruitful volunteer action had not sobered the spirit of Peace Corps, Papal and Self-Styled volunteers.

Today, the existence of organizations like yours is offensive to Mexico. I wanted to make this statement in order to explain why I feel sick about it all and in order to make you aware that good intentions have not much to do with what we are discussing here. To hell with good intentions. This is a theological statement. You will not help anybody by your good intentions. There is an Irish saying that the road to hell is paved with good intentions: this sums up the same theological insight.

I would prepare my statement differently, particularly in style, had I had these five hours of conversation with you. I would have made it less harsh and even more definite. I cannot change now because my control of English is not good enough to keep my statement understandable if I change it while reading it.

Before I prepared this statement, I wanted to say something more. In the course of this day I came to believe in the survival of CIASP. On coming here I considered it my duty to continue my efforts towards getting you out of business. I now see that too much money, too many vested interests, too many illusions support CIASP to allow this organization to disappear. Therefore, we have to ask ourselves what to do with CIASP, since it cannot die.

I have reached the conclusion that, quite conceivably, there are a few people who could profit from the experience of the past years of CIASP and develop some kind of an educational agency which makes it possible for North American students to live in Mexico. By "live", I mean "Live" with a capital "L"; live in the

biblical sense in Mexico for a month, fully aware of the limitations of such an experience, of the danger of narcissistic illusions in such a short encounter and yet to LIVE there.

I have no evidence that CIASP as a whole should or could serve this purpose in the future because it might be too much marked by the sins of its origin, which are not recognized as sins by you, but rather considered as simple shortcomings. I do not think that real conversion is possible unless one says: "I was not mistaken, I was wrong. I let myself be led into the organization and the first structuring of CIASP by my deep-rooted pride, belief in my superiority, my conviction that I had something to give." I do not believe that such "conversion" is possible for a whole organization, but I do believe that it is possible for a few individuals.

Some of you might still profit from past experiences in and through CIASP. The very frustration and humiliation which participation in CIASP programs might have meant for you could lead you to new awareness: the awareness that even North Americans can receive the gift of hospitality without the slightest ability to pay for it; the awareness that for some gifts one cannot even say "thank you."

Now, to the statement I prepared earlier.

For the past six years I have become known for my increasing opposition to the presence of any and all North American "do-gooders" in Latin America. I am sure you know of my present efforts to obtain the voluntary withdrawal of all North American volunteer armies from Latin America: missionaries, Peace Corps members and groups like yours, a "division" organized for the benevolent invasion of Mexico. You were aware of these things when you invited me, of all people, to be the main speaker at your annual convention. This is amazing!

I can only conclude that your invitation means one of at least three things:

Some among you might have reached the conclusion that CIASP should either dissolve altogether, or take the promotion of voluntary aid to the Mexican poor out of its institutional purpose. Therefore, you might have invited me here to help

others reach this same decision.

You might also have invited me because you want to learn how to deal with people who think the way I do, how to dispute with them successfully, and how to refute them. It has now become quite common to invite Black Power spokesmen to address Lions Clubs. A "dove" must always be included in a public dispute organized to increase U.S. belligerence.

And finally, you might have invited me here hoping that you would be able to agree with most of what I say, and then go ahead in good faith and work this summer in Mexican villages. This last possibility is only open to those who do not listen, or who cannot understand me.

I did not come here to argue. I am here to tell you, if possible to convince you, and hopefully, to stop you, from pretentiously imposing yourselves on Mexicans.

I do have deep faith in the enormous good will of the U.S. volunteer. However, his good faith can usually be explained only by an abysmal lack of intuitive delicacy. By definition, you cannot help being vacationing salesmen for the middle class "American Way of Life," since that is the only life you know.

A group like this could not have developed unless a mood in the United States had supported it, the belief that any true American must share God's blessings with his poorer fellow men. The idea that every American has something to give, and at all times may, can and should give it, explains why it occurred to students that they could help Mexican peasants "develop" by spending a summer with them. Of course, this surprising conviction was supported by members of a missionary order, who would have no reason to exist unless they had the same conviction except a much stronger one. It is now high time to cure yourselves of this illusion.

Like the values you carry, you are products of an American society of achievers and consumers, with a two-party system, universal schooling, and Family-Car affluency. You are ultimately, consciously or unconsciously, "salesmen" for a delusive belief in the ideals of democracy, equal opportunity and free enterprise among people who haven't the remotest possibility of profiting from these.

Next to money and guns, the third largest North American defense export is the U.S. idealist, who turns up in every theater of the world: the teacher, the volunteer, the missionary, the community organizer, the economic developer, and the vacationing do-gooder. Ideally, these people define their role as service. Actually, they frequently wind up alleviating the damage done by money and weapons, or "seducing" the "underdeveloped" to the benefits of the world of affluence and achievement. Perhaps this is the moment to instead bring home to the people of the U.S. the knowledge that the way of life they have chosen simply is not alive enough to be shared.

By now it should be evident to all America that the U.S. is engaged in a tremendous struggle to survive. The U.S. cannot survive if the rest of the world is not convinced that here you have Heaven-on-Earth. The survival of the U.S. depends on the acceptance by all so-called "free" men of the idea that the U.S. middle class has "made it." The U.S. way of life has become a religion which must be accepted by all those who do not want to die by the sword or napalm. All over the globe the U.S. is fighting to protect and develop at least a minority which consumes what the U.S. majority can afford. Such is the purpose of the Alliance for Progress of the middle class which the U.S. signed with Latin America some years ago. But increasingly this commercial alliance must be protected by weapons which allow the minority who can "make it" to protect their acquisitions and achievements.

But weapons are not enough to permit minority rule. The marginal masses become rambunctious unless they are given a creed or belief which explains the status quo. This task is given to the U.S. volunteer, whether he be a member of CIASP or a worker in the so-called "Pacification Programs" in Viet Nam.

The United States is currently engaged in a three-front struggle to affirm its ideals of acquisitive and achievement-oriented "Democracy." I say "three" fronts, because three great areas of the world are challenging the validity of a political and social system which makes the rich ever richer, and the poor increasingly marginal to that system.

In Asia, the U.S. is threatened by an established power in



China. The U.S. opposes China with three weapons: the tiny Asian elites which could not have it any better than in an alliance with the United States; a huge war machine to stop the Chinese from "taking over", as it is usually put in this country; and forcible re-education of the so-called "pacified" peoples. All three of these efforts seem to be failing.

In Chicago, poverty funds, the police force and preachers seem to be no more successful in their efforts to check the unwillingness of the black community to wait for graceful integration into the system.

And finally, in Latin America the Alliance for Progress has been quite successful in increasing the number of people who could not be better off, meaning the tiny, middle class elites, and has created ideal conditions for military dictatorships. The dictators were formerly at the service of the plantation owners, but now they protect the new industrial complexes. And finally, U.S. volunteers come to help the underdog accept his destiny within this process!

All you will do in a Mexican village is create disorder. At best, you can try to convince Mexican girls they should marry a young man who is self-made, rich, a consumer and as disrespectful of tradition as one of you. At worst, in your "community development" spirit you might create just enough problems to get someone shot after your vacation ends and you rush back to your middle class neighborhoods where your friends make jokes about "spics" and "wetbacks."

You start on your task without any training. Even the Peace Corps spends around \$10,000 on each corpsman to help him adapt to his new environment and to guard him against culture-shock. How odd that nobody ever thought about spending money to educate poor Mexicans in order to prevent them from the culture-shock of meeting you!

In fact, you cannot even meet the majority which you pretend to serve in Latin America, even if you could speak their language, which most of you cannot. You can only dialogue with those like you, Latin American imitations of the North American middle class. There is no way for you to really meet the underprivileged, since there is no common ground whatsoever on which to meet.



Let me explain this statement, and also let me explain why most Latin Americans with whom you might be able to communicate would disagree with me.

Suppose you went to a U.S. ghetto this summer and tried to help the poor "help themselves." Very soon you would be either spit upon or laughed at. People offended by your pretentiousness would hit or spit. People who understand that your own bad consciences push you to this gesture would laugh condescendingly. Soon you would be made aware of your irrelevance among the poor, of your status as middle class college students on a summer assignment. You would be roundly rejected, no matter if your skin is white, as most of your faces here are, or brown or black, as are a few exceptions who got in here somehow.

Your reports about your work in Mexico, which you so kindly sent me, exude self-complacency. Your reports on past summers prove that you are not even capable of understanding that your do-gooding in a Mexican village is even less relevant than it would be in a U.S. ghetto. Not only is there a gulf between what you have and what others have which is much greater than the one existing between you and the poor in your own country, but there is also a gulf between what you feel and what the Mexican people feel that is incomparably greater. This gulf is so great that in a Mexican village you, as white Americans (or cultural white Americans) can, and do, imagine yourselves exactly the way a white preacher saw himself when he offered his life preaching to the black slaves on a plantation in Alabama. The fact that you live in huts and eat tortillas for a few weeks render your well-intentioned group only a bit more picturesque.

The only people with whom you can hope to communicate are some members of the middle class. And here please remember that I said "some," by which I mean a tiny elite in Latin America. You come from a country which industrialized early, and which succeeded in incorporating the great majority of its citizens into the middle classes. It is no social distinction in the U.S. to have graduated from the second year of college. Indeed, most Americans now do. Anybody in this country who did not finish high school is considered underprivileged.

In Latin America the situation is quite different. Some 75% of all people drop out of school before they reach the sixth grade of grammar school. People who have finished high school are members of a tiny minority. A minority of that minority goes on for university training. It is only among these people that you will find your educational equals.

The middle class in the United States is the majority. In Mexico, it is a tiny elite. Seven years ago your country began and financed a so-called "Alliance for Progress." This was an "Alliance" for the "Progress" of the middle class elites. Among the members of this middle class you will find a few people who are willing to waste their time with you. And they are overwhelmingly those "nice kids" who would also like to soothe their troubled consciences by "doing something nice for the promotion of the poor Indians." Of course, when you and your middle class Mexican counterparts meet you will be told that you are doing something valuable, that you are "sacrificing" to help others.

And it will be the foreign priest who will especially confirm your self-image for you. After all, his livelihood and sense of purpose depends on his firm belief in a year-round mission which is of the same type as your summer vacation-mission.

The argument exists that some returned volunteers have gained insight into the damage they have done to others, and thus become maturer people. Yet it is less frequently stated that most of them are ridiculously proud of their "summer sacrifices." Perhaps there is also something to the argument that young men should be promiscuous for awhile in order to find out that sexual love is most beautiful in a monogamous relationship. Or that the best way to leave LSD alone is to try it for awhile, or even that the best way of understanding that your help in the ghetto is neither needed or wanted is to try, and fail. I do not agree with this argument. The damage which volunteers do willy-nilly is too high a price for the belated insight that they should not have been volunteers in the first place.

Of course, for those of you who go in full conscience that you are simply utilizing an organization to go on an expense-paid vacation, and I'm sure that those are few in number, you will not understand such reasoning, since your purpose is fraudulent.

If you have any sense of responsibility at all, stay with your riots here at home. Work for the coming elections. McCarthy might lose, but certainly by campaigning for him you will know what you are doing, why you are doing it, and how to communicate with those to whom you speak. And you will know when you fail. If you insist on working with the poor, if this is your vocation, then at least work among the poor who can tell you to go to hell! It is incredibly unfair for you to impose yourselves on a village where you are so linguistically deaf and dumb that you don't even understand what you are doing, or what people think of you. And it is profoundly damaging to yourselves when you define something that you want to do as "good," a "sacrifice" and "help."

I am here to suggest that you voluntarily renounce exercising the power which being an American gives you. I am here to entreat you to freely, consciously and humbly give up the legal right you have to impose your benevolence on Mexico. I am here to challenge you to recognize your inability, your powerlessness and your incapacity to do the "good" which you intended to do.

I am here to entreat you to use your money, your status and your education to travel in Latin America. Come to look, come to climb our mountains, to enjoy our flowers. Come to study. But do not come to help.

## **Between Jail and Campus: The Chaplain's Halfway House**

(On January 17, 1969, the papal delegate in Mexico formally visited CIDOC and read a document emanating from the Holy Congregation of the Faith which forbade peremptorily all Roman Catholic clergymen from attending CIDOC and using its services. The only group of ecclesiastics which heeded this order and canceled a projected program at CIDOC was the Association of U. S. Campus Ministers who had contracted for a four-week seminar on the future of the campus ministry during the summer of 1969. They very correctly, though, held CIDOC harmless for the economic consequences of this cancellation. They organized their seminar elsewhere in Cuernavaca and provided registration to the 120 odd Catholic and Protestant ministers in attendance to a course at CIDOC of their choice.)

(A short but serious illness prevented me from conducting a seminar for some of these ministers, and I had only one opportunity to address them, at which occasion I made the following statement.)

While we have ghettos for Jews, Negroes, Mexicans and homosexuals, the campus is a ghetto of a different kind. Ghettos are the traditional steppingstone for immigrants into urban America, but the campus is different because never before has society demanded all its citizens pass through one.

Whatever "education" is, it serves at least to rationalize the concentration of youth on campus. Increasingly, students are citizens of student age: the campus is becoming their normal habitat; they live on campus, sleep on campus, dine on campus, get drugs on campus, have sex on campus, worship on campus, politic and get sick on campus. Occasionally they venture off-campus to meet in special departments reserved for them in restaurants, stores and vacation spots. They also learn on campus. But only further research will determine how significant, if at all, classroom attendance is in the total learning of students.

Within this all-inclusive youth enclave, the campus minister's social role is as ambiguous as his self image. He thrives on campus and enjoys unique status: without being a professor, he is a member of the faculty club. While being a cleric, his vestry or bishop grants him freedom from most restrictions binding other clerics. Most campus ministers seem to enjoy the unique claim to immunity which their combined religious and academic cloaks provide: unprofessional excursions into politics, psychiatry, liturgical reform, and psychedelics become somewhat tolerable if they happen near the campus chapel, and under the guidance of the chaplain. Unliturgical celebrations in Church, "unpriestly" behavior at parties, un-canonical standards and unorthodox views which would be judged intolerable in other colleagues in the cloth are frequently tolerated in the chaplain. In the community at large, his marginality to both church and faculty provides him with a nimbus of special competence to report from where the action is, not entirely unlike the way missionaries formerly showed slides of opium dens, tribal dances, and eastern religious rites. The Lions Club now invites the chaplain to report on youth-culture.

The campus minister can imagine himself in at least three roles: (1) that of the university divine, gifted like the great professor but who has renounced academic pursuit for the sake of ministry among the academics; (2) that of minister to a special minority, similar to prison and army chaplains, who attempts to bind youth to his denomination; and (3) that of the "divine companion to the troops," the eternally youthful dissident within the clergy.

The campus minister who dreams of himself as a D'Arcy, Danielou or Newman does so only by ignoring the reality that the life-style, stance and selectivity of Oxford and the Sorbonne have fallen in disrepute on campus today. If he truly combines academic discipline and clerical status, his existence surprises both the typical "youth" and the exceptional "scholar." If the synthesis is a pretense, he cannot maintain — like generations of campus divines before — that it is demanded from him as appropriate behavior.

The second type of minister is the "reformatory chaplain," the

man with a *mission* to the outcasts. Society and his denomination have appointed him pastor to a wayward congregation on its way to "normal life" in the "everyday world" of society. He holds the trust of his denomination, the Lions and Rotarians, the campus administration and future employers to integrate his flock into the mainstream of society. He helps them become god-fearing members of their denominations, good citizens, neighbors, and employees. He is the missionary of the established Church on the borderland of the youth culture.

Finally there is the role of the minister with a vocation. He is ill at ease in the established church and has asked for appointment as dissident among dissidents. When he could not get acceptance from his superiors, he sought it from his new constituency, donning their uniform and insignia, from jeans to beads. Frequently he seeks his model in Camilo Torres. When Cardinal Concha appointed a new batch of military chaplains, whose principal task is ministering to the men shooting the guerrilleros, Camilo asked but did not get an appointment to minister to the men being shot at. So he followed his vocation even without a church-appointed mission.

This minister with the self-styled vocation seems "in" at this moment. He must not necessarily be a follower of Camilo. He sometimes resembles more a Marcuse and seems to believe that the unction of the chair can catalyze Reich with Castro or redeem Esalen through Greek liturgies. Others again channel funds from unsuspecting suburban congregations to the revolution of their choice.

The campus minister's three self images are set against the transition from the university of the thirties to the campus of the sixties, a transition which affects the older minister even more radically than the aging college teacher. The minister joined an elite institution to minister to youth involved in an intellectual enterprise accessible only to a minority. He now finds himself a member of an institution which proposes to shape the entire environment for both its youthful and older members and provide them with special assistance should they venture outside it.

Within the total campus environment higher learning is one of many activities going on. The curriculum of our major univer-

sities is being crushed by two countervailing forces. Higher learning is being squeezed into corners of the campus and expensively enshrined. The classroom building psychologically gives the impression of a vulgar latter-day chapel. Classroom attendance substitutes for church attendance, academic certification for ordination or tonsure. We can foresee the day when most higher learning will take place independent of the campus, in institutions which are accessible to all citizens of all ages, without curricular liturgies. We can foresee the day when the campus will be considered no more educational than any other part of the city, the vacation colony or the old age home; education will be incorporated in all of these or available as movie theaters and libraries are now. If the campus survives, it will quite openly be the delegatory habitat of the young. Meanwhile, the USA is going through the age of the campus, as it went through the age of emancipation and the age of the railroad. The options that universities will become again specifically educational institutions or dissolve into concentration camps for youth are still not faced.

"Education" still serves as the ideological banner under which the entire student age population can be managed. On the campus two opposing parties, both only marginally interested in classical academic activities, meet head on. "Outside society" composed of taxpayers demands the campus provide custody for youth, indoctrination to the older generation's values, labelling and certification for easy management in the labor market, and the type of special competence which societal maintenance requires. On the other hand the inhabitants of the campus divide into two factions: those which accept the fiction that the years from 16 to 26 have the principal purpose of preparing a young citizen to join a community whose values and behavior are adult; and those which conceive of their age (the age of youth, of intense awakening, of flexibility, of imagination, of potency) as the most precious. The former want to delay satisfaction, and consider their stay on campus as an investment. The latter seem irresponsible because they seek to live now. The student who conceives of himself as a novice in training for adult society is more apt to seek the minister who initiates him to the



existing, adult church, than the student who believes himself to be grownup and wants a church which is relevant now.

Students already seek their education outside the campus, as I know from my experience at CIDOC. This will happen ever more unless many other campus adornments go the way of ROTC: unless the current drive against applied research, job-training, socio-economic certification and socio-cultural indoctrination (all of which are institutionally performed by the university) goes hand in hand with a concerted drive against the presence on campus of the dean of students, the student activist, and the chaplain.

Only the success of such a drive would revolutionize the present "campus" sufficiently to re-establish the central, academic purpose of the original university enterprise. Such a revolution would rid the university of most young Americans of "student-age" for all of their sleeping and most of their waking hours now spent on campus. Unless we rid the campus of those distracting activities that now submerge disciplined learning, we might as well reconcile ourselves to what is now happening: learning is becoming a marginal activity; and by learning I mean sustained and methodical application to intellectual pursuit.

This is not likely to happen, and I am addressing myself at this moment neither to persons who stake their lives on the reform of the learning process in modern America nor to University chaplains, whose principal task is that of attending an enlightened elite during the crisis which their academic pursuits might engender. I am speaking to campus ministers, and will try to explore with them their role.

Now this could be done from the point of view of a church. I could ask about the corporate intention of the Church when she sends these men to the campus; the corporate intention of the faithful when they build campus chapels; the specific mission entrusted by the bishop to the minister he appoints. Such research would get me entangled in theological analysis and this is something I have vowed not to do. I could also explore the presence of campus chaplains from the vantage point of the university administrator, and the nuisance value the chaplain presents to the administrator. This was something I had to face



more than a decade ago when I was vice-president of a university. The skillful management of divines for the smooth operation of an institution, as well as the patient and courageous, even joyful, acceptance of their presence, is the subject of other meetings. Here I want you to analyze the chaplain from just one point of view. I want you to focus on the unique contribution which chaplains, divines, ministers and other full-time ideologues make to create the possibility for the existence of a "campus."

Chaplains provide social acceptability for borderline cases of social deviance. In fact the presence of the chaplaincies at the campus makes it possible to expand that no-man's-land between the campus and the institutions of adult society which make the campus into such an effective enclave. The "outside world," the world of the adult, of the military, business and government, grants ample autonomy to the inhabitants of the campus, as long as they do not challenge its central belief systems. Public pressure in favor of majority intervention in this privileged minority enclave becomes intense only when dissidence seems to endanger fundamental trivialities. The chaplain's field seems to be the borderline between the main campus and the jail, the madhouse and welfare institutions.

The chaplain legitimizes dissent in matters in which, without his intervention, the law would apply in all its rigor; he might do so by backing the dissenting conscience by an oracle, in which he announces its identity with God's conscience. He might also do it by joining personally in the dissent. Dissent in the name of God is still more laudable and less punishable than dissent based on personal initiative. The chaplain ever more frequently provides pastoral counseling. By the mere fact of offering it, he defines a new class of symptoms, which are not serious enough to warrant medical intervention, not culpable enough to warrant the intervention of the law, but important enough to be treated by some public deputy, the man of the cloth for lack of anything better. The chaplain ever more frequently provides the spawning ground for secular communes: all kinds of experiments in sharing and intimacy and experience which are meaningful to the participants, strange to all others, and barely related to the tradition of the Church which appointed him.

In all these cases the chaplain's office is recognized as a halfway house on campus between the special world of the university and the public enclaves to which society relegates its common deviants: the madhouse, the jail, the slum or bohemia. The total enclave called campus could hardly survive within "normal" society without developing a class of institutions which provide a buffer. These would have to be staffed by persons trusted in the normal world (in this case the ministers) as capable of dealing with people unlike normal people (the students) and accepted by the university administration on campus (because they are chaplains of denominations which would withdraw them if they did not meet minimum standards of everyday decency) and acceptable by the students whose souls they are committed to save.

If the modern campus had no campus ministry provided by churches, it would have to invent one and have it staffed by all kinds of major ideological denominations.

## The Vanishing Clergyman

The Roman Church is the world's largest non-governmental bureaucracy. It employs 1.8 million full-time workers: priests, brothers, sisters and laymen. These employees work within a corporate structure which an American business consultant firm rates among the most efficiently operated organizations in the world. The institutional Church functions on a par with General Motors and the Chase Manhattan. This common knowledge is accepted, sometimes, with pride. But to some, its machine-like smoothness itself seems to discredit it. Men suspect that it has lost its relevance to the Gospel and to the World. Wavering, doubt and confusion reign among its directors, functionaries and employees. The giant begins to totter before it collapses.

Some church personnel react to the breakdown with pain, anguish and fright. Some make heroic efforts and tragic sacrifices to prevent it. Some, regretfully or joyfully, interpret the phenomenon as a sign of the disappearance of the Roman Church itself. I would like to suggest that we welcome the disappearance of institutional bureaucracy in a spirit of deep joy. In this essay, I shall describe some aspects of what is taking place in the Church, and suggest ways in which the Church could seek a radical reorganization in some of its structures. I am not recommending essential changes in the Church; even less do I suggest its dissolution. The complete disappearance of its visible structure would contradict sociological law and divine mandate. But change does entail much more than drastic amendment or updating reform if the Church is to respond to God's call and contemporary man. I shall outline certain possible changes, solidly rooted in the origins of the Church, and boldly reaching out to the necessities of tomorrow's society. Acceptance of this kind of reform will require the Church to live the evangelical poverty of Christ. At the same time, the Church, sensitive to the process of the world's progressive socialization, will come to have a deep respect for, and joyful acceptance of, this phenomenon.

The institutional Church is in trouble. The very persons on whose loyalty and obedience the efficiency of the structure depends, increasingly abandon it. Until the early sixties, the "defections" were relatively rare. Now they are common. Tomorrow they may be the pattern. After a personal drama played out in the intimacy of conscience, more and more ecclesiastical employees will decide to sacrifice the emotional, spiritual and financial security which the system benevolently provides for them. I suspect that within this generation these persons will have become a majority of the Church's personnel.

The problem lies not with the "spirit" of the world, nor with any failure in generosity among the "defectors," but rather with the *structure itself*. This can be taken as an almost aprioristic conclusion, since the present structures developed as a response to past situations vastly different from our own. Further, our world continually accelerates its rapid changes of societal structures, in the context of which the Church must carry out its real functions. To see the situation more clearly, I shall focus my attention on the nature and function of ministry, the complex channel through which the Church touches the world. We can thus gain some insight into the Church of tomorrow.

It seems evident that basic and accepted concepts of ministry in the Church are clearly inadequate. Quantitatively, the Church does not need the present number of full-time employees who work in its operational structure. More fundamentally, the situation suggests the need for a deep reappraisal of the elements which make up the current idea of the priest as the Church's basic representative in the world, a concept still maintained in the conciliar decrees. Specifically there is need for a re-examination of the relation between sacramental ministry and full-time personnel, between ministry and celibacy, and between ministry and theological education.

Today, it is assumed that most, if not all, of the Church's ministerial operations must be carried out by full-time underpaid employees who possess a kind of theological education and who accept an ecclesiastical law of celibacy. In order to begin a search for new directions which are more evangelically and

sociologically relevant, I shall discuss separately four aspects of the problem:

- A. The radical reduction in the number of persons dependent on the Church for their livelihood;
- B. The ordination to sacramental ministry of men independently employed in the world;
- C. The special and unique renunciation implied in perpetual celibacy;
- D. The relation between sacramental ministry and theological education.

#### A. THE CLERGY: DESIRE FOR MORE AND NEED FOR LESS

The Church's personnel enjoy remarkable privileges. Every teenager who seeks employment among the clergy is almost automatically guaranteed a status which confers a variety of personal and social benefits, most of which come with advancing age, not because of competence or productivity. His rights to social and economic security are more far-reaching than plans for the guaranteed income.

Ecclesiastical employees live in comfortable church-owned housing, are assured preferential treatment in Church-owned and operated health services, are mostly trained in ecclesiastical educational institutions and are buried in hallowed ground, after which they are prayed for. The habit or collar, not competent productivity, assures one's status and living. An employment market, more diversified than any existing corporation, caters to him, discriminating against laymen who do not share his ritual initiation. Laymen who work in the ecclesiastical structure are recognized as possessing some few "civil rights," but their careers depend principally on their ability to play the role of Uncle Toms.

Recently, the Roman Church has followed the example of some Protestant Churches in shifting more of its employees from parish work to paper pushing. At the same time, the traditional demand for increased personnel at the parish level and the simultaneously

burgeoning process of over-inflated bureaucratic machinery masks the increasing irrelevance of both these aspects of the structure. Organizational explosion results in a feverish search for more personnel and money. We are urged to beg God to send more employees into the bureaucratic system and to inspire the faithful to pay the cost. Personally, I cannot ask God for these "benefits." The inherently self-perpetuating expansion of church personnel operates well enough without additional help, and only serves to make an already over-staffed Church more priest-ridden, thereby debilitating the Church's mission in today's world.

### The Bureaucratic Maze

The Vatican itself best illustrates the complex problem. Post-conciliar administrative growth supersedes and supplants the old machinery. Since the end of the Council, the twelve venerable curial congregations have been increased by the addition of numerous intermeshing and overlapping post-conciliar organs: commissions, councils, consultative bodies, committees, assemblies and synods. This bureaucratic maze becomes ungovernable. Good. Perhaps this will help us to see that principles of corporate government are not applicable to the Body of Christ. It is even less appropriate to see his Vicar as the chief executive of a corporation than as a Byzantine king. Clerical technocracy is even further from the Gospel than priestly aristocracy. And we may come to recognize that efficiency corrupts Christian testimony more subtly than power.

At a time when even the Pentagon seeks to reduce its manpower pool by contracting specific jobs in the open market of industry and research, the Vatican launches a drive toward greater self-contained institutional diversification and proliferation. The central administration of this top-heavy organizational giant passes out of the hands of the "venerable congregations" staffed by Italian career priests to clerical specialists recruited from all over the world. The Pontifical Curia of the Middle Ages becomes a contemporary corporation's planning and administrative headquarters.

One of the paradoxical aspects of today's structure is that the organization priest is also a member of the aristocracy of the only feudal power left in the Western world, a power whose sovereign status was recognized in the Lateran conventions. Further, this same power increasingly uses a diplomatic structure developed to represent the Church's interests vis-a-vis other sovereign states to service the emerging international agencies, such as FAO, UNICEF, UNESCO and the United Nations itself. This development demands more and more employees for a wider range of jobs, requiring even more specialized education for recruits. The hierarchy, accustomed to absolute control over its employees, seeks to staff these positions with captive clergy. But the big push for more intensive recruitment runs head-on into a strong and contrary trend: yearly, almost as many trained personnel leave as are recruited. Hence, we see the reluctant acceptance of submissive and obedient laymen to fill the gap.

Some explain clerical "defections" as the elimination of undesirable elements. Others blame the various contemporary mystiques of the world. The institution instinctively attempts to explain this loss and the concomitant vocation "crisis" in terms flattering to itself. Then too, one needs strong justification for the enthusiastic and emotional drives for more "vocations." Few wish to admit that the collapse of an overextended and disproportionate clerical framework is a clear sign of its irrelevance. Fewer see that the Pope himself would grow in evangelical stature and fidelity as his power to affect social issues in the world and his administrative command in the Church decline.

#### Parkinson's Law

Changes on the institutional periphery are as faithful to Parkinson's law as changes in Rome: Work grows with available personnel. Since the end of the Council, attempts at collegial decentralization have resulted in a wildly uncontrolled growth of bureaucracy reaching to the local level. Latin America offers a grotesque example. A generation ago, Latin American bishops traveled to Rome about every ten years to report to the Pope. Their only other contacts with Rome were the stylized petitions



for indulgences or dispensations, channeled through the Nuncio, and occasional Curial Visitators. Today, a complex Roman Commission for Latin America (CAL) coordinates sub-commissions of European and American bishops in a power balance with the Latin American Bishops' Assembly. This is organized in a board (CELAM) and numerous commissions, secretariates, institutes and delegations. CELAM itself is the crown of sixteen national bishops' conferences, some of which are even more complex in bureaucratic organization. The entire structure is designed to facilitate occasional consultations among bishops, in order that, returning to their dioceses, they might act with greater independence and originality. The real results are rather different. The bishops develop the bureaucratic mentality necessary to keep up with the merry-go-round character of the increasingly frequent meetings. The newly-created organisms absorb large numbers of trained grass roots personnel into clerical staff and planning services. Restrictive and unimaginative central control replaces creative and fresh approaches in the local churches.

In the entire Church, a clergy survives partly because priestly service at the altar is united with clerical power and privilege. This union helps to maintain the existing structure. Church-employed priests assure a personnel supply to fill places in the corporate structure. Priest-clerics assure the continuance and abundance of career-minded churchmen. The ordination of self-supporting laymen to sacramental functions would eventually destroy the bureaucracy. But men whose mentality and security have been formed and maintained by the system instinctively fear the ordination of persons who remain in secular employment. The diocesan chancellor, the Catholic Charities director and the pastor feel as much threatened by declericalization as the Catholic University president, the supplier of ecclesiastical finery and furnishings, and such leaders as Saul Alinsky. In different ways, all are supported by or depend upon the power and prestige of the clergy. Nevertheless, the ordination of secularly employed men may be one of the Church's great advances.

Today, some clerics begin to see that they are smothered in a



scandalous and unnecessary security combined with restrictive and unacceptable controls. A priest, well trained in theology, is assured life-long support, but it may be as an accountant, and not as a theologian, if he has been caught reading certain "suspect" foreign authors. Conversely, a Latin American bishop may send a priest for sociological studies in Europe, and then decide to create a diocesan department of research to use the new talent he has acquired.

Some priests are dissatisfied with their work, either because their freedom to do a good job is curtailed, or because they feel unprepared for the specific task assigned them. In the first instance, better job descriptions are proposed as a remedy; in the second, better education for the jobholder. Both solutions are no more than misguided palliatives. The question must be asked: should not this job be dropped from Church control, and the cleric either fired or challenged to compete for it under secular control and conditions. Of course, if we continue the present system, we are still stuck with our problem: the dissatisfied cleric.

### Training for What?

The next five years will see a proliferation of re-training programs for the clergy. The outmoded product of novitiate and seminary needs different skills and attitudes to fit into the "new" Church: a multiplying growth of specialized commissions, bureaus and secretariates. But it will be a problem selling the programs. The men themselves are beginning to say: Perhaps I need training to move into the secular world, to support myself as other men in society, to act as an adult in the world.

Dioceses and religious congregations increasingly use business consultants, whose criteria of success are taken from the American Management Association, and whose premise is that the present structure must be maintained. The resulting clergy in-service training is essentially repressive, ideologically biased and directed toward efficient church growth. Present ecclesiastical training improves a man's ability to operate a more complex machine. A retreat only serves to confirm a man's *personal*

commitment to the structure. An *adult* formation concept is needed, one which would lead men to search for the right questions. Is this structure rooted in routine or revelation? Should I, a man totally at the service of the Church, stay in the structure in order to subvert it, or leave in order to *live* the model of the future? The Church needs men seeking this kind of conscious and critical awareness, men deeply faithful to the Church, living a life of insecurity and risk, free from hierarchial control, working for the eventual "dis-establishment" of the Church from within. The very few such groups in existence today are branded as disloyal and dangerous by the clerical mentality.

A good example of such subversive education is provided by the Sister Formation Movement in the United States. This movement acts as a major factor working towards the secularization of the American Church from within. In the mid-fifties, a group of sisters set up a lobby to pressure for advanced professional education of religion. When this had been achieved, and the Brothers and Sisters returned to their communities with Ph.D.'s, they were competent to apply for academic jobs anywhere. They no longer had to rely on preferential treatment traditionally accorded in Church institutions to religious, irrespective of their talent or professional training.

Many of these trained persons become conscious of ridiculous restrictions imposed upon them and their institutions by the clerical mind and ecclesiastical control. Some saw themselves facing the necessity of leaving their communities in order to live a meaningful and relevant career. Others chose to work for the liberation of their institutions from repressive and destructive Church control. The former were branded as defectors and the latter as subversives. Finally, religious congregations began to allow their members to seek temporary or permanent employment of their own choice in the open market, while remaining members of the community. This leads to the persons themselves choosing their companions, places of residence and form of community living.

#### Pampered Submissiveness

Many superiors of religious women have recently begun to

understand the signs of the times. Suddenly they see the possibility that the era of religious congregations might be over. Bishops are not yet aware that an analogous movement is at work among the clergy. But this movement is weaker and less sophisticated, because of the retarded nature of the American clergy. For several generations they have been pampered into unquestioning submission by their middle class comfort and security.

Today, some priests believe that they might be better ministers if they worked at secular jobs, which entail real social and economic responsibility. A priest-artist, for example, questions the bishop's right to employ him as a scribe, or to suspend him if he seeks real work in Greenwich Village. This produces a double effect among the clergy. The committed man is moved to renounce his clerical privileges, thereby risking suspension, and the mediocre man is moved to clamor for more fringe benefits and less adult responsibility, thereby settling down more comfortably in his clerical security.

Seeing the evangelical and social contradictions in the bureaucracy, some courageously face the possible alternatives. I know many who desire full-time jobs in poverty programs, as community organizers, teachers, researchers, professional men. They desire to earn their living and live as celibate laymen, while exercising their ministerial functions on a part-time basis in the service of the faithful, and under the bishop's authority. They ask if the system is sensitive enough to the real society to evolve a new form of radical and personal declericalization which would entail neither suspension from orders nor dispensation from celibacy.

Of course, such radical secularization threatens the existing parochial system. It would encourage the imaginative and generous to strike out on their own and thereby leave the clerical and outdated ecclesiastical structure in the hands of those who choose security and routine. It would frighten both bureaucratic bishops and rebellious DuBays. The bishops desire more clerics, but reject any demands for employee privileges, especially the notion of unionized power. The attitudes of both the bishops and the DuBays necessarily imply the furtherance of the clerical system.

Men in secular society sometimes recognize a real hypocrisy in this system. Groups founded for social protest and revolutionary action find the clergy suspect. The former, when they act, freely risk their career for a cause to which their conscience impels them. The priest or nun who suddenly becomes aware that a real world exists and belatedly joins such actions, risks a gentle reprimand at most. Usually, the more enlightened superior is quite pleased and happy with his "courageous" subject. It is much cheaper to permit a few naive protesters than to face the frightening price of Christian institutional testimony to society.

To begin the task of giving this testimony, may we pray for an increase of priests who choose "radical" secularization? For priests who leave the Church in order to pioneer the Church of the future? For priests who, faithfully dedicated to and loving the Church, risk misunderstanding and suspension? For priests, full of hope, capable of such actions without becoming hard and embittered? For extraordinary priests, willing to live today the ordinary life of tomorrow's priest?

## B. THE SHAPE OF THE FUTURE MINISTRY

An adult layman, ordained to the ministry, will preside over the "normal" Christian community of the future. The ministry will be an exercise of leisure rather than a job. The "diaconia" will supplant the parish as the fundamental institutional unit in the Church. The periodic meeting of friends will replace the Sunday assembly of strangers. A self-supporting dentist, factory worker, professor, rather than a church-employed scribe or functionary, will preside over the meeting. The minister will be a man mature in Christian wisdom through his lifelong participation in an intimate liturgy, rather than a seminary graduate formed professionally through "theological" formulae. Marriage and the education of growing children, rather than the acceptance of celibacy as a legal condition for ordination, will confer responsible leadership on him.

I foresee the face-to-face meeting of families around a table, rather than the impersonal attendance of a crowd around an altar. Celebration will sanctify the dining room; rather than

consecrated buildings, the ceremony. This does not mean that *all* churches will be converted into theaters or real estate white elephants. For example, the Bishop of Cuernavaca believes that Latin American tradition requires the existence of the cathedral church as a kind of testimony in stone, whose beauty and majesty reflect the splendor of Christian truth.

Present pastoral structures have been largely determined by ten centuries of a clerical and celibate priesthood. In 1964, the Council took a suggestive step toward changing this pattern when it approved a married diaconate. The decree is ambiguous, since it could lead to a proliferation of second-rate clergy without making any significant change in present structures. But it can also lead to the ordination of adult, self-supporting men. The danger would be to develop a clerical church-supported diaconate, thereby delaying the necessary and inevitable secularization of the ministry.

The "ordinary" future priest, earning his living, will preside over a weekly meeting of a dozen deacons in his house. Together, they will read the Scripture, then study and comment upon the Bishop's weekly instruction. After the meeting, when it includes Mass, each deacon will take the Sacrament to his own home, where he will keep it with his crucifix and Bible. The priest will visit his various "diaconias" and preside at their occasional Mass. At times, a number of the "diaconias" will meet for a more solemn Mass in a rented hall or in a cathedral.

Freed of present executive and administrative duties, both the bishop and his priests will have time for occasional celebrations. The bishop will be able to prepare and circulate his weekly selection from the Fathers and the outline for discussion. He and his priests will together prepare the home liturgy for the "diaconias." These changes will require a different attitude toward weekly Mass obligation as well as a re-evaluation of present ritual practices of penance.

Present canon law provides for the ordination of those whose lifelong livelihood has been guaranteed by the Church, and of those whose own estate is sufficient to support them. To restrict ordination to this kind of economic independence seems anomalous, if not revolting, in today's society. Today, a man

supports himself by working at a job in the world, not by performing a role in a hierarchy. It is certainly not contrary to the purposes of canon law to consider professional ability or earned social security as sufficient sign of independence for ordination.

### A New Synthesis

The sacramental ministry of ordained laymen will open our eyes to a completely new understanding of the traditional "opposition" between pastor and layman in the Church. As we move beyond both these concepts, we shall clearly see their transitory character. The Council, summarizing a historical development of the last hundred years, attempted to define the clerical priest and the un-ordained layman in two separate documents. But the future will achieve, from the apparent antithesis, a new synthesis which transcends present categories.

The current ecclesiastical imagination is still inadequate for defining this new function — the lay priest, Sunday priest, part-time or secularized minister, ordained non-cleric. Principally, he will be the minister of sacrament and word, not the jack-of-all-trades, superficially responding to a bewildering variety of social and psychological roles. With his emergence, the Church will finally free itself from the restrictive system of benefices. More importantly, the Church will have abandoned the complex series of services which have resulted in the minister becoming an artificial appendix to established social functions. The ordained layman will make the Catholic parson pastorally superfluous.

### Urban Anomalies

The Church awakens anew in the City. Traditional pastoral analogies become anomalies in the asphalt, steel and concrete context of city life. Urban renewal and new experiences of community call for a re-look at older terminology. Kings, crowns and staffs have lost their meaning. Men are not subjects of sovereigns, and they impatiently question how they can be sheep lead by a shepherd. The Church's community-creating functions break down when supported by symbols whose driving force lies

in an authority structure. Sophisticated urban Catholics do not seek authoritative guidance for community action from a pastor. They know that social action is ecumenical and secular in motive, method and goal. The Protestant minister or the secularist professional can possess better credentials of leadership.

Theologically literate persons no longer seek moral guidance from a priest. They themselves think. Frequently, they have long ago surpassed the priest in theological formation. Parents with a good liberal education are increasingly skeptical of entrusting their children to the clerical system of "professional" catechesis. If children can be evangelized, parents see that they are called to the task, and possess the knowledge and faith to carry it out.

No thinking Catholic questions accepting the ritual which recognizes that a man has received divine power to moderate a meeting of Christians or preside over the celebration of a sacrament. But men begin to reject the claims of a pastor who, because of his ordination or consecration, feigns competency to deal with *any* problem of his heterogeneous congregation, be it the parish, the diocese or the world.

The reorganization of contemporary life frees men to accept a vocation for part-time ministerial functions. Leisure time increases with reduced working hours, early retirement and more inclusive social security benefits, making time available for the preparation and exercise of Christian ministry in a pluralistic and secular society.

It is apparent that many objections can be raised. The lay priest or deacon might wish to withdraw from the ministry, he might publicly sin, he or his wife might become divisive factors in the Christian community. Present canon law implicitly contains the solution: let him be "suspended" from his functions. Suspension must become an option for both the man and the community, not just a punishment reserved to the bishop. The ordained minister might feel called to take a controversial position on some secular matter in society, and thereby cease to be a fitting symbol of sacramental unity. He might in conscience feel that he must become a sign of contradiction, not only *to* the world, but also *in* the world. Let him or the community freely



seek suspension. The community which has recognized his charism and presented him to the bishop, can also respect his liberty of conscience and allow him to act accordingly. He himself, as minister, has no special benefits, income or status to defend. His daily life has not been determined by his priesthood. Rather, the latter has been characterized by his secular commitment.

### C. MINISTRY AND CELIBACY

Man finds it difficult to separate what habit or custom has united. The union of the clerical state, holy orders and celibacy in the life of the Church has confused the understanding of the individual realities involved, and prevented us from seeing the possibility of their separation. The clergy have stood on their socio-economic status and power, defending their exclusive right to the priesthood. We seldom see theological arguments directed against the ordained laymen, except perhaps in reference to the inadequacy of the term itself. Only Catholic clerics who wish to marry, and married Protestant ministers who fear to lose their clerical status, defend the extension of ecclesiastical social security to a married minister.

The link between celibacy and priestly orders now comes under heavy attack, in spite of authoritative statements defending it. Exegetical, pastoral and social arguments are marshalled against it. By this action, increasing numbers of priests not only deny it, but also abandon both celibacy and the ministry. The problem is admittedly complex, since two realities of faith, sacramental ministry of priesthood and the personal mystery of extraordinary renunciation, meet. Our secular language breaks down in the delicate analysis of their mutual relationships. The formulation and discussion of three separate questions may help us to see the proper distinctions, and lead us to understand the nature of the relationships involved. The choice of voluntary celibacy, the institution of religious communities and the legal prescription of a celibate priesthood must be seen separately.



### The Choice of Voluntary Celibacy

At all times in the Church, men and women have freely renounced marriage "for the sake of the kingdom." Consistent with such an action, they simply "explain" their decision as a personal realization of an intimate vocation from God. This mysterious experience of vocation must be distinguished from the discursive formulation of reasons to "justify" such a decision. To many, such arguments appear meaningless. This conclusion leads men to abandon their commitment to celibacy. The defenders of celibacy frequently interpret this action as manifesting a poor or weak faith among contemporary Catholics. On the contrary, it may just as well be evidence of the purification of their faith. Men now see through the alleged motives (sociological, psychological and mythological) for celibacy, and recognize their irrelevance to true Christian renunciation. Renunciation to marriage is not economically necessary for service to the poor, nor legally a condition for the ordained ministry, nor significantly convenient for higher studies. Persons who acted on these motives now fail to see their value and relevance. Celibacy can no longer enlist social approval in its defense.

Psychological motives formerly invoked to justify the superiority of sexual abstinence are hardly acceptable today. Many celibates now see that they initially refused marriage because they were repelled, afraid, unprepared or not attracted. Now they choose marriage, either because of a more mature understanding of themselves, or to prove their original feelings wrong. They no longer see themselves as heroes to their parents, because they are "faithful," nor as pariahs, because they "defect."

Comparative studies in religion reveal many "reasons" for sexual renunciation throughout human history. These may be reduced to ascetical, magical, and mystical motives. Oftentimes they are "religious," but hardly related to the Christian faith. The ascetic renounces marriage for freedom to pray; the magician to "save" a Chinese baby through his sacrifice; the mystic, to seek exclusive bridal intimacy with "the All." Contemporary man knows that sexual renunciation does not make prayer more

intimate, love more ardent, or graces received more abundant.

Today, the Christian who renounces marriage and children for the kingdom's sake seeks no abstract or concrete *reason* for his decision. His choice is pure risk in faith, the result of the intimate and mysterious experience of his heart. He chooses to live *now* the absolute poverty every Christian hopes to experience at the hour of death. His life does not *prove* God's transcendence; rather, his whole being expresses faith in it. His decision to renounce a spouse is as intimate and incommunicable as another's decision to prefer his spouse over all others.

### The Institution of Religious Life

The Church has evolved two devices to control an evangelical charism: the social and juridical organization of religious communities, and the ritual celebration of vows. Religious orders provide a community structure within which the member is supposed to deepen his baptismal commitment to sanctity, and make himself available for the manpower pool controlled by his superior. This captive personnel force enabled the religious congregations to conduct benevolent and business enterprises. Now it appears that these institutional works will disappear even faster than parish, diocesan and curial structures, as more and more members leave to fulfill their vocation in the open job market.

Christians desiring to live evangelical celibacy see fewer reasons for joining the established, juridical communities (even secular institutes), but they do recognize the necessity to band together with others of like mind, temporarily or permanently, to seek mutual support in their common and difficult spiritual adventure. Those established religious communities which remain in existence will retain houses of intensive prayer, available as retreat houses, spiritual training centers, monasteries or deserts. To arrive at this kind of Christian poverty and witness, the congregations legislate their impending demise by approving shortened skirts, changing prayer schedules and experimenting in social action. Perhaps this legislative sniping at superficialities will serve to diminish the pain of those in the

dying structure, easing their stay to the bitter end.

As the traditionally accepted reasons for maintaining the present juridical communities evaporate, other means of making a life-long vow will be explored. The Church has traditionally accepted the possibility of the private vow. Less and less shall we see this in exclusively legal terms. As living a vow moves from clerical structures to a life of renunciation in the secular world, it seems more appropriate to signify the joyful acceptance of this kind of commitment through a liturgical celebration of a mystical fact, and not through a juridical act creating legal obligations. The Church moves in this direction as vows become less public, solemn and binding. Today, any religious receives his dispensation when he states that he does not intend to keep his vow. Formerly, vows were treated as public renunciations of rights; now they seem more like public statements of conditional intentions. The religious makes much ado of the fact that he is not married, and that he will not marry, unless, of course, he changes his mind. We move from a religious "state" to a religious "stage." This confusion and pharisaic legalism is a sorry testimony to the world.

The celebration of a vow should be a rite established by the Church, publicly testifying to belief in the authenticity of a particular Christian vocation and charism. Only exceptional persons, after many years of living their renunciation in secular life, should be admitted to such a liturgical celebration. The Church thereby publicly manifests its willingness to entrust the testimony of a mystery to the fidelity of these new "monks." Only then shall we return to the real and close analogy between Christian marriage and renunciation: both sacraments will celebrate the Christian's full awareness of the depth and totality of a commitment he has established and lived in the real society of men.

### Priesthood and Celibacy

A large segment of the thinking Church questions the tie between celibacy and the priesthood. The Pope insists on their connection. Neither doctrine nor tradition give definitive support

to his position. I believe that the emergence of a new pastoral Church depends largely on compliance with his directive during our generation. His position helps assure the speedy death of the clergy.

To counteract the trends of declining vocations and clerical drop-outs, many solutions are proposed: married clergy, sisters and laymen in pastoral tasks, brighter appeals in vocation campaigns, worldwide distribution of existing clergy. All are simply so many pusillanimous attempts to rejuvenate a dying structure.

During our generation, at least, there is no need to consider the ordination of married men to the priesthood. We have more than enough unmarried ones. Ordaining married priests would slow up any real pastoral reform. But there is a second, and more delicate, reason for this decision. Thousands of priests now reject celibacy, and present the painful spectacle of men trained for sexual abstinence groping belatedly into big-risk marriage. The Church dispenses them secretly, arbitrarily and awkwardly. They are forbidden further exercise of their orders. Having chosen marriage, they could still exercise priestly functions, but they would cease to be models, except perhaps to others like themselves.

The real need here is to clarify and liberalize the process by which the Church allows a priest to marry. Further, all must see that the good of the Church requires the "ex-priest" to abandon both clerical security and ministerial function. This is as difficult for the priest who "wants out" without accepting the concomitant consequences, as it is for the bishop who wants to "hang on" to his priest at all costs. The clerical mass exodus will only last as long as the present clerical system exists. During this time, ordination of married men would be a sad mistake. The resulting confusion would only delay needed radical reforms.

The one institution which has no future in the Church and which is at the same time most impervious to any radical reform, today loses an increasing number of its men due to the legislation of celibacy. The overall seriousness of the seminary crisis, of itself, forces us to probe much more deeply into the entire question of ministerial education in the Church.

#### D. SACRAMENTAL MINISTRY AND THEOLOGICAL EDUCATION

Since Trent, the Church has insisted on forming and educating its ministers in its own professional academies. It was hoped that this process would continue through the minister's personal initiative, within his structured and clerical life. The Church trained its ministers for a life it rigidly controlled. But the further recruitment of young and generous men in order to shape them in the mold of clerical life as it is still described by the Vatican Council will soon border on the immoral. At the moment it seems highly irresponsible to continue the preparation of men for a disappearing profession.

This does not mean that Christian ministry will require less intellectual formation. But this latter can develop only on the condition of a better and more general Christian education. The problem here is that this term has become confusingly all-inclusive and thereby lost its precise meaning. It must be redefined. Personal maturity, theological precision, contemplative prayer and heroic charity are not specifically Christian. Atheists can be mature; non-Catholics, theologically precise; Buddhists, mystics, and pagans heroically generous. The *specific* result of Christian education is the *sensus ecclesiae*, "the sense of the Church." The man joined to this is rooted in the living authority of the Church, lives the imaginative inventiveness of the faith, and expresses himself in terms of the gifts of the Spirit.

This "sense" is the result of reading the sources of authentic Christian tradition, of participation in the prayerful celebration of the liturgy, of a distinct way of life. It is the fruit of experiencing Christ and the measure of prayer's real depth. It follows upon penetration of the faith's content through the light of intelligence and the force of will. When choosing an adult for the diaconate or priesthood, we shall look for this "sense" in him, rather than accept theology credits or time spent in retreat from the world. We shall not look for professional competence to teach the public, but prophetic humility to moderate a Christian group.

I assume that weekly preparation through readings for liturgical celebration is a better formation for the exercise of ministry than specialization in theological studies. In saying this, I do not intend to underrate the importance of rigorous theological study. I only want to put it in its proper place. Ultimately, the function of theology is to clarify a contemporary statement, or verify its fidelity to revealed truth. The contemporary expression of revealed truth is only the result of the Church's faith. The function of theological science, therefore, is analogous to that of literary criticism. The *lectio divina* is akin to the savoring of literature itself. Theology verifies our fidelity; spiritual reading nourishes our faith. As the social sciences become more complex and specialized in response to the problems of technological society, so the fidelity of the Christian community increasingly depends on its competence to express the faith in a language new to the Christian, who lives in a situation never before interpreted in the light of the Gospel. The Church will grow in the childlike simplicity of its faith and in the intellectual depth of its theology.

Nearly all of what is now considered theological science will pass out of the exclusive competence of the Church. Already, most of the subjects of the seminary curriculum are competently taught in secular universities by men of all faiths. With the closing of the seminary, the omni-competent theological generalist will disappear. The study of theology will become oriented toward specialized research and teaching, rather than toward all-round professional performance. Christian professors who possess this "sense" of the Church will orient students toward a Biblical and ecclesial unity in their studies, a task never really accomplished by ecclesiastical curriculums.

Theological study will also become more widespread. The Christian college graduate, desiring to participate more actively in his weekly small group liturgy, will seek intellectual analysis in systematic theological reading and studies. He will have the time to do so because of the increase of leisure time in our society. Those who will have combined the asceticism leading to sexual renunciation with their years of study and liturgical participation will be uniquely fitted for the episcopacy. The

Christian community will not hesitate or err in recognizing their charism.

Increasingly, the Church's teaching function will cease expressing itself in pastoral letters condemning abortion, and encyclicals advocating social justice. The Church will discover new faith and power in the revealed word. It will teach through a living and intimate liturgy centered around this word. Small Christian communities will be nourished in its joyful celebration.

The Spirit, continually re-creating the Church, can be trusted. Creatively present in each Christian celebration, He makes men conscious of the kingdom which lives in them. Whether composed of a few persons around the deacon, or of the Church's integral presence around the bishop, the Christian celebration renews the *whole* Church, the whole of humanity. The Church will clearly manifest the Christian faith as the progressively joyful revelation of love's *personal* meaning, the same love which all men celebrate.



## **Mission and Midwifery**

### **Part I:**

### **Missionary Formation Based on Missiology**

#### **The Object of Missiology**

The missionary is called to the contemplation of God's mysteries as He reveals them in the history of His Church. He studies the growth of the Church into the time-space of human existence and the process through which the Word becomes historical part of man's languages and only thus becomes the gratuitous gift of God suited to ever new peoples.

Missiology is the theology of church development. It is the science which tries to illuminate the dynamics of the sacrament of salvation; the sacramental character of revelation which manifests itself in the history of the Church; the global divine liturgy.

Missiology studies the encounter of a community with the Word of God. Its object is God's calling to a people and that people's communitary answer to the Word, its acceptance. Missiology therefore is a theological social science and its focus is the process in which revelation is appropriated anew in the public, and therefore liturgically-expressed, act of faith of a new tribe within the people of God. God can speak to man only through signs in which His Word becomes meaningful to men in their language. Thus revelation is sacramental and Christ is the ultimate sacrament of God. Incarnation is the message of God to men, the Word of God become a Jew, the Word of God as member of a people. The Church is this same message carried by ever new messengers into ever new languages and communities. The mission of the Church is the social continuation of the Incarnation and Missiology its study. Mission is a social process, the process of Christian community development, the social dawning of the mystery. Mission is the growth of the One Church but also the growth of the humanly ever new Church. Mission is the social flowering of the Word into an ever changing present.

Theological missiology is the science about the Word of God as the Church in her becoming; the Word as the Church in her borderline situations; the Church as a surprise and puzzle; the Church in her growth; the Church when her historical appearance is so new that she has to strain herself to recognize her past in the mirror of the present; the Church where she is pregnant of new revelations for a people in which she dawns.

The Church as a social reality has limits through which she distinguishes herself from a world in which she is, or into which she grows without ever being of it. Mission starts where the world begins to perceive these limits and begins to perceive that the Church reveals to it a new and never suspected dimension of borderlines, as through Paul on the Aereopages. Mission begins with the social awakening to the transcendency of the Church, and therefore the transcendence of the Word.

The common refusal of the Athenians is the best possible proof that Paul spoke in their language (and therefore as a missionary) in rigorous faithfulness to the Gospel (and therefore as an apostle).

Conversion implies the discovery that revelation of the living God can be relevant to our universe of concepts, if we are willing to blast this universe open in a new dimension. The discovery that God wants to renew and open the conceptual frameworks of man; that the God of Israel Who became a Jew can be mentioned in the rhythm of the tom-tom as well as in the logical tools of Einstein. The discovery of ever new words in which the Word can be said is ever a joyful discovery anew, as much for the neophyte as for his Mother the Church. Since this profound, unique and continued newness of the Gospel constitutes the light under which Missiology studies the social encounter of Man and God, we have to understand it precisely.

For many reasons we can say that the Church is ever new; ever new people and ever new communities belong to her fold: every one of its members daily grows; every day the people of God renew their faith in the renewal of the mysteries of God. All this newness is implied but is not specifically focused on by Missiology. Its perception should be presupposed in a trainee for missionary assignment.

Missiology studies the growth of the Church into new peoples, the birth of the Church beyond its social boundaries; beyond the linguistic barriers within which she feels at home; beyond the poetical images in which she taught her children. The Church is led to marvel about the ever new images in which her venerable knowledge can become meaningful for the first time, just as ever new worlds are led to marvel about the new levels of meaning their traditional images can convey.

Grateful and surprised, the Church took from the Germans the celebration of Christmas and from the Aztecs dances to the glory of God. Dante lets Aristotle and Plato, yea, even Virgil, marvel about never suspected divine depths into which their conceptual tools could lead.

Missiology therefore is the study of the Church as surprise, the Church as divinely inspired contemporary poetry; the developing of human society into a divine bud which will flower in eternity.

Preparation for the study of missiology therefore implies increased receptivity for the poetic, the historical, and the social aspects of reality.

### The Two Approaches of Missiology

Whenever God spoke sacramentally, i.e., visibly, He spoke to His people. If He spoke to one, He did so always for the others. The object of Missiology is the encounter of Word and People.

This encounter we can analyze starting from the Word of God or from the reaction of the people. In this encounter nothing changes in the Word; the people of God, as distinct from the people of the world, exist only because of the Word. Whoever studies this process can therefore do it in two ways; he can do it as a theologian or as a social scientist. He can study the process of propagation of Revelation or the social consequences of this continued Revelation in the institutions of the world.

Missionary revelation is epiphany renewed in a darkness into which the Light had not penetrated, or in which the Light had not as yet been received; a gratuitous gift through the Church, and therefore object for theological study only.

This epiphany is impossible without deep social change, and

this social change must be analyzed and conceptualized before it can be interpreted by the theologian and so enrich his understanding of Revelation. What happened to the words and the customs and the images and the gods of a people before they were able to receive the light of the Word must be known before we can fully grasp what new riches have been added to the total understanding of the Word by the incorporation of a new people into the Church. This is the task of the social sciences and the humanities in the study of missiology.

The Church's experiential knowledge about its catholicity stems from its surprising discovery of the newness with which ever new peoples and epochs and individuals can reject or grasp the ever one Gospel.

### The First Approach: "The Church in the Eyes of the World"

#### Ikon and Idol

Father Alejandro Del Corro has lived so long among those who are marginal to the processes of education and production in Latin America, even though they live side by side with others involved in these processes, that he has learned to speak the language of the castouts. In every course he gives a number of lectures to our neo-missioners. After one of these a group of Sisters came to see me; they were in great distress. "Father Del Corro told us that we should not speak about God to his people; he begged us not to bother them with our God; he told us that 'our God' could not be theirs . . . ."

What had Del Corro meant? When we speak about God, we speak about Him in words; we communicate what we believe about Him with facial expressions and gestures. All these signs depict images for us, and behind these images again stand concepts. We could also say that we usually communicate our faith about God by describing to our listeners the images we have made of Him; visual, verbal or conceptual. We believe our signs to convey to other persons the meaning we give them, because we are used to associating only with persons who think and feel and speak as we do. Often it comes as a shock to us when we find out

what others understand, from what we tell them, even about God.

When speaking about God we assume that our words and images are ikons, simple representations, of a reality which is evidently other than the sign we use. Only when others take our images of God to be idols, pictures of a reality which in them, somehow, finds a true expression of its nature, only then do we become aware how deeply our own faith has become idolatrous; how much it has to be purified, in the sense of St. John of the Cross, before it can be a source of missionary preaching. Good ikons are the end product of the conversion of people. When used for those who did not paint them with their blood and history, they usually become idols. Missiology can and must set in motion a process of purification of the concept of God for the neo-missioner. Today the use of social science can be a significant tool to get the mature Christian to reflect on the value he gives to the system of symbols within which he lives his consecrated life of prayer, profession of the faith, and building of the Church.

#### The Missioner confronts Public Opinion with Ecclesiastic Faith.

The Church can discover hidden truth about herself in the mirror of public opinion. The first image of the crucified God has the head of a donkey. It meant mockery but uncovers a truth: the frustrating non-sense of a redemption wasted for so many is hidden equally by the sweet Jesus and the tormented corpse of traditional hagiography.

The caricature of a Marx or a Kinsey or a Conant might be neither more sophisticated nor more pleasant than that first Roman graphite, nor less revealing. The social scientist in many ways is the caricaturist of our century, the professional jester to hold the mirror to communities who take themselves too seriously. The Church is for good reasons a fascinating subject for research, and that research from without is often the most valuable trail for a newcomer within (as the missioner is) to come to grips with the social reactions to the Church.

Since the Church is to be a sign lifted up among nations, it

needs to be a social sign; its witness must be given in face of public opinion. Through the sign of the Church, public opinion is confronted with a witness to reality which is not of this world. Facing the Church, public opinion is confounded with transcendental faith as witnessed by a community.

### The Church as a Group among Others.

Anthropologists and sociologists are developing conceptual instruments which allow us to analyze any group with new vigor: How could the Mystical Body of Christ escape such analysis, or try to escape it? Role, status, function, community versus society, self-image versus expectation; public opinion and social pressure; movement and organization; institutionalization and charismatic leadership: these are concepts which a theologian of past times hardly had to take into account. Today it would be folly to try to think of the Church and its growth without reference to these aspects which relate it to any society or community.

The changing image of the priest, and its projections into the dreams and plans of a social group during rapid industrialization, is reflected in the frustration of our clergy in many parts of America. The interdependency of changing image and frustrated lives becomes subject for analysis and rationalization. The concepts mentioned above are necessarily applied to this analysis, and questions are formulated which are substantially new about the Church itself and about the Church in a new surrounding. With these characteristics such concepts must be called "missionary" in the sense explained above.

What ties a function to a given state? Which are those Christian functions which need be, must be, or cannot be exercised by the same subject? Are priestly functions tied to the clerical state? This question is today just as revolutionary as the analogous question was before Pius XII published *Provida Mater Ecclesia*. Is the public consecration to God through the three vows tied to the religious state?

Just because we would be opposed to a married clergy, does this mean that we have to be opposed to the ordination to the

Priesthood of married men? These theoretical questions become burning pastoral issues. Only if they are rigorously formulated, both from a sociological and a theological point of view, do they become questions to which an answer can at least be sought. How else could we discuss the assertion of a Latin American Bishop: "I refuse a married clergy. I would love to dispense some of my priests from their celibacy, but automatically would forbid them ever again to function as priests. But by all means I need to ordain many of my older married men to the priesthood; let them be good priests, good husbands and good professionals at the same time."

Another Latin American Bishop: "The priests we have today are all ordained ex-seminarians and most have conserved the mentality of the seminary. That's after all why the Rector ran the seminary." All of them, with the right to a wife, have renounced the need to earn a living and acquired the privilege that every Christian recognizes in his separate and superior social status. In the world of today, in which Competence gives a Right to Function, in which knowledge gives a right to work, in such a world our people ever more must reject the idea that a clerical ("separate", "unworldly") stand or status gives the privilege for the exercise of functions.

If the Church is ever to become relevant to the industrialized world which is developing in Latin America, the neo-missioner cannot help but be faced by such questions. If they throw him into panic, or compel him categorically to deny their importance, he will become an impediment to "mission" rather than its instrument.

God told us that he had founded a society. What this means, we have to learn from two sources: from our observation of human society and from the contrast of this human society with that which God has described. As in every other aspect of the Gospel, Christ came to complete not to destroy. Therefore the Church is a society, a family, a community like any other but more so, deeper, in a special new way. In her knowledge about herself, the Church had to apply to herself the current and contemporary concept of society. Various such concepts have existed side by side since apostolic times: Jewish, Greek and



Roman interpretations of the idea that God had a people on earth were not fully the same. It could be argued that the difference in the basic concept of what the Church as a community and as a society has to be led to the separation between the Orient and the Occident, between medieval and reformed Christendom. It could equally be argued that one of the major obstacles for the acceptance of the Church by Indian and Chinese was their totally different idea of society. Had the Church re-thought the Kingdom in terms of Confucius, what unsuspected depth might ecclesiology have reached in our times.

Since the incorporation of new concepts into the Church happens through the missionary through whom gospel-concepts are transmitted to a new world, he needs a clear understanding of societal structure. He needs a great freedom from his own, inherited social system, because necessarily it is in terms of this system that he at least partially interprets the Kingdom of God. Only with this freedom will he be able in word and action to "translate the Church" into other languages. What sense could a young member of a popular democracy in the East make out of the Church "as a perfect society," if this were explained to him in the terms of most textbooks we have?

#### The Church, a Power among Powers.

Just as anthropologists try to understand the Church as a social grouping, so political scientists are fascinated by her social power, her function as a pressure group, as the source of ideologies and as means for the transmission of ideas and culture. We must lead the neo-missionary to go after every scrap of evidence that his people and his church have been seriously studied by the political scientist; this will lead him to significant questions.

Will Herberg has tried to show that in the USA the Catholic Church has a significant function in the Americanization of immigrants. Once it becomes irreputable for an immigrant group to seek security in the identification with a national minority, identification with a religious one can render an analogous service. Is this spiritual use of the Church permissible? May the Church, consequently, be forced to make acceptance of the American ethos a condition for the Puerto Rican to become a

living member of its parishes? May the Church demand middle-class behavior from a proletariat which either seeks class-consciousness (as, say France and Austria) or a classless society, as in the Socialist countries of the East?

Very often the theologian reaches the distinction between those aspects of the Church which are essential for it to be a community of salvation, and those which characterize it as a pressure group, only after he has dispassionately studied the analysis of the political scientists. Why not lead our neo-missioners to develop the habit of asking for a mirror, which the behavioral sciences can offer to him? Why let him avoid the mirror as soon as he suspects it is lurking behind a corner, or allow him to mask it, or train him to look away from it? We cannot avoid moving toward a self-conscious society. Why not train our future leaders for it rather than bring them up afraid to see their own reflection?

No doubt the Hispanization of the new world is the reason for its Christianization. The church of Latin America was the main outpost of Spanish culture, just as in Poland or Croatia she was the main defense against Russian or Serbian victory, or as in Ireland she was the main crutch for the achievement of independence. But we must ask in which measure is the maintenance of a Spanish social structure or of Croatian folklore and language related to the task of the missionary to foster the development of Christian community. When does the moment arrive when the Church may, or must, stop being the protector of a people's language, social order, class, or legal system?

What should we say to the "findings" or caricatures presented by the political scientist that the Church in Colombia is the principal tool for the maintenance of an Hispanic-aristocratic model of society, or that the French orientation of the Church in West Africa is one of the major obstacles to the development of truly national cultures?

#### The Church as One of Many Ideological Movements in a Society.

The social psychologist succeeds ever more in presenting the Church to us as a possible answer to the emotional needs of a

people. Especially as happens in most mission areas where a process of rapid social change has set in, the few who change fast look back with condescension on the many who stay behind, in whom they see their own past. Becoming free from the past often means becoming free from the shackles of moral superstitions and from the need for the emotional satisfaction of ritual customs.

A missionary who is not aware of these tendencies can not share concern for them with his people. Let us take as an example the present situation in the industrializing areas of South America.

For many here the Church is rapidly becoming the symbol of resistance to social change. Christian doctrine is used by some as a platform for anti-socialist agitation and by others as justification for the defense of inherited privilege. In the recent Brazilian counter-revolution the Gospel was used by clerical and secular politicians alike to justify opposition to change. Christian tradition was pitted against socialization; the violence needed to enter the kingdom of Heaven was used to justify imprisonment, and the need to separate the good and the bad on the day of judgment served as a justification to strip opponents of their civil rights.

Not only privilege and money are threatened by social change. Cherished customs and traditions cannot withstand the progressive trend toward urbanization and technological improvement. Traffic makes processions impossible just as increased productivity makes impossible the intimacy and simplicity of traditional family life. The simple village priest and the peasant woman are no less threatened by the loss of securities and the amenities of life than the rich landowner. Together they are tempted to use the Church's traditions as a supernatural argument to unite people in opposing change. Rather than leading its people to follow a life meaningful for the future, the Church thus can become an escape for those who want to stay forever in the past.

So the Church can become a bastion against "threatening" change; a preserve of popular deities; a seeming defense for the individual to protect his being expelled from his own childhood. The Church is thus tempted to ride on the frantic need for folklore desperately felt by a people faced with socio-cultural change.

Just as local custom is threatened by the birth of a society in which radio and TV and trucks establish national dimensions, so small nationalities are threatened even in their political survival by this trend. Again the Church might be a last resort to defend political independence.

In 1960 the party wishing independence of Puerto Rico from the U.S. gave enthusiastic support to three U.S. bishops, one of whom had been their main target for several years as a defender of the incorporation of Puerto Rico into the United States as a state. This support was due to the bishops' opposition to the existing government. It was taken by the bishops as a sign of the Catholic spirit of their people. This example illustrates the confusion of which we speak.

Those who wish to use the Church to defend economic privilege, cultural tradition, or national independence represent a profound temptation to the Church. Especially if he comes from without and therefore lacks the common feeling of the native, the priest finds it only too attractive to put himself and his Church behind any one of these movements, because in the short run the Church never loses in being at the service of a minority group, be they Irish immigrants in New York, Peruvian landowners, or the devout clients of a particular picture of Our Lady.

In the long run, however, identification with a group in process of being marginalized by the dynamics of social change always means marginalization of the Church. Identification of the Church by its priests with the psychological needs of individuals has always meant destruction of the church from within.

Li Wei Han is a Chinese theoretician of political struggle. His pamphlet to the Cuban Communist Party has achieved some notoriety in advising his colleagues how to do away with the Church. His advice culminates in the sentence: "When you will have reached the point at which the Catholics will look at their religious obligations as individual accomplishments, then you know that you have done away with the Church."

In Latin America there is a tendency to look upon certain foreign priests as men who follow Li Wei Han's advice: they make the financing of a factory a community enterprise, and they

build the plant so as to teach individual Catholic children how to get ahead of others in their civic life, and yet strictly individually remain faithful to their "religious obligations." Here is the root for one of the major objections to the establishment of Catholic school systems in Latin America. It is often claimed that the principal motive for a Latin American parent to send his child to a Catholic school is not religious; all the parent wants is to use religion (and the cheap services of the brilliantly-trained foreign Religious) to help his child get away from his past, to get away from his community, and to learn to identify with those who in the past could afford private education (that means the rich) and to be able to be on good terms with those who now maintain world dominance (the Americans, represented by the Religious).

Whether or not these objections are justified is not so much the point for the neo-missioner as his ability to understand them and to sympathize with the souls from which they spring.

The Second Approach:  
"The Church in the Eyes  
of Christian Communities"

As we have seen, the Church learns about itself by seeing itself in the mirror of public opinion, in the microscope of the social sciences. Even more the Church can learn about herself (and her essence) by seeing herself in the faith of Christian Communities. Through the eyes of the world the Church recognizes that she is doubtful, disreputable, shabby; in the eyes of the faithful, that she is a mystery.

In the eyes of an ever-changing world the Church discovers her doubtfulness from an ever new angle; in the eyes of the ever new faithful the Church discovers constantly new depth in her mystery.

Every structure of this world which the Church challenges to a reaction develops its own problems in front of her. Every people that comes to the Church wrests from the one Church a new and never-before-seen aspect of her mystery to which it gives a new expression of her testimony. The scientific study of the image which the Church projects leads us to recognize that the

Church's inconsistency with the world is universal. The technological study of the expressions which various Christian Communities give to their faith in revelation leads us to recognize the truly 'Catholic' range of the modes in which faith is possible.

Every new language in which faith becomes a reality adds to the depth and complexity of the Church's faith. Every new ideology which leads men to the faith enriches the universal church with new concepts and symbols through which witness can be given to revealed truth.

The discovery of the Church in the faith of ever new communities leads to contemplation of the historical life of the Word of God in the ever new, unique reality that is the World. This discovery is the interpretation of history as that cloth from which the Church is woven to be the banner of Christ; the banner which is always on the loom of today and always waves above the present. Even though its threads lead back to all the languages which have interwoven themselves into the poetry of any particular people, the banner woven from them is always the one true Church.

## Mission and Midwifery

### Part II:

### Selection and Formation of the Missioner

#### Missionary Adoption

In imitation of Christ the missioner seeks to become an adopted child. His relationship to his new people is that of Jesus to the Jews through Joseph insofar as this relationship is distinct from his relationship to the Jews and the human race through Mary.

His belonging to the community into which he is sent remains precarious and dependent on the arbitrary goodwill of others. Forever he remains a man who is tolerated, a guest, marked by the strangeness of his birth. Forever he remains an adopted brother; if he is a priest and called "father," forever he will remain conscious that other men's children select him as their father.

If we want to send a man into this situation, we must first help him to grow deep roots into his faith which will allow him later to renounce freely the legal claim to membership in a community which might (if it was founded by him, the missioner) owe its existence to his presence. His acceptance by his new people must for him consistently remain both a grace and a gift which he cannot earn but of which he must prove himself worthy. He will be forever tempted by illusions; either to think himself a native or to think himself once and for all sufficiently adapted. The first would be an illusion because one can go native (with all the odium this implies in this uniquely English expression) but never repeat one's physical birth. The second would be an illusion, because the process of psychological rebirth out of love into a new people knows no limits, and cannot be accomplished before the hour of death.

Through and in this psychological tension the missioner is a sign and sacrament of the Church: *In This World, Yet Not of It And, Unfortunately, as Yet Not Completely Either of The Two.*



### Missionary Miscarriages

Not everybody has what it takes to accept a missionary vocation, be he a layman, priest or sister. Some should be discouraged from seeking missionary service, either once and for all, or at least at the present moment of their lives.

There are deserters of home and country who cannot endure their heritage and their mother tongue and their mother-church and cannot or do not want to accept responsibility for either. Foreign language becomes for them an excuse for not assimilating their own, and foreign culture a screen behind which they can shield themselves from shaping the culture into which they were born. Mission becomes a temptation for them to put a holy label onto psychological escapism and it is the task of the missionary educator to help them find this out.

There is a special type of weakness which compensates for lack of security and self-reliance by adopting an aggressive nationalism. Mission for such men can become an export-import undertaking of what is good for us at home. The step is very short from the apostle who gives witness to the Church by telling "the wondrous things God has done in Israel" to the other who tries to sell overseas "what has worked so well at home." The first highlights that even in as corrupt a world as that from which he comes, God's grace won out. The second is tempted forever to prove to others that his native people were bright or good or sensible enough to accept the Church and make it flourish through their own works and that this is a reason for others as well to turn to the Church. It is a delicate task indeed for the mission educator to have the neo-missioner discover the dispensations of divine grace behind the humanly successful Church he felt he had to make known to others.

The love of adventure can certainly be used by God with more impunity than by vocational directors to attract men to his service. Patient education and counseling will have to assist a generosity fired by sensuous dreams of a jungle or martyrdom or of growing a beard to grow into selfless virtue.

More than ever before in history (with the exception of the time of the crusades), God's ability to awaken true missionary

yearnings in our youths seems to be hampered today by organized promotion of apostolic tourism. Calculating publicity experts try to create mass interest in the joys and satisfactions of missionary assignment and, at least in the United States, point out the relative comfort, security, home leave and short contract in this specialized branch of ecclesiastic service. The mission-educator will have to help the neo-missionary to see through this advertising without thereby hurting the reputation or estimation of those who put it out.

There is finally the ecclesiastic conquistador of modern times in his many types and shadings. There is one who wants to "save more souls" or who derives satisfaction from heaping up baptisms at a rate undreamt of at home; not to mention the Sister who wished to help as many natives and savages to the fruition of civilized living standards which she hopes will open their hearts to the blessings of Christianity. A theologically correct understanding of mission, as the activity through which Christ becomes socially contemporary in each culture through the Church which is His sacrament, will often lead to an unmasking of these erroneous or superficial yearnings.

The conquistador might be equally plagued by a compulsion to bring the blessings of his country to ever new areas of the world, to use the Church and her influence among people in Latin America who respect her, to make the USA more loved or respected. "How can I, an American, be taken seriously as a missionary when people do not know and respect Americans?" is a question in the mind of many.

Particularly dangerous for the faith and the souls of a people is the missionary who consciously introduces the songs and stories and folklore which developed in his home-country around the faith as a means to bring a foreign people to the Gospel. Instead of helping people develop their own translation of the Gospel reflecting their own culture and folk ways the missionary through his preaching alienates them from their roots.

It is important for this reason that neo-missioners begin to grasp fundamental mythology: the science which studies the ways heroes and symbols grow into gods. He must do so to understand that one people's valid representations of the true

God (ikons) can easily become another people's idols, or representations of the psychological experience of sham-gods.

### The Missioner as "Ersatz"

The missioner is sent not only to sow but to plow. We must prepare him to accept exile as his home. Freely he could choose exile; by tolerance of others he will be at home in their house. If he wants to remain truly a technical assistant in the building of an ever new Church, he will have to remain "the foreigner with us." As soon as he can take roots, as soon as the sower becomes farmer and harvests, he is substitute for one who has not yet been produced by the earth he is plowing; for one whom the community he is building yearns to come from its own womb. He harvests on another's field. Loyalty asks from him to remain a substitute. It would be proof of his loyal and selfless service if his community could tell him at the end of a life-time, "We owe it to you that your successor is not only as good as you but also one born among us."

The missioner renounces family life in a new dimension transcending that of celibacy in a certain way. He who has renounced the right to engender his own children may still be called by God to be the human fulfillment of a community's felt need for a pastor. In that particular order of self-realization as the son of a community chosen by it to preside over its sacramental encounter, he can find permanent definite self-fulfillment. This fulfillment is denied to the missioner; the community's human and cultural yearnings for a man to preside the agape must tend beyond the man who introduced them to its mystery; it must tend to the native son in that place. The missioner might be tempted during a lifetime to take by force and psychological trick what he had renounced the day he accepted his missionary assignment.

This problem can become acute especially in countries of Latin America where the Church is strongly experienced as a universal mother and where today its people are urged to adopt foreign fathers. Our people feel about the Church what they say about the Virgin because they cannot see it in the Church. Close

connections seem to exist between our people's devotion for Our Lady as the spokesman of the Church in heaven and their priests as the representatives of the Church on earth. Here, in a country built by priests, where many priests have been traditionally foreigners from Spain, and others shot as the heroes of independence, the neo-missioner must learn to discover his own reactions to being a priest: he cannot become a native priest; he will not be able to be a Sahagun or Cante or Zumaraga, because their time, the time of mission and conquest, is over; and he most probably wants to set himself apart from former Spanish priests and, most probably, from the native clergy because he feels that he would not be needed if they were what they and he should be.

Education of the neo-missioner to the integration into the clergy as a foreigner and *ersatz* is probably the major task of mission education. It is rendered doubly difficult in thoroughly Catholic Latin America where even the traditional notions of "mission" do not apply to him.

We have seen above that the missionary is called to be substitute, to refuse to become the human fulfillment of the community he creates, to keep its desire alive and growing to get one of its own to fulfill his present functions. Often all pressure from home runs counter to this, his evident destiny. The editor of the journal which collects money for his mission wants proof that he is "accepted." His people want him to build and to erect monuments for posterity and in these he can easily see himself reflected as the man through whom his community reached its self-fulfillment.

Yet with every building he builds with foreign money, his function as technical assistant is impaired; his function as foreign, imperialist paternalist is fulfilled.

Here is the task of mission education: to lead the neo-missioner to want ever more to become occasion of other people finding their way to Christ, building their roads to him, led by their own people in the direction they choose.

#### Mission as the Generation of Local Church

Mission is the opening of ever new languages toward the living

God of Revelation. Mission is the collaboration of the universal Church with a new people in the creation of a new language in which faith may find expression. Until "theos" could mean "Jahwe" there was no way in the Greek language to express the living God. Before "charis" meant a disposition of the God, the sending of His Son could not be understood in Greek. And perhaps, before St. Methodios translated the same word into Slavonic as "blagodate," there could be no thought of Russian Spirituality.

Mission is the spawning of local church from the Universal Church. Local church is community built through faith in a common symbol. Mission is the transformation of signs (words, gestures) which traditionally meant worldly reality into representations of revealed meaning.

For the Church to be present in any given place, not only must several Christian persons be together, but they must be together for Christ's sake and conscious of their togetherness. This consciousness of togetherness for Christ's sake can only be achieved through experience, through the use together of identical symbols (words, gestures, architecture or music). The common symbol makes togetherness for Christ's sake an experience; it is the generating force of local community and church.

Local Church must be rooted in temporal community for the Church to be truly in this world. It is not enough for a group of Christians to meet in Peking for the Church to have become Chinese. The Christians who meet in Peking must be aware simultaneously of their being Christian and Chinese, of their belonging to each other because they are "of Christ and of China," for the Church to have accomplished the first step of its mission.

This simultaneous consciousness can be obtained only if the sign used to express faith is both truly representative of revealed meaning and truly meaningful within the culture to which it belongs as a sign. As long as the symbol used to express the faith of a community is entirely foreign to the world within which it is being used, we are dealing with a celebration of "the Church" but not with "a" Church, a new community in the Catholic universe.

As soon as a set of signs and sentences, born outside the Church, become capable of meaning the Gospel, we can speak of a rooting of the Church in a new people. The Church becomes a Sacrament of Christ in a new milieu as soon as members of this milieu can find both Christ and solidarity with their non-believing brothers in a prayer of their own language. This moment might precede the juridical "establishment" of the Church or it might lag behind it.

Mission is the social incorporation of the Word of God transmitted by the Church in the language and culture of a people. Mission is the foundation of the Church in the culture and yearning, the dreams and the senses of a people. Mission is the dawning of the Church in the darkness of a language in which words have never so far meant the light of Christ. Architecture, poems and folklore which aim to mean the Gospel are fruit of Mission and at the same time the tree on which its fruits grow.

#### The Missioner as the Great Translator of the Gospel

Mission is the interpretation of the Word of God through its expression in ever new languages, in ever new translation. Mission is always authoritative translation of the Gospel. As any translation it is made by the poet, but as any translation of the Gospel it needs the guarantee of authority to be "ordained" as sacred Word of God. Every radically new translation, as missionary translation always is, implies the discovery of radically new angles of the one Word of God, and so mission is a process of theological discovery, a field of research for the theologian.

As preacher and technical assistant in the growth of a new Christianity the missioner helps his people in the use of their poetic powers to open their language to the meanings of the Gospel. As Bishop the Missioner guarantees the faithfulness of the words of the new translation to the Word of ecclesiastic tradition. As theologian the missioner discovers the new aspects of the Gospel which have become manifest to the Universal



Church through the translation performed by a new local Church and helps the Universal Church to incorporate this new enrichment into its catholic tradition.

#### Technical Assistance to New Faith: Task of the Missioner

The Church is always the worldly sign of other-worldly reality, sacrament of Christ as Christ was sacrament of the Father. Her birthday is Pentecost, the day when one Hebrew word was understood in dozens of goyim languages. Since then it is the task of the missioner to translate the Word until the Parusia when all peoples will be able to say Amen and Alleluia in their own languages.

Midwifery is the oldest profession, and so is mission the oldest of the functions of the Church, the function of Peter at Pentecost. The missioner stands where the universal Church gives birth to a new community in a new world. He is technical assistant in the development of the church-sacrament out of the pre-existing matter of a people's language and culture. The missioner stands not only at the frontier which divides people from people, but equally on the frontiers which divide epoch from epoch, milieu from milieu. In our times ever more, he stands at the frontier which divides science from science.

#### The Missioner as the Foreigner

The yearning for adoption in a foreign community begins for the religious in the novitiate. It is here that he usually first experiences what it means to abandon his home and its customs and to submit to a new world into which he was not born and which he has freely decided to make ever more his own, and contribute all he is to it. Here he first realizes that he is called to grow into a man selfless and tactful enough to contribute his own life to the development of a pre-existing, freely chosen community which must be helped to grow. The religious community for him is a foretaste of his mission community.

In a foreign country he will never understand as he understood at home. He will never grasp the full meaning of smiles around



him. He needs to grow in comprehension of his lack of understanding, its roots and its permanence. He must freely sacrifice his lack of total syntony, so as not to be tempted to make continuous demands on those around him, yet only communicate what he can fully understand or understand better than they. He must gain insights into the roots of his lack of understanding; he will do so by first discovering new richness and depth in his own language, and then by discovering that the full meaning of certain words can be learned only very early in life. And finally its permanence; he must accept that he will never catch up with those who have had years before him to grow into a culture and language. These insights are the basis for his service as catalyst.

He thus will be able to live in his new world without continuously suspecting that something is being hidden from him. He will learn humbly to admit that he cannot follow and that he will never quite follow. And he will learn to make this admission without condescension. He will make others realize that he would love to follow, that he is certain he is missing out on something important by not being able to follow, without discouraging them from speaking in his presence. He will make them feel that he is happy to be allowed to run along as fast as he can, as long as he is not a brake, a nuisance.

The neo-missioner must learn to accept the feelings of insecurity and lostness consequent on his recurrent disorientation for what they are: his vocation. Otherwise he will continuously be tempted to fear that either he or the Church for which he stands are being eluded or ridiculed or taken advantage of. He will learn "to be simultaneously present and left out," sacramentally re-presenting the Church.

He will courageously face the fact that his soul is tuned differently from that of the people and that the incorporation in an orchestra of an instrument not foreseen in the composition is always a difficult task. He will sit at the table and not quite catch the joke; and he will feel his strangeness much more than a stranger, because he is an adopted son.

He will learn to realize not only that he does not understand as others do; he is not even understood as they are. He will accept

that he will never preach the Gospel in the language of the people as it should be preached, that at best his pupils will be able to do so. That, in a way, he who came to announce the Gospel is condemned to silence or at best to stuttering. His growth in this realization, that his audience is in a way "beyond him," will lead him to growing respect for the uniqueness of each people, the mysterious complexity and otherness of each community, and the transcendence of the Gospel which, according to his faith, can be understood everywhere fully, even though not equally.

Several years of efforts have shown us that the realization of the psychological and theological implications of missionary service can often be had only at the cost of experiencing the missionary situation. We do not believe that mission education understood as a guided process of emotional and intellectual growth into the frontiers of the Church can be conducted in the home country of the missionary. The neo-missionary must have an opportunity to dive into a world foreign to him before the words used in his education can become more than abstractions for him. We believe that the future orientation of the missionary's life depends in many aspects on the guidance he receives during the first months of his presence overseas when he is still wide open to the shocks of a foreign world, before he has built up his defense to the invitation to surrender to it.

It was a turning point in my life as mission educator when a Doctor told me, "Your pupils will deal with the *indios* exactly with the delicacy and loving tact with which they believe themselves treated by you." He did not tell me, "with which you treat them" . . . . but "with which they believe themselves treated by you." It was then I discovered that as missionaries we will be judged even more on our deep attitudes than our external behavior; that as missionaries we assume a new responsibility to discover and develop properly these often unconscious attitudes.

### Missionary Tact

We must distinguish three related realities: (1) the substance of revelation we grasp in faith, the symbol; (2) the living expression

created by a community for this faith, and (3) that which a man foreign to this creative community understands when he encounters its symbol.

Each community will give to some of the words it possesses the power to express a new reality. In this sense the symbol of faith must be ever re-born from the womb of a community. This symbol will have its full original meaning for those who shaped it. If it is transmitted to others who are heirs to the culture in which the symbol was first formulated, three things can happen to it:

First, it can be slowly changed, so as to incorporate other words which in the meantime have become more significant of the originally intended supernatural reality.

Second, it can become a source of words meaning the same thing throughout centuries; a rock within a slowly changing and adapting world of words. In this sense the great words of prayer, the Our Father, the Creed and catechism, have been normative for the languages of Western Europe. Words they contain have resisted change of meanings and implication more than others. The words of lived prayer become a living guarantee for linguistic permanence.

Third, it can remain unchanged and slowly disappear behind the horizon of still-meaningful words in a language. The grace of a good death; the bystanders at Mass; the communion-letter are examples.

The words of a temporal community are meaningful of revealed reality only for those initiated to their transcendent meaning. All faith is therefore fruit of a process of initiation, which usually begins in childhood.

For those not initiated into the Christian meaning of the words of a human language, their Christian use looks nonsensical, garbled or funny. An examination of conscience preparing a man for the confession and absolution of his mortal sins contains at least five words hardly meaningful for the average English speaker, even though, in the substance of his Christian faith, he might not be terribly far away from the man who uses them.

The neo-missioner must be helped to strain his ear to the meaning of the words he uses; not the meaning they have for him, but the meaning they have for the man to whom he speaks. I remember the encounter with a Haitian priest, who had just told a woman that the combination of communion and voodoo was sacrilegious. "Of course, of course I eat wood" (*on mange du bois*) was her answer, since the French catechism used with this Creole-speaking population defined sacrilege as the act by which "*on mange et bois indignement . . .*"

This development of delicacy and tact refers not only to words but to gestures as well. It is not always easy for a North American to understand that a T-shirt is underwear for a professional man in certain areas of Latin America, even if in those same areas people may walk around naked to the waist. An *abrazo* for a woman might be an obligatory expression of affection in a world where the simple expressions of camaraderie used by U.S. priests with women are completely out of place.

This growth of delicacy will lead the neo-missioner not only to adapt his message to the meaning of the people; it will lead him to discover never suspected contents in the Gospel. I am always surprised how much it means for North American religious women to discover that Christ can be loved with *carino*, a fully respectful affection, without any "mushiness," for which they had no word until they learned Spanish, and which, therefore, they were unable to grasp because they had no way of giving expression to it.

### The Growth to Maturity of the Religious through Mission

We have to observe priorities in missionary training. A religious is first a witness to the gratuity of God's love; then only, a pastor of a Christian community and only thirdly a technician for cooperatives, agriculture or social work. Missionary education of the religious must start with the assistance given to him to discover never-suspected dimension in his vows through their practice by him in a missionary situation.

For this purpose, in the process of missionary education, we

have to make the religious neo-missioner come to realize the threefold function of his mission.

First, mission countries today usually are identified as those countries which are in the process of rapid development. Therefore the missionary will usually be welcomed because he is an educator, doctor or technician moving into a country which is just becoming aware of its need for such professionals and of its incapacity to provide them from within.

Second, the missionary is usually a man who will be entrusted with a pastoral mission. His bishops and colleagues welcome him because he has probably had considerable education in one of the many specialties ever more needed to fulfill this type of function.

Lastly he is and remains a Religious, a gratuitous witness to God's lavish love. He is publicly consecrated to witness God's transcendence. He did not choose this state to be more available to the suffering or more efficient as a pastor. He chose it because God is great.

Only his renouncement of worldly values, including the renunciation of himself as a man with a this-worldly mission, enables him to bear this witness. Only because he renounced himself to the point at which he became unable of his own free choice to assist his neighbor materially or spiritually does his witness have value. Only because people see that he is a man of evident and true love, and yet for mysterious and transcendent reasons has renounced his freedom to make this love fruitful in material or spiritual service to his neighbor, does he become a "puzzle" to them. That a man should love God in prayer and in the person of his neighbor so much that he would sacrifice to Him his ability to serve his neighbor constitutes one of the problems raised by the religious.

If a religious does become more useful than a married man through his apostolic or temporal service to an underdeveloped country, that is a consequence, not the purpose of his religious vows. He distinguishes himself from the member of a secular institute because this witness to the gratuity of God's love, which becomes visible in the gratuity of his own love, should be

expressed by the religious, in contrast to the member of the secular institute, through common life and dress.

Christian renunciation is always renunciation in community and in view of community. Religious renunciation even more so is built totally on the rooting of the religious in his Order, country and epoch. Only because the religious is not a floater, an uprooted international, a timeless being, do his vows have social meaning, does his gratuitous renunciation mean a contribution to the community.

His poverty or renunciation of things has meaning only because he is related to these things not in a purely individualistic and arbitrary sense, but because the trees and fields and heirlooms and productive instruments which he renounces have meaning for him together with others. And only because his obedience limits his freedom to serve, and to give to, and to accept from others is it the renunciation of a social value with communitary meaning. Only because by thus renouncing his free will he also renounces the rights or claims of others over his freedom, is his vow of obedience a concern for others. And only because these others are not *any* others, but those to whom he is related by neighborhood, family or contemporaneity, does his obedience have social value as an act of witness to his belief in the total transcendence of God.

Finally his chastity is related to community far beyond the obvious renunciation of love and procreation. It implies the continued refusal of a gift, of which he will become ever more capable.

## Missionary Poverty

An intensified search for methods of missionary education now parallels the heavy demand for missionaries. However, before one can attempt to decide what should be the nature of a missionary training program one must determine what are the specific qualities which distinguish the missionary.

The simplest way of exploring these qualities is to study what the missionary has in common with the non-missionary, and to decide what is proper to him alone. It seems absurd to search for a specific difference in depth of generosity or competence or sanctity between the priest or the sister or the doctor or the layman who considers himself a missionary, and the person who does not. Evidently the missionary is intended to be a fully dedicated human being, but is not complete dedication equally characteristic of any man or woman totally given to God in any circumstances?

The difference between the missionary and the non-missionary is, therefore, not one of degrees. Neither is it, as we shall see, a difference in the field of action chosen. For to distinguish the missionary by his field of action is at best misleading. To say, for example, that the missionary is he who preaches the gospel to the infidel or the heathen would exclude the Maryknoller in Peru and the Jesuit in the Philippines from that vocation. And to say that a missionary is a person who leaves his country would imply that the home missionary in the South of the United States or the priests of the Mission de France have no right to be included in the missionary category.

Our search for the common denominator of every missionary vocation (specifically if for this article we exclude "missioners" who conduct parish revivals) does not lead us toward a common field of action or geographic location; a missionary and a non-missionary can work side by side in a parish doing the same job. On the contrary, the one common denominator of all missionaries is that they are men who have left their own milieu to preach the Gospel in an area not their own from birth. The difference is one



of the relation between the man and the field, not one in the man himself or the field.

Since this is so, the formation of a missionary will be centered on the development of a capacity to leave his home at least spiritually and to talk to strangers. It is this he has to learn in a course aimed at missionary formation. Our purpose here will be to analyze the way in which all spiritual, intellectual and practical training of the missionary has to be organized around the development of the beatitude which makes the transition from a familiar to a foreign way of life easy and practical: spiritual poverty in imitation of a special aspect of the Incarnation.

In the beginning was the Word and the Word was with God: the perfect communication of God eternally consubstantial with Himself. To communicate Himself perfectly to man God had to assume a nature which was not His, without ceasing to be what He was. Under this light the Incarnation is the infinite prototype of missionary activity, the communication of the Gospel to those who are "other," through Him who entered a World by nature not His own. The closer the pattern of a human life approximates this aspect of the "Kenosis" of the Word the more can that vocation be called a missionary one. It does not matter if the missionary is the Irishman among the Zulus or the bourgeois among the totally different culture of the French proletariat, or the urban northerner in the rural South, or the New York "boy" in a Puerto Rican neighborhood. Just as the Word without ceasing to be what He is became man, Jew, Roman subject, member of a culture at a given moment in history, so any one of these missionaries, without ever ceasing to be what he is, enters and becomes part of a "foreign" culture at the present moment in a given place.

The missionary is he who leaves his own to bring the Gospel to those who are not his own, thus becoming one of them while continuing to remain what he is. Only great love can motivate a man to do this, and deep knowledge is required which love wishes to communicate.

To make intercultural communication of the faith possible, the missionary must acquire special skills and special attitudes through specific missionary training. The urgency of the need for

missionaries, the limited supply of willing persons, and the rapidly changing pattern of culture make it ever more necessary to attempt a planned and intelligent formation in those skills and attitudes which the missionary requires for his apostolate. An intensive training program can accelerate the process of cultural adaptation which previously was often left to casual osmosis in the mission field itself. Intensive formation can mean an economy in manpower by shortening the time to make a man fully effective.

Very often the missionary has to learn a new language; always a new *lingo*. Modern linguistics have greatly shortened the time this takes. The missionary must also learn to understand hitherto unknown social, economic and geo-physical forces. This is often easy on the surface but it is difficult for the missionary to accept the consequences these forces will have on his own life: the weather might frustrate him with tiredness; his social position put him into a goldfish bowl, and poverty force him to unaccustomed discomfort.

Most important of all, the missionary has to face a new culture. He has to learn to distinguish between that which is morally good everywhere and that which is socially acceptable to a particular ethnic group. He will have to know which of his habits among "his new people" are socially unacceptable, though they may be morally good and he may be used to them, and he might have to become willing joyfully to accept cultural taboos of his own home as everyday patterns in his new surroundings. This emotional and intellectual willingness to accept a new culture which does not come naturally can be greatly enhanced by a theoretical understanding of culture and a guided research of a local milieu.

However, the learning of a language, the acceptance *in toto* of a special "human climate," and especially the willingness to become part of a new culture present much more than purely intellectual problems for the missionary. For him language, techniques and culture are not academic ends but first of all means to a practical purpose: communication of the Gospel. The missionary becomes part of his new surroundings to become able to speak, not just to survive. He is the man who is willing to

witness with his life to a foreign people the relativity of human convictions in front of the unique and absolute meaning of the Revelation. He often is the man through whom the Incarnation of the Word becomes real in cultures other than that of the ancient Jews. (Is it for that reason that we have missionaries to all nations but He has reserved for Himself the mission to the Jews?)

Sometimes the "missioner" lives among people who to him are foreigners but who have received the Gospel before through priests from one culture and for a historical accident now must receive their priest coming from another. This is the case for instance in many parts of Latin America. In such situations the word "missioner" assumes a very special meaning. The priest from abroad remains "missioner" in the sense that he communicates the Gospel to those who are not of his own. The people among whom he lives might have received and absorbed the faith centuries before any of the missionary's ancestors entered the Church or the Church had any influence on the culture of the missionary's home. In such a situation the missionary's task is even more delicate than in a situation of first evangelization: many of the traits of the culture the missionary finds to be different from his own deserve respect not only because they are an intimate property of a people but also because they were developed in centuries under the influence of the Catholic Church.

The full realization of such cultural relativity, especially in matters which are intimately connected with the unchangeable structure of the Church, requires great detachment. We all love to give absolute value to the things we have learned to love. We must, because to love the immediate is human and therefore necessary. But we usually forget to ask ourselves if the values we treasure are absolute in relation only to ourselves or to everyone. The man who is willing to be "sent" away from his home as a "missioner" will have to subject his values to a careful scrutiny to determine their "catholicity." Just as he has to become indifferent (in the sense of Loyola) to possessions and physical comfort, just as he has to become indifferent to being or not being with his family and his people, so he has to become indifferent to the cultural values of his home. This means that he has to become very poor in a very deep sense.

For what else is spiritual poverty but indifference, willingness to be without what we like? As spiritual poverty implies not the absence of likes but freedom from them, so the attitude of the missionary carries him not to the denial of his background but to communication with another, and this is a difficult goal to achieve. If it is difficult to become indifferent, detached, from all exterior comforts, and if it is even more difficult to become indifferent to more intimate gifts such as physical integrity or the presence of those we love, or our reputation or our success, how much more difficult is it to become detached from convictions deeply rooted in us since childhood about what is and is not done.

Yet it is this last detachment which the missionary will have to achieve if he wants to be truly an instrument of the Incarnation rather than an agent of his own culture. No missionary has the right to insist, in the name of the Gospel, on acceptance of his own human background, and thus to make Baptism or full Church membership dependent on a degree of spiritual poverty in the convert which he himself is not willing to practice.

The realization of the necessity of this deep poverty in him who stands at the frontier of the Church as incarnate in a culture and a culture which has not yet fully accepted the Church (or perhaps fallen away from Her) is equally important for the priest abroad as for the priest from the United States eastern seaboard who belongs to a Catholic subculture when presenting the Church to members of a traditionally Protestant group, or the French missionary to the proletariat. What else, in fact, is the purpose of Church history but a continuous meeting of the Church as it has already become a reality in a culture with a new world which now becomes Christian or now returns to Christ? The "new world" contributes to the body of the Church a new human richness and accepts for itself not only the faith but a participation in purely human values of century-old tradition. This meeting is accomplished through the missionary. Through him not only will the faith be accepted, but the new convert will enter the mainstream of "Catholic culture" (a term which seems to imply a contradiction because "catholic" means "universal" and "culture" as we use it, says "the way of life of some"). The

missioner's detachment, indifference, and spiritual poverty toward the values of his own particular culture, far from hindering him from transmitting his own background, will help him to give out of the treasures of his own history what is needed by the convert, and not just what he feels strongly about.

Without an understanding of this distinction between imposition and absorption of cultural patterns, neither the Catholic missions nor the concept of Catholic culture can be understood. Each people, just as every individual, has the right upon coming into the Church to absorb with the faith certain effects of the atmosphere in which the faith has grown for centuries, and thus to become in a fully human fashion part of a "Catholic world." On the other hand, certain human cultural traits, such as the law of Rome or the logic of medieval Paris, and the dress of the late Empire, have become the fashion in which the Incarnate Word appears to the convert and which he has to accept just as much as "kenosis" of the Word of God as he accepts Him as a Jew. Unless the missionary is very detached from his own tiny world and reads absolute "Catholic" meaning into local and time-tied customs, he will not be able to think Catholic when asked for a divine faith and the development of a human tradition by his convert.

This growth in spiritual poverty must continue during the whole life of a missionary, but its first conscious development is of decisive importance and should be at the center of specialized missionary training.

The first learning of a language must be more than the attempt at the acquisition of a skill, even more than the capacity to communicate which we referred to above. It can easily become a symbol of a man's willingness to become profoundly poor, to relinquish his own world of thoughts and associations and expressions "as the best there is," as the standard measure of fully developed thought. The acceptance of a local history and climate and socio-economic structure can be more than the expression of a generosity which embraces physical discomfort for the sake of Christ. It is rather the expression of an eager willingness to become one with the missionary's new people. The acquiescence to foreign cultural norms of behavior and taboos,

besides being a necessary and utilitarian accommodation and a mark of delicacy and charitable toleration, can become an imitation of the Incarnation in a unique and typically missionary way.

Such a course of action, which goes against the grain of everything that has become part of our personality from earliest childhood and which symbolizes for us all that is humanly precious and lovable, is not only difficult but extremely painful.

To study, for example, a language or a set of customs as a spiritual exercise rather than simply as a technical effort requires not only deep love but great insight. Since this insight is itself a painful experience, the human tendency is to obscure it, to keep it from view. One cannot make the effort at missionary poverty in order to avoid pain.

Many dangers threaten to hinder the missionary from seeking poverty at this intimate level and most of them stem from the insecurity which breeds fear. If material things and friends and health are crutches against the threat of the unknown, how much more does the set of values and customs with which each one was brought up serve this protective purpose, and how much more, therefore, is each one anxious to defend his culture as inalienable, absolute and worthy of being imposed on others. If we don't want to let go of a thing we think we need we always find a reason for defending our right to keep it, and the more intimate the thing is to us, the more unknowingly we protect ourselves from the suspicion that we might have to give it up. Since there is hardly anything more intimate to us than our culture, there will be nothing we will stick to more obstinately and against our best intentions than the ways we were taught "things have to be done." No wonder the young missionary will discover in himself every day new tricks his nature plays to avoid his detachment from his whole past. He will find himself constructing philosophical arguments pointing to "human nature" which is "the same everywhere" to justify the singing of "Silent Night" at Christmas in preference to traditional celebrations, or to defend the free choice of a mate as called for by the Gospel because he protests the choice by his mother of a wife for his brother in Boston. A more subtle trap in which the bright man might find himself is



learning so much about his mission field as to become an anthropologist in order not to have to accept this one people as his by becoming a part of them. The difficulty of self-illusion will have to be taken carefully into account in a delicate process of integrated personality development as missionary formation should be.

Individual direction of the young missionary will be just as necessary as free-flowing group discussion to make rationalizations and subterfuges conscious and allow curricular training to become a channel of spiritual growth. Otherwise contact with the "foreign" becomes an opportunity for the development of detachment, and personal freedom could easily become either a force which throws a frightened man back upon himself anxiously grabbing for past symbols of security, or for the imprudent but enthusiastic, a temptation to deny the values of his own background, thus remaining suspended in a dangerous vacuum seemingly between cultures.

The development of a missionary spirit will have to start from an analysis of the concept of spiritual poverty, or Ignatian indifference or detachment. Man can become detached from visible things which he can use with his body and the integrity of his body itself. Man can go further and become detached from the respect, the affection and opportunities for self expression his fellow-men can give him. The missionary must go even further into an area of detachment from himself which we call "missionary poverty," an intimate mystical imitation of Christ on His Incarnation.

From its organization around the acquisition of this special aspect of the beatitude of poverty corresponding to the task of the missionary every attempt at missionary formation will receive unity and deep meaning. Intellectual formation in the social sciences and linguistic studies for the missionary must be seen as a means for the development of a specific form of spiritual detachment corresponding to his very personal vocation.

A curriculum of special courses given to the "missioner-to-be" thus can become a potent instrument for the realization of a deeply realized catholicity in imitation of the Word which by becoming son of a carpenter in Galilee, became MAN.



The science of linguistics has brought into view new horizons in the understanding of human communications. An objective study of the ways in which meanings are transmitted has shown that much more is relayed from one man to another through and in silence than in words. Words and sentences are composed of silences more meaningful than the sounds. The pregnant pauses between sounds and utterances become luminous points in an incredible void; as electrons in the atom, as planets in the solar system. Language is a cord of silence with sounds the knots, as nodes in a Peruvian *quipu*, in which the empty spaces speak. With Confucius we can see language as a wheel. The spokes centralize, but the empty spaces make the wheel.

It is thus not so much the other man's words as his silences which we have to learn in order to understand him. It is not so much our sounds which give meaning, but it is through the pauses that we make ourselves understood. The learning of a language is more the learning of its silences than of its sounds. Only in God is Word co-eternal Silence. Among men in time, rhythm is a law through which our conversation becomes a *yang-yu* of silence and sound.

To learn a language in a human and mature way is to accept the responsibility for its silences and its sounds. The gift a people give us in teaching us their language is more a gift of the rhythm, the mode, and the subtleties of its system of silences than of its system of sounds. It is an intimate gift for which we are accountable to the people who have entrusted us with their tongue. A language of which I know only the words and not the pauses is a continuous offense. It is as the caricature of a photographic negative.

It takes more time and effort and delicacy to learn the silence of a people than to learn its sounds. Some people have a special gift for this. Perhaps this explains why some missionaries, notwithstanding their efforts, never come to speak properly, to communicate delicately through silences. Although they "speak with the accent of natives" they remain forever thousands of miles

away. The learning of the grammar of silence is an art much more difficult to learn than the grammar of sounds.

As words must be learned by listening and by painful attempts at imitation of a native speaker, so silences must be acquired through a delicate openness for them. Silence has its pauses and hesitations, its rhythms and expressions and inflections; its durations and pitches, and times to be and not to be. Just as with our words, there is an analogy between our silence with men and with God. To learn the full meaning of one, we must practice and deepen the other.

First among the classification of silences is the silence of the pure listener, of womanly passivity; the silence through which the message of the other becomes "he in us", the silence of deep interest. It is threatened by another silence: the silence of indifference, the silence of disinterest which assumes that there is nothing I want or can receive through the communication of the other. This is the ominous silence of the wife who woodenly listens to her husband relating the same little things he so earnestly wants to tell her. It is the silence of the Christian who reads the gospel with the attitude that he knows it backward and forward. It is the silence of the stone, dead because it is unrelated to life. It is the silence of the missionary who never understood the miracle of a foreigner who listens with a greater testimony of love than that of an outsider who speaks. The man who shows us that he knows the rhythm of our silence is much closer to us than one who thinks he knows how to talk.

The greater the distance between two worlds, the more this silence of interest is a sign of love. It is easy to listen to chit-chat about football; it is a sign of love for a midwesterner to listen to the reports on *Jai-Alay*. The silence of the city-priest on a bus listening to the report of the sickness of a goat is a gift; truly the fruit of a missionary form of long training in patience.

There is no greater distance than that between a man in prayer and God. Only when this distance dawns on consciousness can the grateful silence of patient readiness develop. This must have been the silence of the Virgin before the Ave which enabled her to become the eternal model of openness to the Word. Through her deep silence the Word could take Flesh.

In the prayer of silent listening, and nowhere else, can the Christian acquire the habit of this first silence from which the Word can be born in a foreign culture. This Word conceived in silence is grown in silence, too.

A second great class in the grammar of silence is the silence of the Virgin after she conceived the Word, the silence from which not so much the *Fiat* as the *Magnificat* was born. It is the silence which nourishes the Word conceived rather than opening man to conception. It is the silence of meditation which delicately communicates that the Word is growing in us, the silence which closes man in on Himself to allow him to prepare the Word for others. It is the silence of syntony; the silence in which we await the proper moment for the Word to be born into the world.

This silence, too, is threatened, not only by hurry and by the desecration of multiplicity of action, but by the habit of verbal confection and mass production which has no time for it. It is threatened by the silence of cheapness which means that one word is as good as the other and that words need no nursing.

The missionary, or foreigner, who uses words as they are in the dictionary does not know this silence. He is the man who looks up English words in himself when he wants to find a Spanish equivalent, rather than seeking the word which would syntonize, rather than finding a word, gesture or silence which would be understood, even if it has no equivalent in his own language or culture or background; the man who does not give the seed of a new language time to grow on the foreign soil of his soul. This is a silence before words, or between them; the silence within which words live or die. It is the silence of the slow prayer of hesitation; of prayer in which words have the courage to swim in a sea of silence. It is diametrically opposed to other forms of silence before words, the silence of the artificial flower which serves as a remembrance of words which do not grow. It is the silence of the pause in between repetition. It is the silence of the missionary who waits for the dispensation of the next memorized platitude because he has not made the effort to penetrate into a living language of others. It is the silence of "pastoral Spanish." The silence before words is also opposed to the silence of brewing aggressivity which can hardly be called silence, an interval of

preparation of words, too, but words which divide rather than bring together. This silence tempts the missionary who is fed up with the idea that in Spanish nothing means what he wants to say. It is the silence in which one verbal aggression, even though veiled, prepares the other.

The next great class in the grammar of silence we will call the silence beyond words. The farther we go, the farther apart does good and bad silence grow in each classification. We now have reached the silence which does not prepare any further talk. The silence, it is, which has said everything because there is nothing more to say. This is the silence beyond a final *yes* or a final *no*.

This is the silence of love beyond words, or the silence of *no*, forever; the silence of heaven and of hell. It is the definite attitude of a man who faces the Word which is silence.

Hell is this silence, deadly silence. Death in this silence is other than the deadness of a stone, indifferent to life, or the deadness of a pressed flower, memory of life. It is the death after life, a permanently-lived refusal of life. There can be noise and agitation and many words in this silence. It has only one meaning which is common to the noises it makes and the gaps between them.

There is a way in which this silence of hell threatens missionary existence. With the unusual possibilities of witnessing through silence, an unusual ability to destroy through it opens to the man charged with the Word in a world not his own. Missionary silence risks more: it risks to become a hell on earth.

Ultimately, missionary silence is a gift, a gift of prayer, learned in prayer faced by the infinitely distant, infinitely foreign God and applied in love to men, much more distant and foreign than ever men at home. The missionary can come to forget that his silence is a gift, a gift in its deepest sense gratuitously given by God; a gift generously transmitted to us by those who are willing to teach us their language. If the missionary forgets this and attempts to conquer by his own power that which only others can bestow, then his existence begins to be threatened. The man who tries to buy the language like a suit, the man who tries to conquer the language through grammar so as to speak it "better than the natives around here," the man who forgets the analogy

of the silence of God and the silence of others and does not seek its growth in prayer, is a man who tries basically to rape the culture into which he is sent, and he must expect the corresponding reactions. If he is human he will realize he is in a spiritual prison, but he will not admit he has built it around himself; he will rather accuse others of being his jailers. The wall between himself and those to whom he was sent will become ever more impermeable. As long as he sees himself as "missioner" he will know that he is frustrated, that he is sent but got nowhere; that he is away from home but has never landed anywhere; that he left his home and never reached another.

He continues to preach and is ever more aware that he is not understood because he says what he thinks and speaks in a foreign farce of his own language. He continues to "do things for people" and considers them ungrateful because they understand that he does these things to bolster his ego. His words become a mockery of language, an expression of the silence of death.

It requires much courage at this point to return to the patient silence of interest or to the delicacy of the silence within which words grow. Out of numbness muteness has grown. Often out of the fear of facing the difficulty late in life of trying again to learn a language, a habit of despair is born. The silence of hell, a typically missionary version of it, has been born in his heart.

On the pole opposed to despair there is the silence of love, the holding of hands of the lovers, the prayer in which the vagueness before words has given place to the pure emptiness after them, the form of communication which opens the simple depth of the soul. It comes in flashes and it can become a lifetime in prayer just as much as with people. Perhaps it is the only truly universal aspect of language, the only means of communication which was not touched by the curse of Babel. Perhaps it is the one way of being together with others and God, in which we have no more foreign accent.

There is still another silence beyond words, the silence of the Piéta. It is not a silence of death but the silence of the mystery of death. It is not the silence of active acceptance of the will of God out of which the *Fiat* is born nor the silence of manly acceptance of Gethsemani in which obedience has its roots. It is the silence

beyond bewilderment and questions; it is a silence beyond the possibility of an answer, or even reference to a word which preceded. It is the mysterious silence through which the Lord could descend into the silence of hell, the acceptance without frustration of a life, useless and wasted on Judas, through which the world was saved. Born to redeem the world, her Son had died by the hands of His people, abandoned by His friends and betrayed by Judas whom He loved but could not save: silent contemplation of the culminating paradox of the Incarnation which was useless for the redemption of at least one personal friend. The opening of the soul towards this ultimate silence of the Piéta is the culmination of the slow maturing of the three previous forms of missionary silence.

**Design:** Mike Kelly, Robert Voge Inc.

**Body Type:** 10 point Caledonia, leaded  
two points.

**Headings:** 12 point Caledonia bold.

**Paper:** 60# Nekoosa natural book offset.

**Cover:** 80# coated one side offset enamel.

**Typesetting:** Frank A. Freeman,  
James M. Simmen.

**Printing:** James R. Bartlett.

**Production:** Epubco.



## **The Urban Training Center for Christian Mission**

The Urban Training Center seeks to discover the nature of faithful participation in a wide variety of urban situations, and to develop ministries which facilitate such participation.

Training accordingly focuses on specific points of decision and development in the society, both at more "established" points and more "insurgent" points, in places of accumulated power and present powerlessness. Faithful participation at such points includes reference both to the historic sources of faith and to current forms of understanding and organization. It must do so in a fresh and radical way at a time when both doctrine and practice have been subjected to rigorous historical inquiry, and when specialized concepts and skills characterize activity in a plural society. Conception and development of appropriate ministries require, therefore, actual engagement with urban actors and specially-guided reflection on their actions. "Christian thinking, speaking, and organization must be reborn out of this praying and this action" (Bonhoeffer).

In shorter periods of training, the primary focus remains on problems brought by trainees from their home situations. Field study is necessarily limited to diagnosis, survey, and consultation in the Chicago area and (where desirable) by visits to significant projects elsewhere. In the longer training periods, trainees actually go to work on the Chicago scene, often helping to develop strategy in selected agencies or organizations. In all cases, seminars are provided to develop ability in theological and sociological analysis as well as in appropriate professional practices.

Workshops are regularly offered in such projects as cooperative economic enterprises, the use of housing legislation and other governmental programs, as well as in skills of planning and management. Trainees are accountable and helpful to one another in smaller groups which, with staff, review and guide field practice. Near the close of training most participants present a proposal for a ministry related to a social project, thus making their own efforts available to one another and to the ongoing work of the Center.