Chapter VI

TYPES AND ROLES OF CATHOLIC ELITES

The historical survey of the Church in Latin America reveals that it was not as monolithic as thought to be. There were differing tendencies and divisions within the Church in the context particularly of politics. But these divisions were not as complex and deep-rooted as those that have surfaced in the Church in recent times. The preceding analysis of some of the recent developments in the Church in Latin America and some of the movements and ideologies reveal divisions within the Church at all levels--bishops, priests and laity--divisions that are far deeper and of more complex dimensions than ever before in the history of the Church. No serious study of the Church in Latin America is possible without taking into account the fact of any number of contesting sectors within the contemporary Church. They are the result of divisions and polarizations, as already discussed in previous chapters, related to the most fundamental aspects of the life of the Church, such as the nature of the Church, its relation to the world, its mission, and the meaning of Christian faith in the present Latin American context.

As the Church is co-extensive with society in Latin America, these divisions and polarizations in the Church profoundly affect the society in its socio-economic, cultural and political spheres. These divisions in the Church are as much the result of the socio-economic and political divisions and polarizations in society as they tend to deepen them further.
Attention is focussed on the elites not because these divisions do not affect the masses but because it is at their level that there is greater articulation of the differing perceptions. Moreover, it is they who influence the behaviour of the masses. It is true of all societies that societal behaviour is initiated and directed by a few persons generally termed as elites. As Lipset and Solari say, in all societies, institutional and societal power are held by a small minority since the structure of complex society and organization prevents the mass from directly exercising power. The distinction, therefore, between elites and non-elites is found and will always be found in all societies, whether they be capitalist, socialist, collective, or any other. But the elites are elites only in relation to the non-elites i.e., precisely in terms of their actual or potential influence on the behaviour of the masses. Hence, the latter are not unimportant. Moreover, the elites are the products of society. They have their social origins and social basis. However, it is at the level of the elites that the differing perceptions are easily identified and studied.

The term "elite" is used in this study in a very general sense, i.e., to indicate those who have an actual or potential influence on a given society. Lipset and Solari say: "The most general usage refers to those positions in society which are at the summit of key social structures, i.e., the higher positions

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in the economy, military, politics, religion, mass organizations, education and the professions. But, in this study the term is used irrespective of the position or office held in a given social structure. The Medellin Conference used the term elite to indicate in general: "The high level leaders in areas of culture, the professions, business and industry, and government", and in particular, "within these groups, the dedicated few who exercise actual or potential influence on decision-making in the cultural, professional, educational, social and political level". The concept of "elite" has a mere descriptive meaning and refers to their behaviour in the context of social change without any judgement of value or connotation of class.

The term "Catholic" elites refers to elites in the context of the Catholic faith and not in the context of the institutional Church, nor restricted to top positions in the Church hierarchy such as the cardinals, bishops, etc. They are elites no doubt, but elites are found also at all levels in the Church--bishops, priests and the laity, in their varying but evolving pattern of leadership in the context of social change, and their capacity to exert a decisive influence on the development of the Catholic system or the social order either as individual leaders or as a nuclei.

Sanders writes: "In a Catholic frame-work, an individual who participates in an elite has internalized Catholic beliefs and values to a sufficient degree that he justifies his social actions

2 Ibid.
chiefly by his Catholicism, rather than by other norms, institutions or pressures". Catholic elites are, then, those leaders whose behaviour flows from their Catholic faith on which they have reflected sufficiently. There are many elites in Latin America who are Catholics because they maintain some links with Catholicism, often as a form of culture religion, but their actions reflect little understanding of the normative Catholic faith and its implications, and of the social teachings of the Church which are supposed to provide a framework for social action.

It does not, however, mean that a Catholic elite is one who acts "as a Catholic as such". The distinction between acting "as a Catholic as such" and acting "as a Catholic" is important. As Gutierrez points out, in the first case the Catholic acts as a member of the Church and his actions represent the ecclesial community. (This is what happens with the members of "Catholic Action" and many priests and bishops). In the second case, the Catholic acts under the inspiration of Catholic principles but assumes exclusive personal responsibility for his actions, he does not represent the ecclesial community. (This is the case with most political activities). This distinction, however, is not always observed in practice.

Several authors have provided the basis to identify and describe several types of elites in the Church in Latin America.


Different writers have employed different approaches and conceptualizations in this regard—historical, theological, sociological, etc. They are all somehow related to social change. Some such approaches are discussed below.

It must be understood that these different types of elites or sectors in the Church did not emerge in the Church suddenly at a given point of time. They evolved gradually in response to given historical situations and crises, and as a result of deeper understanding of the meaning of Christian faith. But in the contemporary Latin American Church they all coexist.

Elites in the Historical Context

Theological and social thought in the Church developed in stages. While new currents of thought were developed in some sectors old ones persisted in the others. It is possible to identify and categorize Catholic elites in this process or stages of development of theological and social thought.

Dussel, a historian, philosopher and liberation theologian, in his attempt to periodize the history of theology in Latin America proposes six stages detailing the reaction of theological reflection to the varying historical circumstances of the region and the various influences which impinged upon it. 6 Though it is not his purpose to categorize and identify different types of elites, yet, they are useful in understanding the

6 Enrique Dussel, Historia de la teologia (Madrid, 1976), pp.19-68; "Outline of a history of the Church in Latin America", Social Compass (The Hague), Vol.XIV, no.5-6, (1967), pp.343-63. Here, he briefly touches upon the theological evolution in a ten-fold stage in which the history of the Church in Latin America is discussed.
historical and theological context in which they evolved. The first three stages of Dussel pertain to the period of conquest, colonialism and independence. These periods show not much differenciation and are not of much use for an understanding of the emergence of different types of elites in the contemporary Latin American Church. But the last three stages are very useful. According to him the fourth period extends from 1831 to 1950. This period, he says, was marked by a conservative position, a neo-colonial theology on the defensive which was always behind the times. This form of traditional scholastic theology supported the Christendom concept, in which the Church, as repository of all truth, was at the centre and everything else outside was to be subordinated to the salvation-goal and scheme of the Church. 7

The fifth stage according to Dussel extended from about 1930 to about 1962. This period saw the evolution of a theology of "New Christendom" and the passage from traditional theology to developmentalist, reformist theology at least in some sectors in the Church. This was the period of Catholic Action. After 1950, the theme of development was very much in vogue in theology. 8 Attempts were made to formulate a theology that favours development.

The period from 1962 to 1968 was the sixth stage according to Dussel's periodization. This was the period in which the Second Vatican Council met. It was also a preparatory period

7 See Chapter III above.

for the Medellin Conference which was held in 1968. It was during this period that the core concepts of a theology of liberation were formulated. During this period the concept of liberation began to replace that of development, in some sectors of the Church. Developmentalist theology related to the development of underdeveloped countries based on assistance from developed countries. Liberation theology considered the concrete political commitment of the Christian in his geopolitical situation of "periphery".

Dussel’s periodization and analysis of the emerging new theological thoughts gives a theological basis for a categorization of the Catholic elites into three types: the traditionalists, the developmentalists, and the liberationists. But he does not elaborate a description of these types.

Jesus Garcia Gonzalez, a sociologist, in his analysis of the historical process of development of Latin American Catholic social thought since the Second World War provides a new basis for identifying and describing the different types of elites that have emerged in the Latin American Church in the recent past. He divides them into four overlapping stages. Each stage gives rise to the emergence of a new sociological basis that are used for categorizing and describing Catholic elites.

The first stage, he suggests, lasted roughly from 1945 to 1961. It was characterized by Catholic Action objectives that

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9 Jesus Garcia Gonzalez was a staff member responsible for Latin American affairs in the Pontifical Commission of Justice and Peace of Vatican from 1970 to 1974.

10 Jesus Garcia Gonzalez, Desarrollo y/o Liberación (Rome, 1971), mimeo (IDOC-Rome doc.no.9845).
were based on a fragmented world view. Programming was peacemeal; each social problem was attacked individually. The socio-ethical dimension was not integrated into a theological and pastoral conception of the role of the Church in the world.

The second stage extended from about 1950 to the 1960s, around 1958-65. During this period the concepts of development and underdevelopment were used but the correlation between the two were not established. This period was marked by a greater awareness of the inter-dependence of social and economic problems. Garcia detects a two-pronged reaction during this second stage. The first was doctrinal, inspired by the Christian humanism of the Lebret School. It envisioned an integral and harmonious development. But it did not take into consideration either the necessary cultural and political conditioning for popular mobilization or the strength of the mechanism of external dependency. The second was socio-economic as made available by social sciences. This was developed further in the third stage.

The years between 1963-1966 was roughly the third stage according to Garcia. It was characterized by the categories marginality-integration; it dealt with underdevelopment as the effect of a strong social stratification derived from the super imposition of ethnic groups and cultural manifestations that resulted in the marginalization of the lower strata of society. There are two indices of marginality: lack of passive participation which means people do not have access to
goods and services, and lack of active participation, which consists in lack of access to decision-making situations. The antidote of marginality was judged to be integration, understood as incorporation into the mainstream of a participant society. The strategy to achieve this integration was the establishment of grass-roots groups responding to different felt needs. Cooperatives, unions and neighbourhood councils were responses to economic, labour, and local problems respectively.

The Church in Latin America, Garcia points out, legitimized this point of view at the extraordinary meeting of CELAM in Mar del Plata, Argentina, held in October 1966. The theme of the gathering was "The Role of the Church in the Development and Integration of Latin America". This approach to social problems was cause-centred rather than effect-centred. It attempted to strike at the roots of social injustice rather than ameliorate the effects. However, it was predicated on a world view of two parallel societies, the modernizing and the traditional, which were not casually related. Marginality was not viewed by the participants at the Mar del Plata meeting as an effect of socio-economic and political system and of the mechanisms of an effective internal colonialism, exercised by the modernizing centre elites on the traditional peripheral masses. Pastorally, the distinction was made between an apostolate of evangelization and an apostolate of civilization, the latter being seen as necessary preparation for the former. The social policy it advocated was based on efforts to reform the social, economic and political structures rather than a transformation of the mentalities, values and habits of the kind that awaken creativity.
The fourth stage, according to Garcia, extended from the CELAM meeting at Mar del Plata (1960) to the Medellin Conference (1968). The key concepts of this stage were oppression and dependency versus liberation. The bankruptcy and decline of the developmentalist projects of the Alliance for Progress, and the growing gap between the haves and the have-nots led to the definition of the machinery of internal domination and external dependency and the relation between them.

Garcia examines the ideas of the socio-economic dependency as developed by social scientists like Guerreiro Ramos, Helio Jaguaribe, Candido Mendes, Alvaro Vieira Pintos, Celso Furtado and Teotonio dos Santos and who, he says, were soon joined by avant-garde theologians and pastoral experts in an interdisciplinary effort. It is in this context, he explains, that the term "liberation" came into Latin American Christians usage as the logical counter to domination and oppression. Although he acknowledges the fact that "liberation" had been previously linked to revolutionary activity, he points out that this link ought not to restrict the understanding of the concept because he says:

The specifically Christian contribution to the formulation of liberation...was to go beyond the exclusively political connotation of the concept (and of the action flowing from) placing it in a more global and dynamic framework. 11

From 1964 to 1968, Garcia points out, the subject of liberation had become increasingly prominent as the central theme in many statements emanating from the Church in Latin America. This trend culminated in Medellin where the term

11 Ibid., p.9.
"liberation", and its idea and meaning were legitimized. García's periodization which can serve as an excellent sociological and theological basis for identification and descriptions of types of Catholic elites may be summed up as in table 1.

**Elites in the Pastoral and Religious Context**

Several authors identify and describe the Catholic elites with special emphasis to their pastoral and religious behaviour. Their behaviour can be ultimately explained only in terms of theological and sociological concepts.

Gutiérrez describes theological evolutions in their pastoral dimensions in the context of the relation between the Church and the world and of the Church's role in the world. He has thus identified four pastoral options that co-exist in the contemporary Latin American Church: Christendom, New Christendom, mature, faith and prophetic. Although these labels can be placed in a historical context, as Dussel does, in Gutiérrez's analysis they are used to designate mentalities or approaches rather than historical periods.

A close relationship between Church and State characterized Christendom from the conversion of Constantine to the beginning of the modern era. The attitude it produced are still to be found in some sectors in Latin America. A great deal of importance is

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Table 1
Periodization of the Development of Catholic Social Thought

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Signs of the times—the social reality</th>
<th>Theological infrastructure</th>
<th>Strategy for Social action</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>AFTER WORLD WAR II ECONOMIC BOOM; EUPHORIA COINCIDED WITH SOCIAL PHENOMENA: DEMOGRAPHIC EXPLOSION, MASSIVE RURAL EMIGRATION, URBAN CONCENTRATION, UNEMPLOYMENT, UNDER-EMPLOYMENT, POVERTY, MISERY.</td>
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<tr>
<td>DISCRETE VIEW OF SOCIAL PROBLEMS. ETHICAL-DOCTRINAL FOUNDATION PERIPHERAL BUT NOT INTEGRATED TO A THEOLOGICAL AND PASTORAL CONCEPTION OF THE ROLE OF THE CHURCH IN TEMPORAL MATTERS.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>ATTENTION TO SPECIFIC PROBLEMS; SOCIAL SERVICE, SOCIAL CENTRES, COOPERATIVES; PERSONAL INITIATIVES; IF ASSUMED BY THE CHURCH NOT ON THE LEVEL OF PASTORAL WORK.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>AWARENESS OF INTER-DEPENDENCE OF SOCIO-ECONOMIC PROBLEMS. EMPHASIS ON STRENGTHENING OF ECONOMIC INFRASTRUCTURE; ALLIANCE FOR PROGRESS PROPOSED AS MODEL INDUSTRIALIZED NATIONS WHO CONTROLLED MARKETS AND WORLD ECONOMY.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>CHRISTIAN HUMANISM OF THE LEBRET SCHOOL TYPE. SCIENTIFIC SOCIAL APPROACH.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>INTEGRAL AND HARMONIOUS DEVELOPMENT. HARMONY BETWEEN PROMOTION OF INFRASTRUCTURE AND PROMOTION OF POPULAR SECTORS WITH NO CLEAR AWARENESS OF CULTURAL AND POLITICAL CONDITIONING FACTORS OR OF STRENGTH OF MECHANISM OF EXTERNAL DEPENDENCE.</td>
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<tr>
<td>DEVELOPMENT—UNDERDEVELOPMENT</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>1945–1961</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>1958–1965</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>MARGINALITY-INTEGRATION</td>
<td>1963 - 1966</td>
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<tr>
<td>Scientific interdisciplinary analysis with anthropological focus which interprets underdevelopment as a result of strong social stratification flowing from an ethnic-cultural superimposition; Herodian groups; marginality seen as global phenomenon, lack of active and/or passive participation looks for causes, sees parallel societies, not interrelated.</td>
<td>Doesn't completely close gap of traditional theological dualism; two distinct realities, temporal and spiritual, two histories. Distinction between apostolate and civilization. Development as servant of pastoral thought.</td>
<td>Popular promotion as strategy to mobilize and structure popular sectors through grass-roots communities; co-operatives, unions, neighbourhood councils. Structuralism designed to integrate marginals into mainstream rather than develop internal dynamism which transforms mentalities, values, habits, and release energy.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>OPPRESSION AND LIBERATION</th>
<th>1966 - 1968</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bankruptcy of developmentalist; search for causes by inter-disciplinary analysis; awareness of reality as global, structural, dynamic under-development as effect of development of other countries; internal stratification provides basis for external dependence mechanisms, internal domination and external dependency; formal education transmits values and knowledge that perpetuate divorce between real life and ability to face it, i.e., it domesticates.</td>
<td>One reality; one global society; one history; this view demands commitment of believer to own reality. Liberation and promotion central task of Church. Avoids dualism which separates temporal works from sanctification.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Source: Abstracted from Jesus Garcia Gonzalez, n.10.
attached to membership in the institutional Church and to the baptismal rite. For this mentality, baptism is synonymous with conversion. This is a sacramental christianity. Fulfilling the laws of the Church regarding the reception of the sacraments is of paramount importance. Social conditioning factors are very strong and they buttress the faith. Great emphasis is given to the hierarchical order in society. This pastoral option favours the parish as a form of presence of the Church. The parish is regarded as the Christianizing agent par excellence, for, it is within it that the sacramental life of the Church is nourished. Temporalities outside the Church have no autonomy. They are to be at the complete service of the Church. Acts of charity and of magnanimity are encouraged.

The second pastoral option, that of New Christendom, is characterized by the creation of Christian institutions such as Christian political parties, labour unions, formation centres for workers and peasants, educational and social movements etc. This mentality began to appear in Latin America around the year 1935 with the growth of Catholic Action influenced by Maritain's integral humanism. Maritain designated it as "New Christendom" to distinguish it from the former option. Pastoral action as well as Catholic Action had as its objective the growth of the Kingdom of Christ.

The mature faith approach prefers the formation of elites. It corresponds to the second stage of the specialized Catholic Action movements. The faith which characterizes such Christians is not individualistic. There is a great deal of emphasis on the Christian community. Apostolic action does not require
instituionalization. The fundamental concern is for the personal freedom of the person to whom the gospel message is directed.

The prophetic approach which advocates wide-ranging dialogue is the newest form of presence and action of the Church in Latin America. There is a greater awareness of the diaspora situation of the Church.\(^\text{13}\) There is a great concern to reach those outside the visible or institutional Church. The mission of the Church in the world is redefined in terms of a world in which the Lord of history is already present. It is important to meet the social demands of the Gospel and to denounce the social injustice which has been supported sometimes even by the Church itself. Members of the lay apostolic movement are radicalized and become more committed to the Latin American process of liberation.

Gutierrez says that the Vatican Council presents a new image of the Church. It is from this basis that the last three pastoral options emerged. In the Council the Church is understood as a sacrament, a sign. A new theology of the Church thus emerges. There is a change from an abstract, theological conception of the Church as expounded by scholastic theologians like Robert Bellarmine, to another conception in which the Church is regarded as a historic happening. The history of the Church is discovered. A close relationship between temporal progress and growth of the Kingdom of God is established in the

\(^{13}\) Diaspora refers to a situation or stage in which the real Church is in a minority and is scattered.
council, but the duality is not fully breached. In an important text the Council declares: "While the earthly progress must be carefully distinguished from the growth of Christ's Kingdom, to the extent that the former can contribute to the better ordering of human society, it is of vital concern to the Kingdom of God." 14 Commenting on the text Gutierrez writes:

There is a close relationship between temporal progress and the growth of the Kingdom, but these processes are distinct. Those engaged in the latter not only cannot be indifferent to the former; they must show a genuine interest in and value it. However, the growth of the Kingdom goes beyond temporal progress. In short, there is close relationship but no identification. 15

The second step leads from a theology centred almost exclusively on God to a theology which discovers more clearly that Revelation implies a revelation about man. The bond between God and man is fundamental to an understanding of the true Christian value of the person, to Christian humanism.

The third step leads from ecclesiocentrism to Christocentrism. Under historical pressures, the Church had become centred in itself, to the point of identifying with Christ. In the Vatican Council, the Church came to a clearer realization that Christ is indeed the centre. The Council documents are clearly Christocentric.

Fourthly, the Church opened itself to ecumenism, explicitly recognizing that other Christians also hold values which lead to salvation. It likewise recognised that religious values may be found outside its pale. This new awareness leads

15 Gutierrez, n.5, p.171.
to a new theology whose basis is a profound and dynamic integration of the temporal progress and the Kingdom of God and an ordering toward the fullness of all that is human in the free gift of the self-communication with God. \textsuperscript{16}

These different ecclesiological perspectives are indicative of the differences in world view regarding the central question of the relationship of the Church to the changing social order. They are the basis of the different pastoral options that have emerged in the contemporary Latin American Church. The four options as described by Gutierrez may be summarized as in table 2.

Gutierrez's description and analysis of the four different types of pastoral options co-existing in the contemporary Latin American Church provides a very good theological basis for identifying and understanding the different types of Catholic elites in Latin America. However, he does not seem to maintain the famous distinction between acting "as a Catholic as such" and acting "as a Catholic". His different pastoral options are presented as different options of elites representing the ecclesial community. They are, therefore, options of pastors, bishops and priests. But, not all elites are necessarily pastors. Not all elites act always "as Catholics as such". They act very often merely "as Catholics" on their personal responsibility. Though pastoral actions are very relevant in the context of the relationship between Church and world, actions purely "as Catholics" seem to be even more important in contemporary Latin America, as they have wider application.

\textsuperscript{16} Ibid., p.172.
Table 2
Latin American Pastoral Options

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>APPROACH</th>
<th>The Christendom concept</th>
<th>The New Christendom concept</th>
<th>The Mature Christian Faith concept</th>
<th>The Prophetic Christian concept</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fundamentals task to baptize; stress on parish</td>
<td>Creation of temporal institutions.</td>
<td>Apostolic action in small well trained groups.</td>
<td>Reveal active presence of salvation among men.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PRIMARY FUNCTION</td>
<td>Preaching and administering sacraments.</td>
<td>Preaching and administering sacraments.</td>
<td>Fundamentally religious and spiritual.</td>
<td>Possibilities of temporal works for priests.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PRIMARY LAY DUTIES</td>
<td>Presupposes congruence of Church and world; complete service.</td>
<td>To favour the growth of the Kingdom of God.</td>
<td>The sanctification of the world.</td>
<td>Double function; in Church and in world.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>KEY NOTION</td>
<td>Salvation.</td>
<td>Mystical Body.</td>
<td>People of God. Pilgrim Community.</td>
<td>Church as sacrament of salvation; God in the neighbour.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RELATION TO STATES</td>
<td>Union of Church and state.</td>
<td>Non-intervention of Church in politics.</td>
<td>Church institution not to interfere in temporal society.</td>
<td>Denunciation of all that stands in the way of man's communion with his fellows and with God.</td>
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<td>-----------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RELATION FOR CHRISTIAN</td>
<td>Incorporation into visible Church; reception of sacraments.</td>
<td>Baptism of water; baptism of desire.</td>
<td>To have freely accepted the Christian faith; belief in a provident God.</td>
<td>Conversion to neighbour he who loves is saved.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RELATION TO Masses</td>
<td>Has sense of masses; appeals through popular pious practices.</td>
<td>Embodies what masses should be or should want.</td>
<td>Undifferentiated.</td>
<td>Greater concern than mature faith approach.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RELATION TO ELITES</td>
<td>Individuality poorly developed; ecclesiastical recognition encourages works of magnanimity.</td>
<td>Appeals to elites.</td>
<td>Prefers formation of elites.</td>
<td>Undifferentiated.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RELATION TO THINGS TEMPORAL</td>
<td>Total sacralization</td>
<td>Man seen as creative Sanotification of subject; consecration of the temporal; acknowledges value of historicity.</td>
<td>Eschatology is rooted in human history.</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Jose Comblin provides another basis of analysis when he discusses three religious modalities co-existing within the contemporary Latin American Church: Catholicism of the masses (catolicismo popular), bourgeois Catholicism, and social or revolutionary Catholicism. According to him, these three trends have been co-existing in tension within the Church in Latin America since the Second Vatican Council. These three modalities are, he thinks, in fact three religions.

Comblin describes the attempts at uniformity and rigidity in the universal Catholic Church prior to the Second Vatican Council which brought about a veritable explosion and unleashed liberal forces of the European and North American type. But the great majorities of the Church in Latin America were least affected by it. The official Church continued to be not responsive to their needs. The people persisted with their traditional popular religiosity. This is significant, he says, because it points to the widening gap between modernizing elites and the people. He writes: "The people do not follow the Catholic Church in its conciliar renewal which is, in the first place, an adaptation of the Catholic Church to the European and North American Middle Class".


18 In recent times there has been a great deal of study on the popular Catholicism and popular religiosity. See for example Aldo Buntig, ed., El Catolicismo popular en la Argentina
A bourgeois or secularized neo-Catholicism, according to Comblin, characterizes the upper levels of Latin American society, such as intellectuals, professionals, university professors and students. In these circles, traditional Catholicism is subject to vehement attacks. The middle class, many of whom were educated abroad, have absorbed European and North American thought pattern and life styles. They have also imported European cures for secularization—organizations such as Opus Dei and the Cursillos. Both of these movements understand the mission of the Church as limited to an interior conversion.¹⁹

The social or revolutionary Catholicism believes that "the raison d'etre of the Church is to preach charity and the raison d'être of the Christian is to practice it."²⁰ In the contemporary society charity cannot be understood only on person to person basis since injustice is collective and even structural. The whole of society is organized for the purpose of exploiting the people for the benefit of small privileged minorities. Therefore, the practice of charity requires changing the social structure. This situation precludes neutrality on the part of the Church because silence would tantamount to approval of injustice. A ramification of this position is the need for a radical conversion of the Church

previous footnoted contd.


¹⁹ Comblin, n.17, p.11.

²⁰ Ibid., p.6.
institution in favour of the poor. This third group demands an objective analysis of the social impact of ecclesial institutions and a consequent rejection of links to the dominant class. There is a tendency in this group to adopt Marxism as a method of analysis and pattern for action but they do not become affiliated to Marxist parties, he comments. Three options for action are favoured by this group: conscientization of the poor, direct political involvement, and collaboration with governments that favour fundamental social reforms. Comblin concludes saying that their chances are slim since they form a vanguard which is a group into itself, not representatives of the great masses of people.

Comblin's analysis does not seem to shed any new light or provide any further insight into the structure or behaviour of any of the three modalities he describes.

Ivan Vallier has identified and described at some length four types of elites in the Church in Latin America: Traditionalists, Papists, Pastors and Pluralists.\(^21\) He describes the emergence of new sectors in the Church in terms of "functionally generated differentiations" as part of the Church's "strategy for survival" and as "new ways of social influence".\(^22\) His assumption is that on the wake of the protestant and Marxist inroads into Latin America not only the Catholic Church's monopoly but also its value systems represented by protestantism and political movements of the left.\(^23\)

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\(^21\) Ivan Vallier, "Religious Elites: Differentiation and Development in Roman Catholicism", in n.1, pp.190-232.

\(^22\) Ibid., p.200.

The traditional Catholic elites, according to Vallier, are oriented to power structure of secular society. Their chief strategies for achieving influence are skilful maneuvering, short-term coalitions and making most out of ad hoc situations as they arise. They emphasise the role of the hierarchy within the Church as it proves important in the pursuit of influence.

Vallier then introduces a novel type called papists. He does not explain why they are called papists. But he describes them by their adherence to papal teachings on social doctrine (that is probably why he calls them papists). They form that sector of modern Catholicism aimed toward rechristianizing the world. Their objective is to regain the Church's influence by expanding the frontiers of Catholic values. But, they eschew direct alignment of the Church with political parties.

The third type according to Vallier, are the pastors composed of a small but growing group of bishops and priests whose main task is to build up strong worship centred congregations. They search for formulas that will effectively build the people and the pastors into a strong spiritual body through the rites of the Church and other actions of the pastors. With this objective the priests assume, besides their usual role as ritual leaders, new roles such as preaching, counselling, etc.

The last type Vallier describes are the pluralists. They realize that Catholicism is only one religion among others. Their concern is not so much with political activities or worship and
sacraments as with social justice and grass-root ethical action in the world. They stress community enterprises aimed to further economic development and social integration. They give special attention to the needs and deprivations of the poor and the exploited and maintain that the Church should play its role in the social revolution.

The last three, says Vallier, are important in the context of social change because each of them is related to a particular stage of Latin American development. He explains the three stages of development as; 1) acceptance of the idea of change, 2) translating the idea into action; 3) developing new modes of integration that facilitate development. The papists are related to the first, the pastors to the second and the pluralists to the third. Thus, these three are important for social development in Latin America.

Vallier's categorization into the aforesaid four types does not fully describe the tensions within the Church and the inner dynamism of the different sectors. In his book, Catholicism Social Control and Modernization in Latin America, he abandons this categorization and describes the different sectors of the Church in each country in terms of conservatives, progressives and radicals. But he maintains that "a conscious striving through shifts and strategies at influencing"24 is at the base of all that happening in the contemporary Latin American Church. This may be partially true. But this does not explain the complex dynamism and tension in which the Church is caught up.

24 Ibid., p.69.
Procopio Camargo proposes a different typology for the Brazilian Catholicism: traditional rural Catholicism, traditional urban Catholicism, and internalized Catholicism. The first two, in his view, are characterized by the strength of custom and tradition, by a certain fusion between the values and norms of society and those of the religious group, by the sacred character of religious behaviour, and by the religious legitimation of the social norms. The third type is characterized by a religious and social behaviour oriented by religious values, a rational explanation of those values and norms, and by a certain differentiation between religious values and the value system prevailing in society.

Camargo describes how in rural Brazilian Catholicism behaviour is 'sacred' and how the social norms are reinforced by Catholicism which retains the traditional influence and conservative image. Traditional urban Catholicism is described as losing a real influence in the development of secularized urban civilization. Religious practices are observed because of a juridical type of observance and not because of a link between religion and real life. Internalized Catholicism, according to Camargo, is characterized by a sense of spirituality, manifesting an effort on the intellectual level and also the will to integrate religious values in life, while affirming at the same time a tension

with the prevailing social values. It is also characterized by a social orientation and by encouragement to commitment in the process of social, cultural and economic development in the transformation of society.

Some of the author's observations are valid for contemporary Latin American Church. But the Church in Brazil and elsewhere in Latin America has come a long way off from 1967 when the author proposed his typology. A typology differentiated more in terms of change conceptualized with reference to a theological formulation is required to describe the sharply divided different sectors in the contemporary Church in Latin America.

Roncagliolo identifies three basic options in the Latin American Church: traditional, developmentalist and liberationist. He posits a crisis-phase as a transition stage from developmentalism to liberationism.

The traditional option that is prevalent in some sectors of the contemporary Latin American Church, Roncagliolo says, correspond to the Christianity of the Middle Ages, which sought the integration of Church and society as taught by St. Augustine. The temporal world is thought to be sacralized through legitimation given by the Church to temporal governments, through consecration of the countries to heavenly patrons, and so on. The same medieval concept of Church and society is sought to be maintained through integrism.

The developmentalist approach which seeks a departure from the medieval concepts, according to Roncaglilo is of neo-Thomist origin, based particularly on the Christian humanism of Jacques Maritain. Its aim is to construct a new Christendom. But it clearly distinguishes between Church and the world. However, the actual effort at constructing the new Christendom (profane as opposed to the earlier spiritual) involves spiritual, social and political action in favour of a kind of social Christianity. Social, educational and even political movements with this objective are organized or encouraged. In relation to development and social change it tries to avoid both capitalism and communism and adopts tercerism, a third way which is supposed to be equidistant from the other two.

Roncaglilo says that the developmentalist option that was based on a dualist vision of the Church and the world with a clear separation between the spiritual and political sphere as taught by the papal encyclicals, experienced its crisis particularly in the years after the Second Vatican Council in which the relationship between the Church and the world perceived up to that time underwent a profound transformation. The duality was somewhat breached in the Council. The social and the spiritual were inter-related. Further, theological development revealed the oneness of history of the world and of salvation. Faith-commitment was perceived as social commitment. The crisis of the duality was accompanied in the socio-economic sphere by the crisis of developmentalism.

The liberationist option according to Roncaglilo emerged from the crisis experience at theological as well as socio-economic
levels. It is a militant commitment on the part of Catholics as flowing from their Catholic faith. It is a commitment to popular struggles, with or without alliance with political parties. Roncagliolo describes some individuals and movements of this option and show that despite a variety of approach and experience their commitment was ultimately one and the same, liberationist. He sums up the three options and the crisis leading to the liberationist option in the following table. (table-3).

Elites in the Socio-Political Context

Several writers have identified and described the Catholic elites with particular emphasis on their socio-political behaviour. Their behaviour, however, is not unrelated to theological formulations, and pastoral and religious practices.

Hugo Assman, a liberation theologian and a leading protagonist of Marxist Christian dialogue in Latin America, in: a collaborative study with Jose Blanes and Luis Bach, explains the liberation process in terms of a series of steps which lead to the maturity of the historical conscience of Christians.27

Together, they start from the premise that there are radical differences between Biblical and Western thought. In the language of the Bible, they hold, truth is not an abstraction, it is an action, a praxis; whereas Western thought is marked by

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### Table 3

#### Three Types of Elites, Crisis of Developmentalism

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Traditional Option</th>
<th>Developmentalist Option</th>
<th>The Crisis</th>
<th>Liberationist Option</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Denies the autonomy of the world.</td>
<td>Recognizes the autonomy of the world in front of the institutional Church.</td>
<td>Recognition of the autonomy of the Church.</td>
<td>Affirms the solidarity of the Church with the world.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Denies the existence of Scheme of secular history. Recognizes only the schemes for the Kingdom of God.</td>
<td>Recognizes the existence of scheme of secular history provided it is based on Christian principles and helps the action of the Church.</td>
<td>Recognition of secular history. Assigns to the Church a liberating role.</td>
<td>Recognizes the autonomy of secular history.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The laity is reduced to auxiliary roles to the Church hierarchy.</td>
<td>The laity has a function proper to it; the building up the New Christendom.</td>
<td>Double task of the laity: building the world and the Church.</td>
<td>It is the duty of all Christians—priests as well as laity to build up the Church in the very construction of a better world.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total commitment to the preservation of the traditional order.</td>
<td>Commitment to tercerism (third way) particularly to Christian Democracy.</td>
<td>Political abstentionism.</td>
<td>Various Socialistic Commitments.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Roncagliolo, n.31, p.42.
abstraction, and difference between ideas and action. They point out also that Christianity has been held captive in a historical and sociological sense by the Western ideological system. The liberation process requires, therefore, a series of steps which would rid Christianity of this captivity and lead to the maturity of the historical conscience of the Christians.

The first step according to the study is commitment to Christian values. Many Christians also commit themselves to the political struggle. They analyse their reality in descriptive and general terms and are satisfied they are speaking about concrete elements of that reality—the poor, the rich, imperialism, capitalism, etc. Such an analysis whose point of departure lies in abstract principles, remain just that abstract. It does not include a structural analysis of the causes and means by which some persons subjugate others. The first step may be expressed in a diagram as follows:

\[
\text{Christian Values} \quad \xrightarrow{\text{Commitment}} \quad \text{Commitment.}
\]

The second step includes the beginning of the analysis of the concrete situation in process terms; the feed-back from the analysis has an impact on the values the Christian holds, and they, in turn, influence his commitment. Since in this stage, the analysis is justified in terms of ahistorical values, the commitment is unstable and ambiguous, even reversible. They
characterize this phase as transitional. The cleavage is developing. Many Christians at this stage have a great need for language which will assist them in removing the conceptual blocks which hem them in. The second step may be represented as follows:

Christian Values $\rightarrow$ Commitment $\rightarrow$ Beginning of analysis of the concrete reality.

The third step, according to Assman, Blanes and Bach, is the crucial one. A more strictly scientific analysis of the concrete reality provides a basis for the commitment to the struggle in historical terms. It no longer needs to be justified as "Christian". By contrast, abstract, ahistorical values are seen to belong to another logic, i.e., the logic of social Christianity, to be "imprisoned in another ideology". Structural analysis is used to unveil the causes and mechanism of exploitation. The unveiling reveals that the strategy of ecclesiastical institutions is essentially reformist and that the social doctrines of the Church is based on a Christian ideology.

The third step may be expressed thus:

Christian values $\rightarrow$ Commitment $\rightarrow$ More rigorously scientific analysis of the reality

Increasing departure from the initial ahistorical reference; i.e., "Christian values". $\rightarrow$ Conscious political struggle (definite praxis)

28 Ibid., p.67.
The fourth step described by Assman, Blanes and Bach, sketches the process of political struggle: a scientific analysis of the reality leads to reflection on the objective role of faith-informed action in the process of class struggle. What is the behaviour of the Church in the struggle? What is the meaning of this struggle in terms of the Kingdom of God? Christian values now play a motivating role, but are not needed to justify action. Love of God is manifested in terms of love for men, here and now. Religion and religious ideologies are sociological facts included in an analysis of the inescapable political dimension of a specific religious phenomenon. Step four may be represented as follows:

Political Struggle

Scientific analysis of the concrete reality

Reflection on the real and objective role of the praxis of faith (institutional levels, dissenting groups, Christian majority minorities, etc.) in the process of "class struggle"

Frame of reference is the social context of present cultural, social, political and economic environment.

- critical reflection on the behaviour of the Church in this struggle.

- meaning of this struggle in the trans-historical perspective of the Kingdom of God (assessment of the Central Christian themes: love of God, love of neighbour, reconciliation and conflict, unity and struggle, grace and the world, etc.)
The analysis of the four steps by Assman, Blanes and Bach provide insight into the inner tensions and dialectical processes involved in the maturity of what they term as historical conscience of Christians. Precisely because it is postulated in terms of a dialectical process, a kind of dialectical theology, the end result seem to them inevitable as the processes themselves are. But, this is not always verified in actual reality.

Thomas Sanders has categorized the Catholic elites in Latin America as reactionaries, conservatives, progressives and radicals and has described their composition, strength and differences. The most notable quality of the reactionaries, says Sanders, is their militancy in the defense of certain religious and social principles that they find rooted in the Church-tradition, and in the opposition to Communism. They cling to medieval scholastic theology with little change or sense of historical context. They are not reconciled to the changes brought about by the Second Vatican Council.

The reactionaries, according to Sanders, exult in authoritarianism and hierarchical order both in the Church and society. The idea of a "Christian" society dominates their socio-political views. They deplore the loss of Christian values in modern culture, as manifested in divorce, birth control etc. They try to restore Catholic values through militant organizations such as Society for Tradition, Family and Property.

Communism and socialism are the arch enemies of reactionaries. They organize militant campaign against Communism and those supposed to be Communist infiltrators in the Church. Socialism is considered a denial of the right to private property emanating from the natural order instituted by God and which no human authority should violate, and of the divinely ordered hierarchical structure of society with distinction of function and class. The reactionaries, says Sanders, are a great force in Brazil and Chile (and probably in other countries) not so much because of their number but because of their social and political position.

The conservatives, writes Sanders, differ from the reactionaries chiefly in their lack of militancy. But they too believe in a traditional Catholic society and support past structures. They do not oppose, however, the innovations of the Vatican Council out of respect for the voice of the Church. They retain at the same time, without tension, the older theology and practices. They do not contribute to modernization and development, nor question the Church's linkage with the powerful.

Sanders says that in both Brazil and Chile the conservatives form the largest group among the clergy and the laity but not among the bishops. Parishes and schools are their strongholds and the middle class is their base. Fearful of Communist revolution and socialism they support conservative political and social groups.

Sanders describes the progressives and radicals by comparison and contrasts between them. The progressives have absorbed the changes that have recently taken place in the Church
especially since Vatican II, and try to make significant
distributions to the modern world. Their intellectual inspiration
is neo-Thomism especially of Jacques Maritain, and try to work
carefully within the framework of the Church. The radicals too
claim their inspiration from Church documents. But they do not
envision social and political action in terms of moral norms and
directions emanating from the Church, but in terms of conscious
participation of faithful Christians in given moments. They also
relate their actions to motifs drawn from Marxism. While the
progressives work through "organizations of Christian inspiration"
such as Christian labour unions, Christian Democratic Party, etc.,
and avoid Communists, the radicals seek alliance with secular
movements including Marxist.

Both the progressives and radicals agree that convinced
Catholics represent a minority in society. But, while the former
consider it a transient situation and try to overcome it, the
latter think that it is a permanent situation and devise
strategies accordingly. Both emphasize promotion of small
groups of conscious dynamic Catholics, often apart from parish
structures.

The progressives as well as the radicals accept the role of
conscientization in social change. But the goals of social change
are different for both. The progressives adopt a cooperative and
evolutionary approach while the radicals adopt a critical and
revolutionary approach. The progressives propose an alternative
system which, they believe, avoids the problems of both capitalism
and socialism. But the radicals reject capitalism and opt for
socialism.
Sanders describes fairly accurately the various types of Catholic elites as they are seen in action in contemporary Latin America. However, the distinction between the reactionaries and conservatives, and between progressives and radicals does not seem to be as sharp as they are in fact in the continent. The differences between the reactionaries and the conservatives are more fundamental than militancy.

The reactionaries not only seek their inspiration from medieval thought but their objective is to construct the Church and society on medieval models, on the concept of old Christendom. In differentiating between the progressives and the radicals the full extent of the tension between the two does not seem to have been sufficiently stressed. The crisis experience and the dynamism that brought about the existence of the radicals is not described by Sanders.

Gonzalo Arroyo examines the different currents of social Christianity in Latin America and proposes a three fold typology; traditional Christians, reformist Christians and revolutionary Christians. 30

Arroyo describes the traditional Christians as politically conservative and religiously faithful to the practice of sacraments. This current of Christianity, he points out, prevailed in Latin America almost without countervailing forces.

till the 1930s. But this current has been steadily losing strength in recent times. However, in the face of a possible social revolution traditional Christians grow more radical by adopting ideological positions of an integrist cast.

The reformist current of Christianity, the author maintains, is closely bound up with the growth of Christian Democratic Party particularly in Chile and Venezuela, and with its impact in the rest of Latin America. It is in line with the general current of reformism in the contemporary Catholic Church as reflected in many official Church documents. These Christians, he says, talk about social reforms and about "revolution in liberty" and "communitarian and democratic socialism". They have internalized a whole set of abstract ahistorical ethical values such as democracy, participation, liberty and non-violence. These values structure their thinking in such a way that they are incapable of participating in ahistorical process which would establish the socialism they claim to profess. Arroyo contends that this hypothesis is verified in the events in Chile during the Allende regime and after the military coup. The reformist Christians appeared to collaborate with the Popular Unity Government. But their collaboration proved to be basically a tactical maneuver. He writes:

"Once the overall system in which it [The reformist current] was integrated no longer allowed for legally effected structural changes in the economic and political realm, it would cease to manifest support for the socialist program. Once capitalism shed its reformist mask it no longer tolerated the over-all transformation of society by legal democratic means. At that point institutional religion (that had reflected
the reformist current) being a support for the system would tend to regress to conservative positions in ideology and doctrine, thus clearly espousing the anti-communist positions". 31

After analysing the behaviour of the Chilean Church hierarchy and the various reformist groups including the Christian Democrats and the possible explanations, Arroyo contends that reformism is "an ideological ruse which safeguards the interests of the ruling classes and functions exclusively within the confines of capitalist system". 32

Arroyo believes that events in Chile since the military coup in 1973 have brought about such a radical polarization between fascists and revolutionaries that a 'third way' between them has been almost eliminated from Chile. He writes: "The reformism of Christian social doctrine of men like Frei and Tomic has been laid to rest by the machine guns and bayonets of the military junta". 33

Arroyo describes briefly the evolution of various Christian revolutionary movements in Latin America including the Christians for Socialism (of which he was one of the founding leaders). He contends that the revolutionary Christians do not try to derive their political stance from their Christian faith even though they feel that it dovetails with the Gospel message and with Jesus' predilection for the poor and their liberation.

31 Ibid., p.237.
32 Ibid., p.241.
33 Ibid., p.244.
They derive their political stance from an objective and scientific analysis of society which is authenticated by those working among the poor and oppressed. But their Christian faith is enlivened and vivified by the political activism in favour of the poor. He believes that with the practical elimination of the 'third way' of the reformist Christians in Chile the revolutionary Christians have that much to their advantage in the struggle that lies ahead.

Arroyo's description of the three types are rather sketchy and purely socio-political, as he himself admits. His polemics with his one-time mentor Roger Vekemans who is an ardent advocate of reformism is well-known. His remark about the elimination of reformism from Chile is to be taken in that context. Only time will prove how far he is correct in his evaluation. But theoretically he seems to be closer to the truth when he contends that reformism is reducible to capitalism in the final analysis.

Arroyo's contention that the revolutionary Christians do not derive their political stance from their Christian faith is contrary to the testimony of other revolutionaries like Camilo Torres who always maintained that revolution is a Christian imperative and that his commitment to social revolution flowed directly from his commitment in faith. His contention may be true in the case of particular political actions or strategies, but does not seem to be true in the case of political activism in general of revolutionary Christians as Christians.
The Medellin Conference has categorized the Catholic elites as traditionalists or conservatives, evolutionists or advocates of economic development, and revolutionaries, and have located them in the cultural sphere (artists, men of letters and of universities—professors and students), professional sphere (doctors, lawyers, educators, engineers, agronomists, city planners, economists, sociologists, technologists), socio-economic sphere (industrialists, bankers, labour and peasant leaders, business men, land owners etc.), and political and military sphere (politicians, those who exercise judicial authority, and professional military officers).  

The three types are examined in terms of their attitudes, mentalities and sub-groupings, in the process of social change and relate them to the evidence of their faith. The analysis and description of the three types by the Medellin Conference may be expressed as in table 4.

It is a relevant and useful categorization and description of Catholic elites. The three most prominent and easily identifiable currents or tendencies in the Church are identified and discussed. The reformists are not identified by that term but they are included in the category of evolutionists. The term advocates of economic development is too vast and cannot be said to be a specific category. Even the conservatives can be included in that. This typology does not take into account the theological dimensions and many other features of Catholicism. But then,

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34 Second General Conference, n.3, p.110.
the Medellin Conclusions admit that it is not an exact or in-depth analysis of the whole Latin American situation. While locating the elites in various sectors of society one notable omission is the ecclesiastical sphere. All the three types identified are found also within the Church, especially in the ranks of the bishops themselves.

Having examined a number of categorizations and typologies proposed by several authors, the following typology (table no.4) is proposed by way of conclusion to this chapter. Though any number of groupings and sub-groupings are possible, an attempt is made here to restrict them to three most easily identifiable types: the conservatives, the reformists, and the liberationists.

The conservatives, the reformists, and the liberationists are the three groups that are clearly in the mainstream of Latin American Catholicism. However, it must be noted that, as the last group is a novel phenomenon in Latin America there is an abundance of literature on it. The other two groups are generally taken for granted and there is a paucity of literature as compared to the third group.35 Much of the literature available is in the context of polemics with the liberationists.


Smithsonian
Table 4
Three Types of Elites According to the Medellin Conference

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SOCIAL PROBLEMS</th>
<th>Traditionalists of Conservatives</th>
<th>Evolutionists or advocates of economic development</th>
<th>Revolutionaries</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Preservation of established order and privileges. Do not question the social structure. Show no social conscience. Paternalism and almsgiving with no concern for changing status quo. No social participation for popular classes.</td>
<td>Limited Social conscience. Greater emphasis on economic progress than on social betterment. Some modification of social structure if it helps economic development. Limited integration of the marginalized into the mainstream of society to facilitate development. Scientific study of society to make it more efficient.</td>
<td>Question the very social structure. Seek radical change. Reordering of the entire social order. People are and must be the subject of the change. Active participation of the popular classes in decision making at all levels.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ECONOMIC PROBLEMS</td>
<td>Some interest in economic development. Act under the influence of national or international economic power. No humanization.</td>
<td>Emphasis on economic development. Chief concern is the means of production. Importance of technology and planning. Marginal people to be integrated into the mainstream of society as producers and consumers.</td>
<td>Question the existing economic structures. Radical change in goals as well as implementation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FAITH</td>
<td>SECTORS</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------</td>
<td>---------</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dichotomy between faith and social responsibility. Faith is reduced to a creed or set of laws. Membership in the Church is a matter of tradition and of self interest. There is not so much a crisis of faith as a crisis of religiosity.</td>
<td>Upper Class Socio-economic sectors. Professional circles. Established governing bodies.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wide variety of manifestation of faith from complete religious indifference to deep personal commitment. Church is viewed in term of its instrumentality in the development of the country. Desacralization arising out of the technological mentality.</td>
<td>Technocrats. Various development agencies.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Identification of faith, with social responsibility. Vivid sense of service of neighbour. Critical of the institutional Church, its historical role and present attitudes to social change. Experiences of crisis of faith.</td>
<td>Intellectuals, University people. Scientific researchers.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As mentioned in Chapter V, there are any number of movements in Latin America that are on the extreme right or on the extreme left. The members of these groups especially of the ultra-right profess themselves to be Catholics and have frequent recourse to Catholic teachings in support of their activities.\textsuperscript{36} In terms of numbers and influence they are not negligible. But as movements, they have obviously overflowed the Catholic boundaries, aside from the fact that they are not endorsed by the official Church.

Within each of the groups, the conservatives, the reformists and the liberationists it is possible to identify sub-groups. Among the conservatives, for example, it is possible to identify reactionaries, arch-conservatives, moderately conservatives, modernizing conservatives etc., depending on their particular modes of behaviour. Some writers like Sanders distinguish between reactionaries and conservatives but admit that the difference between them is based on militancy. As opposed to the conservatives the reactionaries are marked by their militancy in seeking a return to the traditional order as it always existed.

Militancy, however, is not necessarily associated with the reactionaries alone. Even the moderate conservatives have shown militancy especially in their anti-Communism. This is what had happened in Brazil in 1964 when hundreds of thousands of Brazilians took part in the "family marches". They were not necessarily all reactionaries.

In the institutional Church there are not as many reactionaries as it is often made out to be. This was proved in the failure of the renegade archbishop Marcel Lefebvre of Switzerland to establish anywhere in Latin America the parallel Church he had succeeded in establishing in some parts of Europe and North America in protest against the innovations introduced by the Second Vatican Council.

It is true that there are sections in the broad conservative group that exhibit reactionary tendencies is given circumstances. The term "reactionary" designates the social behaviour whose predominant tendency is to return to a social structure which has already been overcome or to positions adopted by the classes that grew out of the dominating classes of the previous structure. (Such is the case when maintenance of feudal privileges is sought in a capitalist system that has overcome the feudal structure, or when classical colonial postures are adopted after independence). The term may also designate that behaviour which, in the framework of a particular structure adheres to an aspect of the structure which has already been overcome.

The term "conservative" designates that social behaviour which has a pronounced tendency for the maintenance of the structure in the moment of its highest degree of stability and expansion. The term "modernizing conservative" designates that behaviour which accepts certain superficial modifications of the structure and then cling to that form in which it has functioned in a given moment.
(Such is the case with the behaviour of many conservatives in the Church, who, because of their acceptance of the authority in the Church, are reconciled to the post-Vatican innovations in the Church, which have not really altered the basic structure of the Church).

All the various tendencies are really manifestations of the basic conservative tendency to preserve the traditional order, to refuse to change, and to thwart any attempt toward change. Whether reactionary, arch-conservative or moderately conservative their basic attitude toward the preservation of the traditional order does not differ substantially. Strategic or tactical means adopted in a given situation may differ. Their social and political views with regard to social change coincide. All of them maintain that the Church's realm is purely spiritual which includes fight against atheistic Communism. Hence, though it is possible to divide the conservative section in the Church into several sub-groups it is considered adequate to describe them as one broad group.

The middle group in the Church is known variously as reformists, developmentists, modernizers, pastorals etc. It is not a coherent single group with uniform attitude towards socio-political and economic problems of Latin America. Within this group it is possible to distinguish sectors with tendencies towards conservatism and others with those towards progressivism.

The reformist group is best represented by Christian Democrats and Lopez Trujillo group in the institutional Church. With regard to change they are favourably disposed to it and to
adaptation to the requirement of modern times, in line with the Vatican Council. In the socio-economic sphere they advocate a third way distinct from capitalism and socialism. The Christian Democrats describe the third way as communitarianism which stresses the social character of private property. The reformists maintain that changes are required but that they must be gradual, incremental and orderly. Vekemans writes: "Neither excessive pragmatism, which does not choose to change anything, nor excessive utopianism, which seeks to change everything, will prove satisfactory".

The reformists maintain that the Church should not be neutral in the struggle for justice. But the approach to social justice should be in terms of evangelical love rather than of class struggle. The Church should provide a broad framework for social and political action. They propose social Christianity and emphasize Christianizing the society by means of apostolic group action. Whereas the principal duties of the clergy are religious and spiritual those of the lay persons are to sanctify the world. Politics in a sphere proper to the laity. Priests and religious should not be directly involved in politics.

39 Roger Vekemans, Teología de liberación y Cristianos por el Socialisme (Bogota, 1976), p.535.
40 Ibid., pp.538-41.
The reformists, as much as the conservatives, are totally opposed to Marxist ideology and class struggle. The sustained efforts of the teaching of the Catholic Church against Communism and socialism has acted as an almost coercive influence on these sectors in the Church. Atheistic Communism and denial of private property is considered totally irreconcilable with Christian principles. Hence the reformists spare no efforts to oppose Communism and expose those they consider to be Communist infiltrators in the Church.

Dussel argues that a third way is not possible either in theory or in practice. He writes:

There is no 'third way' but rather secondary positions within the first (i.e., capitalism): brazen or totalitarian imperialistic capitalism, or populism such as Peronism, or developmental capitalism such as Christian Democracy or reformist capitalism one or another way. 42

He considers the "third way" between capitalism and socialism not a real alternative, but, a specious one, because, in fact, it leaves standing the whole structure of capitalism, uncriticized except in its brazen extreme ideological aspect which even the Latin American commercial bourgeoisie argues must changed.

Gonzalo Arroyo contends that social Christianity is only a reformist mask which capitalism and conservatism were and shed, as and when found in their interests. Christian Democracy, according to him, works within the confines of capitalism. Hence

he argues that reformists in the final analysis are reducible to the conservatives. 43

The thought process of both the conservatives and liberationists is one and the same, i.e., formal logic, whether deductive or inductive, as opposed to the dialectical logic employed by the revolutionaries. Thus, it is possible to reduce both the reformists and the conservatives to a single category. However, the reformists profess to maintain a position distinct from both the conservatives and revolutionaries, and they form, perhaps the largest group in the Church in Latin America. Hence, they need to be treated as a separate type in the Church.

Within the reformist type there are also sectors with tendencies more to the left. Though they generally support strong governments and law and order yet, faced with what they consider to be excessive repression, some of them have joined hands with the more progressive sectors in the Church in denouncing unjustified repression.

The term "revolutionary" connotes the behaviour of those who are opposed to the existing social structures and are committed to radical changes, not through a process of evolution or gradualism but through total and sudden transformation. In this sector also it is possible to identify different sub-groups. There is the prophetic type that is preoccupied with verbal denunciation of the evils of the present structures and of the repression under the

43 Arroyo, n.30, pp.229-46.
dictatorial regimes. There are others who are equally committed to action for the liberation of the poor and the oppressed. Even in this category there are those who are committed to non-violence like Dom Helder Camara, and those who opt for any means, including violent, to overcome the situation of institutionalized violence. But, all of them emphasize the necessity of profound and immediate transformation of the structures of society. They argue for active participation of the Church and its personnel in this revolutionary process. Political action cannot be separated from pastoral action in the present context of Latin America. They are committed to socialism and to strategic as well as tactical alliance with Marxists.

The term "progressive" is often used to connote the reformists as well as the revolutionaries. The term itself is vague and relative. One can be considered progressive in relation to the conservatives but not necessarily so in relation to the revolutionaries. Hence that term is not employed here to describe any type.

The term "liberationists" is used in preference to the term "radicals". As Enrique Dussel points out, the term "radical" connotes only a negation of the negation, i.e. a negation of the existing structure which is supposed to be a negation of the rights of man. The term carries with it a connotation of perennial minority. Radicals are always in a minority in any society. "Radical" is an imprecise term. What it opposes is definite but what it proposes is indefinite. As opposed to it the term
"liberationists" or "liberators" (liberadores) is positive and definite. The term "radical" is not necessarily related to the people while the term "liberationists" is necessarily related to the people to be liberated. Similarly the term "liberationists" is used in preference to the term "revolutionaries" because the former has a Biblical context and is richer in meaning especially in a Christian context.

The three types are identified in relation to change of structures in society. Structure is understood as a coherent system which forms a totality in itself (e.g. the human body) consisting of different elements (e.g. brain, heart etc.) which enjoy a relative autonomy in such a way that each one depends on the other and cannot be what it is except in its relation with them. It is characterized by the unequal development of its elements, its differences, its oppositions, and the unity of its contradictions. Among these elements a determinant can be distinguished, which conditions the appearance and the development of the others without reducing them to it. A structure is not immediate and empirically visible as a structure. Structures come into existence in a variety of ways; sometimes through a long process of evolution with conscious or unconscious efforts toward the formation of it, sometime through sudden and conscious efforts. Structures are in existence in society as part of it and exercising a decidedly determining influence.

44 Author's interview with Dussel on 10 June 1977; See also Dussel, Filosofía de la liberación (Mexico, 1977), pp.70-71,
Typology is understood as an artificial model that is devised in order to describe a particular category of thought or behaviour. It is, in fact, a "statistical data" made up of descriptive words and not of numbers and percentages.

Any typology has its advantages and limitations. They are useful in ordering and clarifying modes of thought and behaviour. But they are not absolute because they are heuristic. They are subject to change as human beings change. An individual may not fit into a given typology either because he does not possess all the characteristics of a given type or he possesses characteristics of more than one type, or reveals characteristics of one type in terms of certain behaviour and those of another type in terms of other behaviours. In this sense even categorization into such broad grouping as "left" or "right" may not be accurately done. Even though many individual elites, particularly among the bishops, are known to belong to a particular type and are often talked about as such no attempt is made here to categorize any individual. The typology, moreover is presented without any judgement of value, of connotation of class.

The relative size or extent of each of the three types in the Church as a whole, and at different levels, i.e. bishops, priests and laity, is a matter of conjecture. The bishops are, perhaps, the most visible elites in the Catholic Church. Some attempts to study, and assess their orientations have been made.

Levine attempted such a study of the bishops of Colombia and Venezuela on the basis of a questionnaire sent to them.45

But the attempt was only partially successful for want of adequate response. A majority of the bishops who responded saw national problems primarily in terms of social economic and political structures. (79 per cent for Colombia and 56 percent for Venezuela). 46

But a large percentage stressed the traditional methods of charity and the provision of general moral guidelines (4½ percent for Colombia and 39 percent for Venezuela). 47 Only a small minority showed a preference for activism i.e. upon and direct use of its human and natural resources in the promotion of change (17 percent for Colombia and 19 percent for Venezuela). 49 If it is any reliable guide one might say that in the Church as represented by the bishops in Colombia and Venezuela the traditional or conservative sectors form the largest group.

Antolinez makes an estimate of bishops of Brazil and states that 30 percent of the bishops are "socially minded" (progressives), about 55 percent are "pastorally minded" and 15 percent are "juridically minded" (traditional conservatives). In the case of Chile the bishops are divided into 25 percent, 50 percent and 25 percent respectively. 49

46 Ibid., p.58.
47 Ibid., p.61.
48 Ibid., p.63.
49 Juan de Dios Antolinez S.J. "In a Catholic, Dependent, Oppressed Continent, What Does the Church Do and Say?" in IDOC. n.42, p.14.
For Latin America as a whole the hard-core conservatives as well as the militant progressives are in a small minority, as was seen both in Medellin and Puebla. The middle group forms probably the largest of the three sectors among the bishops. The distribution of priests and laity is not likely to be substantially different from that of the bishops.
### Table 5

#### Three Types of Elites and Their Roles

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>DESCRiPTION</th>
<th>Conservative</th>
<th>Reformist</th>
<th>Liberationist</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>POLITICAL SPHERE</td>
<td>Socialism. Liberating political activism is part of the mission of the Church and priests.</td>
<td></td>
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<td>------------------</td>
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<tr>
<td>Alignment with conservative politics. Sometimes neutrality if it helps conservative politics. Mission of the Church is then defined as purely spiritual.</td>
<td>Alignment with reformist politics or neutrality. Church's mission is spiritual. Politics is the domain of the laity and not of priests.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Traditional acts of paternalistic acts of charity. The spiritual richness of the state of poverty. Total condemnation of Marxism.</td>
<td>New forms of social action. Scientific social research. Accepts Marxist analysis but does not acknowledge. Total opposition to Marxism.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Capitalism national and international. Interest in economic advancement, within the capitalist structures of quality and quantity. Value tiation. Active part for the and dependency on the metropolitan countries. No participation of the popular classes.</td>
<td>Reformed capitalism. Developmentalism. Means of production must be improved in cy. Socialism is the only solution. Integration of the marginalized into the mainstream as producers and consumers. No real participation of the popular classes.</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Favourite quotation &quot;You will always have the poor with you&quot;(Mt.26:11). Poverty and suffering will be compensated in heaven. All cannot be equal. They are weak and lazy without any desire to overcome their lot.</td>
<td>They must be given education and schools. The trade union will look after justice. All violent struggles must be eschewed.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All distinction of social classes must be eliminated. Society divided between exploiters and exploited are unjust. Poverty is the product of unjust structures. Society without classes as ideal.</td>
<td>Education for conscientization. Liberating activities. Accepts Marxist analysis and methods within a Christian vision of eschatology. Tactical and strategic alliance with Marxist.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>THE RICH</strong></td>
<td>Their social position is just. They deserve it because of their intelligence and hard work. The rich are needed to create industries and jobs. They are the leaders of society.</td>
<td>They have to fulfill social obligations: just salary, social security, vacation etc. The ever increasing gap between the rich and the poor must be narrowed.</td>
<td>Their social position is the consequence of an unjust system which exploits the working majority.</td>
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<tr>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>THE UNITED STATES</strong></td>
<td>Defender of the Christian West. Model country where order, democracy, prosperity of progress and guardian of general welfare flourish. Liberty in the world. Ex-Closer alliance with it. All cessive U.S. influence and should strive to reach their interference must be level. Supportive of all U.S. limited. endeavours in the world.</td>
<td>Bastion of democracy and anti-communism. Promoter of order, democracy, prosperity of progress and guardian of general welfare flourish. Liberty in the world. Ex-Closer alliance with it. All cessive U.S. influence and should strive to reach their interference must be level. Supportive of all U.S. limited. endeavours in the world.</td>
<td>Underdevelopment in Latin America is the price of development in U.S.A. An enemy of authentic liberation of peoples. Liberation from dependency on it and from all forms of control and interference.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>RELIGION</strong></td>
<td>Useful to keep the people calm. The believers know that 'Kingdom is not of this world' (John 18:36). Christianity and Socialism are not compatible.</td>
<td>Religion has been the solution of social problems neither in Capitalism nor in Socialism but in the social doctrine of the Church.</td>
<td>Religion is committed to the interest of the higher classes. It is to be solidarized truly with the poor of the world. Gospel and capitalist values are incommensurate. Socialism is in keeping with the spirit of Gospel.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
CONCLUSIONS

The survey of the historical evolution of the Church in Latin America reveals that it has been enmeshed in the Latin America politics since the days of the conquest. The conquest itself was marked by the fusion of the two powers--spiritual and temporal. This fusion was further institutionalized during the colonial era. The crown was the Pope's agent, and the Church personnel in Americas were as much the Crown's agents as they were missionaries. The Church as an institution depended on the State and, in turn, helped to sanctify the colonial social and political order.

The conquest was marked by violence too which in the subsequent years came to be perpetuated in the Latin American society. Today the principal means of the ruling class in Latin America are still those of the Iberian conquerors--brute force or machismo. Catholicism indirectly helped, by acquiescence, the perpetration and eventual perpetuation of violence. Antonio Montesinos and Bartolome de las Casas notwithstanding, very few of the early missionaries suggested that violence was unchristian.

Aside from sporadic attempts by a few individual missionaries to show paternalistic concern for the suffering natives, the Church was unconcerned about the socio-economic problems of exploitation and poverty. By extolling the virtues of poverty, suffering and submission the Church merely instilled in the marginalised classes
a sense of resignation, passivity and fatalism, the effects of which continue and are a hindrance to their liberation today.

Through tithes, legacies and gifts the colonial Church became an economic, and therefore, political power with immense possessions in lands and capital goods. Preservation of its privileges and vast material wealth became one of its chief concerns.

The movement for independence created a division in the Church in its relation to the Crown. But independence did not really alter its relation to power. Patronage was transferred from the Crown to the emerging ruling elites of the new republics. Catholicism was declared the State religion and articles of intolerance of other religions were incorporated into the constitutions. The Church retained its privileges and the material wealth especially the vast tax-free land holdings, and monopoly over education.

The Church, bereft of the Crown's protection, sought to safeguard its interests against the free-thinking politicians or liberals who possessed anticlerical tendencies, through increased political activities in support of the conservatives who often ran tyrannical governments in the interest solely of the ruling class. In the ensuing, often bloody conflicts between the conservatives and the liberals that lasted through the 1930s and are still alive in some parts of Latin America, the Church invariably aligned with the conservatives, thus inviting the opprobrium of the liberals who, when in power, passed several
anticlerical legislations aimed at reducing the power of the Church. However, their anticlerical legislations were not matched by socially progressive legislations. The liberals, as much as the conservatives, represented the ruling class and its interests. In the process, the Church lost much of its material wealth and many of its privileges like the monopoly of education.

Eventually, Church and State were constitutionally separated. This enabled the Church to act free of the shackles that bound it to the State. But it continued, as before, to provide the ruling class with an ideology that opposed any change in the social structures. Even the social encyclical Rerum Novarum of Pope Leo XIII did not create any sense of social awareness in the Church in Latin America.

It was only after the publication of the encyclical Quadragessimo Anno of Pope Pius XI that some efforts were made to focus attention on the social problems existing in Latin America. Encouraged by the Pope and led by some bishops, many Catholics in Latin America perceived their function as christianizing society by means of apostolic group action. Whereas the principal duties of the clergy were religious and spiritual, those of lay persons were to sanctify the world. Catholic social action attended to specific problems, often on the basis of personal initiative and, in the case of priests, not uncommonly without institutional approval for, the Church did not consider such interests to fall under the heading of pastoral work. Between 1945 and 1968, Latin American Catholics created a variety of strategies for Catholic
Action which taken together have been characterized as "social Christianity".

Even while Catholic Action movements were creating a social awareness in some sectors of the Church others remained impervious to any change and clung to conservative and reactionary ways of old. The experiences of many social activists convinced them of the futility of social action without corresponding political action for change. It is under these circumstances that Christian Democratic party was formed all over Latin America. Christian Democracy questioning both liberal capitalism and Marxist socialism, advocated a 'third way', as implicit in the Church documents. The Christian Democrats and their slogan "revolution in liberty" raised hopes about socio-economic reform and development.

At the same time, many Catholic social activists were convinced of the inadequacy of a reformist approach to the socio-economic problems of Latin America which they rightly perceived as caused by unjust socio-economic and political structures. The social scientists gave further insight into the problems by analysing them in terms of development-underdevelopment, and centre-periphery relationship. They received increasing support from studies made by the Economic Commission for Latin America (ECLA). The Marxist view of neo-colonial capitalism and class struggle found increasing acceptance among many Catholics. The successful Cuban revolution and the relative success of the socialist experiment in Cuba acted as catalysts in transforming many Catholics into revolutionaries. New theological formulations began to take shape.
in some sectors of the Church which provided a framework for Catholic revolutionary activities. The Vatican Council and the social encyclicals of Pope John XXIII and Pope Paul VI opened up new possibilities. By the close of the 1960s deep divisions in the Church in Latin America were discernible. At least three sectors were clearly distinguishable: the conservatives, the reformists and the liberationists.

It was in this context that the Second General Conference of the Latin American Bishops was held in 1968, in Medellin, Colombia. The Medellin Conference officially accepted "liberation" as the goal and committed the Latin American Church to a process of profound social transformation. However, it did not bring about a uniform conversion of all sectors in the Church (including those in the Church hierarchy) to that particular point of view. Divergent and directly opposed points of view continued to co-exist within the Church.

The years after the Medellin Conference saw further deepening of the divisions and polarizations within the Church. The spread of authoritarian military regimes in a majority of Latin American countries and the repressive measures they widely employed further contributed to a polarization between the conservatives who supported the regimes and the progressives who opposed them. As repression increased, the Church as the last remaining organization in the neo-fascist States, with relative freedom to act, acted on behalf of the repressed masses. Direct attack on Church personnel by the repressive regimes brought the
Church in direct confrontation with the States. Opposition to the repressive measures and violations of human rights were on the increase in the Church particularly in Brazil and Chile, making it very uncomfortable for the repressive regimes and their supporters in the Church.

The Medellin Conference provided impulses for increased revolutionary activities by the Catholics. Some theologians taking inspiration and encouragement from the Medellin Conference began to formulate systematically a theology of "liberation" or "revolution". A number of movements committed to social revolution began to take shape within the institutional Church. The Church in Latin America began increasingly showing tendencies towards the left.

While preparations were under way for the holding of the third General Conference of the Latin American Bishops, some sectors in the Church in collusion with the Vatican Curia sought to reverse the course in which the Latin American Church had been set at the Medellin Conference. The Preparatory Consultative Document on which discussions in the Conference were to be held and the selection of participants to the Conference itself bore the mark of this conservative maneuvers. The progressives in the Church, on the other hand, sought to consolidate the gains made since the Medellin Conference and wanted the Church to make further advancement towards radical social transformation.

The two years of preparation for the Puebla Conference was marked by acrimonious debates, conflicts and tension among the various opposing sectors in the Church. The Preparatory Consultative Document was widely studied, discussed and criticized at the
grass-root level throughout Latin America, revealing an interest unprecedented any time anywhere in the Catholic Church for a Church document.

At the Conference itself the presence of Pope John Paul II and his exhortations had a salutary effect on maintaining unity in the Latin American Church despite the co-existence within it of divergent and directly opposed points of view. The Final Document of the Puebla Conference demonstrated a surprising consensus among the bishops of Latin America—remarkable in view of the deep divisions that had come about in the Church in the years preceding the Puebla Conference—about its past experience, its present context, and its future direction. However, the text of the Final Document and the process by which it was produced, show clearly the co-existence within the Church of conflicting interests and contesting sectors.

Medellin was a kind of manifesto for the Church produced by its more progressive sectors. But Puebla was a product of the collective experience of the Church in Latin America. Despite the efforts during the preparatory period to maneuver the outcome, Puebla proved an encounter quite representative of different sectors and forces found in the Church today—the conservatives, the reformists and the liberationists.

The Final Document of Puebla is the outcome of debates and compromises. It is significant for both the consensus and the divisions reflected in it. The document endorses the fundamental lines set out at the Medellin Conference: a preferential option for
the poor and oppressed, a sociological analysis of "structural sin", of "institutionalized injustice" and "institutionalized violence", of poverty produced by "mechanisms of oppression" and the need for rapid "structural change".

Though unity in the Church has been preserved tensions have not been really resolved in several areas. On the contrary, Puebla made it obvious that the Church will be deeply divided in the future.

In its criticism and rejection of both the capitalist and Marxist ideologies, Puebla implicitly suggests a "middle way" or a "third way". This point had been made in all the social documents of the Catholic Church dating from Rerum Novarum as well as in the documents of Medellin. The inherent weakness of the option for the "middle way" is that it is derived from different focal points in the respective ideologies. While upholding the humanistic ideals of capitalism, it denounces the social evils of industrialization, particularly the inequities in wealth. The reverse is true of its treatment of Marxism. While supporting the theoretical goals of Marxism—like the equitable distribution of wealth—it criticizes the theory itself and its analysis of class struggle, as well as its materialism which Pope Pius XI described in Quadragesimo Anno as "militant atheism". This reflects a subtle but pervasive differentiation in Church thinking between the role of social and individual ethics in ideology. In practice, modern capitalist and Marxist ideologies fall short of the ideals which they uphold as standards. But the failures of capitalism are attributed to human
weakness and sin; thus, the predominant themes in Catholic social doctrine can concentrate comfortably on individual conversion and change as leading to social reform. The failure of Marxism, on the contrary, are attributed not to human sin, but to inherent fallacies in Marxist analysis itself. In other words, capitalism is perceived as reformable, but not Marxism. While Church's thinking purports to rise above both the ideologies, its concepts of sin, redemption, conversion, etc. are tied to a capitalist perspective.

It is true that neither system has succeeded in creating the optimum society. Such a broad critique, however, must be related to the context in which it is used. Under unpopular governments which seek to maintain stability through repressive measures to which both economic and civil freedoms are subordinated, a "third way" only works to support the status quo. Practically, as long as rulers hold reasonable amount of power, any move which is not against them acts to support them. The "third way" is essentially a choice for reform, not for revolution and, as such, undercuts the power of revolutionary movements. Hence, it is not possible for the revolutionary sectors in the Church to compromise with the "third way". They view the "third way" as a compromise with capitalism and oppose it as much as, or even more than capitalism itself.

While the "third way" has many advocates and adherents in the Latin American Church, it is at the same time opposed by many
within the Church as an impossible and impractical position in the unstable and turbulent situation of Latin America. In the tense political climate of most Latin American countries today, even adherents of gradual reforms are in a dangerous position. Dictators find it extremely easy to deal with all reformers as subversives or Communists.

The Puebla Document which suggests a "third way" does not mark a uniform conversion of all sectors to that point of view. Nor does it resolve the contradictions and tensions inherent in the "third way". There is bound to be more debates and divisions within the Church on this option.

The most important problem that has not been resolved and which has deeply divided the Church in Latin America is the problem of national politics. Such a problem had always bedevilled the Church, and Puebla made it obvious that the Church would be even more deeply involved in national politics in the future. But what is more important is that the Church is going to be even more divided than ever before in its attitude towards involvement in politics and in its actual involvement itself.

Church's role in politics has always been an issue in Latin America. But the issue surfaced in a particular way in recent times in almost all the Latin American countries. The Christians for Socialism and similar clergy-led movements which have clear political options have taken shape everywhere in the continent.

National Bishops' Conferences in Chile and Colombia explicitly forbade priests from membership in Christians for Socialism and similar movements with political options. But it was
not considered by many as the last word on the issue. It was hotly debated among the conservatives, the reformists and the liberationists immediately before the Puebla Conference. The conservatives argued for a Church committed to traditional order and remain apolitical, the reformists, for a Church committed to change but apolitical, and the liberationists, for a Church socially as well as politically committed to the process of liberation. Each of these sectors in the Church sought the issue to be settled once and for all at the Puebla Conference, in accordance with its point of view.

In keeping with the teachings of the Vatican Council and Medellin Conference and with the pronouncements of Pope John Paul II in Mexico, the Puebla clearly and persistently declared that the Church as an institution must avoid any partisan political activity. It echoed the opening message of Pope John Paul II in asserting that the Church is a mystery and not a political party. The bishops at Puebla were really concerned about the unity of the Church which would be torn asunder from within if it allowed partisan factions to claim its universal truths for their particular programmes and politics.

At the same time Puebla's broad understanding of its social commitments, and pastoral and prophetic responsibilities will inevitably draw the Church into basic issues of change, freedom, equality, justice, participation and power--into involvement in politics.

The repressive regimes that exist in many countries in Latin America has already made the Church politically involved. This
involvement has occurred in several ways, with implications which vary depending on the behaviour of these regimes. In general, they have moved the Church to explicit political statements about the desirability of democracy. The Puebla Document has further specified the qualities that should characterize good polity—widespread popular participation, equal protection under the law, an independent judiciary, more equitable distribution of wealth and opportunity, a guaranteed right for workers and peasants to organize themselves, etc. Puebla sees all these as falling within the Church's larger pastoral mission as "Mother and Teacher of all". The bishops expect resistance but express confidence that the Church will pursue it to its "ultimate consequences".

The bishops at Puebla have not only asserted the autonomy of the Church's religious sphere, and the right to articulate social values and goals, that is autonomous of the State, but also argued for political pluralism and social "space" for institutional as well as theological reasons.

With the suppression of political participation and activity under authoritarian regimes, structures which the Church defends as "religious" and its own (e.g. Basic Christian Community) have become in reality a forum also for political activity in favour of the poor, but generally avoiding partisan approach.

Though Puebla views this mission of the Church as pastoral and quite distinct from politics the fact is that in the actual exercise of this pastoral mission the Church is inevitably drawn into politics. It is a paradox, because this involvement exists in the face of a sincere desire and attempt to stay out of politics.
This paradox has not been resolved at Puebla and is not likely to be resolved in the near future.

The problem of clericalism in politics is a corollary of this larger paradox of Church and politics. Puebla insists that the clergy should keep out of politics. At the same time priests are expected to be pastors "committed to the integral liberation of the poor and the oppressed". "Socially committed" and at the same time "apolitical" clergy is an extension of the paradox of "socially committed" Church which is to be "apolitical" at the same time. The contradictory nature of demanding that the priests remain "apolitical" is illustrated by their position in parishes throughout Latin America. Is the priest who allows hunger strikers to strike in his Church or Church premises acting politically? What about priests who sign petitions, or go to courts with parishioners to seek the whereabouts of a "disappeared" person? Conversely, is it apolitical to remain silent under a government which imprisons and tortures thousands, or to say mass at the installation of its officials?

To describe the role of priests, Puebla adopts the basic image of the shepherd, the pastor, in relation to his flock. This image evokes a relationship of leader and followers of a more traditional kind than seems to be evolving in the contemporary Church. "Lo pastoral" (the pastoral dimension) involves clerical solidarity with the poor and suffering ("compartir los angustias") as well as their "formation" under the tutelage of the pastors. In the pastoral process both the pastors and their flocks are conscientized. Political involvement is inevitable in the process. Segundo Galilea
calls it the political dimension of pastoral work.

The liberation theologians argue that political involvement is a necessary outcome of the application of the Catholic faith. Segundo Galilea acknowledges, "the imperatives of the political ramifications of applying the Gospel". Morelli points to the political dimension of the faith as a constitutive and not merely complimentary element of the very act of faith. Bishop Leonidas Proano has drawn attention to the political dimension of any religious action which directly or indirectly influences the power-wielding sectors of society. Although the Catholic faith transcends politics, it has political consequences. Assman concurs with these opinions and highlights the utility to the status quo of the Church's so-called apolitical immersion in its spiritual mission.

But Vekemans points to the danger of clericalism in clerical involvement in politics. He argues:

The priest must guide and enlighten the Christians in their search for a just political structure. He must arrive at the doctrinal moment—properly understood—and leave it up to the laity to take the responsibility and the initiative of political action, remaining free to support their 'structuring,' with his constructive criticism.

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3 Philip Berryman, "Ecuador's Proano: 'I am a Stone on a Bridge Others will Finish", National Catholic Reporter (Kansas), 25 April 1975, p.15.
Lopez Trujillo also argues in the same vein against clerical participation in politics. Against this view Gutiérrez adduces the argument from the life and death of Jesus which was not devoid of political dimensions.

Puebla has made it obvious that in its broad understanding of its prophetic and pastoral responsibilities the Church as an institution will be deeply involved in politics. The political dimension of Christian faith which the German theologian Metz elaborates is relevant in the Latin American context more than anywhere else in the world. Bishop Fragoso of Creteus, Brazil, speaking of Church and politics says: "In the former we celebrate the faith, while in the latter we live it, and thus celebrate it anew".

Whether the Church's involvement in politics will have significant effects for profound social change depends on how firmly the Church's role is rooted in religious commitment at the grass-root level. Ultimately its impact will turn on the efficacy and the extent of initiatives such as the novel experiment of the Basic Christian Communities which Puebla has warmly endorsed. As nurseries

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of future leaders and as surrogate for otherwise repressed political and social participation (as in Brazil and Chile) the Basic Christian Communities have great potential both for the Church and the society at large. It is difficult to know whether the BCCs will be able to balance their double role as "centres of evangelization and engines of liberation and development". In any case they are likely to proliferate, and under the present repressive regimes they serve at least as a forum for keeping alive hope for a different kind of future.

10 Puebla Official Document no. 56.