

FATHER FRANK PAUL MOODY

(1923 - 1978)

The details of Father Moody's tragic death have just reached us. We knew his many personal friends and those who knew him through "Joint Venture" will be anxious to know of Father Moody's final hours.

True to his character Father Moody had started off to deliver an Epiphany gift of oranges to the Sisters and to those at the procure in the Mission of Kalemic (Zaire). As he rode his motorcycle through the village, a child ran out from behind a parked lorry. In his efforts to avoid hitting the child, his motorcycle overturned, and he fell heavily to the ground. A blow to his head caused a double fracture of the skull as well as other serious injuries. In spite of efforts to save him by flying him to the hospital at Lubumbashi, Fr. Moody died on Jan. 9th at 4 a.m.

Fr. Moody's body lay in state in the Cathedral. Throughout all the morning people came to pray. An unknown little girl remained weeping in front of the coffin for an hour. At 3 p.m. the funeral Mass was celebrated by his close friend, Bishop Mulolwa, along with the Archbishop of Lubumbashi, White Fathers and 30 priests. The Cathedral was crowded with priests, brothers, sisters, and laypeople. Everyone was moved by the sympathy of the crowd who had come to pray for Frank who had died in a town where he had never been before. The Salesians provide his final resting place among their 50 Confreres in their cemetery at Kabubu 15 miles from Lubumbashi.

Even this short account reveals so many things that are associated with Fr. Moody: his thoughtfulness, his willingness to risk his life rather than injure another, his ability to create an lasting impression on all who came in any type of contact with him. It is consoling to know that his many friends in various parts of the world were represented by those people in the Lubumbashi cathedral who were moved to attend the funeral of a man they had not known. It is in such moments of shared prayer that death is transcended.

Thoughts of Father Moody expressed in Joint Venture

Sometimes we feel discouraged and wonder if it is all worthwhile: people are worthwhile; our brothers and sisters are worthwhile; those moments of realisation and penetration, of illumination and ventilation, when the Spirit's breath scatters the dross and His light makes away with darkness - they are worthwhile" (JOINT VENTURE (J.V) No 6 March 1972, p.5).

What everyone is trying to do is to achieve SOMETHING BEAUTIFUL FOR GOD, something to be, to do, to leave behind when we pass on (J.V.13, March 1974, p.49).

Institutions, structures, systems get in the way. They have a tendency to become self-perpetuating, even in their least significant aspects.... We do not dialogue with institutions; we dialogue with people, with children of God, fascinating in their endless diversity, admirable in their striving and courage, sometimes maddening in their inconsequence, lovable in their humanity and all its limitations (J.V. Sept. 72 p.36).

Some would say that by caring too much about men, who are poor and hungry, sick and ignorant, who suffer insecurity and indignity and who die often before they have really begun to live, we take the transcendental out of salvation, we reduce it to worldly temporal terms. Maybe we do, and maybe we are not so wrong in that; the Son of God becoming man must have meant something in human consequences. He faced them (J.V.12, Dec. 1973, p.27).

Adaptation and renewal are like a bridge; we can step and examine our image in the waters of time as they flow beneath our feet; We can even succumb to a little institutional narcissism but the action is on the other side (J.V.2, March 1971.p.9).

And that life is short. We must not miss our cue; and the audience of the angels does not clap or boo. And when the curtain falls we won't go home alone (J.V.6, March, 1972 p.34). We have only one curtain-call, and when the curtain falls there will be no encore; the most we can hope is that, when our song is ended, the melody lingers on (J.V.10, March, 1973 p.5).

Church leaders and the challenge of the "inédit"

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An information and research centre such as Pro Mundi Vita, whose purpose it is to serve church leaders in the execution of their task, quite often faces difficulty in the task of analysing complex, unexpected, and in fact unprecedented situations. These are the consequence of the phenomenon which today we call "inédit".

In the present essay we propose to say something about this "inédit", this "not-yet-known", this "never-happened-before". It may perhaps be of help in discussions on this important problem, which is always topical and also extremely difficult. The attitude to be taken in such discussions must be determined by what is permanent in the Gospel revelation. That this is not always the criterion used is due to a misunderstanding of the development of revelation and also to an interpretation which is too theoretical or too one-sided.

For centuries, Christian leaders, both clerical and lay, thought that sufficient guidelines for the solution of new problems and the quest for new ways of facing the future could be found in the many aspects of Tradition. Tradition - whether the Bible itself or the Bible as explained by Tradition (either explicitly expressed in dogmatic formulae or interpreted by the Magisterium and the great Schools) - remained for many leaders the definitive, complete and sufficient norm, both scientifically and practically, for human ethics.

As a consequence, whenever something "inédit" unexpectedly appeared, only a few leaders were aware of it; and even then these few were inclined to avoid the problems that arose. They ignored them or tried to protect the community against such problems. It is only in the fairly recent past that the collective Christian conscience has felt itself beset by a number of doubts about the monopoly of the past as norm for the future.

Time and circumstances have wrought great changes. Every openminded observer recognizes the incredibly rapid changes challenging men today. Man has gained a deeper awareness of his historical character. He is aware of being a part of the evolution of life as a whole, as well as of being conditioned both sociologically and psychologically. The perspectives opened up by the sciences and their technological application have broadened enormously. The limits of what is "possible" for mankind are being extended in a formidable and fascinating manner. Mankind has now reached a stage where it can even programme its own future. The man of today is more open to the future. The criterion seems to be what can be done rather than what has already been done. And very often

what can be done is seen - frequently after the event - as "inédit", as something which has no precedent, as a crossing of frontiers which had seemed uncrossable. All this goes to show that modern man by his very successes, but also, and especially, through some obscure creative drive, is attracted by the secret to be uncovered in domains that have been inviolate and by worlds which public opinion, the Schools, and authority have declared taboo. The "inédit" is an invitation to the breaking of taboos. This is a universal phenomenon.

Disconcerting as this phenomenon may be for leaders in the political, economic, scientific and cultural life of mankind, it is undoubtedly all the more so for experts in the "meaning" of life and of its celebration. Its repercussions are felt by all systems of philosophy and by all religions. For a Catholic Christian they are at once easier to face and harder to avoid.

Accustomed, since the Renaissance, to living with the increasingly rapid development of a humanity conscious of its autonomy (let us remember D. Bonhoeffer, so close to St. Ignatius, with his "etsi deus non daretur" letter to Bethge, 16 July 1944), the Western Catholic Christian, whether rejecting or criticizing this development, or feeling its challenge or contributing to it, in common with the Reformation Christian, is less disconcerted by it than the follower of a non-Christian religion, less even than many of his brethren in the Eastern Churches. But it cannot be denied that he is undergoing a profound identity crisis. In fact, he is faced simultaneously with an experience of the "inédit" as a human being and as a believer, an experience in which, moreover, each part influences the other.

The present essay can be no more than an introduction to a line of thought which, in order to come to a deeper understanding of the phenomenon of the "inédit", requires much wider competence and interdisciplinary research. We shall give some examples by way of putting the human "inédit" into perspective, and then, after doing the same thing for the Christian "inédit", we shall conclude with some reflections for the use of those called to the delicate task of accompanying as ministers their brothers and sisters assembled to form Churches.

1. THE HUMAN INÉDIT

For Littré the word "inédit" is only an adjective: "(that) which has not been published". The word is found as both adjective and noun in Larousse and Robert with the sense "what has not been published", or, by extension, "that which has been unknown". Victor Hugo writes: "That which is completely new - that is the inédit".

In this essay the word "inédit" means for us that which is novel, which has no precedent. A distinction must be drawn between that which is novel only in the sense of being newly discovered (e.g., the discovery of America or of the evolution of the species) and that which is novel

in the sense of being a new achievement or experience for man (e.g., landing on the moon, cybernetics, certain forms of overpopulation, control of conception, etc.).

Every person in his or her lifetime experiences many "inédits", "critical thresholds" (Teilhard de Chardin) - and must do so in order to become a person. In the last analysis, every moment of one's life is an inédit (growth, encounters, information, interpretations). Life is both promise of and hope for the inédit.

We must avoid blurring the notion of "inédit". What would not be "inédit", for instance, would be the various phases of different continuous evolutions, even if they are geometrically or even logarithmically accelerated evolutions - unless reaching to the very limit amounts to a real mutation (e.g., the first development of human life, following on accelerated evolution, but comprising a mutation).

On the other hand, it must not be thought that the "inédit" is peculiar to our own epoch. The results of the Edict of Milan, of the discoveries of Galileo and Darwin, of the thinking of Kant, Hegel, and Feuerbach, of the Renaissance and of the Enlightenment were enormous and persist still, as do also those of the French Revolution. Those "inédits" were probably just as important as those we are living through today.

There is no denying, nevertheless, that there is a veritable avalanche of entirely new questions being asked at the same time in practically every sector of human life in every continent.

Progress in biology and the vast field of human reproduction has been such that man is able (or soon will be able) to control the quantity and the quality of his own reproduction. Man is aware of this power and of its consequences (it could mean greater liberation or deeper slavery) not only for his strictly private life but also for the programming of society as a whole. For that matter, there are few people today that do not accept some regulation of births, some serious concern for eugenics. For many of our contemporaries, the rights of society in this domain take precedence over those of isolated individuals. The balance between races and continents will be affected by all this. It could result in racial aggressiveness on a continental or a global scale; it could, just as well, result in the elimination of many congenital defects, in an improvement in the quality of future generations. Meanwhile, the evolution of medicine is forcing man to put questions about the "right to die" and about the human sense of certain forms of euthanasia.

Relations between the sexes are also undergoing a rapid and increasingly widespread change. Through universal education, involving increasingly widespread information, women in many countries are discovering themselves as human beings in their own right, the equals of men and not their "natural" subordinates. The traditional images of father, chief, king, sage, and the prerogatives that go with them, have been

profoundly affected. Not only have relations between men and women been affected, but also relations between men and between women, and those relations which govern the dialogue between generations. The increasing awareness of individual identity on the part of both husband and wife is modifying the conditions which gave rise to the traditional form of the institution of marriage. There seems to be an increase in the number of regions where simultaneous polygamy is replaced, not by real monogamy but by successive polygamy or polyandry, or by a multiplicity of sexual relationships. At all events, birth control and, as a consequence, freedom for sexual relationship as a value in itself, are changing the mores of our contemporaries so radically that those who are responsible for the organization of society are faced with juridical and pedagogical options never known before (the sterilization laws in India, the quasi-disappearance of marriage in several cities in Africa, the presence of several million divorced Catholics in the USA).

The internationalization of the economy, not only in capitalist circles but also in collectivist systems and in areas where the two overlap, is leading to problems as regards planning for a dynamic balance, problems for which there are no historical precedents. The fact that the different reports of the Club of Rome and the different views among their critics and adversaries fail to end in consensus even among the best-informed people shows that mankind is approaching the limits of its power to make macro-ethical decisions. Already the speed with which the economic system is developing is outstripping mankind's capacity to control it, even though it has at its disposal a whole arsenal of computers surpassing the imagination of a Jules Verne. The multinationals are provoking the organization of workers on a similarly international scale, and together these are shattering what is left of national sovereignty and preparing new forms of planetary government, or at least making them desirable.

In the field of armaments, mankind has managed to build for itself a power for aggression of such magnitude that it is capable of wiping out the whole human race and its planet more than 25 times over. Is the result of this to be that, for the first time in history, war will be banished, or will mankind have to be prepared to accept its own destruction, perhaps within a scientifically calculable time? Horror films seem already to be preparing the imagination of vast numbers of people for this eventuality. In the meantime the spread of nuclear power in industry, while it brings with it enormous possibilities for development, at the same time makes the world much more vulnerable than did the ever present danger from seismic catastrophes. Finally, the means of communication are continually enriching the collective consciousness of men, making them open to one another, but they are also working to the advantage of international terrorist bands, and are now pointing in the direction of international police machinery.

There are other "inédits". The rapidity with which specialization

in science is developing makes it well-nigh impossible not only for the mass of intellectuals but even for experts to have that overall view of mankind-in-the-process-of-developing which the great minds of the Middle Ages and of the Renaissance actually thought they possessed. It follows from this that there is no longer any agreement about "human nature", and doubt about the very possibility of any such definition has penetrated all intellectual circles; there is an ever increasing realisation of the impossibility of formulating a theory of man that is universally acceptable. Paul Ricoeur has noted the disorientation that follows from this: "The striking experience of our time is the vague, overwhelming conviction that for the first time our heritage no longer seems capable of creative reinterpretation, of projection into the future".(1) For Peter Berger, the human spirit has left its abode and has no place where it feels at home.(2) But this "exodus" and this helplessness could also give rise to increased creativity and solidarity by opening up new areas of liberation.

Be that as it may, the inductive is everywhere winning the day over the deductive, experience over principle, hypothesis over doctrine. But at the same time the need is felt for guidelines towards personal development, even if they are only provisionally valid. Man is looking for them on the basis of experiences lived within the very many micro- and macro-societies to which he belongs. He knows the need for laboratories for interpreting the "signs of the times"; sometimes he claims to hear "rumours of angels", and begins to accept that the widespread need of the "mystic" element has to be counted among the "inédits" of a world that is supposed to have proclaimed the "death of God".

2. THE CHRISTIAN INEDIT

Since Vatican II "there has been wave after wave of unexpected upheavals in our ways of living and thinking. It is not first and foremost what came out of the Council or the application of its principles that have determined the trend of the past ten years of our lives. The trend has been due to disruptions and changes which the Fathers in the Council at Rome could scarcely even imagine or foresee". (3) Not only is the Christian, like any other human being, faced with the "inédits" mentioned above, but he is also faced with the challenge of "inédits" in a context that is specifically Christian.

During the last century, liberty of conscience and ecumenical dialogue were things that were forbidden or at least suspect. In Catholic theology the non-baptized were practically excluded from the full enjoyment of eternal happiness.

Scripture was often read in a fundamentalist fashion, without reference to the socio-cultural conditions in which each of the sacred books was written. Sacred History theoretically came to an end with the

death of the last apostle.(4) So it was also with revelation - Newman's contribution on the evolution of dogma being still unknown or rejected. Each attempt at reading the "signs of the times" involving a reinterpretation of tradition was viewed with suspicion or met with repression, and those who risked such attempts were branded as innovators and modernists.

Since Vatican II, and a little earlier than that in the case of Scripture, the collective consciousness of Christians has accepted change as being inescapable in the interpretation of revealed data. By that very fact it denied the past more than a relative claim to be the main and privileged norm for the future. Stress on orthopraxis, on plurality of theologies, on the importance attaching to social and individual situations, testifies to this change of perspective. By way of bringing out what this really means, the distinction made by Archbishop Etchegaray of Marseille in his speech at the Synod of Bishops (October 1974) is of interest. He summed up the two conceptions of Church and Revelation: "According to the first, the Church is the repository of a doctrine which it has the mission of spreading all over the world with the authority of God; according to the other, the Church's task is to discern the signs of the times: the manifestations of the divine life in communities and in history".(5)

Whereas twenty years ago Protestants were treated as separated brethren, a good number of bishops now think that intercommunion will soon become an irresistible necessity. There are even some who have produced possible formulae for the coexistence of different hierarchies reunited in one Church. Meantime, believers of other religions are honoured with the name of "brother" (as at the meeting between Muslims and Christians at Tripoli), and there exist several groups consisting of believers from different religions, very often under very special Christian influence (as, for instance, the World Conference on Religion and Peace).

But others, still in the line of Vatican II and the ad hoc Roman Secretariats, already find dialogue with Marxism or Maoism more important for the future of mankind than dialogue with religions. In any case this rapid crossing of different frontiers that have sometimes been there for more than a thousand years is leading the Christian conscience to live an "ungleichzeitige Gleichzeitigkeit"(6), that is, a coexistence of different phases of an evolution that is both synchronic and diachronic. The consequence of this is that the Christian identity is more and more difficult to recognize, whether for those who profess to adhere to the message of Christ or for those who profess to be looking in from the outside. This identity crisis, accompanied as it is by feelings of anomy and marginalization, is itself also something unprecedented. Aware of being inundated with new theories about man, none of them finally formulated, the Christian is anxious to know what makes him different from others.

For the first time the very framework of all theological thought, deprived of the support of Western philosophy which has fallen apart, is called in question by the many challenges posed by structuralism and the sociology of knowledge. Theology is more conscious than ever that it will never have said the last word. The epoch of theological "summas" has been replaced by that of exploratory approaches and progress through trial and error. (7)

For the Christian there are other inédits, many of which are only relative and merely involve rectifications. The changes of ecclesiological outlook that resulted from the new focus on the "People of God" calls for a tremendous readjustment in relations between clergy and laity and between the magisterium and the *sensus fidei*.

The emergence of the non-Western Churches, the dynamism of the ecumenical movement, and the broader and more hesitant ecumenical contact with the other great religions, are all making it necessary for the Petrine ministry to find quite novel means of expression. (8) Tradition supplies no model; there is in fact no precedent for this kind of situation.

Even in the dialogue between atheist humanism and the Christian mysticism of the "negative way" (the rediscovery of Master Eckhart is significant), there is the novelty of the meeting of two "voids" seeking to be filled with a plenitude of life to be created or to be received.

A deeper appreciation, through Christian reflection, of the creativity and the presence of the Holy Spirit will enable more light to be thrown on the novelty of what is truly new. In this way really new interpretations will be developed of the relation of Christ to a really historical humanity. It is quite remarkable how the style of Pope Paul VI's apostolic letter Octagesima adveniens to Cardinal Roy cuts right across that of the social encyclicals. The latter reflected an all-embracing and coherent doctrine of society and put forward models that were quasi-perfect and static. The apostolic letter simply describes a situation, calls for new interpretations, takes it for granted that there will be several, and for the first time employs the word "utopia" - this word certainly implies many novelties. The heuristic consequences for all Christian social and individual ethics are obvious: there are no definitive solutions, there will always be a need to take new bearings, new decisions, there will always have to be a re-conversion in situations that are more or less radically new.

3. REFLECTIONS

Leaders of ecclesial communities are at once guardians of man's true roots and heralds of his true horizons. It is their vocation to go along with those who trust themselves to them in the difficult task of reading the "signs of the times", on the journey from the known to the unknown, from what has been socially acceptable to what has not.

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How can this be done? First of all, the duty of becoming well informed must be taken very seriously. What many people think to be without precedent is often not so, having happened elsewhere without their being aware of it. Secondly, it must be accepted that there are no ready-made answers to novel situations: the call for coordination of different readings of events becomes a duty. Beginning at the local level, those whose ministry it is to govern, to engage in theological and spiritual reflection, to discern the implications of the sciences, especially the human ones, must put themselves in a mode of constant dialogue in order to be able to set up relatively permanent teams of responsible people, people who can find meaning in the aspirations, the conflicts, the setbacks and successes of both human and Christian communities, people who can see the Spirit of the Son of Man at work in them and can discern which trends among them are really creative and liberating. All of this presupposes that these "interpreters" really do take cognizance of the different approaches and are ready to accept, if only provisionally in some cases, the coexistence of several different attempts at valid interpretation and reasonable praxis, mindful of the famous words of Gamaliel: "If this idea of theirs or its execution is of human origin, it will collapse; but if it is from God, you will never be able to put them down" (Acts 5:38-39).

The important thing will be to bring these attempts at interpretation into contact with one another, thus helping them to enrich each other and to become more discriminating. That is so for everything that has to do with authority, the taking possession and sharing of intellectual and material conquests, and the sphere of sexuality. But it is likewise the case with the interpretation of the relations between salvation and liberation, between mysticism and politics, between "Birth of God" (M. Bellet) and birth of man, between Christian identity and human change.

It goes without saying that the coexistence of different phases of the process of awakening people's awareness, not only at local level but also at that of different cultures (and Churches), will give rise to a need for intercultural cooperation; and here, if harmonization is to be achieved, a respect for pluralism and a desire for dynamic communion (and therefore for fundamentally common perspectives, linked to the rights of man) will require delicate steps to be taken - not the kind that involves reducing everything to a common denominator but rather the kind that remains ever open to new interpretations. The role to be played by councils, synods, symposia, reviews, and centres for research, etc., in promoting communion and in evaluating the whole process cannot be overestimated.

This "dynamic of the provisional" (R. Schutz) will require church leaders not only to show very great resourcefulness when faced with attempts at creativity and uncertain strivings after new humanisms, but also to maintain very great fidelity to Jesus Christ and unceasing

clarification and purification of the traditions of the Church. These will have to be reformulated not merely alongside but at the heart of these human strivings and systems.

People in charge will have to be on their guard against a temptation rather common among them - that of too readily assuming that the "silent majority" prefer the certitudes of the known past and cling to them, and that concern about the future is confined to intellectuals. That is a mistaken interpretation. Industrialization (with its continuous adaptation to new discoveries), mass communication and education (more and more a lifelong affair) guarantee that new ideas will filter down almost immediately to the "grass roots". There, it might be added, what is in question is rather a generation gap than an opposition between those who are "initiated" and those who are not.

J. H. Newman, leader, doctor, prophet, and poet, felt this growing need of openness to the new, to non-repetitive life. Alongside the necessity of the Book he stressed the necessity of "consulting the faithful in matters of doctrine", and thus accepted the dynamism of the Spirit present in Christian public opinion. He was also a person who reconciled fidelity to Christ with the evolution of dogma. Since his time many others have tried to free the living Word from the fears of the Judaizers in the search for a "Christianity without ideology" (9) in which the "praxis" of the faith has at least as much light to throw as tradition whenever the latter is merely repetitive and reflects only an uncritical cult of the past. With good reason Y. Congar asks for a distinction to be drawn between "Tradition" and "traditions".(10) Ch. Wackenheim is right when, like A. Greeley, he wants to close the gap between believing praxis and a closed dogmatism. If it is true that the faith can never give a structurally complete interpretation of history or of reality, but has its place, in a dialectical context, on the side of conscious reason making sense out of events and structures, then it will never be put out when faced with the "inédit" but will rather "judge" it from within. This judgement will appeal to what faith remembers but will not make the mistake of putting new wine into old wineskins. That is how the faith is able to "free the future" (Illich): by shattering every ideology, theological or otherwise, through the utopia of the Kingdom, by rejecting any "Christian" world-view that is univocal and invariable. All this boils down to saying that unless there is continuous growth towards developing consensus in the Christian community, Christian hope is smothered inside a closed system, where nothing truly new can come about, where the ever-fresh newness of Christ is denied, where God's freedom and that of man are both confined to the prison of an ideologized past. However, an end to doctrines does not mean an end to interpretations; that would be dehumanizing for man and would make a Christian into a fideist.

From now on, more than ever before, church leadership, while still concerned with theology, must embody the prophetic mission of the faith. In fact, the diachronic and synchronic remembrance of Christian "believing" will demand, more than ever before, an effort to think clearly and to look ahead. Believing will more and more be synonymous with hoping, and reflection on the faith, if atrophy is to be avoided, will have to embrace the totality of the human world in the making. It goes without saying that without continuous coordination at all levels this leadership will deprive itself of the contribution afforded by praxis, and will fall back into the easy ways of pointless repetition. Only those who truly take seriously the "inédits" of human history will be able to speak in a credible manner about the "inédit" of a personal and collective awakening beyond history. Only such people can be "prophets of permanence" in regard to Jesus and to man, or speak of "a love stronger than death" in the case of both.

As a help to leaders to make the necessary discernments, multiple comparative studies could be undertaken on the various ways the Church has reacted when faced with the "inédit" (there have been "open" councils like that of Jerusalem, and councils that were "closed" or on the defensive). In the communion of Churches there have always been some local Churches which have shown themselves more ready than others to welcome the "inédit"; how have they managed to coexist throughout history, and (in some cases) at what price? As always, the absence or presence of means of information and communication has played a great role in deciding whether novelties are peacefully integrated or stir up strife. Better information could increase the chances of reaching a harmonious pluralism, but under what conditions? Leaders themselves will feel the need for continual "refresher" courses in order to see where they stand, as free and responsible people, vis-à-vis the "inédits" of their own lives and those of the communities whose guides they are; the presence of leaders of both sexes, of different ages, and from different cultures (e.g., the urban and the rural, that of the worker and that of the scientist) could make these refresher courses genuinely refreshing, by providing an encounter of men and women who have already partially integrated certain "inédits" into their world.

Finally, there must be no discounting of the repetitive element in life, for this is indispensable, just as in the case of drums, which, supplying the background to variations in music, stress thereby the continuity behind the changes.

CONCLUSION

The study of church history teaches us that very often leaders have found themselves faced with situations which were more or less novel, and that besides periods of rather inflexible reaction to the presence

of something new there have been periods of calm and daring creativity. In any case, the Spirit is stronger than human fears. Since the prohibition of the 4th Lateran Council (1215) against starting more religious orders, how many founders have been "transgressors" and instigators of "inédits"? And what evolution has taken place within the Church as regards slavery, the just war, loans at interest, women, freedom of conscience, etc.?

The real "inédit" is a sign of the transcendence of human destiny, capable of bringing to birth a future that will renew a whole past by going beyond it. It belongs to Christian conscience, to lucid and open dialogue between office-bearers, experts, and other members of the People of God, to distinguish at every stage what is really new and vivifying from what is fallacious, what is normative from what is simply "normal" according to statistics. The risk involved and the courage needed to make this discernment in due time form part of the vocation of church leaders, and in order to make it they will have to continually refine the criteria, which have themselves been determined by a historical context. To give them timely information about new situations, about new challenges, about the existence of more refined criteria, is part of the duty of those whose mission it is to be always alive to the "signs of the times", which, despite their ambivalence, are always harbingers of hope.

Both these and the church leaders they serve know themselves to be responsible for man and his future, and both know that tradition alone does not hold all the answers,(11) but also that without the relative coherence produced by tradition there would be a total disintegration of the human spirit and an end to all humanism; for man is called upon to preserve his interior unity at any price, even if that necessitates a radical control of the dynamism of scientific specialization, which tends to atomize everything. Here we see the never-ending struggle to defend man as a person (and his progress towards full humanity) in the face of chaotic specialization which, though full of genius, leads nowhere but to his destruction. Decisive new choices will have to be made by every generation as long as mankind continues on its pilgrimage through unending change.

- FOOTNOTES

- (1) P. Ricoeur, "Le conflit, signe de contradiction et d'unité", *Chronique Sociale de France* (Lyon), cahier 56, Nov.-Dec. 1972, p.78.
- (2) Peter Berger, *The homeless mind* (New York, 1974).
- (3) Cardinal F. Marty in a conference at the Institut Catholique de Paris. See *La Documentation Catholique* (Paris), 1 Feb. 1976, pp. 131-132.

- (4) See K. Rahner, "Tod Jesu und Abgeschlossenheit der Offenbarung", *Theology Digest* (St. Louis, Missouri), vol. 23 (1975), No. 4 (Winter), pp. 320ff. ("There is but one single revelation, Christ himself, always living by his Spirit in the world.")
- (5) R. Laurentin, *L'évangélisation après le quatrième Synode* (Paris, Seuil, 1975), pp. 142-143.
- (6) K. Rahner in *Strukturwandel der Kirche als Aufgabe und Chance* (Freiburg, Herder, 1972), Herderbücherei, vol. 446.
- (7) See P. Berger and Th. Luckmann, *The social construction of reality* (Garden City, Doubleday, 1976). See among others P. Ricoeur, "Science et Idéologie", *Revue Philosophique de Louvain*, May 1974; H. Desroche, *Sociologies religieuses* (Paris, Publications Universitaires Françaises, 1968), and *L'homme et ses religions* (Paris, Cerf, 1972); Thomas S. Kuhn, *The structure of scientific revolutions* (Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1972).
- (8) See, for instance, J. Kerhofs, "What Christians from non-Western Churches expect from the Petrine ministry in the 1980's", *Concilium* (New York), 108 (1975).
- (9) Ch. Wackenheim, *Christianisme sans idéologie* (Tournai-Paris, Castelman, 1975).
- (10) Y. Congar, *La Tradition et les traditions. Essai historique*. Paris (1960).
- (11) Y. M. Congar, OP, "L'influence de la société et de l'histoire sur le développement de l'homme chrétien", *Nouvelle Revue Théologique*, no.106 (1974), pp. 673-692. We quote from p. 684: "Something really happens in history by the very fact that the 'given' meets the 'inédit' of human history and in that encounter enters on a process of 'becoming', with a view to a future which will crown this 'becoming' and be the result thereof".

- Sedos Doc. No. 4/2449

(This article is also available in French from the Sedos Documentation Centre and in several other languages from Pro Mundi Vita, Rue de la Limite 6, B-1030 Brussels, Belgium.)

THE CHURCH IN LATIN AMERICA TEN YEARS AFTER MEDELLIN*

by Peter Henriot

Protection of human rights? Not only is that an important item on Jimmy Carter's agenda, but it is also a key issue for the church in Latin America.

In October of 1978, a major church gathering will take place in Mexico: the Third General Conference of Latin American Bishops. Held to commemorate the tenth anniversary of the historic Medellin Conference, this gathering will have long-term implications not only for the Catholic Church in Latin America, but also for the church in other parts of the world. But perhaps even more significant will be the implications of the Conference for the future course of the Latin American peoples' struggle for basic human rights and social justice.

That the social role of the Catholic Church has been changing in Latin America was clearly noted -- not altogether with enthusiasm -- in the famous Rockefeller Report (prepared by Nelson Rockefeller for Richard Nixon in 1969). Once looked upon as the conservative bastion of the status quo, in many Latin countries the church has recently become the moving force for social change, protection of the poor, and challenge to oppressive powers.

The pivotal moment for this change in the church was the Second General Conference of the Latin American Bishops, held in Medellin, Colombia, in 1968. Meeting to respond to Vatican II's call to up-date pastoral approaches, this Conference was significant for at least three reasons: (1) it promoted widespread cooperation and interchange between theologians and church leaders throughout Latin America; (2) it identified the massive problems of poverty and oppression as the major challenge to the authenticity and credibility of preaching the Christian gospel; and (3) it endorsed a structural analysis of the social situation, such as is being explored by the theologians of liberation.

Medellin sparked a dynamic renewal with the church. The documents from the Conference supported a pastoral approach geared toward transforming society through more mature faith, deeper commitment to justice and peace, and adaptation of the structures of the church. Movements of the laity, comunidades dd base (groups of committed Christians engaged in action/reflection processes of "conscientization"), renewed catechetical programs, strengthening of family programs, liturgical renewal, long-term planning; these and many more topics were studied at Medellin and guidelines for action drawn up.

A church renewed and committed to "liberation from every form of

* From: CENTER FOCUS, quoted in Info on Human Development, Dec 1977.

servitude" could not, however, avoid coming into sharp conflict with forces of privilege and oppression. This has been especially true in many states ruled by military dictatorships (only a handful of the Latin governments today have civilian leadership) and inspired by a "National Security State" ideology which in the name of defense harrasses, expels, tortures, and murders all suspected "subversive" elements. In many of these states, anyone who takes Medellin seriously and practices its evangelical call to be with the poor is considered "subversive". Church-state conflict and outright persecution of laity, religious and priests in Brazil, Argentina, Uruguay, Paraguay, Bolivia, Chile, and El Salvador are clear examples of this.

Recently, one of the best-known prophetic voices in Latin America, Dom Holder Camara, Archbishop of Recife-Olinda of Brazil, pointed to this situation by stating that often "the only voice that has a chance of supporting the poor is the voice of the church." But this has definite consequences: "If a priest or bishop or a religious sister works to construct housing for the poor, he or she is called a saint. But if the same religious leader seeks to help the poor by denouncing injustice he or she is called a subversive, a Marxist."

The impact of the Medellin meeting on the church in the United States has also been great. Interest in insights from the theology of liberation has been stirred at both academic and popular levels in this country, and renewal of parish and non-parish structures through approaches similar to the comunidades de base is increasing. The very successful "Call to Action" Conference in Detroit last October was frequently spoken of as a "quasi-Medellin" meeting. And the rising prominence of Spanish-speaking (approximately 25% of the US Catholic population) has in many ways meant a great interest in Latin American church development.

As a consequence of these developments since Medellin, there is considerable interest now in the planning, agenda, and process of the upcoming Conference in 1978. Many in the United States and in other countries will be watching closely as the meeting draws near. Its agenda will probably focus on evangelization, with some explicit ties to such social justice issues as human rights and the National Security State. Some of the questions that will be asked during the preparations are:

- 1) Will there be any conservative pull-back from the solidly progressive stance taken at Medellin?
 - 2) Can the Conference deal creatively with tensions within the **church itself and between the church and the oppressive state, military, and business structures?**
 - 3) How will the church handle such pressing questions as new roles for women, socialist movements for justice, popular religiosity, and increasing secularization?
 - 4) Will the Conference involve grassroots input, continue the exploration of the theologians of liberation, invite observers from other churches and other nations, and engage in a truly open process of dialogue?
- Answers to these questions are important to anyone concerned today about the future of Latin America tomorrow.

COURSES

- Romess - Cantess 1978 For people who are interested in an ecumenical course on "The Bible Today" two sessions will be held: one in England from 20 July to 1st August and one in Rome from 23rd June to 5th July. For information on either course, write to CAWTESS, 15 Dover Street, Canterbury, Kent CT1 3HD, England.

- Sangre de Christo Course is a 100-day programme sponsored by the Christian Brothers designed for brothers and priest of middle years (about 35 to 50). The programme involves lectures, prayer life and liturgy, community life, work and recreation. A detailed account of the programme is available at Sedos Documentation Centre or from the Sangre de Christo Centre, Route 4 Santa Fe, New Mexico, 87501 U.S.A.

- The Missionary Nature of the Church is the title of a summer Workshop sponsored by the U.S. Catholic Mission Council. It will be held from 9 July - 22, 1978 at Our Lady of the Lake University, San Antonio, Texas (411 S.W. 24th Street San Antonio, Texas 78285 U.S.A.)

- Cours d'été de 'Islamologie. Du dimanche 2 juillet 1978 au vendredi 28 juillet, un cours de été d'Islamologie, en esprit de "dialogue islamo-chrétiené", aura lieu à l'Institut Pontifical d'Etudes Arabes. Ecrire directement à l'Institut en libellant "Cours d'été, 1978 (Institut Pontifical d'Etudes Arabe, 49 Piazza S. Apollinare, 00186 Roma, Italie.)

- The IVth Conference of the International Association of Mission Studies on the theme CREDIBILITY AND SPIRITUALITY IN MISSION will be held from 21 to 26 August, 1978 at Maryknoll, New York. For information either consult the booklet at Sedos Documentation Centre or write to one General Secretary IAMS, Boerhaavelaan 43 Leiden, Netherlands.

- Two-three week Irish Missionary Union Spiritual Renewal Courses in June and September 1978... also a three months' course on the Priestly Ministry from September to December, 1978. For information on these courses write to IMU, 54 Wellington Road, Dublin 4, Ireland. The newsheet 6/77 also lists several one year courses in development studies, missionary studies catechetics, liturgy and ecumenics.

- The Mission Council announces Seminars for missionaries on home leave in the United States. The dates are June 11 - 24 September 10 - 23 November 26 - December 19. Write to USCMC 1302 Eighteenth Street N.W. Washington D.C. 20036

- The Instituto Studi Asiatici offers a year programme on the following topics: Modelli di Civiltà per L'Asia di Domani, Il Cammino dell'Uomo verso L'Assoluto, e Tecniche Orientali di Ricerca Spirituale. Per iscrizioni e informazioni: Segreteria Instituto Studi Asiatici, Via Mosè Bianchi 94, 20149 Milano.

- Mission Institute includes time to reflect and to discuss and to have "the opportunity to assess some political, social and economic issues which affect our being-in-mission". Dates: June 4 to July 1 and July 23 to August 19. Write to Mission Institute, Maryknoll, New York. 10545.

- CEVAM: Continuing education of persons in leadership position in Christian institutions. The center for the exploration of values and meaning (CEVAM) of Indianapolis USA is now offering Christian institutions a programme for the conscientization of their leadership. It consists of a four week continuing education session, a one year consultation service and a documentation facility. The initiative is ecumenical. Places are still available. For the U.S. programme contact: Dr. Brian Hall, Professional Circle 5726, Suite 106, Indianapolis Ind. 46241 or for the Rome programme: Rev. Benjamin Tonna, 45 Baskett Road. Rabat, Republic of Malta tel. 674408.

- Adaptation or Compromise A seminar considering recent developments in the realms of Theology, Prayer and Morality with a background of Scripture. Dates 8th to 27th August at Spode House, Rugeley, Staffs. WS151 PT, England

- Hawkstone Hall Renewal Course 4th Sept to 1st December. The purpose of this course is spiritual and personal renewal of priests and religious. Speakers include: Rev. B. Ahern CP, Rev. Sean O'Riordan, C.SsR, Rev. Francis Sullivan, SJ and others. Details from Rev. Director C.SsR. Hawkstone Hall, Weston, Shrewsbury SY4 5LG, England

We must accept the fact that the purpose of leadership is not to make the present bearable. The purpose of leadership is to make the future possible (from an address by Joan Chittister OSB, at the LCWR Assembly 1977).

TOPIC: DOCUMENTATION

ITEMS OF INTEREST

Resources for Christian Leaders - a guide for Churches, Demoninations, Missions and service agencies, published by MARC. This includes a section on how to locate resources as well as articles on "Are Christian Organizations Different?" and "Is 'Management' Christian?" Sedos Doc. No. 4/2851

Health Care Guidelines for use in developing countries by Rufino Macagba is also a MARC publication. Sedos Doc. No. B - H, 6/619

Samples of the material used for the International Days for a Society going beyond Dominations have been received. Short Discussion Texts and Case Studies are available on such topics as: "Kimvuka Ya Intondo", a pastoral method in Zaire, "LOC: A movement for the liberation of the oppressed in Portugal, etc. The study days were launched as an international programme by the Brazilian Episcopal Conference (CNBB). It is open to all groups, organizations and institutions interested in "a society going beyond domination". This initiative is the continuation of the programme that the CNBB adopted in 1973, on the occasion of the 25th anniversary of the U.N's Universal Declaration on Human Rights and the 10th anniversary of the encyclical "Pacem in Terris". (For more information cf. p. 178 of the CICM Chronica for November, 1977). Material is available from the European office at Secretariat d'Appui des Journées Internationales, 14 rue Saint-Benoit, 75006 Paris, France. Sedos Doc. No. 4/2848 a - b 4/2849 a - b - c.

A Bibliography on Development Education has been received from the Central Bureau of Catholic Education. The bibliography is an effort to contribute nationally and internationally towards the education for peace, justice and the new international relations. Copies are available from Bureau Beziudenhoutseweg, 275, The Hague, Netherlands. Sedos Doc. No. 4/2760.

The 1978 Multi-Media International Handbook, published in collaboration with Sonolux has as its theme "Focus on Group Media". It discusses the ecclesiological aspect of group media along with its use in catechetics and retreats.. Copies available from Multi-Media International Borgo S. Spirito, 5 C.P. 9048 00100 Roma. Sedos Doc. No. 13 - 5 (SC), 6/596.

Immagine dell'uomo - un catalogo bibliografico estero - this bibliography of books published in various languages is available either at the Sedos Documentation Centre or from E.M.I. Via Meloncello 3/3

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40135 Bologna. We are indebted to the Verona Fathers who noted it in their newsletter. Sedos Doc. No. 4/2754

For those who read Swedish a copy of Svensk Missionstidskrift published by the Swedish Missionary Council. Articles included are "Church History of the Third World" by Terence Ranger, "The Temporal Authority of the Maronite Patriarchate in 20th Century Lebanon" by D. Kerr. We are grateful to Dr. Hallencreutz for this issue. In it he has written an article on the University and Missionary Research to commemorate the 500th anniversary of the University of Uppsala. Sedos Doc. No. 5: 133

The 1977 Theology Annual of the Holy Spirit Seminary, H.K. contains the final draft of the proposed new canon law on marriage, a discussion of Chinese translations of the Bible and an article on "Joy from a Theological Viewpoint" incorporating Chinese philosophical and Christian religious concepts. Sedos Doc. No. B - 6, 6/617.

Attitudes of the American Women Religious Towards the Concept of Mission- a research report submitted to the U.S. Catholic Mission Council by Joseph Shields. In a recent letter from Sister Ann Gormly SND-N of the Council she writes "We now have a revised questionnaire prepared and we have announced it with enclosed letter. Some congregations are using the typology of the study for their own reflection on mission. We have drawn up some questions to stimulate such self study." Another enclosure describes the current project on "Convivencia-Convergence-Solidarity". Sedos Doc. No. 4/2658.

The Centre d'Information des OIC now publishes a newsheet called "Dossier CIOIC. Recent issues deal with "Informations Internationales de Genève, Le Programme des Nations Unies pour le Développement et Le Droit a La Mer: Une Urgence. Available from CIOIC 1 rue de Varembe 1211 Genève 20. Sedos Doc. No. 5.134.

Echoes de la Rue du Bac Decembre, 1977 carries an account of the recent meeting in Paris of the CECC (Catholics in Europe Concerned with China). Sedos Doc. No. 2. MEP (IERB 113). We also have received an report of the meeting from Fr. Lazzarotto, PIME. Sedos Doc. No. 4/2850.

Un Bonzo Del Laos Racconta: intervista con una autorita buddista lao rifugiata in Tailandia raccolta da P. Marcello Zago, omi
Sedos Doc. No. 4/2847

The Outlook Winter Issue, 1977 contains the conference papers of Mission Today". Papers included are "The Meaning of Mission Today: Continuing Education of the Missions" by Fr. John Blewett, S.J., : "Mission at Home: Post Christian" by T. Curtis Hayward; "Mission at Home-Non Christian" by Michael Hollings and "Mission Abroad" by Bishop Edward O'Meara. Sedos Doc. No. 5/0 (15/8/77)

A Socio-Theology of Letting Go: the role of a First World Church Facing Third World Peoples by Marie Augusta Neal S.N.D. de N. Sedos Doc. No. B-6, 6/618.

Summer Resources is a guide to professional and personal growth opportunities offered in the U.S. during the Summer of 1978. It is available from CRUX, 75 Champlain Street Albany New York 12204.

Two very attractive yearbooks recently received are: On All Continents: the Oblates of Mary Immaculate, 1977. Sedos Doc. No 3/148 D - 2 and The Jesuits 1977-78, Sedos Doc. No 3/147 D - 3 (also available in French.

Libermann: Juif Selon l'Evangile 1802-1852 par Mgr. Jean Gay. Sedos Doc No. 3/150 D - 1. Le Père Jacques Laval: Le Saint de l'Ile Maurice 1803-1864 par Joseph Michel Sedos Doc No. 3/149 D - 1.

Fr. Buhlmann's latest book is Process ad Addis Abeba 1980 (une tribuna-
le per le missione). Sedos Doc No. 6/601 C - 2. (Sedos Documenta-
tion Centre supplied some of the material used in the book).

For those who found Fr. Godwin's article on Mission Spirituality (SVD Journal No. 17) useful we now have his book Spend and Be Spent (Sedos Doc No. 6/599 C - 6)

Two directories available: Eglise en Iran 1977 (Sedos Doc No. 6/602 C - 1) and Japan Catholic Directory 1977; Sedos Doc No. 6-598 C - 1.

Sedos quoted elsewhere

—on Vatican radio...material on Hindu women from the Bulletin of 15 Dec. 1977.

—in World Mission for Dec. 1977...Fr. McGourn's paper on "The Gospel and Interculturation among the Aymaras" given at the Sedos Assembly December, 1976.

—material on human rights in ICA, (Jan - Feb 1978), the bulletin of the Missionary Sisters of the Immaculate Heart of Mary.

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S E D O S

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

MINUTES

The Sedos Executive Committee met at Sedos on Monday 23rd January at 3.30pm.

Present were: Fr. Timmermans, cssp Sr. Godelieve Prové, scmm-m
Sr. Danita McGonagle, ssnd Fr. Joseph Lang, mm
Fr. P. Divarkar, sj Sr. Mary Motte, fmm
Br. Pablo Basterecchia, fsc Sr. Joan Delaney, mm

Fr. Hillengass, sj, was present to give information on the hiring of staff in Italy.

1. STAFF POLICY

Fr. Hillengass shared his knowledge of present legislation and practices in hiring staff in Italy.

In the discussion that followed Fr. Timmermans expressed the view that since it was unlikely we would get religious personnel, staff would, therefore, be a big item in the budget, and funding would be necessary. Preparatory to that, a plan for the future is needed. Fr. Divarkar and Fr. Lang, Sr. Mary, Sr. Danita and Sr. Joan will meet on Tuesday 31st January to discuss the plan and staff needs.

2. MEMBERSHIP

The Order of Franciscans Minor requested membership. The Executive Committee unanimously accepted the OFM's as the 44th Sedos member.

On January 25th, the Executive Secretary will visit the Augustinians who have requested information about Sedos.

3. THE NEXT GENERAL ASSEMBLY

It was agreed to hold this on Monday 29th May. Fr. Timmermans suggested one possible speaker. Suggestions are also expected on the Evaluation Sheets. Br. Pablo will find out if the Christian Brothers Generalate is available at that time. It was suggested we notify Fr. Systemans of the USG of the date in view of the non-Catholic delegates who may attend the USG meeting in May and who might be interested in the Sedos meeting.

4. DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING

27th February at 3.30pm. at Sedos

Other meetings are scheduled for: 10 March Friday - 3.30pm.
12 April Wednesday - 3.30pm.
10 May Wednesday - 3.30pm.

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