(Poverty)

Sourcebook on Poverty, Development and Justice

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SOURCEBOOK ON POVERTY, DEVELOPMENT AND JUSTICE

Edited by the Education Staff of the
Campaign for Human Development

INTRODUCTION

This Sourcebook contains five inter-related essays entitled:

1. Social Justice and Development in the Mission of Christians

2. Reflections Upon the Social Mission of the Church in the United States

3. Social Sin

4. Christianity: A Life Style

5. Education to Justice: Reflections on the 1971 Roman Synod Document, Justice in the World

In publishing the Sourcebook, the Campaign for Human Development does not presume to give final answers on these complex topics. Rather, the essays are intended to provide resource material to suggest significant questions which could be addressed in adult education programs. We have attempted here to explore various aspects of the question: What does it mean in the United States to be a Christian, carrying out the social mission of the Church?

In a companion reader, *Poverty Profile,* 1972, which you will receive with this booklet, we have first addressed the question of social justice by confronting the facts of chronic poverty and inequitable distribution of income in our country. In this Sourcebook we hope to explore how those facts of poverty relate to our Christian vocation to give life to all people.

A companion publication entitled *Poverty and Justice: An Adult Education Handbook*, to be published shortly, will provide practical techniques, models and thematic development strategies for designing education sessions on the topics presented in the Sourcebook. While intended as complementary tools, both the Sourcebook and the Handbook can be used independently. Comments, requests, and critiques can be addressed to:

Campaign for Human Development
United States Catholic Conference
1312 Massachusetts Avenue, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20005

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Poverty Profile $1.00 (10% discount on order 25 and over)

Sourcebook on Poverty, Development and Justice, $1.50 (10% discount on orders 25 and over)

Poverty and Justice: An Adult Education Handbook, $2.50 (discount applies here also.)

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SOCIAL JUSTICE AND DEVELOPMENT IN THE MISSION OF CHRISTIANS: SCRIPTURAL AND DOCTRINAL FOUNDATIONS

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I. INTRODUCTION

Many Christians have been confused by the growing tendency to bring social, economic and political concerns "into the Church"; while others are exhausted after spending contributions, taxes, personal effort and hopes in ten years of work with mixed results (sometimes it seems, no results). They ask: "Is justice in the world possible, is working for justice desired by "Christian" society, ought it to be a goal of the Church after all?" The movement of Charismatic Renewal has proclaimed, to growing agreement, that the proclaiming of the gospel, catechesis and prayer, are first necessary before any movement to justice is possible by the People of God -- first because true Christian justice can only proceed from a life of faith and prayer, and secondly, because failure or inability on the part of Christians to accept working for social justice as an integral part of their faith indicates that true evangelization and conversion never occurred, or was weak.

Meanwhile the Catholic Church in the United States has created a Campaign for Human Development, which announces as its goal the development of self-determination and socio-economic power among poor people, and the National Conference of Catholic Charities has decided to channel efforts and resources to advocacy and social institutional change. Do the resurgence of prayer and evangelical activity and the move of social arm of the Church into the controversial areas of change, power and advocacy stand in opposition to each other? In this chapter, we cannot hope to examine completely such a vast question, nor can we presume the competence to give a final answer. Our hope is to list briefly some themes of our faith and to trace teachings of the Church on social justice in order to explore the question: What do the concepts of social justice, development and empowerment have to do with Christianity?

II. NO SOCIETY, ECONOMY OR CULTURE IS SACRED

What, in our time, does it mean to be a Christian? How does one act out his Christianity? What are Christian things to do? Living as a Christian may require different forms of action in different times and cultures, because life in the Lord is essentially a transcendent reality and it cannot be said that actions or practices of one particular culture or time are unchanging signs of Christian life. (e.g. cannot be said, as it once was, that government through "divine right of Kings" is an eternal, unchanging order for society, dictated by God.) In a workshop during the National Congress on the Word of God, Father Joseph Komonchok recalled that there is

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throughout the Bible a theme of "desacralization of social and political institutions"... The Bible rejects as idolatry any attempt to attribute to "specific social or political institutions" an immutable or divine character. The prophets continually warned the Jewish people, when their Kingdoms grew overconfident of their own power and righteousness and they violated the law, to examine their ways and turn back to God. In the same way Christians have the continual responsibility to evaluate their own culture, society, values and religious practices, in order to stay true to what the Holy Spirit may inspire. This does not mean that Christianity is a totally spiritual, other-world-oriented faith which deems this world a vale of tears and chooses to avoid it as completely as possible. Pope John, in Mater et Magistra (No. 5) emphasized that Christianity does occur *in time* and *place* and, because salvation is won *in living,* must embody itself in concrete actions. Recognizing that conditions, economies and immediate causes of things change over time and place, the Christian is faced with the need to recall the basic reality of the Church, the teachings of the Lord Jesus, the vocation of discipleship--and by applying these to current times and life-styles, and by accepting the guidance and power of the Spirit of God, to choose forms of action which manifest these themes. In this process, there are basic transcendent themes of Christianity which can be examined.

III. BASIC CHRISTIAN THEMES

1. *Church as a missionary people called to love all men and give life to the world.*

The Second Vatican Council described the essential reality of the Church, the People of God, in the following passages from its *Dogmatic Constitution on the Church:*

> By an utterly free and mysterious decree of His own wisdom and goodness, the eternal Father created the whole world. His plan was to dignify them with a participation in his own divine life. He did not abandon men after they had fallen in Adam, but ceaselessly offered them help to salvation, in anticipation of Christ the Redeemer . . . He planned to assemble in the Holy Church all those who would believe in Christ. Established in the present era of time, the Church was made manifest by the outpouring of the Spirit. At the end of time she will achieve her glorious fulfillment. (No. 2)

The Son, therefore, came on mission from His Father. It was in Him, before the foundation of the world, that the Father chose us and predestined us to become adopted sons, for in Him it has pleased the Father to re-establish all things. (Eph: 1: 4-9 and 10). To carry out the will of the Father, Christ inaugurated the kingdom of heaven on earth and revealed to us the mystery of the Father. By His obedience He brought about redemption. The Church, or, in other words, the kingdom of Christ now present in mystery, grows visibly in the world through the power of God. (No. 3)

Thus, the Church is meant to be the People of God on earth. Through it, the Father has chosen to continually manifest Christ's presence in the world. The Father's purpose is to communicate His love for all people and all creation, and by dignifying the world with participation in His own divine life, to re-establish all things. The kingdom is the work of Jesus, our Lord and Savior, and cannot be built without radical total dependence on His Spirit, for power and guidance.

God's design is in fact to communicate Himself (1 John 2: 1-3) . . . The Father has sanctified the Son and sent Him into the world (John 10:36). The Son in His turn has sanctified and purified the apostles, and consecrates them by sending them to the world. (John 17: 14, 17-19). This is the moment of their consecration. (Yves Congar, *Power and Poverty in the Church*, p. 32)

Thus, being sent into the world, missioned from the Father, is the consecration of Christ, His Son; and being sent from Christ as followers, disciples, is the consecration of Christians.

According to Jesus Himself, the "mission" of Christians must be the same as His -- and Christians cannot accomplish this, except through the power of the Spirit. By living as Jesus did, we bear much fruit, and build up the kingdom.

I am the way, the Truth and the Life. No one can come to the Father except through Me. If you know Me, you know My Father, too. (John 14:6-7)

I tell you most solemnly, whoever believes in Me will perform the same works as I do Myself; he will perform

even greater works, because I am going to the Father . . . If you love Me, you will keep my commandments . . . I shall ask the Father, and he will give you another Advocate to be with you forever . . . If anyone loves Me he will keep My word, and My Father will love him, and we shall come to him and make our home with him. (John 14: 12; 16-23)

I am the vine, you are the branches. Whoever remains in Me, with me in him, bears fruit in plenty; for cut off from Me you can do nothing . . . It is to the glory of My Father that you should bear much fruit. (John 15: 5,9)

To do the "works" of Jesus, to live His life, is to find His "way," to become "other Christs," to share in the redemptive work and be co-creators of a new heaven and a new earth:

This is My commandment: love one another, as I have loved you. A man can have no greater love than to lay down his life for his friends. You are my friends, if you do what I command you. I shall not call you servants any more, because a servant does not know his Master's business; I call you friends because I have made known to you everything I have learned from My Father. You did not choose Me, no I chose you; and I commissioned you to go out and bear fruit. . .(John 15: 12-16)

What Jesus receives from the Father, so we also receive from the Father through Jesus, as sharers in His mission. Everyone who considers himself a Christian, including the laity, is called to friendship and redemptive mission with Jesus Christ. And Christians do not only share His mission as individuals, but as a corporate reality...The People of God.

It has pleased God, however, to make men holy and save them not merely as individuals without any mutual bonds, but by making them into a single people, a people which acknowledges Him in truth and serves Him in holiness...

Its goal is the kingdom of God...Established by Christ as a fellowship of life, charity, and truth, it is also used by Him as an instrument for the redemption of all, and is sent forth into the whole world... (*Dogmatic Constitution on the Church,* No. 9.)

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2.   *The primacy of service and love in giving life.*

The way of the world is quite different and opposed to the Way of Jesus Christ, and based upon radically different principles:

> You know that among the pagans their so-called rulers lord it over them, and their great men make their authority felt. This must not happen among you. No, anyone who wants to become great among you must be your servant, and anyone who wants to be first among you must slave to all. For the Son of Man Himself did not come to be served but to serve, and to give His life as a ransom for many. (Mark 10:42-45)

Yves Congar, in *Power and Poverty in the Church,* summarizes the differences between the two very clearly:

> The 'first' man within us longs to dominate, to play the Master...Christ came as the 'second Adam,' or rather, as St. Paul says, the 'last Adam,'...not a man of domination but a man of obedience, giving thanks, a man in communion with others or rather complying and communing with God in them, a man of God, who is 'all in all' (1 Cor. 15:28). The first Adam has life...He lives, but his life constantly wastes away and renews itself by devouring, that is, destroying other creatures, appropriating them to itself...But normal life, true life, should not be sustained by bringing death. Life should come from within and communicate life. 'The last Adam is a quickening spirit' (1 Cor. 15-45) (p. 28)...The way leading to God, who is 'all in all,' leading, that is, to mankind in communion, is a state where others are not destroyed to sustain life, but where life, coming from God, shines out on all men; it is the way of love in humble service...

> The Spirit of possessiveness destroys; agape, love, which is poured forth within us by the Holy Spirit, shines forth and edifies. (1 Cor. 8:1) (p. 29-30)

Thus Jesus, the Washer of dirty feet, He who has "emptied himself, taking the form of a servant," (Philippians 2:6-11), He who dies on the cross--pours His life out in love and service *to give life to His fellow mankind.*

I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full. (John 10:10)

Therefore, being a Christian *inherently* includes *giving life* in the full to fellow humans, through service to them. As Father Avery Dulles, S.J., in his introduction to Lumen Gentium (Documents of Vatican II, American Press, 1966), states, this is part of the three-fold mission of the Church for *every* Christian, including the laity: martyrion (witness), diakonia (ministry), koinonia (fellowship). Each comprises one type of lifegiving, interrelated and inherently part of being a Christian.

3.   *Power and Motivation for Service – Christ's Love – The Freedom of Sons of God.*

The power and motivation to do this comes not from humankind's own power, for we are weak and disposed towards self-centered activity from the fact of sin. Rather, they come from the freedom given by God's love and the fact that He will never neglect us, even at death. This joy, this unmerited gift, can only be received from the Lord if we surrender any illusions of self-sufficiency or power, and let Jesus be our Lord. Then, freed from fear, from the need to save ourselves, we can let go and give life instead of taking it:

> This doctrine...is the primacy of God's grace in welcoming man in spite of his sinfulness and prior even to any effort by men to 'justify' himself before God. It is present in Jesus' preaching of the Kingdom of God, which comes, not as the work of man and not according to a careful balance of reward and punishment, but as the pure favor of God, breaking through the narrow world of human expectation...For Saint Paul, we do not stand confidently before God because we have done the works of the Law, but solely because God has loved us in Jesus Christ. Our common alienation is overcome by his initiative, and with it is also overcome the alienation of Jew from Greek, freeman from slave, male from female.

> In Gospel and Epistle, Christian moral striving arises in response to the saving initiative of God. Rather than the desperate attempt of man to make himself acceptable to God, Christian moral concern is the struggle of one, accepted despite his unacceptability, to lead a life not unworthy of such free graciousness. That is why

God's mercy and the example of Christ become the norms
of Christian living,...owing his freedom to the forgiveness
of God, how can the Christian not forgive?"

Fr. Komonchok, from "Preaching and
Social Development," an address
delivered at the National Congress on
the Word of God, Concurrent
Conference on Preaching and Social
Development.

God has love us first. Our only response is to be selfless, grateful, to
love in return, to share the Good News which is the source of our joy
beyond human expectation:

We are to love, then, because he loved us first.
Anyone who says "I love God" and hates his brother, is a
liar, since a man who does not love the brother he can see
cannot love God, whom he has not seen. (I John 4:19-20)

True humility and unpretentiousness are needed, however, before a
person can fully accept God's love, for acceptance implies admission of
limitation and creaturehood. From the day of the garden of Eden, this has
been man's great difficulty. Therefore, God's kingdom is especially directed
at the poor and unpretentious.

4.   *Poverty. The Primacy of the Poor.*

The Lord, and His Church after him, have stated clearly that the poor
of the earth, the rejected and powerless, are those for whom His ministry is
especially intended. There seems to be, however, some obscurity in what
poverty the Lord means. Most certainly, He states that His kingdom is
meant for unpretentious (people) persons who have no illusion of their own
centrality to the world, who realize they are creatures and humbly accept
their nothingness in the absence of a redeeming, dignifying Power. That
Power is the life of God, grace, the Lord's love. Admitting our essential
nothingness and limitations brings openness and disposition to the Word and
Power of God, which alone can save us and humanize the world. This is the
virtue of poverty of spirit.

"How happy are the poor in spirit; theirs is the kingdom of heaven."
(Matthew 5:3) Only the poor in spirit can receive the Power of God, only
they are humble enough to allow it to enter their lives.

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I tell you solemnly, anyone who does not welcome the kingdom of God like a little child will never enter it. (Mark 10:15)

The Lord Jesus repeated frequently that He came to minister to sinners, the disenfranchised, those in need of help. By implication, He said His mission is not to the "powerful," those who don't think they need help, but to those in need.

Listen, my dear brothers: it was those who are poor according to the world that God chose, to be rich in faith and to be the heirs of the kingdom which He promised to those who love Him. (James 2:5-6)

What is to be given to the "poor?"

The Spirit of the Lord has been given to me for He has anointed me. He has sent me to bring the good news to the poor, to proclaim liberty to captives and to the blind new sight, to set the downtrodden free, to proclaim the Lord's year of favor. (Luke 4:18-19)

Liberation, the good news of God's love for humankind. The liberation is: freedom from fear because the Lord loves us and we will live *forever* by His power, if we will accept it; and freedom from the Law, because we no longer have to try to justify ourselves (prove ourselves worthy) before God by living up to the Law. [We could never, on our own weak abilities, fulfill the Law anyway.] Only by accepting the love of God in Jesus Christ, can we be saved. He loves us in spite of ourselves. But, as St. Paul states (Galatians 5), this freedom of the Spirit is not chaos or license to do anything we want. Salvation requires a stance of repentance, acceptance, allowing the Lord to take us, a life of gratitude. This life can only be lived by the Power of the Holy Spirit, at his guidance. There are requirements, then — we must live as Jesus lived, as was pointed out before. Here is the paradox of poverty — for the Lord lived as a poor man, in order that others might be enriched. Christians are called to do the same.

Foxes have holes and the birds of the air have nests, but the Son of Man has nowhere to lay his head. (Matthew 8:18)

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> If you wish to be perfect, go and sell what you own and
> give the money to the poor, and you will have treasure in
> heaven; then come, follow Me. (Matthew 19: 21-22)

5.   *Renunciation: The Place of Goods.*

In the Sermon on the Mount, Christ referred to the sharing of the
goods of this world — if a man ask for your cloak, give him your tunic as
well. Thus, the good things of life are to be shared, not hoarded. The
function of koinonia (fellowship) is the sharing of ourselves, our time, our
personal care and attention. The function of diakonia (service) is the sharing
of our goods, our resources. The function of martyrion (witness) is the
sharing of our faith, the Word in us. These are the good things, and Jesus
call us to *share them all.*

The Church has always taught that the world is given to all men for
their development and use:

> God intended the earth and all that it contains for the use
> of every human being and people. Thus, as all men follow
> justice and unite in charity, created goods should abound
> for them on a reasonable basis...In using them, therefore,
> a man should regard his lawful possessions not merely as
> his own but also as common property in the sense that
> they should accrue to the benefit of not only himself but
> of others. (*Constitution on the Church in the Modern
> World*, No. 69)

Things, the goods of this earth, insight — these are gifts of God, meant to
enable man to create and ennoble himself, serving as manifestations of
God's love for humankind. The divesting of goods which the Lord required
of His followers is therefore a two-fold act: the act of setting one's heart on
God, His love and power, as the primary dignity to which man is called,
requires people *not* to place their trust and treasure in goods, in material
security, but to place these things in perspective. Their use is to give all
people the stuff with which to be co-creators of a redeemed world.
Secondly, the use of goods to give sustenance to the poor is a way of
witnessing God's love through our concern for other persons and their
needs. It frees them from want, suffering, and dependency, and becomes a
fruit of God's love working through His people. In short, the poverty of
spirit of more affluent Christians, choosing the Lord for their lot and
putting worldly goods and power into perspective — as means to God, as
gifts to be used for all — *this very virtue of poverty becomes the key to
enrich and liberate and love the poor of the world.* In this way, the world is

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humanized, created goods can abound for all, God's love is manifested and men are liberated *in history,* from fear of judgment (by God's love), from fear of death (Christ's resurrection), and from fear and bondage of poverty and oppression. Christians, by their model, should invite the world to a meaningful use and evaluation of goods and power. (Security does not come from these things — but they can be signs of and fruits of the Lord's love.) Christians do not see things as equivalent to the Lord's love — but as a fruit of His creative love, fulfilled. Thus, Christians, if they share goods, are not inviting the poor to materialism, but to a minimum degree of freedom, which if fulfilled by faith, can lift men to full human life. *It is freedom that can issue from God's love — in spirit and in the world.* In sharing, Christians love God as well, because the Lord made it clear that He identifies with the poor and unpretentious:

> Lord, when did we see you hungry or thirsty, sick or in prison, and did not come to your help? Then He will answer, "I tell you, most solemnly, in so far as you neglected to do this to one of the least of these, you neglected to do it to me. (Matthew 25:44-46)

Christ's commandments are a unity — love the Lord with one's whole self — love one's neighbor as onself. They cannot be separated (1 John 4:21). If Christians follow the Lord in this way, liberation *in fact* from fear and want occurs in time and place. So the Church has taught, from the beginning:

> If a man who was rich enough in this world's goods saw that one of his brothers was in need, but closed his heart to him, how could the love of God be living in him? (1 John 3:17)

6. *The Dignity of Humanity — Freedom, Participation as Needs for Human Development.*

Man was created in the "image and likeness of God," is capable of knowing and loving His creator and fellow man, and was appointed by God as master over all earthly creations that he might subdue them and use them to God's glory. (Gaudium et Spes, No. 12). Moreover, the glory of man is his mind, soul, ability to seek and recognize truth, to gain wisdom, to create meaning and order, to choose and thus shape his own destiny. It is to this end that freedom of mind and choice are crucial. They are manifestations of God's love and respect for man — they are also fruits of his creative and redemptive work. And the *result* of Christians living in the world should be

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that this freedom, and reverence for the dignity of a man is extended to all men as a manifestation of and means toward God's Kingdom.

Full human development is both the call and responsibility of a human being:

> In the design of God, every man is called upon to develop and fulfill himself, for every life is a vocation. At birth, everyone is granted, in germ, a set of aptitudes and qualities for him to bring to fruition. Their coming to maturity, which will be the result of education received from the environment and personal efforts, will allow each man *to direct himself toward the destiny intended for him by his Creator. Endowed with intelligence and freedom he is responsible for his fulfilment as he is for his salvation.*

> *However, this self-fulfillment is not something optional. Just as the whole of creation is ordained to its Creator, so spiritual beings should of their own accord orientate their lives to God, the first truth and the supreme good...*But each man is a member of society. He is part of the whole of mankind. *It is not just certain individuals, but all men who are called to this fullness of development.* (*Development of Peoples,* Pope Paul VI, Nos. 15, 16 and 17.)

Pope Paul VI described the characteristics of a more humanized world (and thus, more divine) in this way:

> If further development calls for the work of more and more technicians, even more necessary is the deep thought and reflection of wise men in search of a new humanism which will enable modern man to find himself anew by embracing the higher values of love and friendship, of prayer and contemplation. This is what will permit the fullness of authentic development, a development which is for each and all the transition from less human conditions to those which are more human.

> Less human conditions: the lack of material necessities for those who are without the minimum essential for life, the moral deficiencies of those who are

mutilated by selfishness. Less human conditions: oppressive social structures, whether due to the abuses of ownership or to the abuses of power, to the exploitation of workers or to unjust transactions. Conditions that are more human: the passage from misery towards the possession of necessities, victory over social scourges, the growth of knowledge, the acquisition of culture. Additional conditions that are more human: increased esteem for the dignity of others, the turning toward the spirit of poverty, cooperation for the common good, the will and desire for peace. Conditions that are still more human: the acknowledgement by man of supreme values, and of God their source and their finality. Conditions that, finally and above all, are more human: faith, a gift of God accepted by the good will of man, and unity in the charity of Christ, Who calls us all to share as sons in the life of the living God, the Father of all men. (*Development of Peoples,* Pope Paul VI, Nos. 20-21.)

These condition's cannot be seen necessarily as sequential stages through which one *must* pass to find the Lord. Rather, they are parts of a whole vision, which is a world of justice. In the Old Testament, justice constituted the existence of desired relationships among people, and between people and God. A just man lives in harmony, in ordered relationships, with God (humility, thanksgiving, worship, praise) and with fellowmen (sharing the goods of this earth, reverence, respect, peace, love.)

From his revelation we can understand why God hates injustice. He calls us to live in a harmonious community... Cruelty, violence, preying on one another destroys this harmony... (*Justice: God's Vision, Man's Discipleship* -- Pastoral letter of Bishop Carroll Dozier, Memphis, Christmas 1972.)

Freedom is the proper environment in which humanization can occure. It is both a means and an end, therefore, a characteristic and a goal of the mission of the people of God.

The heritage of this people (messianic people) are the dignity and freedom of the sons of God, in whose hearts the Holy Spirit dwells as in His temple. Its law is the new commandment to love as Christ loved us (cf. Jn. 13:34). (*The Dogmatic Constitution on the Church,* No. 9.)

Only in freedom can man direct himself toward goodness. Our contemporaries make much of this freedom and pursue it eagerly, and rightly so, to be sure. Often, however, they foster it perversely as a license for doing whatever pleases them, even if it is evil.

For its part, authentic freedom is an exceptional sign of the divine image within man. For God has willed that man be left "in the hand of his own counsel" (Sirach 15:14) so that he can seek his Creator spontaneously, and come freely to utter and blissful perfection through loyalty to Him. Hence, man's dignity demands that he act according to knowing and free choice. Such a choice is personally motivated and prompted from within. It does not result from blind internal impulse nor from here external pressure. (*The Constitution on the Church in the Modern World,* No. 17.)

Freedom can be abused, but not if kept in the context of justice, harmonious relationships voluntarily ordered by God's Spirit of Love:

Man achieves such dignity when, emancipating himself from all captivity to passion, he pursues his goal in a spontaneous choice of what is good, and procures for himself, through effective and skillful action, apt means to that end. Since man's freedom has been damaged by sin, only by the help of God's grace can he bring such a relationship with God to full flower. (*The Constitution on the Church in the Modern World,* No. 17.)

Freedom, love, peace unity, sharing — these are characteristics of the kingdom of God. Full human growth is a part of the fulfillment of redemption, then, since the true human image is a reflection of God. The Lord's goal is to give full life, to help us truly be human, to be free because our life line is His love and His will -- the freedom of the sons of God. It follows then that "whatever dehumanizes people diminishes and acts against the image of God, the fulfillment of the Kingdom. Whatever frees man — 'liberates' him — for further self-development and self-fulfillment by that fact also furthers the creative work of God and the visibility of His image in the world." (Komonchok, p. 7)

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7. *Types of Bondage*

There are many types of bondage, internal and external, personal and social: the bondages of sin, pride, fear, death — these the love of Christ can break; the bondage of egoistic attempts at self-sufficiency or the fear to lose the false security of excessive goods — these can be loosed by a more realistic concept of life and a more human, sharing-oriented economy and society, which works towards community and the common good. Then, there are the bonds of poverty and oppression, often created for others because the rich and powerful are caught in the bonds mentioned above:

> Now a man can scarcely arrive at the needed sense of responsibility unless his living conditions allow him to become conscious of his dignity, and to rise to his destiny by spending himself for God and for others. But human freedom is often crippled when a man falls into extreme poverty, just as it withers when he indulges in too many of life's comforts and imprisons himself in a kind of splendid isolation. Freedom acquires new strength, by contrast, when a man consents to the unavoidable requirements of social life, takes on the manifold demands of human partnership and commits himself to the service of the human community. (*The Constitution on the Church in the Modern World,* No. 33.)

In this vein, Pope John had stated earlier:

> Beginning our discussion of the rights of man, we see that every man has the right to life, to bodily integrity and to the means which are necessary and suitable for the proper development of life... *(Pacem in Terris,* No. 9)

Included in Church social teaching is the desirability of self-help, freedom of choice, the deciding upon one's own destiny, taking life into one's own hands, as much as possible and on a relatively equal basis with all others in society. In addition to poverty and greed, Pope John considered oppressive governments or societal conditions to be unjust limits to freedom and dignity:

> The dignity of the human person also requires that every man enjoy the right to act freely and responsibly. For this reason, therefore, in social relations man should exercise his rights, fulfill his obligations and,

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in the countless forms of collaboration with others, act chiefly on his own responsibility and initiative. This is to be done...without being moved by force or pressure brought to bear on him externally. *(Pacem in Terris,* No. 34)

8. *Christian Mission: To Share Goods and Build a Just Social Order.*

The Council reaffirmed John's emphasis upon the rights of political involvement and self-determination, and, as quoted above, saw poverty and want as other chains limiting freedom of choice and action. The Council constantly stressed that Christians are responsible for promoting conditions which foster the "Common good" (*Constitution on the Church in the Modern World*, Nos. 26, 31); saw a reasonable minimum of physical goods as pre-conditions or means to social participation, freedom and the opportunity to participate as co-creators; and saw social participation and shared decision-making as basic situations for the opportunity for dignity and freedom to be achieved. All of these goals are part of the Christian social mission:

> For the rest, the right to have a share of earthly goods sufficient for oneself and one's family belongs to everyone. The Fathers and Doctors of the Church held this view, teaching that men are obliged to come to the relief of the poor, *and to do so not merely out of their superfluous goods.* If a person is in extreme necessity, he has the right to take from the riches of others what he himself needs. Since there are so many people in this world afflicted with hunger, this sacred Council urges all, both individuals and governments, to remember the saying of the Fathers: "Feed the man dying of hunger, because if you have not fed him you have killed him. *According to their ability, let all individuals and governments undertake a genuine sharing of their goods. Let them use these goods especially to provide individuals and nations with the means for helping and developing themselves.* (Emphasis ours.) (*Constitution on the Church in the Modern World*, No. 69.)

This responsibility applies to affluent and poor Christians alike. Referring to economic development programs, Pope Paul spoke of the principle of self-help and self-determination in his "Development of Peoples":

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Such programs should reduce inequalities, fight discriminations, free man from various types of servitude and enable him to be the instrument of his own material betterment, of his moral progress and of his spiritual growth. To speak of development is in effect to show as much concern for social progress as for economic growth. (*Development of Peoples,* No. 45)

Speaking of international development programs, Pope Paul stated that the goal must be to "discover the ways that will allow peoples which are still underdeveloped to break through the barriers which seem to enclose them and to discover for themselves, in full fidelity to their own proper genius, the means for their social and human progress" (No. 64), so that all peoples can become "artisans of their own destiny." (No. 65) The Roman Synod of bishops stated in their *Justice in the World*:

> ...we have nevertheless been able to perceive the serious injustices which are building around the world of men a network of domination, oppression, and abuses which stifle freedom and which keep the greater part of humanity from sharing in the building up and enjoyment of a more just and more fraternal world. (Introduction)

> ...it is impossible to conceive true progress without recognizing the necessity — within the political system chosen — of a development composed of both economic growth and participation; and the necessity too of an increase in wealth implying as well social progress by the entire community as it overcomes regional imbalance and islands of prosperity. Participation constitutes a right which is to be applied both in the economic and in the social and political field. (Section I)

The Church has clearly affirmed the values of self-help, personal decision-making and shared social decision-making as means to personal human development and as signs of basic fulfillment having begun. A Christian has the duty and the right to all of this, and the responsibility to assist others in doing these things, so that human development of the whole and the common good may be pursued, and human community be built up. *Every person and group has a right before God to the goods and social conditions needed for them to be free and to live in dignity, in order that they be responsible agents in their own lives and full participants in extending these conditions to others. In this way, harmony and justice are*

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achieved. Provision of needs, participation and respect are therefore conceived of as signs of and means to freedom. The Lord Jesus constantly went about healing, providing, forgiving, proclaiming liberty to all kinds of captives. Freedom is man's vocation, the path to human development. In this context, then, any true program of "development" must lead to freedom, liberation from bondage of all kinds. The existence of such liberation as a fact issues in harmony -- the condition of justice, as mentioned above.

9. *Work for Justice (Harmony) and Liberation – A Requirement of Being a Christian.*

The Roman Synod of Bishops emphatically stated that "action on behalf of justice and participation in the transformation of the world fully appear to us as a constitutive dimension of the preaching of the Gospel, or, in other words, of the Church's mission for the redemption of the human race and its liberation from every oppressive situation" (Introduction, "Justice in the World"). Moreover, "Christian love of neighbor and justice cannot be separated. For love implies an absolute demand for justice, namely, a recognition of the dignity and rights of one's neighbor." (Part II, *Justice in the World*).

10. *An Aside – The Rationale for Christian Involvement in Social Change.*

The position reached by the bishops of the Church and the Pope in his teachings are based upon growing understanding of how human development occurs. The study of history and social science's examination of the effect of environment (social, physical, technological) on the personality have revealed that certain needs, certain experiences and certain social conditions profoundly affect human freedom and how people feel about themselves. The Church has recognized this, as revealed above in quotations from the teachings of Vatican II. The Synod of bishops in Rome developed this concept further, in speaking of social conditions, economic arrangements and the status of political power, which do not liberate people.

> ...new divisions are being born to separate man from his neighbor. Unless combatted and overcome by social and political action, the influence of the new industrial and technological order favors the concentration of wealth, power and decision-making in the hands of a small public or private controlling group.

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Economic injustice and lack of social participation keep a man from attaining his basic human and civil rights (*Justice in the World*, I).

This desire, however (for self-development) will not satisfy the expectations of our time if it ignores the objective obstacles which social structures place in the way of conversion of hearts, or even of the realization of the ideal of charity. It demands on the contrary that the general condition of being marginal in society be overcome, so that an end will be put to the systematic barriers and vicious circles which oppose the collective advance towards enjoyment of adequate remuneration of the factors of production, and which strengthen the situation of discrimination with regard to opportunities and collective services from which a great part of the people are now excluded. (I)

For these types of reasons and analysis, the bishops exhorted Christians and all men to work, both as individuals, in their work and voluntary activity, and in associations for improvement of the social order in each society, with regards to rights, economic and social-political participation. Christians have been called to participate in political affairs (*Call To Action* of Pope Paul) and to share, *not only their superfluous wealth but any surplus of goods and wealth which exceeds their reasonable needs for human development.*

This social order requires constant improvement. It must be founded on truth, built on justice and animated by love, in freedom it should grow every day toward a more human balance. An improvement in attitudes and widespread changes in society will have to take place if these objectives are to be gained. *(Constitution on the Church in the Modern World,* No. 26.)

11. *The Vision of the Kingdom.*

In healing, forgiving and providing needs, the Lord Jesus lived out what He also came to announce: "The Kingdom of God is at hand." (Matthew 4:17) In so far as we, followers of the Lord, do these things, the kingdom is proclaimed by us also. The Second Vatican Council described this theme and outlined some precautions:

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We do not know the time for the consummation of the earth and of humanity. (*Constitution on the Church in the Modern World,* No. 39.)

The Kingdom won't be finally realized until the end of the ages, when Christ will reestablish all things, making a new heaven and a new earth. As such, the kingdom vision is "eschatological," it is a vision of the future, and it serves as model or standard by which our contemporary society can and must be judged. Pope Paul spoke of the value of utopian visions for society in this regard.

Nevertheless, the Christian faith holds that the kingdom is happening, mysteriously, in history, as was pointed out earlier in a quotation from the *Constitution on the Church.* Therefore, the eschatological nature of the kingdom should not persuade Christians that affairs of the world are totally below and outside of being a Christian:

> ...The expectation of a new earth and a new heaven must not weaken but rather stimulate our concern for cultivating this one. For here grows the body of a new human family, a body which even now is able to give some foreshadowing of the new age. (*Constitution on the Church in the Modern World,* No. 39.)

IV. CAUTIONS.

There are necessary cautions to be taken, however. For one thing, earthly progress *in itself* must be distinguished from the growth of Christ's kingdom. (*Constitution on the Church in the Modern World,* No. 39) It cannot be assumed that the "Successful" or powerful or affluent are the best Christians, or that the poor do not share in the responsibilities. Material good is part of the vision, but the Christian is called first to loyalty and love of the Lord, and His will. Thus, it can be a mistake to consider wealth or other goods as categorical signs of the Lord's favor -- He is just as likely to require suffering and poverty of some people in some times. The crux is -- the kingdom is a mystery and defined by the Lord's will, not man's. Thus, it can never be said, as was pointed out above, that any one form, system, culture or state is commensurate with the Lord's will. This means Christians must "avoid...speaking as if the kingdom will come by our effort, ignoring the transcendent and eschatological character of God's final act." (Komonchok, p. 10) "The kingdom is brought about not by man, but by God, and its character and coming often run counter to human expectation." (Komonchok, p. 9) The Lord's Kingdom, in its basic

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principles, as seen above, is truly other than of this world. Christ, our King, after all, was lifted up to this kingdom by being crucified. Thus, Komonchok concludes, "His redemptive acts in the past have often enough been the contradictions of human anticipation for us to be able to avoid assuming the shape in which the full kingdom will come. Nor is it necessary for us to know it; it is enough for us to know our responsibilities for the development of genuine human community." (p. 10-11). We would add, in addition to those themes outlined above, that the need for prayer, trust in the Spirit, group effort, openness and respect for divergent opinions, and understanding are paramount. These all point to the essential quality of poverty of spirit which must be the central characteristic of the kingdom.

Secondly, the fact that social freedom and satisfaction of basic human needs further human growth and present an environment of freedom does not mean that interior spiritual freedom or human growth *cannot* or *does not* occur among poor or oppressed people. One cannot conclude that to be affluent is to be free and happy, to be poor is to be chained and miserable. Poor people and cultures where poverty exists in great numbers often manifest much deeper human freedom and values of community, sharing, and trust than do affluent persons or societies. In fact, the action of the Holy Spirit in liberating persons spiritually often occurs within suffering or poverty, and cannot be said to be *caused by* satisfaction of needs or social power. What this means is that the action of God must be seen as unpredictable and uncontrollable by man, and that spiritual reality can overcome social-environmental reality. Nevertheless, this witness of increasing the possibilities for human growth is called for by Jesus and His Church from all Christians. And respect for more human cultural values and differences amidst change is especially necessary for those who would extend assistance. Christians are called to help each other be their best selves, not to make other people and cultures exactly like they are. Thus self-development entails the freedom to pick and choose among resources, values and techniques by the poor, so that they can develop themselves according to their own needs and priorities.

Third, many Christians sincerely feel a problem exists in giving goods or encouraging the downtrodden to take destiny into their hands (i.e. to take power in their own affairs). People may be attracted to a materialistic way of life. It is felt that by emphasizing social conditions of more general distribution of wealth, and by seeing in goods and self-determination the social environment for better human development, that well-meaning Christians may actually be de-emphasizing the virtue of poverty, accepting an exaggerated "this-world" concept of the Kingdom (which, as seen above, can be a mistake) and inviting the poor to imitate the secular example of

materialism and secular power. Undoubtedly this represents risk when Christians share or possess resources with which people can take their destiny into their own hands (which implies that they will then decide how best to utilize their resources and talents instead of continuing as passive dependents and recipients of goods). There always remains the possibility that, if successful, newly liberated peoples will imitate the values and models of the secular materialistic society in which they have not shared, i.e. "making it." While understandable, this result may not be desirable if those values and ways of living contain the seeds of avarice or neglect of the good of the community. Yet there is no way the Church can impose or guarantee that those touched by its service will respond with similar activity. The best and most effective way is probably for the Church to be a living example of what can be. Christians, spiritually full and alive in the Lord, can be communities of concern and voluntary sharing -- living the virtue of poverty and respect for life. This is, in fact, what the Lord Himself did, and to pour out one's love and resources to give life, without *requiring* a return, seems to be an action of hope and faith. We do not suggest that foolish irresponsible uses of resources, or actions which are contrary to Christian values, should be supported knowingly, but that Christians who give of their selves in order to bring Christ have to accept the possibility that others may not receive the Christ along with resources and support. It is ultimately a choice that those benefitted are free to make, and this freedom is part of the gift of God, as Vatican Council II stated:

> Christ is our Master and Lord. He is also meek and humble of heart and in attracting and inviting His disciples, He acted patiently...His intention was to rouse faith in His hearers and to confirm them in faith, not to exert coercion upon them...He preferred to call Himself the Son of Man, who came 'to serve and to give His life as a ransom for many.' (Declaration on Religious Freedom, No. 11 Documents of Vatican II).

V. RESPONSIBILITIES

1. *Personal Lifestyle.* Therefore, freedom and resources and personal or community power are risky, but so is all human freedom. If affluent or middle class Christians live an example of dominance and *worldly* power (which consumes), they invite the downtrodden to imitate it and guarantee false development. But if Christians, in divesting themselves, set an example of community, sharing, reverence for life, wisdom with humility — then they invite the oppressed in their freedom and ability to choose (which is a power) to join in building the Kingdom. Liberation then becomes a fruit of

love and an invitation to Christ. The 1971 Roman Synod addressed this, calling for the establishment of justice and an examination of conscience among Christians:

> The present situation of the world seen in the light of faith, calls us back to the very essence of the Christian message, creating in us a deep awareness of its true meaning and of its urgent demands. The mission of preaching the Gospel dictates at the present time that we dedicate ourselves to the liberation of man even in his present existence in this world. For unless the Christian message of love and justice shows its effectiveness through action in the cause of justice in the world, it will only with difficulty gain credibility with the men of our times. *(Justice in the World,* II)

> ...While the Church is bound to give witness to justice, she recognizes that anyone who ventures to speak to people about justice must first be just in their eyes. Hence we must undertake an examination of the modes of acting and of the possessions and life style found within the Church herself... (*Justice in the World*, III)

> ...The life style of all: bishops, priests, religious and lay people. (*Justice in the World*, III)

This subject is taken up in the chapter on Christian Lifestyle in this booklet.

The Christian is called to work for the alleviation of conditions of bondage in the social order. There are many ways, of course, to do this, and many types of bondage. With respect to unjust social conditions and poverty, Christian responsibility includes the following, in summary:

2. *Work* for change as well as to agree with the need for it. (*Justice in the World*, Introduction)

3. Share goods, not only from superfluous wealth, but to give when there is need from goods in excess of moderate, reasonable need.

4. Private property and decision-making power are not to be hoarded or kept for exclusive use. The common good is a prior duty and principle..."private property does not constitute for anyone an absolute and unconditional right. No one is justified in keeping for

his exclusive use what he does not need, when others lack necessities." (*Development of Peoples,* No, 23)

"Economic development must be kept under the control of mankind. It must not be left to the sole judgment of a few men or groups, possessing excessive economic power, or of the political community alone, or of certain, especially powerful nations. It is proper, on the contrary, that at every level the largest possible number of people have an active share in directing that development." (*Constitution on the Church in the Modern World,* No. 65)

5. Respect and support the diversity of cultural values, heritages, ways. Each part of the human family has its own personality, history and wisdom to give to human life. Where cultural values are wholesome and add to the humanization of the world, they build up the kingdom in their richness. "Rightly therefore, it (a culture) demands respect and enjoys a certain inviolability, at least as long as the rights of the individual and of the community...are preserved within the context of the common good." "Culture has the need of exercising its independence according to its own principles." (Both from the *Constitution on the Church in the Modern World,* No. 59). The duty to facilitate individuals and groups in taking their destinies into their own hands also applies here, to allowing different groups to select ways and expressions which best suit their own culture, according to their own needs and priorities. Thus, it is possible that some inappropriate or dehumanizing aspects of western materialist industrial culture may be rejected by the poor, by minority groups or Third World nations in favor of new ways closer to their own heritage.

Even when sharing resources or funding, Christian people of one race or culture or "developed" nation should not impose their cultural ways, values or methods upon those being assisted. This is "cultural imperialism" as the Third World and many minority leaders view it, and assumes that the poor and minority cultures have nothing to contribute to their own growth. Such an attitude constitutes an insult, a superior attitude, actually and psychologically maintains the poor or minority group in a dependent position, and places conditions upon the giving of life, instead of facilitating self-development and self-determination. What many well-intentioned middle or upper class whites have not understood is the need for minority groups to develop new models in their own way, combining "white man's" models with their own

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culture in ways that seem best to the "minority" people themselves. The values and underlying assumptions of the white, western, industrial culture may neither permit minority peoples to develop nor in some cases even be adequate for a true humanistic view of life among the "developed." In this sharing process, "white society" is learning much from so-called "minority" cultures, and, as Paulo Freire has suggested in *Pedagogy of the Oppressed,* the "oppressed" can become saviors of the "oppressor" by sharing a more humanized, community-oriented value system. Exchange must occur in building the human community. In short, every nation and people has a right to be different, and *a right to expect support in being different from others.* Every nation and people has a duty to collaborate through dialogue in working for the common good.

6. Respect and support the self-determining choices and ideas of the poor and minorities for how to use resources in meeting their own needs and developing their own community. They have the primary right to and responsibility to make decisions and choose the paths for responsible development themselves. Other people are responsible for providing resources to be able to make and effect these choices if the resources are not available, and to work for a humanized social order in which all persons and cultures can participate justly in the economic and social systems.

7. More than an individualistic ethic is required.

> Profound and rapid changes make it particularly urgent that no one, ignoring the trend of events or drugged by laziness, content himself with a merely individualistic morality. It grows increasingly true that the obligations of justice and love are fulfilled only if each person, contributing to the common good, according to his own abilities and the needs of others, also promotes and assists the public and private institutions dedicated to bettering the conditions of human life. *(Constitution on the Church in the Modern World,* No. 30)

> We are aware now that we are "our brother's guardian" and that his welfare is our responsibility. A "merely individualistic morality," wherein we see sin and virtue only in our individual thoughts, words and deeds, is no longer sufficient to tackle the problems

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of injustice in our society. It has taken us too long to learn the lesson of the Good Samaritan. (Bishop Carroll Dozier, *Justice: God's Vision, Man's Discipleship.*)

8. Organized programs with large social cooperation and planning are necessary.

> We must build social structures that accomplish true justice. In these new structures man would be able to exercise God-given rights as a sacred person...We are to help create a free-flowing society where man can grow and act without undue restraint. True justice helps preserve the rights of people to live and move and have their being in the dignity that is rightfully theirs as children of God, members of His household. (Bishop Carroll Dozier, *Justice: God's Vision, Man's Discipleship.*)

In order to approach such tasks, efforts by Christian people will have to be pervasive, large in scale and well-organized. Both widespread, individual action (examining one's values, lifestyle, personal work and economic values) and organized programs will be necessary. Neither individual actions nor formal organizational activity are sufficient alone, for the changes needed are of such complexity and scope as to make necessary both institutional and personal efforts which complement each other.

> Individual initiative alone and the mere free play or competition could never assure successful development. One must avoid the risk of increasing still more the wealth of the rich and the dominion of the strong, whilst leaving the poor in their misery and adding to the servitude of the oppressed. Hence programs are necessary in order "to encourage, stimulate, coordinate, supplement and integrate" the activity of individuals and of intermediary bodies . . .

> *In order to be fully effective, these efforts ought not remain scattered or isolated, much less be in competition for reasons of power or prestige: the present situation calls for concerted planning. A planned program is of course better and more*

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effective than occasional aid left to individual goodwill. It presupposes, as we said above, careful study, the selection of ends and the choice of means, as well as a reorganization of efforts to meet the needs of the present and the demands of the foreseeable future. (Pope Paul VI, *Development of Peoples,* Nos. 33, 50.)

This principle is hardly a new one in Catholic social thought in the United States. Bishop Karl Alter, then Bishop of Toledo and subsequently of Cincinnati, and former chairman of the Social Action Department, National Catholic Welfare Conference, wrote twenty-five years ago:

It (Catholic Social Action) concerns itself not so much with the life of the individual but rather with the life of the society. It is interested in the problems of social organization and social institutions. It seeks to imprint Christian principles on the whole social fabric, but it is particularly interested in social legislation and social policy and social systems. (Introduction to *Catholic Social Action,* by Rev. John F. Cronin, S.S., Bruce Co., Milwaukee, 1948.)

and Father Cronin himself wrote:

Social justice imposes the obligation of *group action* to reform the *framework and institutions* of society so that the *common good* will best be served. (Emphasis Father Cronin's) (*Catholic Social Action,* p. 70.)

9. Christians are called to give life to all people, not only fellow Christians. The Christian people are sent into the whole world, the witness to Christ, to love and serve all people, whether they share the faith or not. For Christ loves all people, and has brought dignity to all. Christians, therefore, cannot restrict their services to "taking care of our own." This does not mean that persons or programs or nations, who seek programs which are not for the common good or which contradict the teachings of the Lord, and His Church, have also the right to agreement and support by Christians. As was stated above, all people have a duty to seek God, fulfill themselves and work for the building of a fully human world.

The joys and hopes, the griefs and the anxieties of the men of this age, especially those who are poor or in any way afflicted, these too are the joys and hopes, the griefs and anxieties of the followers of Christ. Indeed, nothing genuinely human fails to raise an echo in their hearts. For theirs is a community composed of men. United in Christ, they are led by the Holy Spirit in their journey to the Kingdom of their Father and they have welcomed the news of salvation which is meant for every man. (*Constitution on the Church in the Modern World,* No. 1.)

Jesus expanded the idea of "neighbor" beyond the boundaries of one's own people, even including that His followers should love one's enemies and do good to those who persecute them.

Go out to the whole world; proclaim the Good News to all creation. (Mark 16:16)

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THE SOCIAL MISSION OF THE CHURCH
IN THE UNITED STATES

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There are two features of the Campaign for Human Development which give it a uniqueness in the history of the American Church's involvement in social concerns, and also make it in some sense a prediction of the future of many programs.

1. *The Campaign for Human Development is set up to work for justice by supporting programs of poor peoples' organizations which are designed to cause social change.* In pursuing justice the Campaign acts as a resource for presently dependent persons to collectivize their energies and thereby become decision-makers in their own affairs.

2. The success of the program is dependent upon its ability to educate those persons with power concerning the social injustices which oppress groups of powerless people in America. It depends for its support upon the contributions of white, middle-class and affluent Catholics, and must, for its ultimate success, strive to bring this group into a new relationship with those who will receive the funds thus contributed. In other words, success cannot be measured solely in terms of how much money is collected and distributed, but in what kinds of attitudes and relationships are developed between givers and receivers. If the program is to effect social change in a fundamental way by dealing with causes, an attitudinal change becomes essential for a true transformation of society.

> Adapted from "World Justice and Peace and American Catholics," James R. Jennings, Catholic Mind, January 1973.

In the world of today, so commonly described as "shrinking" or evolving into one community of mankind, no effort to deal with domestic poverty which has the scope and intent of the Campaign for Human Development can be viewed in isolation from the fact of international poverty. Nor can any attempt to understand and eliminate poverty in the United States act in ignorance of or in competition with the mission of Christians in promoting international justice. Precisely the same issues which are involved in the Campaign are present on a much greater scale in the international quest for development. And the evolution of a *theology of liberation,* arising particularly in Latin America, affords a Christian concept

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for understanding what is being formulated as part of the vocation of the Christian Church. The concept of "empowerment," arising particularly in the United States, corresponds in many ways on a domestic level to "development" on the international level, and the idea of liberation can link them both. In this chapter we will attempt to complement the chapter on Church social mission with a review of the term "development" as it has evolved in the sphere of international relations and relate it to the growing theology of liberation. After that, we shall examine the growing theme of "empowerment" in domestic social affairs, and end finally with a brief review of the heritage of the Catholic Church in the United States in working for social justice.

We do not pretend to be able to summarize all of the relevant questions. Rather this summary is built upon the assumption that concern for such questions will always be a matter of *search* and *evolution*, each effort being a contribution to the growing self-understanding which then becomes part of our thought and action. All principles expressed in chapter one are understood as background for the following review.

I. Development

The term development seems to date from 1945, when the United Nations was founded. There was an increasing consciousness of the disparity between nations in terms of wealth and resources, and a desire in the non-governmental agencies of the UN to establish programs to lessen these inequities and achieve a more just distribution of the world's goods. The Declaration of Human Rights, made at the founding of the UN, affirmed the legitimacy of the claims of all men, regardless of differences, to have those things judged necessary for human development and a life of dignity. At the time, development was seen as a product of man's labors, especially economic, in his society, and under-development was judged as the absence of efficient labor and production. It is important to note that the term "undeveloped" is now considered more apt in describing the state of a country which has not yet reached a *certain level* of economic growth, and is a natural condition, whereas "underdevelopment" is better understood as a consequence of a country's economy being in a relationship of economic-political dependence upon another. For example, a Latin American country whose production level is not determined by its domestic needs but by U.S. economic market conditions is not independent but underdeveloped and the condition is not a natural one but a result of human choices.

In seeking for some understanding of "development" we will examine four points: the levels on which it can be understood, the process of achieving it, failures in the past, and, finally, a working definition for now.

1. *The Levels of Development:*

(These insights are drawn from Denis Goulet, *That Third World,* and Rene Laurentin, *Liberation, Development and Salvation).*

a. The first and most commonly accepted definition of development is related to *economic growth.* The level of development is measured in terms of gross national product, and a comparison of the GNP of one nation with that of another gives a scale for measuring development. Simply stated, then, development means wealth, and increase in wealth means a higher level of development. The same idea applies to domestic achievement or growth — the ability to produce some valued product is rewarded with income and buying power. Such a criterion arose from nations already highly industrialized and was imposed as a model, consciously or otherwise, on the nations which had not yet achieved this status. The norm is clearly quantitative.

b. When this concept of development began to be experienced as inadequate for rich and poor nations alike, a broader and more qualitative norm was sought which would encompass economic, social, political and cultural aspects. According to this model, these different aspects are interdependent; development of one produces development of others, and conversely, stagnation of one hinders the development of all. This model also recognizes that the four-part process of development occurs within an international system of interrelatedness, so that development in one country must of necessity have an effect upon the conditions of others. Therefore, means have to be built into the

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international system for preventing the gap between the nations from growing worse, as indeed it had at the end of the first Decade of Development.

c. Any commitment to development as an over-all social process requires consideration of the *ethical* values by which social progress could be measured. The so-called developed nations are not necessarily in the best position to define these ethical values just because they are wealthier. On this third level of meaning, development presupposes a concept of man by which to assess the moral and ethical content of programs for development. This idea gives priority to "being" over "having," meaning that having more is valuable *only* insofar as it enables man to be more fully a mature human person. This model also implies a relationship of justice among men and a friendship resulting from their cooperation and participation in the creation of a just and human society.

d. A fourth and final level of development is introduced from the level of consciousness on which the Christian can be hoped to be operating. It asserts that human development is ultimately the fulfillment of love of God in the human community. This is the development of which Pope Paul spoke in *Populorum Progressio*, and it assumes that the humanism upon which it is based is not a closed humanism but one open to the absolute. On this level, a dimension of transcendence is always a component of true human development.

Thus, rather briefly, we can see some of the dimensions of the definition of development and the way the various levels build upon one another.

2. *Process to Achieve Development.*
If we assume that no development is complete unless it is based *at least* on an integral humanism, then what kind of process would

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build towards such a goal? According to Denis Goulet, the process should include four dimensions, none of which is adequate by itself: (a) disciplined capital formation in order to achieve self-sustained growth; (b) equitable redistribution of economic and political power; (c) the organization of life in order to increase rationality; and (d) the reconstruction of the forces that move men's lives.

3. *Reasons for Failure.*

What has happened in the efforts toward development made thus far? These programs have been seen to increase rather than narrow the gap between rich and poor nations. According to Goulet, there are three basic causes for failure:

1. *A patchwork, narrow approach to aid:* The process was viewed, in the period immediately after World War II, as essentially a technical one. The pattern of the Marshall Plan where masses of capital were injected into the industrial culture of Europe to stimulate the economy, was transferred, rather simplistically, to Third World countries, on the assumption that the western model could be set down in dependent countries. Later it became apparent that capital could not be fruitfully utilized unless the recipient people had the skills to use it. But the assumption was not questioned, the focus rather being shifted from money to technicians and experts who would administer the capital effectively. This led to an awareness of the unhealthiness of having countries dependent upon outside experts, and so another shift, still using the same basic theory, was undertaken, to that of institution-building within the developing countries. But all the models for progress in this period were *western imports,* and institution-building came to mean in practice that "advisers from rich countries came to tell poor countries what to do."

2. *A subordinate receivership role for Third World Countries:* (The term Third World refers to the large number of developing, industrializing

nations which are neither western democratic-industrial (U.S., Germany, etc.) nor western communistic-industrial (Soviet Union, Eastern Europe, etc.) and tend to align themselves with neither "side" but select independently policies which advance their own national growth.) Until recently the countries the Third World have not been able, or were not permitted, to tell others what *they* thought development was. A few leaders, such as Sukarno and Nyerere, began to formulate their own programs for development which they judged to be more appropriate for their own country's history, culture and desires, and at the same time, declared an effective independence from investor countries. There is a profound instinct in all human groups to be themselves, and this instinct began to be expressed very strongly in the developing nations. The Third World began to declare very forcefully that development is much more than the purely economic ideal being imposed by western industrial nations. Rather it is a matter of lifestyles.

3. *A false belief that western industrial culture possesses the only good model and no "underdevelopment" exists with them.* A high level of production and consumption of goods is not development. It merely provides a basis or possibility for it. Some normative principles still have to be found for deciding how to use these productive assets for human ends. The developed countries are as much or more in need of such norms than the so-called underdeveloped countries. The people of each country must be be free to decide for themselves what goods they want to produce, how much and for what purposes, but they need to do this with a sense of responsibility to one another as well as to themselves.

However, many development programs seemed to require for Third World countries a kind of

cultural suicide and radical loss of self-esteem as a basic prerequisite for development, since the acceptance of aid from industrial nations naturally implied acceptance of the large nations' values and cultural norms. The Third World nations were not taken seriously in terms of their needs, especially the need for self-esteem and independence. Summarizing then, development programs have been overly narrow in their socio-economic emphases, have been insistent upon the model and values of the dominant nations, have not recognized the need for partnership and equal participation of Third World countries, so that their freedom, cultural autonomy and values could be developed.

It is to this historical situation and the problems caused by it that Pope Paul VI, in his 1967 encyclical "On the Development of Peoples" (*Populorum Progressio*), addressed himself. And in in 1971, the Synod of Bishops gathered in Rome, followed with a landmark document "Justice in the World." A few basic principles are listed which were laid down by the Pope and bishops, and reflect the recent pastoral teaching position of the Church about "Development." These complement those in chapter 1.

From *Development of Peoples*.

(1) It is the Church's duty "...to put herself at the service of all, to help them grasp their serious problem in all its dimensions, and to convince them that solidarity in action at this turning point in human history is a matter of urgency." (No. 1)

(2) Freedom from misery, the greater assurance of finding subsistence, health and fixed employment; an increased share of responsibility without oppression of any kind and in security from situations that do violence to their dignity as men; better education -- in brief to seek to do more, know more and have more in order to be more: that is what men aspire to now when a greater number of them are condemned to live in conditions that make this lawful desire illusory." (No. 6)

(3) The hard reality of modern economics... works rather to widen the differences in the world's levels of life, not to diminish them: rich peoples enjoy rapid growth whereas the poor develop slowly. (No. 8)

(4) ...local and individual undertakings are no longer enough. The present situation of the world demands concerted action based on a clear vision of all economic, social, cultural and spiritual aspects. (No. 13.)

(5) Development cannot be limited to mere economic growth. In order to be authentic, it must be complete: integral, that is, it has to promote the good of every man and of the whole man." (No. 14)

From *Justice in the World* :

(1) The new growth of industry and technology will favor the concentration of riches, and powers, (including decision-making powers) in the hands of a small group of leaders. whether public or private, unless something is done to reject this outcome. Economic injustice and the lack of a share in society prevent men from attaining fundamental human and civil rights. (Section I)

(2) ...suffocating oppressions constantly give rise to groups of "marginal people" who are undernourished, located in inhuman housing, illiterate, and deprived of political power and the disposition to responsibility and moral dignity. (I)

(3) In the face of international power systems, the achievement of justice depends more and more on the will to promote development. (I)

(4) ...it is impossible to have true progress unless it is recognized that progress demands -- within the chosen political system -- economic improvement and a sharing on the part of the people in society's benefits...Social progress for the whole community through an overcoming of regional imbalances and

islands of prosperity. This sharing of the people constitutes a right which should be applied in the economic, as well as in the social and political realms. (I)

(5) If the Church must give witness to justice, she knows that whoever intends to speak to men of justice, must first practice justice before them. (III)

(6) The Church, in order to be truly the sign of solidarity desired by the family of peoples, must in her life manifest greater cooperation among the churches of rich regions and poor, by spiritual communion and by division of human and material things. The help which churches now give each other often can be made more efficacious through real coordination...by taking the whole into consideration in the common administration of the gifts of God, by the fraternal solidarity which always favors the autonomy and the responsibility of those who benefit from these gifts, by being concerned about the setting up of criteria, about the choice of concrete proposals and the carrying out of these. (III)

The following are summaries in our words, not quotations.

(7) Support efforts and organizations which promote disarmament, discourage weapons trade, and foster international arbitration and police action (III)

(8) Wealthy people and nations should voluntarily *give away* percentages of their annual wealth, offer higher prices for raw materials from the Third World and allow more imports of foreign made goods, and sometimes allowing preferential treatment to goods made in foreign countries. (II)

(9) Wealthier, more powerful nations should allow and provide for more power in economic and political decisions on the part of the poor and Third World -- that is, they should surrender some of their own, so that more equal participation is achieved. (III)

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(10) Simplicity of life, cutbacks in consumption of
material resources, and cutbacks in environmental
pollution by all nations are necessary. (III)

(11) Just distribution of wealth and more democratic
participation within Third World countries is a duty
of their leaders and governments. (III).

4. *A Working Definition*

In the light of all this, what then can we establish as an acceptable and useful definition of development? A suggested definition which describes that of an individual person but which can be applied to all groups as well:

Development may be described as the *process tending to transform each man into the responsible agent of his own unfolding growth by participating within a community that is an autonomous agent of its own social, economic and cultural becoming. This implies liberation from the constraints of:*

-- the natural order (being subject to natural forces and environment with no ability to control or survive them)
-- the cultural order (ignorance, magic forms of religiosity, incapacity for understanding one's own situation or that of others)
-- the social, economic and political order, both on the national and international planes (different forms of domination and alienation, structured social limitation such as unequal distribution of wealth or racism, incapacity to assume one's own destiny as one's own.)

This then is the scope of any true program for development, a program for the freeing of persons and groups to direct their own lives according to the values they believe to be most consonant with true human development. It is an inherent part of the mission of the People of God, both to proclaim, educate about and work for development, especially for Christians in the United States, a nation so powerful and involved in all dimensions of world society. It is a challenge worthy of man but calls for a constant liberation from the limits of blindness, sin, ignorance, fear and selfishness to which man is subject. Wherever human life is oppressed, enslaved or dehumanized, "underdevelopment" exists. From this perspective, underdevelopment exists within the United States, as can be seen in the Poverty Profile (Published by the Campaign for Human Development, 1972). *And it exists among the*

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affluent as well as the poor, for many are trapped by fear, rigid security-needs for wealth and predictable consumption, cultural values and economic ways which make them incapable of loving their poorer brothers and making their society more human. It is out of this very process of attempting to promote development that the call for liberation has arisen.

II. Liberation.

How can an understanding of "liberation" assist in freeing the very move toward development and empowerment today, and where can we look for an understanding of liberation? The current use of the term covers a wide range of interests and programs -- women, Blacks, Chicanos, prisoners, homosexuals, to mention some. And it is a term loaded with different emotional connotations, because it is associated with different groups and different meanings. To many, "liberation" is threatening, un-American and revolutionary. If Christians are to understand and be brothers to various groups of people, a mutual effort to listen and perceive the human experience and need behind words and symbolic actions must be undertaken. In this way, the term "liberation" can be examined by trying to find a common thread of meaning in all groups who use the term. The common dimension is that all are involved in some kind of struggle to escape, from a situation they see as bondage or dependence, into one of equality and independence. All seek to change the social ways which perpetuate dependence and servitude. The Campaign for Human Development also seeks to transform those structures in the USA which perpetuate a state of poverty.

We cannot trace here the whole evolution of "liberation" but for our purposes we can acknowledge that the strongest and most consistent calls for an explanation of a theology of liberation, as it relates to development, have issued from leaders of the Latin American Church. This should not be a matter of surprise, since Latin America is the only "developing" continent in the world today which has a Christian religious tradition and the liberation movement contains a re-awakening to one of the central religious events of Judaeo-Christian history, the Exodus. Study of this tradition within the Church and a reminder of the themes of the Kingdom discussed in chapter one should help our thinking on the meaning of liberation today, especially as we see the move toward "liberation" in the growing quest for justice and peace in our own country.

The quest for justice which has been described in revelation as a distinctive characteristic of Judaeo-Christian community, has always been,

first and foremost, a response to the call of God to the people He had chosen. This call was given and received, initially, in a concrete historical situation, that of the enslavement of Hebrews in Egypt, and the call was to follow Yahweh into a new and promised land and thereby, to be freed. The chief components of this *revelatory* event were:

1. The experience of oppression, slavery, servitude to Egypt.

2. The call to be liberated through the action of Yahweh.

3. The establishment of a Covenant between Yahweh and the people He had chosen to be the recipients and agents of liberation.

4. The mutual responsibilities of the Covenant--Yahweh's promise to lead, protect and be present to His people and bring them into a new land of justice and peace, and the promise of the Hebrews to obey His law, follow His leading, trust in His promise and do the works of mercy, justice and love.

To understand the importance of this event in the life of God's people, it must not be viewed as an isolated happening in their history, but as a central event. In the Exodus the scattered peoples were called together, invited to become a community of brothers under God, given an identity and vocation before God, and, in this primary revelatory moment, established within history. Hence, the Exodus and Covenant are not simply past history for us, the spiritual descendants of Israel, but their meaning continues to be revealed through the coming of Jesus' Kingdom and our own historical move into the future.

The immediate meaning for those who participated in the Exodus was liberation from bondage, liberation for the future, liberation for life. Its practical center was the *liberation of man.* Understood this way, God is then the personal Power who, in order to liberate men, submits the structures of the world to the project of freedom and creativity. He acts in this way: God loves and frees us first, then asks us to do the same in response. Each era in time is submitted to the judgment of the call to liberation. Since each historical moment has its own forms of oppression and evil, at each point along the journey, Israel's (The People of God) faithfulness can be measured by its ability to recall the primary vocation to liberation -- their own and all men's -- their reliance upon God, and their willingness to evaluate their society in order to do the works of mercy, justice and truth. In so doing,

God's People continually experience coming into the Promised Land, over and over again. Were we to trace the inter-action of God with His people in this light, we would find a pattern repeated over and over again: a tendency to settle down, to restrict the limits of God's love and power within inadequate human institutions and ways of doing things; a tendency to set up boundaries or barriers, structures of separation and security, laws of exclusion and privilege. The whole struggle of Jesus, who came to set at liberty those who are oppressed, was *with His own people* who had made the law of Israel and the land of Israel too narrow and exclusive. And while the Church has continually tried to live in faithfulness to her vocation to preach the Gospel to all nations, she has had to undergo purifications when her heart became hardened. This means that the call to move into the future is a penetrating and purging call, asking for the abandonment of all securities and riches other than the security of reliance upon God's faithfulness to His promise. Prophets have kept the call alive, but often at the risk of their own lives and positions. Jesus renewed the vocation of Israel and extended it, but at the cost of His life. But through His faithful ones, God's call was eventually understood and re-embraced in truth. Past experiences must be seen then not as the unchanging forms for the future, in terms of concrete specifics, but as a model for understanding the present and choosing concrete new steps for the future.

For man to fulfill his vocation, to understand and live faithfully before God and man, he must therefore be involved in the concrete human situations where God is working to achieve the liberation of His people from sin, personal and social, and from its effects (evil, injustice, destruction). Any movement to separate religious experience and understanding of life's meaning from human endeavor in the city of man is to run the risk of alienating faith from service, an understanding described as error by Pope John XXIII in his Mater et Magistra (no. 255). The criteria for judgment given to us by Jesus has a profound and unavoidably practical grounding -- those who will be welcomed into the Kingdom are those who have fed, clothed, sheltered and visited the Lord in the person of His oppressed. Those who are turned out of the Kingdom are those who have turned away from Him through blindness and hardness of heart.

The task is twofold:

1. a recognition of the Lord in His suffering people.

2. a determination to discover the best way, according to the times, to answer His needs as expressed in them.

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At one time the second task meant the ransoming of captives, literally. At another, the establishment of institutions to care for the oppressed and poor. Church programs still perform great and needed services. But social services, although ministering to basic needs of people, in many cases leave them still in a position of dependency and receivership -- they are not subjects of their lives but objects -- they are acted upon. In terms of our contemporary world, then, freeing the oppressed seems more and more to mean involvement in *changing structural systems which perpetuate their dependency, poverty and powerlessness,* where this is possible. A contemporary rendering of the parable of the Last Judgment such as has been done by Laurentin might read:

"Lord, when did we give you to eat, and to drink, and when did we clothe you and visit you?

His answer to the men of the twentieth century will be:

When you changed those structures that generate hunger, thirst, nakedness, and loneliness, when you created or operated structures through which men could finally feed themselves, satisfy their thirst and clothe themselves in a community of justice and love, it was to me that you did it. And when you abstained, it was to me that you did not do it."

(Matt. 25:32-46,
in Laurentin, p. 123)

III. Empowerment.

In the United States, integration of poor people and excluded minority groups into the mainstream of society became an official goal of the government during the early and middle 1960's. This movement was stimulated by three basic concepts:

1. Legal statutes are the guidelines for the way a society operates. If civil rights to social, economic and political sharing in the society's growth are not being realized, it is partly because the society has not brought social activity under just law.

2. The main reason for lack of civil rights and just laws is "prejudice" on the part of white and rich people.

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3. Poor people and minority groups are not inherently inferior or incapable of meeting the standards of the strong (white) society. Rather, they merely lack the "opportunities" to advance themselves because poor protection of rights and prejudice have restricted their opportunities. Massive governmental and private efforts can, over time, restore these and the poor can move into the mainstream, like everyone else. Many types of opportunities must be opened up at the same time, because poverty is a complex thing, made up of social, familial, economic, political, psychological and cultural factors. Life itself is a complex of all these and so is deficient-life, e.g. poverty.

These are oversimplified, of course, and many other concepts were involved. But at least three basic underlying assumptions were the basis for these ideas, which became the central concepts for the Kennedy-Johnson civil rights through law and War on Poverty programs. These assumptions were:

1. Law defines social activity by setting limits on behavior. Or, political activity (laws, the government, etc.) is the main shaper of social and economic activity.

2. Prejudice and discrimination are essentially spiritual-psychological realities. They can be controlled by law or changed by appeals to conscience.

3. The model for the best system for betterment of the poor and minorities is the historical United States work and free enterprise system. Provide jobs, and therefore, education in skills, college, housing -- and people could move after that on their own.

Civil rights laws changed behavior because certain types of social behavior became illegal. In this respect, opportunities were opened up. But it became apparent that there were areas *outside* the realm of law that were not changing -- the number of jobs available, distribution of income, the fact that the War on Poverty was underfunded, or not complied with, or even dismantled by political opposition to legal aid (because it worked) or Community Action Programs (because poor people participating either failed for lack of proper preparation or in fact set up different priorities for their community than did the local political power groups). Moreover, minority people felt that even within the poverty program they were beholden to the gratuitous support of people who didn't understand their culture or who expected that minority persons would accept their values. Middle class organizers came in and *told* the poor what they needed and

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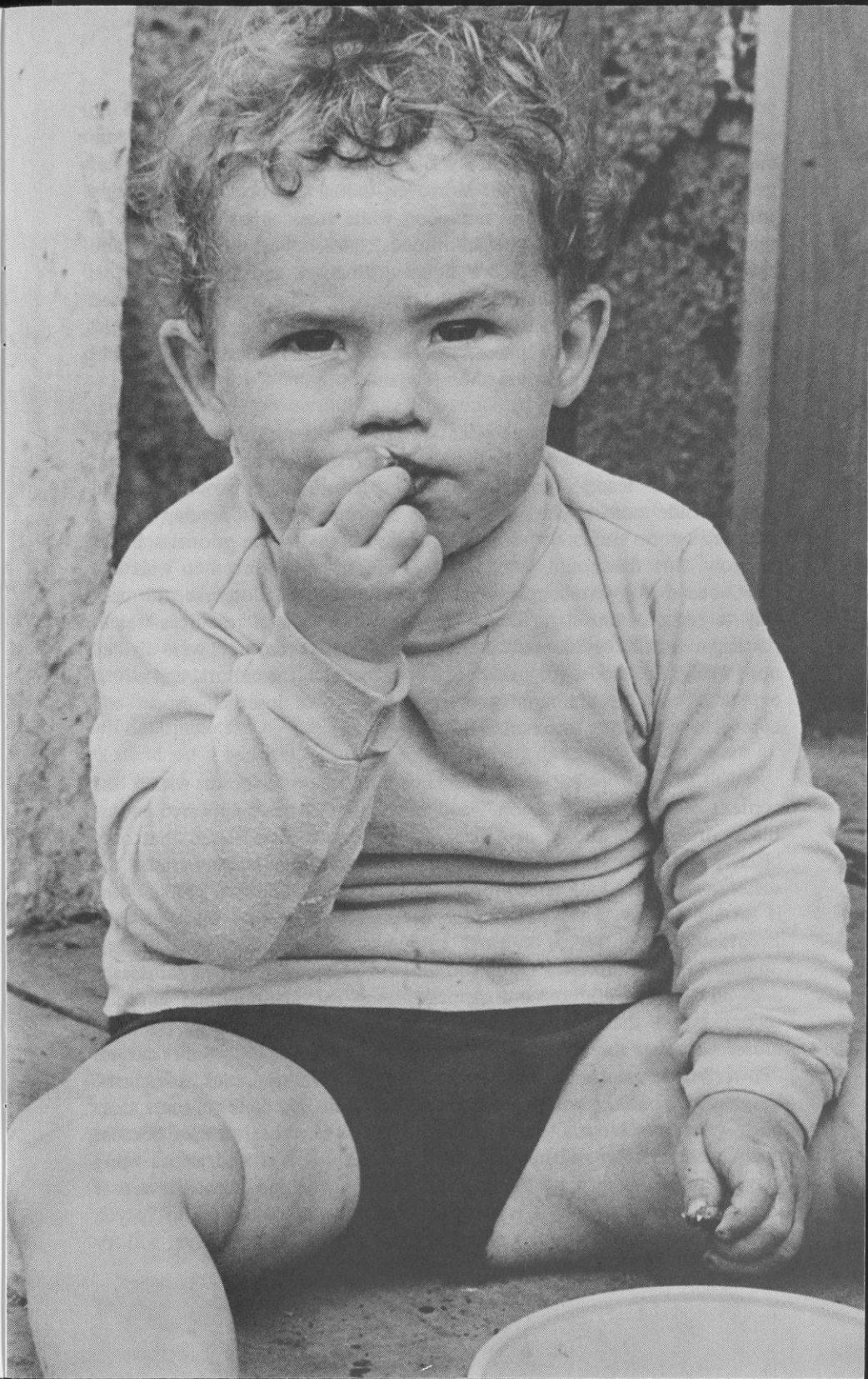
how they should be. Government (local, state and federal) officials told the poor what they would be allowed to do. Participation and shared-decision-making occurred on insignificant levels and questions, over little amounts of resources, if it occurred at all. Moreover, union members were opposing entrance of minority persons; non-poor, white areas opposed (violently in some cases) integration of neighborhoods; later, speculating realtors and agents took advantage of federal housing programs and actually *tried* to force chaotic change in a neighborhood, getting government-subsidy-inflated prices and mortgage guarantees for poor owners. These speculators profited more if the poor *couldn't* succeed in home ownership, because they would be reimbursed and could sell the homes again.

Minority and poor people essentially found the various programs to be distant and not carried out in their self-interest. Even some of their own self-appointed "leaders" tried to set up kingdoms based on government and other outside monies. The notion that a community has to develop its own stable structures and its own leadership, based upon its own priorities, began to grow. But this could hardly happen if one were forced to wait like petitioners for government and other private money. Moreover, the only way to secure a *fair* share of governmental and societal resources was to participate in the decision-making levels where these resources were divided up. Finally, the model for growth had to come from the cultural and ethnic experience of the community or else they would lose self-respect and appreciation for their own heritage.

Cultural and political self-proclamation began to occur within the context of "self-determination," and in the first instance appeared among Black Americans, known as "Black Power." Advocates stated that only black people would understand black needs and experience, because the society, which had long since proved itself racist, still didn't understand how it would be to *share* power and decision-making with black people. Eventually, the ideas of cultural autonomy and empowerment became popular in other minority group movements -- Chicanos, Native Americans and now white ethnics and Appalachians. The rhetoric and emotion accompanying these, as well as the substance of the goals set by these movements, has threatened many people and great backlash has occurred. "Power" was associated with riots, violence, revolutionaries, anarchists. Emphasis on one's culture was called reverse racism. No doubt in some cases both were true, but the essential ideas seem to have been missed because many were unable to listen and look behind the acts and games being played, to the reality of the message. Looking behind all social acts is important. For instance, it is accepted that a boxer should try to "psych out" his opponent by looking or acting tough; that a football player will try

to gain advantage by getting in a good "hit" on the first play; that teenagers try to impress by coolness, belligerence or other moods. In each case, this is a normal human use of psychology to gain attention or respect. So also is anger, militance and table-pounding.

The realization that many social decisions and arrangements in a democratic society are made outside of the reach of the law, based upon the various kinds of give and take which go on in society, was also alien to many people. In order to participate even minimally in the give and take of democratic, competitive society, a person or group has to have a *social bargaining power* -- some good or ability (whether it be votes, reputation, an economic good -- or anything else) by which to influence other groups or individuals in their actions. Simply stated, this is power.

The people of the United States have always believed in essential freedom, equality before the law, government by the consent of reasoned participation by all citizens. It is a hard pill to swallow to realize that probably much of our social decision-making is not done in the governmental-legislative process, and that those bodies are really shaped and directed by the interests and influences which elect or support them. In short, economic and social power elects government. Government is in many respects responding to its constituency, not directing it. Power is a crucial, inherent element in a democracy, not a vile, evil thing. Self-determination is based upon certain abilities, both personal and social, to stand on a relatively equal level with others and have one's opinion at least heard and sometimes adopted. However, for some reason, the people of the United States do not like to talk about or accept "power."

Empowerment began to gain in popularity as poor people and minority people realized that even with the best of intentions, the established government and business structure couldn't allow the powerless to have a significant participation, in monetary terms or decision-making, in the existing system -- that would not be in their self-interest. In order to understand what experience is described by spokesmen of poor people and "minority" peoples, it is necessary to *listen* to what they say. It is also necessary to translate another's language into terms one can understand, and therefore to look behind anger and shock, much of it aimed at "psyching" white people and thereby gaining some influence (the power of respect, fear or surprise) over them. Stokely Carmichael and Charles Hamilton wrote *Black Power* in 1967, subtitled "The Politics of Liberation in America." They said:

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To carve out a place for itself in the politico-social order, V.O. Key, Jr. wrote in *Politics, Parties and Pressure Groups,* a new group may have to fight for re-orientation of many of the values of the old order. (p. 57) This is especially true when that group is composed of black people in the American society -- a society that has for centuries deliberately and systematically excluded them from political participation...To do this, we must first redefine ourselves...we shall have to struggle for the right to create our own terms through which to define ourselves and our relationship to society, and to have these terms recognized. This is the first right of a free people...Only when black people fully develop this sense of community, of themselves, can they begin to deal effectively with the problems of racism in *this* country. This is what we mean by a new consciousness; this is the vital first step.

The next step is what we shall call the process of political modernization -- a process which must take place if the society is to be rid of racism. 'Political modernization' includes many things, but we mean by it three major concepts: (1) questioning old values and institutions of the society; (2) searching for new and different forms of political structure to solve political and economic problems; and (3) broadening the base of political participation to include more people in the decision-making process..

(Stokely Carmichael and Charles Hamilton) *Black Power,* Vintage, 1967, pp. 35-39)

This principle is really not so revolutionary, except that it was based upon the principles of the American Revolution. (New institutions and representation had been demanded, symbols of British authority and power were flaunted.)The real goal is control of one's own affairs, at least on an equal level with others so that give and take can occur. The problem with more traditional charity programs, and even the War on Poverty, was that they maintained political, financial and psychological dependency -- which denied participation on a shared basis and self-respect. This was true before, and in most cases, during and after the "War on Poverty."

Negroes tended to be the objects rather than the subjects
of civic action. Things are often done for, or about, or to,
or because of Negroes, but they are less frequently done
by Negroes.

(James Wilson, *Negro Politics,* Free
Press, 1960, p. 133)

The point at hand is the true principle of self-determination -- people who
can take into hand their own affairs have self-respect and can enter the give
and take of society. But in our society, certain resources are needed before
people can take this responsibility -- as pointed out in the teachings of the
Church quoted earlier.

And certain changes in social and economic values and organizations
will have to occur before resources can be opened up. Thus, "Black Power"
and the movements which followed that model (Chicano power movements
(La Raza), Indian movements, and now White-ethnic power movements) are
based upon appreciation of one's own values and cultural heritage, so that
one doesn't hate himself and try to be something he is not; and upon the
organizing and building of power (vote blocs, community organizations,
jobs, community-oriented business and economic development, control of
some economic resources) so that other groups in the society can be
prevailed upon (out of need or out of respect) to bargain and deal equally in
society with a group which, up to now, has been on the receiver, dependent
end of things. This process is, in fact, crucial to the American system of
democracy:

> The essence of democracy lies in the rights and
> potentialities of the individual...Rights, liberty and
> equality are not valuable per se but because they are the
> means to one fundamental end, individual development...a
> free state seeks to 'release individuality' and 'prevent the
> frustration of the creative impulse.' It leaves room for 'our
> personal initiative' and provides opportunities 'shown to
> be essential to the development of personality.'
> Democracy, according to Laski, is the 'affirmation of
> one's essence.'

(William Withers, *Freedom Through
Power,* John Day Co., New York,
1965, p. 3)

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The ultimate goal of a "free country," then, is human development. In modern society, some power (control of self and some resources) is necessary for freedom (power over material need -- its opposite is poverty; power over social dependency -- its opposite is self-esteem, participation, shared decision-making):

> Freedom is the capacity of each individual to achieve, and the determination of the state to protect him in exercising that degree of power essential to permit him, so far as possible, to make his own life instead of having someone else make it for him. This, as Professor Withers, accurately observes, includes freedom within an enterprise as well as freedom outside his job; freedom of life within the framework of government, as well as freedom to go beyond it; freedom of life within large organizations as well as freedom to live outside them."
>
> (Introduction to *Freedom Through Power,* by Adolf A. Berle, p. VIII)

In order to have a bargaining position, if you will, in such a society, social-political-economic power in some degree is necessary, Berle says. In modern democracy, you can't be free without it.

There is one difficult question for a Christian here, which can only be answered in time and experience, in reflection and prayer. Does not the humanistic idea of power, presented above in the context of democracy and social analysis, contradict the Christian vocation of poverty of spirit, and meekness? In Christian teachings, it is clear that the Lord Jesus distinguishes between the "way of this world" and His "way." Christians will not "lord it over them" but be servants to fellow human beings. No store will be put in material security or earthly positions of influence. Jesus' Kingdom is "not of this world." How can this be reconciled with "empowerment" which seems to connote some kind of force, either spiritual, psychological, political, economic or social?

> On the face of it, the presentation of the New Testament is that when God gets down to work on earth in a personal and definitive manner he exhibits his power in powerlessness. The forsaken and crucified man is believed to be the Christ of God...

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This appears to suggest that the ultimate power which is capable of bringing in and establishing the Kingdom of God is the love of God (the God who is love) which love exhibits its power as powerlessness...Power as we know it (powerful power and not powerless power) always involves counter-action and counter-effects.

David Jenkins, "The Power of the Powerless" from *In Search of a Theology of Development,* Sodepax, 1970, p. 5)

Jenkins stated that "powerful power" achieves its will, or least compromise, on the basis of force (physical manipulation or social pressure). He suggests that perhaps this type of "power" is unredeemable and always productive of resentment, anger, injury of some kind. Christian powerlessness suffers, absorbs, loves, and, therefore, reconciles. Only in this way can harmony be achieved:

If (and it is a big "if") we are ever to get to a state of equilibrium in which all are fulfilled in each other and each can enjoy all (a creative Kingdom of love) then there must be a power at work which will *absorb* powerful power rather than *counter* power with power. (pp. 51-52)

The power of this world divides, takes away, does injury perforce. The power of God unifies (through Christian suffering and reconciliation,) gives, does not injure.

We cannot pretend to be able to answer this. It is extremely deep and at the heart of the mystery of Christ. That is why this section must end with a dilemma, a question, and why this booklet is offered as a sourcebook for thought, not answers. However, there are a few possible approaches which we can suggest in brief summary:

1. Christ did not force Himself on people. Yet His absolute gentleness and self-giving did set up a spiritually forceful situation because of its challenge, its judgment and its purity. People *judge themselves* in the presence of Christ, either accepting Him (His *lack* of pushiness actually becomes very forceful, driving a person to distraction to say yes or no. The Saints have witnessed this), or rejecting Him.

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2. Christ's powerlessness does not exist in His not having force or power or the ability to debate or the personal presence which commands a decision. Nor does He not have food, clothing or money. His powerlessness lies in how He uses them, for He refuses to do injury or destroy. He only builds up, heals. Instead of countering worldly power with His own, He simply refuses to have any part in it -- He withholds His support. He will not take or hoard goods or power. The key lies in the usage:

- The Son of Man came eating and drinking ... (Matthew 11:19)

- Give all you own to the poor ...Matthew 19:21)

- ..'to prove to you that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins' -- he said to the paralytic -- 'get up, pick up your bed and go home' . (Matthew 9:6-7)

- insofar as you did this to the least of my brothers, you did it to me. (Matthew 26-40)

- it is the pagans of this world who set their hearts on all these things. (Luke 12:30)

- 'He has gone to stay at a sinner's house, they said. But Zacchaeus stood his ground and said to the Lord, 'Look, sir, I am going to give half my property to the poor, and if I have cheated anybody, I will pay him back four times the amount.' And Jesus said to him 'Today salvation has come to this house'...

- Do not suppose that I have come to bring peace to the earth... (Matthew 10:34)

Jesus' ways, pouring out, detachment from goods, respect for other's freedom -- these *are* powerful, and create a situation which judges people by the way they respond. The situation created is not without turmoil, because it questions the values of all around Him. This witness and action is life-giving and makes people who wish to take life angry. It *forces* a decision and changes the basic assumptions upon which things normally are done.

Jesus' refusal to participate in self-interested activity is a freedom and detachment which, as in the story of Zacchaeus, both gives life to Zacchaeus and challenges him to imitate the Lord. That is the point. Christ does not give life by taking away -- Christ does not kill off the Romans. He gives by divesting Himself in order to build up others, and Christian freedom lies in giving freedom to others. Then, by invitation, Christian power calls the liberated one to a higher freedom and power -- that of service. This higher freedom is not, cannot be imposed -- it is left to the choice of the one *who is now set free to choose.* That is why the Church can only empower people if it is powerless itself, if it divests itself in order to build up fellow human beings. The Christian, therefore, cannot simply intend to pass on secular power or affluence to the oppressed. The Christian work for human freedom is different in this: that it refuses to take life or freedom; that it works, not for its own freedom or power, but for the freedom and power of others; and that it seeks these not as ends in themselves but as a sign of God's love, a witness to the dignity of people given by God, and a means wherein people have a better environment for freely pursuing their own human development.

> ...Modern forms of democracy must be devised, not only making it possible for each man to become informed and to express himself, but also by involving him in a shared responsibility. Thus human groups will gradually begin to share and to live as communities. Thus freedom, which too often asserts itself as a claim for autonomy by opposing the freedom of others, will develop in its deepest human reality: to involve itself and to spend itself in building up active and lived solidarity. But, for the Christian, it is by losing himself in God, who sets him free, that man finds true freedom, renewed in the death and resurrection of the Lord.

(*Call to Action,* Pope Paul VI, p. 27)

These considerations do not answer the basic question. Prayer and reflection and living with risk in trying will be necessary. Mistakes will be made. But the important thing is to not be afraid of the call, but be trusting in the Power of the Holy Spirit:

> Today more than ever the Word of God will be unable to be proclaimed and heard unless it is accompanied by the witness of the power of the Holy Spirit, working within

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the action of Christians in the service of their brothers, at the points in which their existence and their future are at stake.

(Pope Paul VI, *Call to Action,* p. 30)

IV. The Church's Heritage of Service in the United States.

With this background in mind, we can then look very briefly, at the ways in which the Church in the Untied States has responded to the vocation of service.

In the United States, after 1850, parish life had as one of its primary concerns a service dimension, since the life of the congregations, chiefly immigrants, was one of great poverty, as well as powerlessness, or a sense of exclusion from the established system of social services provided by the government. This condition resulted from increasing harshness of the industrial revolution in the United States, from ethnic and religious prejudice, and from the ever present resistance by the native-born to "foreigners" who would take their jobs and homes. In this respect, many Catholics, starting with the Irish, then the Germans and finally Eastern and Southern Europeans suffered discrimination and exploitation similar to that experienced by Blacks, Spanish speaking, native Americans and white ethnic groups to this day. Abraham Lincoln, speaking of the "American" party and their Know-Nothing roots, stated that "when the Know-Nothings get control, it (the Declaration of Independence) will read ' all men are created equal except Negroes, the foreigners and Catholics'." Conditions in the mills and mines were horrible, child labor exploited, wages and benefits very limited. In fact, on occasion Catholic immigrant people reacted to discrimination by violence, notably in the confused case of the riots and murders attributed to Irish "Molly Maguires" in Pennsylvania. Catholics were stereotyped and considered to be drunken brawlers, of low intelligence, and secret agents for a foreign power (Rome). It is curious to see how much our Catholic immigrant forefathers had in common with current minority groups. Prejudice, low wages, poor housing, stereotypes, occasional violence which is blamed on the entire minority group rather than the few individuals involved. But the case of the Catholic population was notably different from that of contemporary groups, for three reasons:

1. The industrial revolution provided growing numbers of jobs, poor as they were, which subsequently were upgraded; and cities were exploding because of industrial growth, not declining.

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2. The Catholics did not bring a heritage of slavery or racism, and came from Europe where they had a strong western culture and unifying religion.

3. The institution of the Catholic Church, with professional leaders and educators, assisted greatly in serving their needs and fighting for humanitarian values. So also did labor unions.

The Catholic parish became one of the most important centers of social life for immigrant minorities in the United States. Cultural heritage was maintained, at least initially, even while immigrants were assisted in adapting to "American " life. Churches, schools, hospitals, orphanages and other institutions provided alternatives to the public, secular institutions, in order to respect and preserve cultural self-identity and religious belief in the face of suspicion and discrimination. Thus, the Catholic Church worked to integrate its people through its own alternative structures. The Church's concern for social questions grew from the poverty and exclusion of its own people in a new land, and was based upon supporting the individual or family in efforts to adapt. Immigrants gradually accepted being "Americanized" and let their cultural heritage slip, in order to prove to themselves and others that they were loyal, good "American" citizens. This was only natural, but in many ways the model was Anglo-Saxon Protestant with a strong work ethic and intense patriotism. This process was later called "The Melting Pot."

Catholic organizations and more collective efforts to work for social justice began to appear at the time of the Civil War. To name a few with heritage of work for and concern for the poor:

1. St. Vincent de Paul Society, chiefly promoted by Levi Silliman Ives. Vincentians assisted in charitable relief work, but also supported industrial schools and boarding homes.

2. Brothers of the Holy Cross -- labor schools for poor boys and men.

3. Sisters of Mercy -- the same as above for young women.

4. German Catholic Central Union -- fought for justice for the poor and disseminated Catholic social thought to educate for justice.

Catholic efforts were predominantly aimed at their own people's needs, however, and largely ignored those who shared in their plight as Lincoln had described, most notably the freed Blacks. American Indians and Catholic

Mexicans were really untouched and unkown by the immigrant Church, and were being pushed back and out by American expansion in the West.

In terms of social change and structure, the Church began to involve itself over the labor question, especially since the industrial revolution had created a working class of wage earners and most Catholics belonged to it. Cardinal Gibbons of Baltimore grew in reputation because he intervened in Rome against condemning labor unions, especially the Knights of Labor. Shortly thereafter, Church leaders in the hierarchy recognized the validity of such social groupings to work freely for the betterment of workers. They realized the contribution of these unions to freedom and democracy and justice by developing bargaining power for the disenfranchised. Cardinal Gibbons stated that "to lose the heart of the people would be a misfortune for which the friendship of the few rich and powerful would be no compensation." Bishop John Lancaster Spaulding, a co-founder of Catholic University and a great leader, spoke on the occasion of Pope Leo's *Rerum Novarum* that "the mission of the Church is not only to save souls but to save society." And Pope Leo himself established the precedent of the Church's defending the working man's right to organize, condemning an exclusively profit-oriented, self-seeking capitalism which does not adhere to the concerns of justice, and asserting the right of every person to a wage decent enough to provide an adequate living standard. Work for social legislation on the part of Church leaders was also found in the principles of this encyclical.

It is important to note that such a heritage of justice, which has been forgotten by most Catholics in the wake of new needs and new socio-economic positions, was not created by our forefathers with peaceful acceptance. These changes did not come easily, for many Catholics felt that these were areas forbidden to Catholic endeavor, and greatly opposed them. Archbishop James Bayley of Baltimore had described labor unions as "miserable associations" and stated that "their idea is communistic and no Catholic with any idea of the spirit of his religion will encourage them." Another example is the debate over child labor laws. Father Peter Dietz was a community organizer, founder of trade unionist Militia for Christ, first Catholic fraternal delegate to the American Federation of Labor, and founder of social work schools, and Monsignor John A. Ryan was a distinguished Catholic writer on social justice and first Director of the Department of Social Action, National Catholic Welfare Conference. Both had urged legislation outlawing child labor laws. Commenting on this, the Catholic Standard and Times of Philadelphia stated that pensions for mothers and child labor laws violated social liberty, and later blasted advocates of this social legislation "posturing busy-bodies." Intensity of

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sincere opinion on various sides of social questions has characterized the Church in the United States. Reflection on current affairs and new activities never occurs without honest difference of opinion. But, constantly, the Church grew in its efforts to defend the poor and powerless. Along with its emphasis on charity, *it stressed the changing of society so the poor could help themselves, so that workers could bargain for themselves, so that law would protect the defenseless.* The following characteristics summarize those efforts on the part of the Catholic Church:

1. The workingman and poor who were being supported by the organization, though not exclusively Catholic, were mostly members of the Church. The Church then was protecting its own by seeking a just social order.

2. For the most part, advocacy for justice did not issue from the daily life or concerns of ordinary parishioners. Special organizations, the clergy, and institutions did the work. The parish member supported these actions by giving to the parish, and benefitted from the service of the full-time professionals. In short, organized work for social justice did not often reach into the Catholic "grass roots."

3. Much social service work was done through alternative, private Church institutions.

Since the first World War, much outstanding work for social justice has occurred, strengthening the real gift Catholics have made to justice, order and democracy in the United States. To name a few:

-- The Bishops' Program for Social Reconstruction, chiefly designed by Monsignor Ryan at the end of World War I, advocated a high minimum wage (at wartime level or above); legislation for a minimum wage; unemployment, sickness and disability insurance; old age pensions; child labor laws; protection of right of labor to organize; national employment service; public housing; progressive taxation so that all citizens and corporations would bear their just share of the support of the common good. (Many of these were enacted in "New Deal" legislation. Many of them are still to be done, especially achieving a *decent* minimum wage, *sufficient* public housing, adequate work for all). Also, there has been the foundation of the National Catholic Welfare Conference, from the National Catholic War Council; the work of the National Catholic Rural Life Conference and the National Conference of Catholic Charities. Outside the institutional programs of the Church, many significant social movements for justice have given leadership

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to Church work for justice, among them: the Catholic Worker Movement of Dorothy Day and Peter Maurin; Friendship House of Catherine de Hueck; National Catholic Conference on Interracial Justice, especially inspired by Father John La Farge, S.J.; the Adult Education programs of the Association of Catholic Trade Unionists (ACTU) to help Catholic union members develop skills in public speaking, the social encyclicals, parliamentary law, — bent on insuring democratic procedures within unions and preventing the infiltration of Soviet style Communism; the involvement of Catholic priests, parishes, laity and of diocesan Catholic Charities in the work for racial equality and against poverty during the War on Poverty.

Thus, the contribution of the Church in the United States to the pursuit of social justice and freedom has been extremely significant. The present times present a challenge because, in many ways, many Catholic people seem to have lost their roots and forgotten this heritage. Moreover, the fact of institutionalized programs without the involvement and initiation of local groups of laity has alienated this work from the body of Catholics -- they agree with it but do not participate generally. Finally, the challenge of social justice now is different because most Catholics no longer belong to the poor and excluded, but to a middle-class which shares the benefits of an affluent, production centered economy. Changes needed now appear as threats to them. It is true that many urban working Catholics still reside in changing cities where their once proud neighborhoods are aging and city services crumbling, where automation and slowdown in industrial cycles are making more workers obsolete or financially marginal, where governmental programs by and large have ignored their needs. The Church's work and service must be given to these, our own people, who are still marginal citizens in many ways. But the challenge is more one of awareness. The Church's work to insure freedom for all was often motivated by the needs of its own people. An atmosphere of disassociation and "care for one's own" developed, and is still prevalent among many Catholics. Moreover, real marginality and need is experienced by urban working class Catholics many of whom pay strenuous taxes (with no investment write-offs), make low wages and suffer many of the same problems as the poor. The tendency is to care for one's own and see the needs of the poor as a threat. But the Church mission to liberate *all people even as we are liberated by Christ*, and a study of the social-economic factors in urban American seem to suggest that Catholics should ally themselves with the poor. In so doing, both groups could liberate each other, creating a just social order for all instead of fighting for limited benefits for oneself. For the more affluent, the call to justice seems to ask the People of the Church to complement the work of their institutions by action in their *own* lives and by changes in their *own* values. New realities call all the People of God

to go out to people outside of the Church. Calls to promote justice and love, expressed now as "development" and "liberation" and "empowerment" arise from the changes which have taken place in the American Church:

1. the poor in need of service towards liberation are not as identified as church members as well as the poor of the past, i.e., in the 19th and early 20th centuries.

2. governmental and professional agencies have developed and assumed at least some competence for social service in the place of the beneficent societies of voluntary organizations. The Church's work here is still important, but must go beyond this.

3. poverty and related ills are increasingly seen, not as the simple problems of individual persons (who according to the work ethic *should* and *could* better themselves),but also and more importantly as a condition that has its origins in the structure of society and the place of the people in that society.

4. in place of service to people there has arisen, as of old within the labor movement, the awareness of the need to *empower* people to help themselves to become self-determining and to develop processes that will throw off the structural condition of powerlessness and poverty.

These new conditions have serious implications for the Church:

1. works related to the alleviation of poverty cannot be restricted only to church-connected programs. People have to be assisted by minimum, needed resources, to do for themselves.

2. the constituency of a ministry to the poor is not only the Catholic congregation, but the community of need, regardless of religious identification.

3. effective service to the poor more directly involves political action and values change by more affluent people since it involves changing the place of people in the socio-political-economic structure.

In the light of these observations, the guidelines for applications for funding from the Campaign for Human Development have a particular significance:

"... The project must benefit the poor. 50% of those benefitting the project must be from low income groups.

The poor must have the dominant voice in any self-help project...

Priority:
Projects which generate cooperation *among* and within diverse groups in the interest of a more integrated and mutually understanding society...

Promising, innovative projects which demonstrate a change from traditional approaches to poverty by attacking the basic causes of poverty and by effecting institutional change..."

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Criteria and Guidelines, 1972,
Campaign for Human Development.

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Significantly funds are allocated to deserving groups without consideration of their religious affiliation, provided the programs do not go against the moral and ethical teachings of the Church.

And so, Catholics find a situation of historical challenge. Do we remember the roots from which we sprang, the suffering we endured, the heritage of goodness and justice and freedom to which our people have contributed and from which we have benefitted? Was so much effort motivated only by the fact of our *own* needs, thus fitting into the pattern of self-interest? Now that most Catholics have been loved first, can we turn and extend that love and service and dedication to justice to others in need? Will we, whose grandparents and parents suffered a hard road not desirable for anyone, now work to eliminate it for our successors in discrimination and poverty, or for our own people who have never really escaped it? Or will we, comfortable with needs now met, harden so as to be to others what the "nativists" were to our grandparents? Timely institutional programs are needed, as Pope Paul had said, but new communities of faith and mutual support are needed also to liberate us from fear and enable us all to live the Gospel. This is the question to be examined in "Christianity as a Lifestyle."

THE CONCEPT OF SOCIAL SIN

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INTRODUCTION

In establishing the Campaign for Human Development in 1969, the U.S. Bishops emphasized the need for education in the effort to mobilize the good will of the Christian community in the United States against poverty and injustice:

> We also believe that this new effort can lead the People of God to a new knowledge of today's problems, a deeper understanding of the intricate forces that lead to group conflict, and a perception of some new and promising approaches that we might take in promoting a greater spirit of solidarity among those who are successful, those who have acquired some share of the nation's goods, and those still trapped in poverty. (From Preamble to November 1969 CHD Resolution of U.S. Bishops)

This paper examines the connection between economic system, life-style and the perpetuation of poverty; it raises the question of our responsibility to all our brothers.

Social Sin in Light of an Event

On May 4, 1969, James Foreman, former head of the Student Non-Violent Coordinating Committee, interrupted regular worship services of the fashionable Riverside Church, New York City. He dramatically read to the congregation and brought to the wider attention of the religious community in the U.S. the "Black Manifesto," a demand for $500 million in "reparations" to be paid to blacks in this country for damages from past exploitations by American whites. The drama of this incident raised numerous questions across the nation:

--*emotionally:* what were our feelings in the face of such rhetoric and unusual circumstances?

--*sociologically:* where was "brotherhood" in the light of such a black/white confrontation?

--*politically:* what were the power implications of this demand?

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--economically: was a demand for so much money realistic, and how would the money be used?

--ethically: was it really just to speak of an obligation to pay reparations?

--theologically: what were the implications of directing this demand to the American religious community?

Many churches and synagogues were not prepared to deal in any substantive theological fashion with this demand. Leaders of various religious groups appeared to fall back on either out-right rejection or confused acceptance. (See Robert S. Lecky, ed., *Black Manifesto: Religion, Racism, and Reparations,* New York: Sheed and Ward, 1969) Yet at its deepest level, the "Black Manifesto" raised important issues of conscience on the meaning of community, of social sin, and of repentance.

The development of Catholic social thought. Traditional Catholic social thought has seen a fairly consistent line of development in the teaching of the Church since the days of Leo XIII. Leo's *Rerum Novarum* set the general tone and style for the body of social doctrine, with its *emphasis on basic human rights* and its *explanation of the traditional scholastic teachings on social justice.* Scripture was used by Leo in the form of quotations to bolster lines of argument--an approach common to most expositions of Church teachings at that time. Pius XI's *Quadragesimo Anno,* the many writings and addresses of Pius XII, and two major encyclicals of John XXIII, *Mater et Magistra* and *Pacem in Terris,* followed this same general pattern. These teachings contain a *growing receptivity* to *secular, social science sources.*

A *new departure* in this development came with the Second Vatican Council's document *Gaudium et Spes,* "The Church in the Modern World," and subsequently with Paul VI's *Populorum Progressio.* Both of these documents reveal an *emphasis upon Biblical theology* rather than a reliance simply on Biblical quotations. That is, an effort is made genuinely to theologize upon the scriptural teachings on social justice and on the social mission of man in this world. This emphasis upon Biblical theology, in the view of many, adds a new dimension to the social teaching of the Church.

This new dimension reached a still clearer expression in the document of the Second Roman Synod entitled *"Justice in the World,"* of November, 1971. Biblical theology clearly provided a central thrust in the preparations

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for, the debates over, and the final wording of this major document. Thus the Bishops of the Synod were able to say:

> Scrutinizing the "signs of the times" and seeking to detect the meaning of emerging history, while at the same time sharing the aspirations and questioning of all those who want to build a more human world, *we have listened to the Word of God* that we might be converted to the fulfilling of the divine plan for the salvation of the world. (Introduction; emphasis added)

Listening to the Word of God, the Bishops said that "the hopes and forces which are moving the world in its very foundations are not foreign to *the dynamism of the Gospel,* which through the power of the Holy Spirit *frees men* from personal sin and from its consequences in social life." (Introduction) This emphasis by the Synod on the *congruence* of *secular* and *religious* (Gospel) *forces* is highly significant. But even more significant is the stress placed upon the social implications of a scriptural understanding of sin.

The "new" category of social sin. A major theme in Biblical theology is, of course, the theme of *sin* and *redemption.* It is this theme which the Synod document on world justice explicitly picks up and develops in a social context, thereby explicating a new dimension in Church social teaching--the dimensions of "social sin." While this category of social sin can be found in earlier teachings, it is not found with the explicitness and detail with which the Synod debated the topic and wrote of it in its final document.

In general, social sin refers to:

1. Structures that oppress human beings, violate human dignity, stifle freedom, impose gross inequality.

2. Situations that promote and facilitate individual acts of selfishness.

3. The complicity of persons who do not take responsibility for the evil being done.

The discussion of social sin is something for which many of us were not prepared. This fact was acknowledged by the Bishops at the Synod in their general debate, and summed up as follows:

How is it, after 80 years of modern social teaching and two thousand years of the Gospel of love, that the Church has to admit her inability to make more impact upon the conscience of Her people?...It was stressed again and again [in the debate] that the faithful, particularly the more wealthy and comfortable among them, simply do not see structural social injustice as a sin, simply feel no personal responsibility for it and simply feel no obligation to do anything about it. Sunday observance, the Church's rules on sex and marriage tend to enter the Catholic consciousness profoundly as sin. To live like Dives with Lazarus at the gate is not even perceived as sinful. (No. 7)

What the Bishops were reflecting has been underscored with startling clarity by a survey on the focus of moral advice published in a leading American Catholic theological journal:

In recent issues (within the past decade) of *The American Ecclesiastical Review,* a distinguished moral theologian answered the following questions, among others: May an Episcopalian clergyman be called a "priest"? May Catholics patronize a drugstore in which contraceptives are sold? May a used-car dealer repair a car so as to give the impression that it is in better condition than it actually is? If two Catholics are eating in a restaurant and one inadvertently orders meat, must the other remind him of the day? (Paul Hanley Furfey, *The Respectable Murderers,* New York: Herder and Herder, 1966, p. 147)

As further evidence of underdevelopment in defining the idea of social sin, we can cite the articles under "sin" in the *New Catholic Encyclopedia.* This monumental work, published in the United States in 1967 (after Vatican II) attempted to bring up-to-date the best Catholic thought in a wide range of areas. There is no discussion at all of the meaning or implications of social sin.

At this point, then, we certainly must ask: why hasn't there been a theological development of this category of social sin and a pastoral explanation to the people? It surely seems clear that the "religious" person in our society is often equated with the "morally upright" person. But individual morality is what we focus on, not *social* morality. *An*

individualistic spirit appears to prevail in both the theoretical framework of Catholic moral theology and the practice of moral virtue. We can suggest several reasons for this.

First, traditional moral theology was *act-oriented,* rather than *actor-oriented.* Arising especially out of the practice of the Sacrament of Penance, this has meant a concentration upon concrete actions, specific instances, individual events. As a consequence, the general quality of the person who performs the acts--his or her orientation, habits, and attitudes--has not been emphasized. Traditional moral theology tended to be concerned with the deed performed rather than with the sort of person who performed the deed.

The act-oriented approach does not help to delineate a broad range of responsibility for me as a Christian, because with so much emphasis on what I "should do" there is not enough emphasis on what I "must be." Take the example of an ethic of measuring personal success and deriving great personal satisfaction from the acquisition of material goods (closely related to the traditional concept of the personal sin, "avarice"). A serious evil in affluent circles in the United States today, this attitude is translated into action as frequently through omissions as through acts. There arises a serious social manifestation of excessive attachment to one's personal possessions, (shown, for instance, by refusal to support tax reform measures). This seems to be a case of social sin, large scale hardness of heart, which results from an aggregate of individual self-concern. But the act-orientation of traditional moral theology does not provide such assistance in guiding individual Christian consciences here.

A second and related reason for the theological underdevelopment of the category of social sin has been the traditional doctrine of "inculpable ignorance." Traditional moral theology has always taught that a person does not sin if he or she is ignorant of the seriousness of the deed that he or she performs. He would be culpable, or guilty, if he were in fact ignorant through his own fault--for example, if he did not make a reasonable effort to enlighten himself. But if he were ignorant through no fault of his own--truly inculpable--then there would certainly be no sin involved, even if he did something very seriously wrong in the "objective order." Since it is presumed that individuals can be knowledgeable of individual actions and their consequences, "inculpable ignorance" would not be considered very common among individual actions. But the intricate complexities of the modern social scene would make "inculpable ignorance" much more common and hence social sin much less frequent.

Third, much recent theology in both Protestant and Catholic circles has been influenced by existentialist and personalist philosophies. This has resulted in what Johannes Metz has called the "privatization" of theology, a serious loss of the social dimension of the Christian message. (*Theology of the World,* New York: Herder and Herder, 1971, p. 111) As a consequence, there is a significant "a-political" thrust in theology in general, and in moral theology in particular.

A fourth reason why social sin has not been emphasized seems to be the distinction drawn between "legal" and "moral." Although the two are often confused, they are definitely not identical, either conceptually or in the practical order. Indeed, it is possible to have something that is completely legal according to all proper laws, but is definitely not moral in the sense that it does not render justice. An example would be a system whereby highly exhorbitant interest is charged on loans according to the law, even though it does great injustice to those lower-income persons obliged to pay the interest. An individual who "follows the law" might consider himself to be highly moral, yet he may fail in justice. This legalistic mentality has frequently prevailed in religious discussions of social justice, hindering the development of a social morality that shows appreciation of social sin.

The evolution of our understanding of social sin.--Because of this apparent theological underdevelopment of social sin, let's examine some recent patterns and influences that helped to facilitate the more thorough discussion of this topic by the Second Roman Synod.

This is important for at least two reasons: (1) to show how this theological concept came to be accepted; and (2) to learn how it can be effectively communicated to others.

Certainly the experience of the Second World War heavily influenced European and American theologians to consider the social dimension of theological thought and Church action. Something much more profound than Reischenbauch's "Social Gospel" was needed in the face of the war's horrendous moral evil and the complicity of so many "good" Christians. Bonhoeffer's search for a "religionless Christianity" and his willingness to face "the cost of discipleship" gave rise in the post-War years to searching analyses of the relationship between the Gospel and the modern social order. Key to that search was an emphasis upon structures.

Recognition of the power of structures was given in Pope John XXIII's *Mater et Magistra,* in his discussion of "socialization." (Nos. 59-67) The relation of structures to sin was subsequently developed in a remarkable passage contained in the 1965 document of Vatican II, *Gaudium et Spes:*

> To be sure the disturbances which so frequently occur in the social order result in part from the natural tensions of economic, political, and social forms. But at a deeper level they flow from man's pride and selfishness, which contaminate even the social sphere. When the structure of affairs is flawed by the consequences of sin, man, already born with a bent toward evil, finds there new inducements to sin, which cannot be overcome without strenuous efforts and the assistance of grace. (No. 25)

What is particularly remarkable about this passage is that (1) it cogently links structures and sin; (2) it stands out in isolation in the total document; and (3) it was not immediately followed by further development of the same theme in other Catholic social writings.

A major advance in the development of social theology came from Protestant thinkers. In July, 1966 at Geneva, the World Council of Churches Conference on Church and Society began grappling with the theology of revolution, with the fact of violence in the modern world, and with the Christian's relation to violence. The problem of violence necessarily raises the structural issue, which has to do with the ways of life. When aggregated and considered society's normal ways of doing things, modes of living are called the system or the structures. If the system is oppressing human dignity, then it is itself doing violence to the oppressed. This violence by political, economic, and social structures--despite its seeming legality, its subtle, non-violent appearances, its projection by the ruling powers as part of the unchangeable *status quo*--is the situation which provokes a violent defense, the action of revolutionaries who seek to remove the unjust structures.

The World Council of Churches meeting recognized that for many in the world, especially in the developing countries, the question was one of meeting violence with violence. The real authors of disturbance are identified not as those who hunger and thirst after justice, but those who, to protect their privileges, prevent justice by maintaining the structures of oppression.

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Two years later in April, 1968, the Beirut Conference on "World Cooperation for Development" again returned to the problem of unjust structures. Sponsored by SODEPAX, this conference emphasized:

> And our responsibility is not merely as persons for other people, but also for the political and economic structures that bring about poverty, injustice and violence. Today our responsibility has a new dimension because men now have the power to remove the causes of the evil, whose symptoms alone they could treat before. (*World Development: The Challenge to the Church,* Geneva: SODEPAX, 1968, p. 15)

The relationship between these structures of oppression and sin was made explicit at Beirut: "We know the reality of sin and the depth of its hold on human beings, and on our political and economic structures..." (pp. 16-17) Injustice was seen sometimes to be "so embedded in the *status quo*" that violent revolution might be justified to bring about change. (p. 20)

This "opening to violence" was, understandably, a trend which disturbed many church leaders and theologians. In his 1966 encyclical, *Populorum Progressio,* Paul VI had spoken of the fact that "men are easily induced to use force to fight against the wrong done to human dignity," especially when "it is a question of manifest and lasting tyranny that damages the primary rights of the human person and inflicts serious harm on the common good of the country." (No. 31) When the Pope went to Latin America in 1968, however, he clarified his position so as to avoid endorsement of violent revolution.

Latin America: Medellin and Gutierrez. In late August and early September, 1968, the Second General Conference of Latin American Bishops met at Medellin, Columbia. The Medellin Conference opened with an address by Paul VI, who warned that Christians "can not be linked with systems and structures which cover up and favor grave and oppressive inequalities among the classes and citizens of one and the same country..." (*The Church in the Present-Day Transformation of Latin America in the Light of the Council,* Washington, D.C.: Latin America Bureau, USCC, 1970, II, 31) The discussions referred to these systems and structures as being forms of "internal colonialism" (the domination of the poor classes by the rich classes) and "external neo-colonialism" (the domination of the poor countries by the rich countries). Again and again, the power of structures was emphasized, and the need to transform them was stressed. Not surprisingly this very theme has been emphasized in Latin America. For

years, the Argentine economist Raul Prebisch had been insisting that the basic problems facing development in the poor nations were structural and needed to be met by changes of structures.

The concluding statement of Medellin was very explicit about injustice embedded in structures: ["The Christian"] recognizes that in many instances Latin America finds itself faced with a *situation of injustice that can be called institutionalized violence*...violating fundamental rights." (II, 78; emphasis added) The realities of this injustice were clearly said to constitute "a sinful situation." (II, 71) The General Secretary of the Conference, Bishop Eduardo Pironio, emphasized: "It is evident that in the Latin American reality there exists a 'condition of sin' that ought to be transformed into a reality of justice and sanctity." (I: 112)

The direction of thought on structures and sin, which was being set forth at Medellin, was finding its underpinning in the works of several Latin American theologians who were discussing a "theology of liberation." Foremost among these theologians was Gustavo Gutierrez, of Lima, Peru. According to Gutierrez, "liberation" is a far more expressive word--theologically as well as sociologically--than "development." *Development* tends to be heard primarily in an economic sense, and connotes dependence of some people on the assistance of others. *Liberation,* however, emphasizes more of the integral human aspects of the process, and immediately connotes the struggle against the asymmetrical power relationships between rich and poor. The content and implications of the "theology of liberation" is summarized by Gutierrez in a passage worth quoting at length:

> In the past two years we have seen a flurry of public statements: from lay movements, groups of priests and bishops, and entire episcopates. A constant refrain in these statements is the admission of the Church's solidarity with Latin America's plight. The Church refuses to disregard that plight, seeking instead to accept its responsibility to correct the injustices. The poverty, injustice, and exploitation of man by fellow man in Latin America is often called "institutionalized violence." Theologically, that phenomenon is called a "situation of sin." The reality so described is more and more obviously the result of a situation of dependence, i.e., the centers where decisions are made are located outside our continent--a fact that keeps our countries in a condition

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of neocolonialism. In all these statements, from a variety of sources inside the Latin American Church, the term "development" is gradually being displaced by the term "liberation." The word and the idea behind it express the desire to get rid of the condition of dependence, but even more than that they underline the desire of the oppressed peoples to seize the reins of their own destiny and shake free from the present servitude, as a symbol of the freedom from sin provided by Christ. This liberation will only be achieved by a thorough change of structures. ("Theology of Liberation," Theological Studies, 1970, pp. 251-252)

The theological importance of Gutierrez' emphasis is clear. In biblical language, liberation is primarily liberation from sin, and it is a liberation possible only through the power of God, and, in the New Testament, the power of Jesus Christ. To speak of liberation in a social sense, then, is to speak of social sin--and to emphasize the social struggle against that sin. Gutierrez writes:

> Christ thus appears as the Savior who, by liberating us from sin, liberates us from the very roots of social injustice. The entire dynamism of human history, the struggle against all that depersonalizes man--social inequalities, misery, exploitation--have their origin, are sublimated, and reach their plentitude in the salvific work of Christ. (p. 257)

The implications for the life of the Christian--and for the Christian Church--are readily evident.

The Synod's exposition.--A special working paper on justice in the world, was distributed in April, 1971, to the Catholic Bishops prior to the Roman Synod of 1971. The paper discussed the theme of justice in very concrete terms and spoke of the challenge to the Church to respond with specific actions. In the opening paragraph of this document, we find a clear hint of the approach the Bishops would eventually take on *structures* and *social sin:* "[Men of our times] demand profound changes in the very structures of society, structures which often constitute in themselves an embodiment of the sin of injustice." (No. 2)

In its response to this working paper, prepared prior to the meeting of the Synod, the Peruvian Episcopal Conference spoke of the need for a *"faith which interprets the present situation* [of social injustice] *as sinful and a negation of God's plan,"* and called for "a *denunciation of sin in the oppressive consumer society which creates artificial needs* and superfluous expenses." (IDOC, December 11, 1971, pp. 4-5) Similarly, these Bishops spoke of "a world and a humanity marked by sin and characterized by its consequences, which are injustice, deprivation, exploitation, and oppression..." (p. 12) In the responses made by other National Conferences of Bishops, there was considerable discussion of the need to struggle against unjust social structures, but not much explicit reference to social sin.

In the Synod debate itself, the theme of social sin and sinful structures appeared frequently in a variety of forms from several different sources. Cardinal Tarancon of Spain was very clear:

> It is true that the Church's mission begins with liberating man from sin. But it does not end there. Moreover, colonialism, cultural and economic domination, oppression of the weak--all these are really and truly social sins.

Cardinal Flahiff of Winnipeg states:

> Christianity liberates. It liberates from sin--not only personal sin, but also and perhaps chiefly from social sin, since social sin, like original sin, creates a situation wherein individual sin becomes easy and acceptable.

One other strong voice in the Synod debate which emphasized this theme was that of Cardinal Alfrink of Utrecht. According to him:

> The number of injustices deriving from man's behavior and from the institutions created by man are growing. Unjust economic and political structures constitute a "close at hand" occasion to commit sins of individual and particularly collective injustice. An unjust situation becomes a grave sin at the moment in which one becomes aware of it and refuses to exert oneself to change it. Conversion of heart is indispensible but this should arrive at the point of strongly wishing to bring about the change of situations which are objectively unjust.

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The result of such input into the Synod debate is evident in the final text of "Justice in the World." The Bishops are moved by "the cry of those who suffer violence and are oppressed by unjust systems and structures," and remind the Church that her mission for the redemption of the human race includes "its liberation from every oppressive situation." (Introduction) In promoting an integral development to meet the expectations of our time, we must not ignore "the objective obstacles which social structures place in the way of conversion of hearts"--structures, for example, which would make the poor nations "the victims of the interplay of international economic forces." (Part I)

After sketching the outlines of our modern world, the Bishops conclude, "In the face *of the present-day situation of the world, marked as it is by the grave sin of injustice,* we recognize both our responsibility and our inability to overcome it by our own strength." (Part II; emphasis added) Such a situation calls Christians to be aware of the true meaning and urgent demands of the Christian message: "The mission of preaching the Gospel dictates at the present time that we should dedicate ourselves to the liberation of man even in his present existence in this world." (Part II)

In reaching specifics, the Synod document refers strongly to "education to justice." It states: "But education demands a renewal of heart, a renewal based on *the recognition of sin in its individual and social manifestations.*" (Part III; emphasis added) Furthermore, the liturgy is to be used to educate for justice, and thus "the practice of penance should emphasize *the social dimension of sin* and of the sacrament." (Part III; emphasis added)

Thus it is possible to see from this review how the category of social sin evolved from a rather lean theological status to a significant factor in the Synod debates, eventually to receive authoritative acceptance in the Synod document.

1. *What is Social Sin? A structure that violates and oppresses human dignity is surely a sinful structure.* For example, a welfare system, which operates as though its premise were that the poor are somehow bad and therefore not to be trusted or given any say in what happens to them, is a structure that violates the dignity of the poor. It is an oppressive structure that makes victims out of those who are obliged to follow its patterns and customs. Minimal payments, excessive surveillance, demeaning interviews, a punitive philosophy, the ever-present fear of cut-off of funds: all of these elements of the structure of a welfare system offend human dignity. We

would refer to personal action of such a character as sinful. But the action of the structure is even more effective in violating the poor and powerless than the action of an individual person. Hence, we must similarly refer to the action of this structure as sinful.

2. *A situation that promotes individual selfishness can be called a sinful situation.* For example, zoning and tax systems that allow individual citizens to preserve their privileges at the expense of the poor and the powerless provide situations that support individual selfishness. Such restrictive legislation makes it impossible for the less economically advantaged to seek more desirable surroundings outside of the central city. A tax system, which places a disproportionate burden for the public goods upon lower-and-middle income people, (e.g. through numerous loop-holes for higher income brackets) is clearly a system that promotes the individual selfishness of some citizens in our society.

Another example is the financial-income policies widely practiced in this country. Investments are made either to obtain quick gains (profits) or long-range gains in investment value (growth). Both reward persons with capital for steering clear of monetary involvement involving risk, or growth of other persons' interests. Such would be an investment in the poor, in minority banks, in development of cooperative businesses that have slower, but more consistent growth cycles, when managed properly. Therefore, the poor cannot obtain loans from banks or the government as easily as big interests. Similarly, mortgage payments and insurance are harder for low-income persons to obtain than for richer persons...making it next to impossible for the poor or lower middle classes to enjoy a decent life according to normal standards. Unionized, blue-collar working people are paid low wages in many areas, which does not enable them to maintain any real security. They are constantly afraid of price increases, layoffs, or new minority members entering their unions, of changing neighborhoods, which the financial establishments will see as signs of declining property values, (often a self-fulfilling prophecy caused by the financial institutions themselves). Hence, they bitterly resist integrated neighborhoods, low-income housing programs, welfare expenses (which crimp their already limited incomes), union minority training and membership programs. Meanwhile, the more affluent, who have invested capital with appropriate tax write-offs and protection privileges, (for the good of the economy, investment must be encouraged) pay proportionately less taxes to social improvement programs when they have much more wealth. These are all interlocking structures that define an environment for social sin.

The complicity or silent acquiescence in social injustice is a third instance of social sin. This occurs when one is *aware* of sinful structures or situations but refuses the responsibility of trying to change them when capable of doing so. There is no way to ascertain how often this may occur in a society as complicated as ours. Probably, people are ignorant (inculpably) or participating indirectly in arrangements that cause evil to other human beings. An example would be the problem of purchasing farm products produced by large agribusinesses or farmers who utilize farm laborers at below-living wages; who do not provide decent housing or provisions for the migrant farm workers, who lobby in state or federal legislatures against allowing such people to unionize, (a right guaranteed by church teachings as early as the encyclical Rerum Novarum of Pope Leo XIII).

Continued patronage of such producers by buying their products rewards their system of doing things and supports the oppression of farm workers. The problem is that many well-meaning moral persons contribute to such interlocked large-scale problems without realizing it...and have trouble accepting personal responsibility for such situations because on their own personal level, the decision to purchase a certain product is good for their family, or good for some other reason. This results in many good people being outraged when they are told that they have contributed to "oppression"...they feel they have not chosen to do evil to anyone *personally,* and that criticisms of the system by which they live and derive their security is an attack on their person. The idea of social evil or social sin is extremely difficult to explain.

Some sociological and theological insights — It is important for us to understand the theoretical framework that adds support to a position labeling the preaching examples as instances of social sin. This framework consists of a *sociological* emphasis on the reality of social structures, and a *theological* interpretation of the meaning of sin.

A. Sociologists speak of the reality of social structures and emphasize that in modern society these structures--systems and institutions, socio-economic-political arrangements--are highly influential. For example, in studying the sociology of knowledge, Peter Berger has stressed the objective and historical fact of the institutions and structures of society. (Peter L. Berger and Thomas Luckmann, *The Social Construction of Reality,* Garden City, New York: Doubleday Anchor, 1967, pp. 53-67). These institutions and structures are external to the person and persistent in

their reality and influence--whether or not he or she likes it. In order to understand social institutions and structures, it is necessary to understand the process involved in both their genesis and their maintenance. Berger summarizes this process in three moments of a dialectic.

1. *Externalization*--the process by which man superimposes order on his environment in order to make it more meaningful and more useful.

2. *Objectivation*--the process by which the product of man's externalization is experienced as an autonomous reality confronting the individual as an external and coercive fact. ("That's the way things are," "the way 'they' want it," etc.)

3. *Internalization*--the process of which structured reality is passed from generation to generation in the course of socialization. (Newcomers and children are taught how to live by existing ways so they can survive.) "Society is a human product. Society is an objective reality. Man is a social product." (p. 61)

According to Berger and other sociologists, the structures and institutions of our society are not neutral either in constitution or in operation. This is extremely important. Structures and institutions essentially embody value-relationships, reflecting the values of those who construct them. Once created, these structures and institutions in turn influence these values. A political structure such as a representative assembly, an economic structure such as a tariff on certain imported goods, an educational structure such as compulsory schooling to the age of eighteen, a legal structure such as the bail and bond system, a techonological structure such as the modern communications media, familial structure such as a matriarchy: all of these embody meaning and value and reinforce and promote the same. As such, these social structures have tremendous human potential for good and for evil. Properly functioning social structures provide greater and better opportunities for human growth available to all groups in society. Unjust and unresponsive social structures hinder this human growth and freedom, thereby oppressing human dignity.

The existence and the influence of social structures was clearly recognized in a celebrated passage in the 1961 encyclical *Mater et Magistra* of John XXIII:

A leading characteristic of our day is the increase in social relations and social organizations by which is meant that constant growth of those bonds between men that have brought into their lives and activities a wide variety of social groupings which generally have been accorded private and public status in law. This increase springs from many modern factors including scientific and technological progress, superior productive efficiency and a higher standard of living among the citizens...This development of social organization brings many advantages and benefits...But with the daily multiplication in these various forms of organizations there comes a widespread increase in the laws...Thus the individual's freedom to act is confined to narrower limits. For means are often used, methods adapted and conditions created that make it difficult for an individual to make up his own mind independently of outside pressures, to act on his own initiative, to exercise his rights and duties properly and especially to avail himself of and perfect his abilities as a man. (Nos. 59-62)

B. In recent years there has been considerable theological reflection on the meaning of sin, reflection which helps to throw light on the issue we are treating here of social sin. Biblical scholarship has shown that in its more refined scriptural treatment in John and in Paul, "sin" is used in the singular and implies a state or condition. This "sin" belongs more to the inner man, the actor, than "sins" or acts of "transgressions." It is a description of what flows from the character or quality of a person. The theologian Louis Monden has discussed this by describing sin in terms of "option." (*Sin, Liberty and Law,* New York: Sheed and Ward, 1965) Sin is thus seen primarily as a stance, an orientation, a direction that man gives to his life, rather than a single act or deed or incident. This stance is manifested and forced in the day-to-day actions--or failures to act--that go together to define our lives.

Another theologian, Piet Schoonenberg, offers a helpful insight into the power of sin when he explains how man is "situated" in sin, how sin can pervade our whole being. According to Schoonenberg, this "situation" is integrally related to our capacity to freely choose:

> The freedom of the will does not mean that the will acts without any connection with what the whole person is, does, and feels...Modern individual and social psychology

makes us realize to what extent the decision of our will is influenced by our way of seeing concrete reality, by the spontaneous reaction of our drives, and, hence, also by the knowledge and motivation which we may receive from others--in one word, by our whole former education and present environment. All of this constitutes the ground on which, and the raw materials with which our free decision takes shape. (*Man and Sin: A Theological View,* Notre Dame, Indiana: University of Notre Dame Press, 1965, p. 111)

In this context, Schoonenberg speaks of the power of bad example, especially its power to obscure values and norms. Each individual, previous to any responsible decision-making, has need for moral formation; without this moral formation, individual virtue is very difficult, if not impossible. A simple and clear example is that of a child born into a family that lives from theft or prostitution, a family in which the norms of honesty and chastity are not observed and where these values are not alive or operative. We are reluctant to say that such a child seriously sins, because he or she has no possibility of making the choice of value. Yet, there still is harm which is done to others by the child, the harm which is done since the child has no chance for growing as a human person in this area of virtue. This situation of sin is perceived by Schoonenberg as analogous to the situation of "original sin." For the wider sin, the "historical sin" of mankind, is seen as a complex fabric of unjust social structures and many individual sins reinforcing each other. In this way a social milieu or general situation of sin for the whole human family builds upon itself. The social situation of original sin is basically a situation in which individual sinfulness is facilitated.

The theological emphasis upon sin as situation--which at once relates more adequately to the findings of modern biblical scholarship and modern psychology--challenges traditional moral theology to move away from its *act-orientation* (described earlier in this paper) to an approach of actor-orientation. With this understanding, the social implications--indeed the social incarnations--of sin are more readily placed in perspective.

The possibility for social incarnations of sin has been explained well by the Canadian theologian Gregory Baum, who suggests that we take seriously the category of the *demonic.* The demonic means that the evil at work among us cannot be reduced simply to individual human malice. Rather, there are processes and structures among us that multiply evil and spread destruction vastly exceeding the harm that can be done by individual

choices. Evil establishes itself profoundly in human history and is perpetuated by forces which, in part at least, seem to escape immediate personal control. Baum points to the political order and notes that the behavior of certain institutions is not wholly determined by the will of those who belong to these institutions nor even by those who exercise authority over them. Institutions seem to have a life of their own: (1) they can multiply good, with their beneficial effects comparatively independent of personal generosity or the lack thereof; or (2) they can multiply evil, with tendencies adversely affecting the lives of many people with a malice far surpassing the malice of the individuals involved. According to Baum, "the system, the apparatus, the machine does harm and inflicts suffering even against the goodwill of the men who serve it." He gives a striking description of an example of this process:

> In a company, for instance, a decision has to be made by the board of directors that will affect the lives of thousands of people. It is only after lunch that the meeting is able to discuss the proposed plan. Tired from the morning's work and the martinis before lunch, the directors sit around the table listening to the proposal made by the committee. The proposed plan seems advantageous to the organization, and even though it will disrupt the lives of many and unsettle the conditions of life for men in a vast area, the directors give it their approval, without facing these issues and assuming full responsibility for the results. They vaguely rely on the committee that proposed the plan: they may not have been delighted with it but neither were they alert enough to resist it. A halfhearted approval from each of the board members sufficed, the vote was cast, the decision was adopted, and from then on the machinery executes it with precision. After the vote, a member of the board may discover that the new policy has more destructive consequences than he thought, but now there is nothing he can do. The institution moves ahead with automatic and unrelenting regularity. Repentance, goodwill, holiness will not help him. Only a highly complex social process-calling an emergency meeting, convincing the other directors, finding an alternative plan, etc.--a process which is not always within reach, could possibly put a stop to the execution of the orders. While the malice involved in the decision-making was minimal, the institution moves ahead like a monster more powerful

than man, repetitive, compulsive, inhumanly precise,
devouring people in obedience to its inner programming.
(*Man Becoming: God in Secular Experience,* New York:
Herder and Herder, 1971, pp. 120-121)

Baum is not directing his remarks against institutions as such but is simply
pointing to the social consequences of institutional life, and the possibilities
of the demonic to transcend individual personal fault. This description of
social sin is extremely important in our complex technological society with
its highly interdependent domestic and global responsibilities. Poverty,
hatred, discrimination, prevention of political and social participation on
the part of some in the decisions that make the society men live in--(it is to
these realities) that the notion of social sin must now be applied by
Christians who would be apostles of the Kingdom in their own time.

The conclusions reached cannot be programmed or made completely
uniform, but must result from the prayer of individuals and groups of
Christians together, reflecting on the signs of the times and their own values
and lives, and listening to the Word of God in Scripture and the teachings of
the Church. We have tried here to present a summary of the background of
recent development of "social sin" in the context of church social teachings,
in order to stimulate thought and contribute to the discussion, rather than
present a final synthesis or position paper.

Beyond this, a discussion of social sin, as in any discussion of sin, must
be met with a discussion of conversion. Aware of our social sin, convinced
of the reality of sinful structures and institutions, impressed by the impact
of sinful situations, we can look now for the meaning of social *metanoia,*
the content and context of an act of social conversion.

The 1968 Medellin documents made this point lucidly: "The
uniqueness of the Christian message does not so much consist in the
affirmation of the necessity for structural change, as it does in the insistence
on the conversion of men which will in turn bring about this change." (II,
58) First personal conversion, then conversion of structures; but no
authentic personal conversion without genuine commitment to changing
structures. Clearly, the "first...then" is not temporal. For the test of the
validity and viability of the one is action on behalf of the other. It is to the
question of conversion and Christian ways of living that the next paper will
address itself.

CHRISTIANITY: A LIFESTYLE

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Living according to the Gospel is not, and never has been, an easy matter. The way of Christ was meant to be a lifestyle -- a relevant world-view based upon faith and the actual power of the Holy Spirit. This is what Jesus meant when He said:

> I tell you most solemnly, unless a man is born through water and the Spirit he cannot enter the Kingdom of God. What is born of the flesh is flesh; What is born of the Spirit is spirit (John 3:5)

St. Paul described the redeemed person as a "new creation," a really new type of human being. Jesus continually stated that we, of our own human power, cannot manage this new life without His Spirit.

> I am the vine, you are the branches....cut off from me you can do nothing. (John 15:5)

Following Jesus is not meant to be a mental acceptance of historical concepts or metaphysical explanations. Unless the experience of Christ's power changes our basic assumptions and the behavior which flows from them, we have not become new persons. New wine will not stay contained in old wineskins because the old are simply not adequate and new basic values are needed:

> A conversion which is only a matter of ideas, an intellectual change, would not be what the Gospel means by conversion...the entire process of metanoia -- conversion -- takes place at the level of the heart.
>
> P. A. Liege, O.P.
> *What Is Christian Life?*
> Hawthorne Books, New York,
> 1951, p. 11.

Thus, becoming a Christian, another Christ, entails first a radical acceptance of the Spirit of Christ as a guiding power in one's life. Living the Gospel first depends upon personal conversion and faith.

What does it mean to accept the assumptions of Christ? St. Paul often contrasted the lifestyle "of the world" to the lifestyle of the Spirit which is "*in* the world" -- A Christian does not withdraw from, reject or ignore the world, but immerses himself in recreating it and totally loving it with assumptions and values which do not proceed from the mind "of the

world." "Submitting to baptism" means accepting Jesus as Lord, revising one's entire attitude towards life, and giving up worldly self-sufficiency to put a total trust in God. Also this new way of life, as the General Catechetical Directory states, is totally gratuitous — God gives it. Consequently living as Jesus lived comes not so much from taking on new deeds or new laws, but in opening ourselves to the Spirit's guidance and being willing to risk what seems to many to be foolishness, absurdity, total naivete. As St. Paul states, we become fools for Christ.

> Jesus counselled to *love* enemies; to serve others rather than lording it over them; to give cloak *and* tunic, extra time to those who ask; to turn the other cheek when slapped; to place total confidence in God's providence and not to depend on the security of accumulated goods, stylish clothing, stockpiled food supplies; to free the oppressed; to visit the imprisoned; to love other persons as much and in the same way as one loves him or her self; to give life, not by taking or hoarding it but by surrendering ourselves in love and even in death; not to fear death; and to realize that to live each person must die to self-centered needs and actions.

Realistically, who among us lives this way? Or even *thinks* that Christianity means to live this way? At gut level, it seems to be unwise, unrealistic, idealistic, ridiculous.

> The language of the cross may be illogical to those who are not on the way to salvation, but those of us who are on the way see it as God's power to save. As scripture says: I shall destroy the wisdom of the wise and bring to nothing all the learning of the learned. Where are the philosophers now? Where are the scribes? Where are any of our thinkers today? Do you see now how God has shown up the foolishness of human wisdom? If it was God's wisdom that human wisdom should not know God, it was because God wanted to save those who have faith through the foolishness of the message that we preach. And so, while the Jews demand miracles and the Greeks look for wisdom, here are we preaching a crucified Christ; to the Jews an obstacle that they cannot get over, to the pagans madness, but to those who have been called,

whether they are Jews or Greeks, a Christ who is the
power and the wisdom of God. For God's foolishness is
wiser than human wisdom, and God's weakness is
stronger than human strength.

Take yourselves for instance, brothers, at the same
time you were called: how many of you were wise in
the ordinary sense of the word, how many were
influential people, or came from noble families? No, it
was to shame the wise that God chose what is foolish
by human reckoning, and to shame what is strong that
he chose what is weak by human reckoning; those
whom the world thinks common and contemptible are
the ones that God has chosen -- those who are nothing
at all to show up those who are everything. The human
race has nothing to boast about to God, but God has
made you members of Christ Jesus and by God's doing
he has become our wisdom, and our virtue, and our
holiness, and our freedom. As scripture says: If anyone
wants to boast, let him boast about the Lord. (1 Cor.
1:18-31)

The "foolishness" which Paul describes is the radical attitude of sharing,
willingness to be uncertain, refusing to take life for one's own security, or to
hoard material goods, rejecting worldly power which dominates and
embracing powerlessness which seeks the development and creative free
participation of other people in society. Only liberation from certain human
fears can make us free, and that liberation in Christ's Church is found in
Spirit and in community.

The Spirit and the Virtue of Poverty.

Total openness is the door through which Christ's Spirit can enter -- if
people try to predict or force the Spirit into categories of human minds, the
Spirit cannot work there because the person wants to control the future. A
basic human need is to control things, to be secure, to be able to predict
reasonably what will happen -- in a job, in case of illness, in a personal
relationship. Jesus asks us each to relinquish such security and this "letting
go" is very difficult. Living this openness, and pouring oneself out to give
life to the world, appears absurd to the worldly wise. Faith, an act of trust
in the person of Christ, is the bridge over the uncertainty and does not
provide intellectual certitude. Hence, Christians are "poor" -- without

fortifications before God. They must trust His love. The central virtue of Christianity might be called poverty of spirit, and, as was observed in chapter one, the "poor" are those unpretentious ones for whom Christ's Kingdom is especially intended, Johannes Metz has expanded this theme:

> A man with grace is a man who has been emptied, who stands impoverished before God, who has nothing of which he can boast. "For God is at work in you, both to will and to work for his good pleasure" (Phil. 2, 13). He works out his salvation in the poverty of "fear and trembling" (Phil. 2, 12). Grace does not erase our poverty; it transforms it totally, allowing it to share in the poverty of Jesus' own immolated heart (cf. Rom. 8, 17).
>
> This poverty, then, is not just another virtue -- one among many. It is a necessary ingredient in any authentic Christian attitude toward life. Without it there can be no Christianity and no imitation of Christ. It is no accident that "poverty of spirit" is the first of the beatitudes. What is the sorrow of those who mourn, the suffering of the persecuted, the well-forgetfulness of the merciful, or the humility of the peacemakers -- what are these if not variations of spiritual poverty? This spirit is also the mother of the three-fold mystery of faith, hope and charity. It is the doorway through which men must pass to become authentic human beings.
>
> Only through poverty of spirit do men draw near to God; only through it does God draw near to man. Poverty of spirit is the meeting point of heaven and earth, the mysterious place where God and man encounter each other, the point where infinite mystery meets concrete existence. (*Poverty of Spirit*, Johannes B. Metz, pp. 25 and 26)

Thus, the community of Christians has as its first requirement embracing poverty of spirit -- to become poor so that God might enrich us with true life; to become poor so that, as Christ did, we can be free to enrich others through community, the Word, and service of their needs. This implies the divesting of illusory, "of the world" goods: self-sufficiency, personal strength, storing up "worldly" powers against deaths of all kind

(maintaining youth or beauty against age; maintaining influence against feeling useless or unimportant; maintaining goods and clothes against loneliness or insecurity about tomorrow; maintaining one's style of strength and "cool" against looking weak or useless.) Christ teaches first the need to accept death to self and physical death as the entrance to true life. Then, through the Cross, we will be raised to new life.

Much anxiety, time, resources and entire lives are spent seeking fortification against these many kinds of death. (Death, if seen as surrendering life or some part of yourself, occurs every day, each time one suffers, is embarrassed, is hurt by a loved one, fails in some enterprise. It is limitation, finitude.) Moreover, the time and resources expended in attempts at self-fortification are those often anxiously hoarded from others — they create division or jealousy — and block sharing among people. Jesus, and the Church, as reviewed in chapter one, have revealed that true life resides in *giving life*, not in *taking it.* Life "of the world" assumes a basic "scarcity principle" -- I must be careful to protect and provide for myself — in all things. True life does not hoard things, time or self, but, respecting basic human needs for provisions and freedom, shares goods, personal time, concern and abilities, friendship and faith in order to build up full human life. Living this way is not easy. The virtue of poverty of spirit, and open belief in the Holy Spirit as more than a mental figment, must pervade active Christian life. As it is, the way "of the world" lives out basic assumptions — that I am essentially alone and defenseless in life, that I will die once forever, that I must store up defenses of all kinds against various insecurities in life. Christ did not live by these assumptions, and offers us His Spirit as Power to overcome them.

Community and Simplicity of Lifestyle.

Catholics have for centuries repeated the words "the Communion of Saints" when reciting the Apostles' or Nicene Creed. Do we normally realize the consequences that flow from this dogma? In his book *What Is Christian Life,* Fr. P. A. Liege examines this point further:

> Christian conduct involves personal sanctification and
> responsibility. But it is also and necessarily acted out
> within the Church, is holiness within a mystical body.
> And this opens out a new dimension for Christian
> responsibility; the consequences of what a Christian
> man does affects in every way far more than his
> individual life. By "in every way" we mean first the

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community of Christians and then the community of all men. For all mankind and the whole of human history acquire their full meaning in the mystical body of Christ.

Do Christians normally realize the consequences that flow from the dogma of the communion of saints? For these would make them conscious that they are truly responsible for the Christian life of their brethren and that they are ontologically involved in it...Each single member of a Christian community must integrate the communal dimension into his behavior...when a man falls, who is to say that they (members of the community) are not responsible for his fall, if they had done nothing to hold him up before his fall? It is untrue to say that such a matter is no concern of ours, even though the assumption of responsibility for it may sometimes require much tact.

This demands reflection on what the collective effect of personal conduct and the political dimension of human activity should make a Christian do.

(P.A. Liege, *What is Christian Life,* Hawthorn Books, New York, 1961, p. 113-14)

The implications for living the social teachings of the Church in community are great. For just as it is clear that individual conversion, prayer, and poverty of spirit are necessary for any person to accept the Lordship of Jesus Christ, it is also clear that the Lord did not call His followers to an individualistic religion. Salvation is worked out in community, in life with other persons. Christ's assumptions and example direct followers toward loving involvement in the hopes and fears, joys and sorrows of all other human beings. We are called to be "all one," as Jesus prayed at the Last Supper in John's Gospel.

You are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a consecrated nation, a people God means to have for himself; it is yours to proclaim the exploits of the God who has called you out of darkness into this marvelous light. (1 Peter 2.9)

Peter addressed this vocation to all Christians, not only priests or professional religious.

What does this mean in contemporary, pastoral terms? For one thing, it means that the mission both of each individual and all the members in a Christian community concerns not only each other's needs, but those of all people. A parish or other Christian community is not therefore established only to sustain its own needs, but to enable its members to proclaim and witness the Gospel. The internal life of community — the service, witness, education, worship and fellowship -- are signs of our love for each other and resources to enable us to turn these same activities outwards to other people. Effective dealing with causes of bondage and impediments to human freedom and development requires new levels of involvement. Political and economic programs and strategies, both on the domestic and international levels, are valid and necessary levels of involvement for Christian communities which minister to the needs of people in modern human situations. Individual charity alone is not sufficient today.

The Gospel as a living organism has no difficulty in adopting this political development of the life and events of contemporary man. Already, beforehand, it is open to every call for more unity and universality. Always beforehand, it breathes the spirit of disinterestedness and of service on a collective plane, of love for the poorest and for the victims of the great powers of egoism. Christians should have less difficulty than others in accepting the promotion of under-developed peoples, the disinterestedness of the developed nations and the condemnation of nationalism, the fight against the rule of money and of private interests. They ought to be the first to raise their charity to the sphere of the general causes of social injustice. Charity makes wider demands than in the past and can no longer be satisfied with personal relations. Less than ever can the Christian realist content himself with strictly but narrowly fulfilling the duties of his position in life.

On all hands the personal responsibility of every Christian is being urged to widen out to the dimensions of the mystical Body. As each day passes the universal solidarity of all men becomes less and less an abstraction. All the facts -- economic, political,

military -- make this abundantly plain. Whether we realize it or not, no one of our actions, however personal it may be, can keep clear of this new network of human communion, for their responsibility is extending every more widely. If we realize that the half-dead man helped by the Good Samaritan is today represented by a thousand million men, under-nourished, ill-housed, under-educated -- four-fifths of mankind -- does this not at least dictate a deepening of the Christian outlook on material goods and the fight for social justice? All things press me with the question of the coming of others upon the scene, whether these are near or far, and I cannot shirk the answer.

(Liege, pp. 116-117)

Christian communities, then, are called to deal also with structural questions of larger scale than one-to-one relationships -- for structural and collective systems of politics and economy affect life in the world.

It is no longer possible for every person or family to do "his own thing" -- every action we take has its effect on another person -- the world is an interwoven whole network of economic, biophysical, political and social interactions. When I breathe or drive my car, I affect the air someone else breathes. When I pay taxes over which I have no control, I enable others to do things which affect people for good or ill. When I buy slacks, lettuce, or when I ask that land be zoned for one purpose only, I am affecting others. These realities pose very hard and hugely unmanageable problems for an individual — how can one person deal with such awesome interconnections? Personal lifestyle and faith are the root of response, but alone will not be enough.

A second consideration therefore is the need for *community as a personal support system.* If the attitude of Christ is difficult to live out (because it risks martyrdom and uncertainty and self-immolation), not only is faith in the Spirit and poverty of Spirit necessary to seek among Christians, but dynamic small communities which share resources (even money) which encourage, build up, console individual members and families who are trying to live the Gospel -- are needed to liberate members from basic fears of isolation and to enable them to meet their human and spiritual needs even while living faithfully a life of simplicity and openness. To live Gospel values in our culture is difficult because our own cultural values

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stress independence, individual strength, self-sufficiency and success, the nuclear family and mobility. These values place emphasis on a market-place situation in which everyone, while trying to be a "nice guy," is still forced out of necessity to look out for himself. "You got to take care of your own," and, "if I don't watch out for myself, no one else will" -- are very common feelings, if not statements. They are based upon the assumption that each person is responsible for himself -- and has no one to blame but himself if he fails to provide. This cultural value of course is outdated by reality because individuals are affected by large economic political and social systems today — alone one can do nothing. In short, the atmosphere, which is quite a natural one, encourages fear and isolation and self-centered survival-oriented behavior. Every man for himself.

In this context, any Christian finds it hard to live the social values of the Lord -- they simply imply too much risk and insecurity. The Church can preach social responsibility ad infinitum but without some kind of security, people will be able to live it only with great difficulty. This is a situation of being caught in social sin. Current examples abound in the daily newspaper: a good example is the frequent reaction in urban areas among middle income people who generally are considered Christian and many of whom are Catholic, to react vehemently against a proposal to locate low income housing in their residential neighborhood. Reasons given for this reaction are many: some liberals accuse the middle income or lower middle income communities of being racist. Others, using a more economic analysis, state that these people generally have barely survived a highly mortgaged acquisition of a house, take great pride in that home and depend upon its maintaining or appreciating value, and are motivated by the almost certain event of property value decline (when low income housing enters the neighborhood). Naturally, economic analysts state, these people are worried and opposed to the idea of such an event because their entire life's assets and savings are at stake. There is no societal support to help them if property values begin to decline. Often high density public housing causes overcrowded schools, overcrowded recreation facilities, overburdening sanitation problems. These conditions are often caused by poor city planning of people who do not live in the area. Is the threat of economic loss a *legitimate reason* for a Christian to refuse location of poor and oftentimes minority people in their neighborhood? Are the needs of the residents for economic and other kinds of security reasonable and is their reaction therefore to be blamed on the city planners who insist upon packing poor people into high density housing? Are the residents racist? Is the pattern of declining property values the fault of real estate agents who speculate on the possible change of neighborhood and try to make fast

sales? In such a situation, it is very difficult and presumptuous to lay blame on any one person or persons. It is probable that different elements are involved in the decision of middle income residents.

What happens to the sincere Christian in such a situation? In most cases, the desire to provide for one's family and the need to look out for one's own economic security, in a society where that responsibility is laid upon the individual, motivates the well-meaning Christian to resist a more socially oriented decision. He or she does not have the resources or security to place the needs of poor people equal to his or her own. It would be virtually asking that individual to be an economic or social martyr. And yet, it seems clear that only if the people involved in delicate social situations such as the one described, take into their hands the common good and develop methods to secure the reasonable needs of all the community, will racial and economic harmony and human development occur in our changing urban areas.

How does being a Christian help a steelworker who makes 8 or $10,000 with a family of 5, a 20-year-old house containing a 30-year mortgage? How does being a Christian help this man when a black family moves next door and when real estate agents offer him a reduced price for his house, whispering the imminent decline of property values and the state of the neighborhood? Turn the question around: How does being a Christian help the poor minority head of household understand the fear and sense of desperation in the white tradesman who, afraid of losing his own job in an industry which has seasonal work, resists the entry of minority apprentices into his union? Can the Black or Spanish speaking or Indian worker love that other, who comes on as a racist? Most certainly the ability of a Christian to love his neighbor and put himself in the other man's shoes, the ability to consider the needs of one's brother as equal or greater than one's own, if supported by a strong faith and prayer and the strength of the Holy Spirit, will see a Christian through the difficulties of a changing neighborhood and of economic insecurity and social tensions. But in many cases the real problems encountered in such situations of social change are very brutal. There are real fears which, if acted upon, can create the very conditions which are feared. In such a situation what is the Christian thing to do. Does one suffer or sacrifice? *And in social change situations, someone always loses something.* How does all this affect the affluent parishes in the suburbia where social change is "zoned out."

Here is a situation for a new pastoral approach within the Christian community. Most social problems result from the conflict situations of different groups or individuals who are trying to meet what they deem to be

their own legitimate needs. The fact that the Lord Jesus asks us all to set aside our own needs and self-love or at least to consider it equal to the needs and love of our brothers does not make it any easier for us as individuals to live by this Gospel. For life in the spirit of Christianity requires the two dimensions (1) individual faith and trust in the Lord and (2) the community of belief, support and love. Whether or not Christians who are motivated by society to perform less than Christian deeds are lacking in faith and love is something only God can decide. Undeniably in the past, the bearing of social burdens has often been laid on the individual. Questions asked have been "How can I get a job?" "How can I keep my property value?" Or, how can *we* resist the changes? "How can we provide for our own needs?" Where is the Christian community which asks "How can we all help each other satisfy our basic needs and still be just and help the poor and minority peoples share the good things?" The Christian community, if it were a true interacting community giving support and encouragement and brotherly correction, would share goods and help individuals in time of their weakness and trouble. This type of community life would certainly assist Christians to have the strength and the courage and understanding they need to live up to the standards of Jesus Christ. The lack of such support communities has been part of the problem with the individual-centered morality which many Christians lived during the past centuries. Sin and weakness was looked upon as an individual affair. Whether or not social, family or economic conditions helped or hindered the individual in finding the Lord was often not considered because salvation was a question of one's own strength and ability to live up to the commandments of God, no matter what the conditions. Because we are to varying degrees restricted and motivated and strained by our social environment, Christian community life must be a reality and must become a liberating force, before the people of God can expect their presence in this world to be a sign of contradiction and salvation and joy to all men. In short, human *life* is a social as well as individual reality. Human *faith* in God is a social and individual reality, and the living out of the social dimension of Christianity will depend upon both the individual courage and faith of Christians and the social support, encouragement, and assistance which fellow Christians give each other. This new pastoral approach would not place blame or condemn individuals for their weakness or failure to live up to the demands of the Gospel. Rather it would look at people's needs and problems and attempt, by combining resources, sharing ideas and praying together, to meet those needs on a reasonable basis so that all might have an opportunity to develop themselves as human beings and share in the resources of the land. The Christian in an affluent suburb, not faced by the tensions of changing center cities or the dissolution of rural life, will prove his or her Christianity by supporting with various personal resources and time: 1) the concrete efforts of threatened
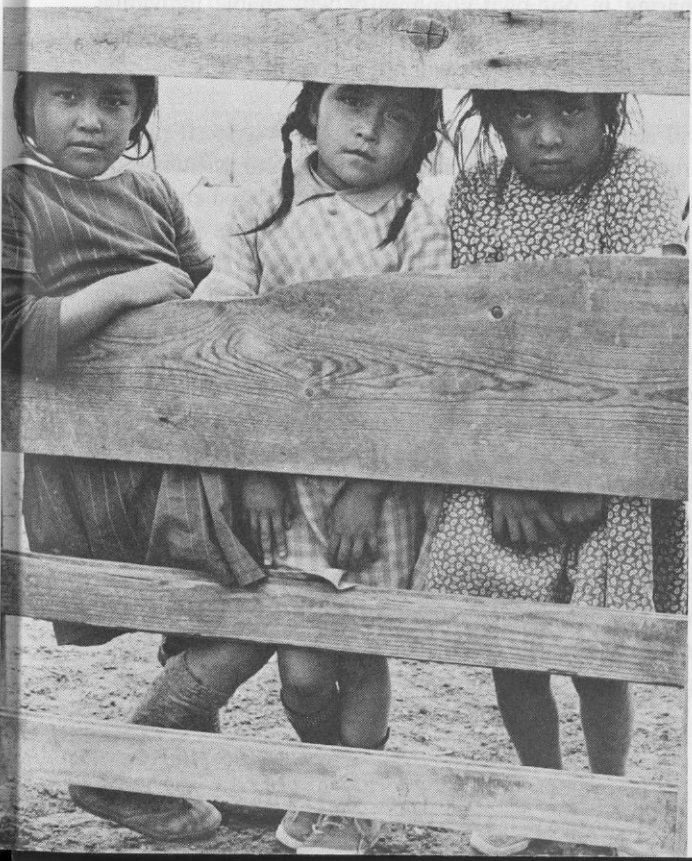
Christians to meet their own legitimate needs; and 2) efforts on the part of poor people to create opportunities for a better life for themselves. If Catholic members of labor unions resist minority apprenticeship programs because they fear their own jobs will be eliminated in order to hire the poor, the Christian community would support programs of *expanded jobs* and placement and meet the family expenses of those who might be dislocated so that they too could be provided for in a decent way and not made to bear full brunt of social change. If a priest preaches justice from the pulpit, he will also of necessity learn the needs and desires and values of the community in which he lives. Thereafter, he can attempt to understand fears of the community and to find ways to bringing the people together in a community, helping them to find security in faith and in sharing their resources with those who do not have. When these kinds of sharing and group support develop within and between parishes, group prayer and discernment over crucial issues will become very apparent as a necessary and relevant part of Christian life, and the community of witness will build up each member at the same time as it speaks to all men of the joy of faith and trust in the Lord.

The implications of our dogma of communion demand of us that we equate our own survival — success — security to that of our fellow Christians and other people. Sharing in our own community will enable individual members and the community as a whole to respond to social injustice. Leaving everyone to his or her own devices will not accomplish this.

Social justice will also require a simplification of life style. If part of the rationale for sharing and new communities of faith and witness is to help each other meet reasonable human needs and be supported enough to share with the poor or oppressed, a consideration of legitimate needs and luxuries must be raised. The goal of Christian sharing is not meant to be superfluous leisure and security. Community can be a means of providing reasonable security *as an alternative* to individual or family stockpiling of goods and securities. Once freed from fears, Christians could effectively put their excess goods and resources at the disposal of groups of poor people or organizations set up to facilitate their development. This action will require a radical examination of conscience on the part of Christians as to unnecessary goods or artificial needs. Such an examination of lifestyles was called for by the bishops of the world in 1971 at the Roman Synod.

> ...anyone who ventures to speak to people about justice must first be just in their eyes. Hence we must undertake an examination of the modes of acting and of the possessions and lifestyle found within the

Church herself...rights must be preserved...Our examination of conscience now comes to the lifestyle of all: bishops, priests, religious and lay people. In the case of needy peoples it must be asked whether belonging to the Church places people on a rich island within an ambient of poverty. In societies enjoying a higher level of consumer spending, it must be asked whether our lifestyle exemplifies the sparingness with regard to consumption which we preach to others as necessary in order that so many millions of hungry people throughout the world may be fed.

(Justice in the World, III)

The Lord Himself called people who hoard and overconsume fools, and counselled us not to be anxious over things. But the problem of simplicity is not so easy. Honest thought and discussion is needed about what are legitimate needs, for in affluent societies people often feel needs for goods which are luxuries to others. Moreover, large economic systems providing jobs and income for many are based upon the predictable consumption and production of consumables which may not be necessary for a decent life. Consider the massive multiplication of clothes, trinkets, toiletries, to name a few. Yet, employment and production are, at this time, necessary.

Other aspects are to be considered in divesting oneself for others. What of political power, control over economic goods and assets — systems by which resources are distributed and by which groups are enabled to bargain in society. Those on the receiving end of the stick are always essentially dependent, no matter how many goods they "get." It is argued that to solve poverty economic growth and production must be increased. But the Poverty Profile reveals that the percentage of that growth *over the last three decades* which is distributed to the lower fifth of our population has remained the same — 4%. And the control and disproportionate return received by the upper fifth has remained the same — 44%. The reason is control over the means of production and investment — people earning money off of money, not off of labor. The poor do not even earn just returns from their labor, and their labor produces capital which multiplies itself for others. The poor have no share in this outgrowth. Therefore, the Church has also counselled an examination of the *ways* in which people and nations participate in political and economic structures -- for some control or share of control is required in order that resources be somewhat equitably shared.

On the other hand, it is impossible to conceive true progress without recognizing the necessity--within the political system chosen of a development composed both of economic growth and participation; and the necessity too of an increase in wealth implying as well social progress by the entire community as it overcomes regional imbalance and islands of prosperity. Participation constitutes a right which is to be applied both in the economic and in the social and political field. (Justice in the World, I)

But even were economic growth and greater sharing of control by poor people and nations achievable (and that requires much dissolving of sinful social and economic values and structures), some acceptance of simplification by the wealthy will be necessary. The world cannot expand its resources and production constantly (even if that new production were shared equitably):

Furthermore, such is the demand for resources and energy by the richer nations, whether capitalist or socialist, and such are the effects of dumping by them in the atmosphere and the sea that irreparable damage would be done to the essential elements of life on earth, such as air and water, if their high rates of consumption and pollution, which are constantly on the increase, were extended to the whole of mankind.

(Justice in the World, I)

Thus, new ways of sharing the goods and systems which exist must be found, and this will include the need of Christian individuals and nations to divest themselves of superfluous goods and power.

Only a new vision and vastly different values will be able to accomplish this. The way of life of Christians will have to find new shapes and values, or be doomed to failure to follow the demands of the Gospel. New pastoral approaches to community will be needed. New social and economic systems are needed — as Pope Paul stated in Populorum Progressio, justice will require "innovations that go deep." Is it possible?

Christianity as a New Way of Thinking.

Serious barriers now stand in the way of Christian communities which live lifestyles of justice, greater sharing, simplification, poverty of spirit and prayer. Such a new pastoral approach would run into "The way things are" now. In fact, social values and expectations, contemporary experience and fear of either failing or being judged "different," the system of rewards and concepts of meaning which exist in our society -- all discourage change. Any social-cultural way of life has strong built-in resistance to change because the security and survival of human lives are involved. People will not accept the risk of change unless good alternatives are offered. Alternatives can exist on two levels: different ways to achieve the same goals; or, different ways in order to achieve *different goals.* To approach the search for ways of further humanizing society and caring for integral human development of all people, Christians will first have to decide what their goals are -- what kind of fulfillment is desired in life and how people can achieve it -- as individuals and in community. Christians will evaluate their own lives and the culture in which they live by reflecting on the values and themes taught by the Lord Jesus and developed by His Church. As explained in the first chapter, the history of God's dealings with humanity makes clear that no one culture or society can ever be assumed to embody perfectly the ways of God -- no human institution is sacred. And the promise of truth given by the Lord rests in the presence of the Holy Spirit and in community -- not in particular cultures or organizational methods. Therefore, Christians are called to continual evaluation of their culture and society.

Any culture has implicit goals, facilitating certain types of human activity (primary goals) and impeding others (secondary goals). Meaning and success are attached to the primary values, which become cultural themes -- basic patterns of thought. We must seek to become aware of our operative social and personal themes and compare them to the teachings of Christ. If there are certain impediments to living as Christians (whether individual sinfulness or sinful social realities), we are responsible for seeking alternatives.

This essay cannot authoritatively or exhaustively examine the culture and society of the United States, and does not presume to do so. Other authors have written on the subject and hopefully their ideas will be considered. What is clear is that serious reflections and prayer are needed since, as the bishops in Rome stated in "Justice in the World," "we have...been able to perceive the serious injustices which are building around the world of men a network of domination, oppression and abuses which

stifle freedom and which keep the greater part of humanity from sharing in the building up and enjoyment of a more just and more fraternal world." (Introduction). "Economic injustice and lack of social participation keep a man from attaining his basic human and civil rights." (Section I)

Can our culture provide an environment in which to build communities which liberate? The notion of human individual development, so strong in our society, is a direct heritage of Judaeo-Christian tradition, and from that have developed modern law, the recognition of human rights, the condemnation of slavery, emphasis upon freedom and human development. Modern western society has brought much to history. However, two problems have arisen: the loss of the communal aspect of human life; and the assumption that meaning, fulfillment and causation are individual-centered realities. In short, personalization of economy, education and law -- have also led to uni-dimensional concepts of the human person -- modern man is very lonely, and isolation is considered a symptom of existential freedom. Freedom is believed to come from mobility, self-sufficiency and separation from social or physical bonds. One's end goal in life is to be free, self-starting, self-sustaining, and, self-centered.

Modern western civilization therefore succeeded in changing what has been called the "sacred society" -- the society where tribal or communal customs and beliefs were assumed to be inviolably supreme. Earlier in history, individual rights and freedom had been subordinate to the whole. The forms and structures were believed sacred. Judaism and Christianity changed this view with an emphasis on spirit and person. Mankind was still facing age old problems, however, of survival against starvation, disease, violence and other physical exterminants. The western system has emphasized individual fortification against these kinds of want. But in doing so our culture sometimes assumed that freedom *is equal to* being fortified against want *on the individual or family level.* Hence, the problem of "scarcity" became a prime motivator in western society. Property in agricultural society meant the chance to be self-sustaining (to grow your own food and raise your own stock) and so became a primary value; productive skills enabled one to participate in exchange and be valued enough to insure the gaining of provisions; having surplus of goods, clothes, *things* – insured against want. Efficiency and dependability assured others of one's market value and increased ability to earn, to compile and to protect. Power was associated with control over nature, goods, production. He who had the largest surplus could invest in others and help them develop too, but in so doing, he collected debts and had power. In short, property

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rights, productivity, control, self-sufficiency, cleverness, possessions -- all become primary social goals. Freedom *from* want also meant being *bound to* these other requirements.

Western culture overcame the repressive aspects of traditional culture and the modern era has been called the age of the person. In the process, however, as recent developments reveal (emphasis upon "love," development of sensitivity, of support groups, of psychological therapy, etc.) certain human development needs became secondary in importance and the communal aspect of life (a definite part of human experience) was neglected. Having become a system, this overbalance causes the modern problem of lack of community and loneliness and self-hatred. It also leads to neurotic materialism. New types of community are relegated to being "subcultures" or are considered odd because they simply do not fit into "things as they are." The challenge: how to maintain the resources and technology of modern men, but harness them for the development of all? Western society has developed islands of wealth and power, for it was assumed that each person should be out for his self-development and was alone primarily responsible for himself. Things obtained by work are seen as "rights" and "mine" -- others have no claim. Giving away wealth or resources is valued only on the neighborly level, as sort of a nostalgic holdover or sub-set of neighborly values. But resources needed by powerless people cannot be had at that level.

In such a society justice seems doomed, because the very habits, instincts and perceptions of people, as well as the fears of not succeeding and being caught in the crunch -- all militate against risk, openness and basic sharing. The drive for self-sufficiency isolates people, makes them feel lonely or inadequate, declares older or younger people to be of low value (to the market place -- except for the fact that they buy things), declares "non-productive" people of low value. Nevertheless, the burden of responsibility for becoming more efficient and more productive lies with the person *who is not* these things, since we are each responsible for our own fate. Therefore, the resources of society are steered to those who already have resources -- where efficiency is greatest and risk of losing the lowest. The powerless are left in a vacuum and blamed for it. As seen in the *Poverty Profile,* this means that money and resources multiply themselves, and poverty supports the process.

There comes a point when qualities, if overstressed, become new types of chains: Freedom from want through the chain of fear, materialism, and self-centeredness. But Church teaching and the teachings of the Lord clearly hold that such abilities as we have harnessed for 80% of American citizens

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and 20% of the world are only basic human stepping stones to higher, more meaningful levels of human development. If they become ends in themselves and block effective love, sharing, and giving life to the world, then we have made a new idol, are trying to build the kingdom of man "of this world," and have missed the call to Oneness and holiness which Christ presented.

The present era calls for reexamination of Christ's call to community -- not the old, repressive of the person, but new communities of spirit and voluntary sharing and respect for the dignity of the individual.

Is not the rise of an urban civilization which accompanies the advance of industrial civilization a true challenge to the wisdom of man, to his capacity for organization and to his farseeing imagination? Within industrial society urbanization upsets both the ways of life and the habitual structures of existence: the family, the neighborhood, and the very framework of the Christian community. Man is experiencing a new loneliness; it is not in the face of a hostile nature which it has taken him centuries to subdue, but in an anonymous crowd which surrounds him and in which he feels himself a stranger. Urbanization, undoubtedly an irreversible stage in the development of human societies, confronts man with difficult problems. How is he to master its growth, regulate its organizations, and successfully accomplish its animation for the good of all?

In this disordered growth, new proletariats are born. They install themselves in the heart of the cities sometimes abandoned by the rich; they dwell on the outskirts -- which become a belt of misery besieging in a still silent protest the luxury which blatantly cries out from centers of consumption and waste. Instead of favoring fraternal encounter and mutual aid, the city fosters discrimination and also indifference. It lends itself to new forms of exploitation and of domination whereby some people in speculating on the needs of others derive inadmissible profits. Behind the facades, much misery is hidden, unsuspected even by the closest neighbors; other forms of misery spread where human dignity founders; delinquency, criminality, abuse of drugs and eroticism.

> To build up the city, the place where men and their
> expanded communities exist, to create new modes of
> neighborliness and relationships, to perceive an original
> application of social justice and to undertake
> responsibility for this collective future, which is
> foreseen as difficult, is a task in which Christians must
> share. To those who are heaped up in an urban
> promiscuity which becomes intolerable it is necessary
> to bring a message of hope. This can be done by
> brotherhood which is lived and by concrete justice.

(Pope Paul VI, *A Call To
Action,* [The Coming Eighteenth]
Nos. 10 and 12)

This search will require prayer and wisdom, radical trust in the presence of
the Holy Spirit and courage to risk new ideas and unpredictable futures. The
Lord said He would provide -- but not by human "of the world" concepts.
Christians are just as likely to suffer "failure" and "want" as to be
successful, powerful, admired and secure. The categories of man are not
always God's. But if Christ lost His life to give life to others, and was poor
to enrich others (materially and spiritually), so also must we be.

How can we maintain the benefits of our present culture while
changing what oppresses human development? Not to hide form asking
these questions, is our great need. We offer a schema, for reflection and
possible action. Below is a comparison of what seem to be current American
secular values and Christian values. In seeking to be just, life-giving and holy,
Christians must imitate the Lord. Discerning what of His life are central
themes and what are cultural forms is difficult -- we have tried to stress
themes here. Where modern forms of life stifle the living of Christian
themes, or where "of the world" themes have asserted themselves,
conversion and new ways of living must be sought. Certainly the comparison
should be down to earth -- because in reality much goodness and human
wisdom exists in our culture. The question is: In our way of life where have
we turned away from justice, life-giving and holiness, and what changes are
needed to reverse that?

The following chart represents a typology -- it is intentionally
absolute -- presenting extremes. Most people undoubtedly live by values
somewhere in between the two poles. But for the sake of study and
thought, two "polar types" have been developed. Also, the values are

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expressed as "gut-level" or operative values. They are not meant to describe what people *think* they believe in or what they say; Rather, behavior, operative choice, is the level sought for. Many people for example, would say they believe in the Resurrection, but not as many feel secure about it in their heart and thus, fewer people live freed from the fear of death.

THEMES

American Secular	Christian
Private; This World; Self	Relationship. Community Transcendance of Spirit. Other

FEELINGS

Self-Maintaining – Having	*Self-Giving – Being*
(1) Fear of death or loss of power as Life-Losing. No after-life.	(1) Acceptance of death and self-surrender as Life-giving. Resurrection. Absorb conflict and injury to reconcile.
(2) Give to get. Transaction is basic to human relations. My worth is in having something valuable to give others.	(2) Relationship is mutual and therefore is exchange. Emphasis is on pouring out and giving to build up the full life of the other.
(3) My security and happiness.	(3) The other peoples' sense of worth and freedom.
(4) Power, Popularity, Respect equal self-worth. People come to me.	(4) Service and facilitating others offers true meaning. I go to others. My worth comes freely from God's love for me and Christ's death. Influence, or "being valuable" is irrelevant.
(5) Desire measures and signs. The law. Consumption as sign of success and self-expression.	(5) Spirit. Trust in Love of God and community. Sensitivity, creativity and ability to give life. Simplicity of life so as to give others.
(6) Toughness. Cool. Self-sufficient.	(6) Meekness. Vulnerability. Dependent in some things and therefore humble.

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Hoarding-Taking	*Sharing-Pouring Out*
(1) Material security through possessions and power = freedom. Concentration.	(1) Poverty of Spirit. Community support and Faith in providence. Reasonable needs met — then distribution to needy.
(2) I can have what I can get, and deserve it.	(2) My purpose is to give life to others.
(3) Efficency and technology. People receive insofar as they produce.	(3) Human needs, and rights of all people to basic needs, regardless of their productivity or efficiency.
(4) Power. Be No. 1. Coercion for self-protection.	(4) Powerlessness. Service. Vulnerability. Refusal to coerce.
(5) Self-defense to point of killing.	(5) Refusal to take life, even at cost of own.
(6) Ownership. Property expresses the self. Property rights modified in society's interest.	(6) Sharing. Possession is stewardship for God and others. Common good primary — property secondary.
(7) Profit-motive. Growth. Gain as goal of an investment of goods or self. Self-interest.	(7) Exchange. Equity. Willingness to lose for sake of other. Other's interest equal to or greater than my own.
(8) Competition. The best gets the proceeds.	(8) Cooperation — sharing to make sure all have minimum needs because all are of God.
(9) Predictability. Control.	(9) Risk. Trust in God and fellow humans.

We all live in darkness -- the experience that we are, of ourselves, nothing. Except that we exist and others exist, and we image God. "Those who seek security could not, to assuage their need, amass to themselves enough objects, or persons treated like objects, even if they had all of history at their disposal...The self is not at the center of the universe...A

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man is too insignificant to be preoccupied with his own failures. Whatever energy he has is required for attending to the loneliness, the pain, the needs of others. No contrition is more truthful than other-centeredness." (Michael Novak, *The Experience of Nothingness,* Harper and Row, 1970, pp. 116-117)

Jesus looked around and said to his disciples, "How hard it is for those who have riches to enter the kingdom of God!" The disciples were astounded by these words, but Jesus insisted, "My children," he said to them, "how hard it is to enter the kingdom of God! It is easier for a camel to pass through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God." They were more astonished than ever. "In that case," they said to one another, "who can be saved?" Jesus gazed at them. "For men," he said, "it is impossible, but not for God: because everything is possible for God." (Mark 10:23-27.)

EDUCATION TO JUSTICE

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I. Catholic Education as Counter-Cultural

The November 4, 1971 issue of *Newsweek* magazine featured as its major article the question "Has the Church lost its soul?" In that article, the following observation was made:

> The *Newsweek* poll also confirms what many concerned Catholic leaders have long suspected: that U.S. Catholics today, as Father James T. Bustchall, provost of the University of Notre Dame, puts it, "are no different, really, from other Americans."

The article went on to suggest that the "soul" of the U.S. Church -- an integral Catholic subculture with its own distinctive blend of rituals and rules, mystery and manners -- has vanished from the American scene. Can this phenomenon be looked upon as a favorable development? Father Michael O'Neill (*America,* April, 1972) has pointed out that the first Catholic schools in our country were counter-cultural; they provided cultural and religious unity in the midst of, and in opposition to, the process of total Americanization (Protestantism and Anglo-Saxonism). Father O'Neill suggests that, like most cultural groups, the Catholic American counter culture, including its schools, eventually became established and recognized as an entity capable of forming loyal, hard working American citizens. In terms of culture and socio-economic status, a large percentage of the church's membership today is Americanized, accepting basic American values, defending and living the American "way of life." Integrated into the middle and upper middle classes, these Catholics experience the prerogatives of such a position. Consequently a counter-cultural spirit is generally not found among these Catholics; it *is* found, however, in the reviving consciousness of other Catholic communities, notably, white ethnic groups, Spanish-speaking Catholics, liberal/radical Catholics and very conservative Catholics. It is precisely in the diversity of the demands of these Catholic groups, no longer immigrant, that they run counter to the prevailing American, and even American Catholic, cultural norms. According to Fr. O'Neill, it is in responding to these diversified needs that Catholic education *should* be counter-cultural because the church itself should be rejecting poverty, injustice, destruction of and irreverence for life -- all contemporary facts in American society.

What is the relationship of Catholic education to the mission of the Church? To society? More specifically, with regard to the church's call to witness Christ's justice and respect for freedom and dignity among all men,

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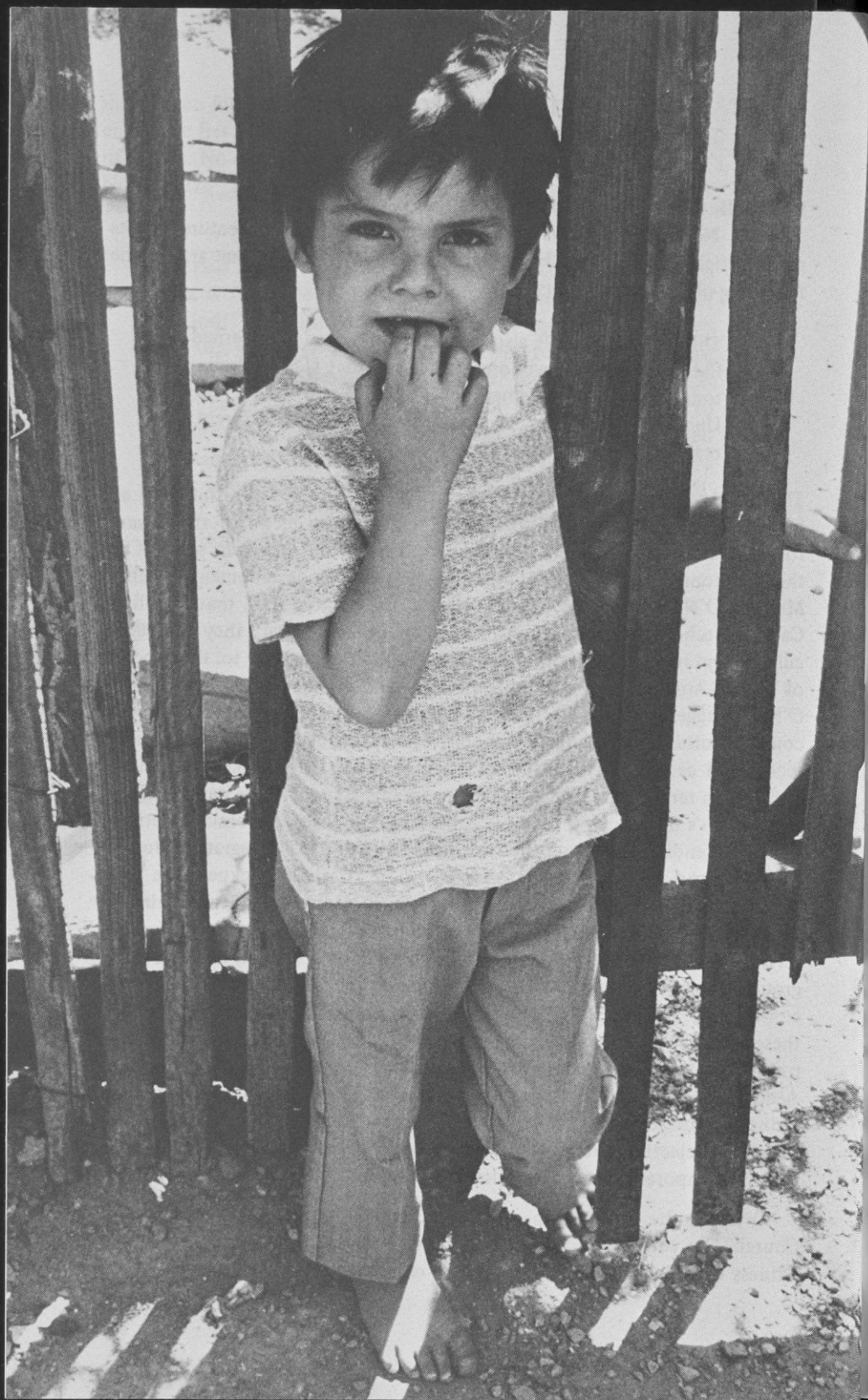
what is the educational mission of the church? The ideas presented here are intended to serve as suggestions for discussion and not as final solutions to the questions raised. The paper has been developed after dialogue, reading and collaboration with educators on all levels, with administrators, with students and parents.

In current times, the proclamation of Gospel values is an urgent need and duty of the church. Christ's gospel sees human life as a promise from God the Father, who purposed in creation that human life should realize fully its potential--physically, psychologically, socially, spiritually. One role of Christian education is to help people understand their lives in the light of this promise, to realize themselves fully and to live lives of faith, hope and love. The U.S. Bishops in their 1972 pastoral letter stated:

> Thus one crucial measure of the success or failure of the educational ministry is how well it enables men to hear the message of hope contained in the gospel, to base their love and service of God upon this message, to achieve a vital personal relationship with Christ, and to share the gospel's realistic view of human condition which recognizes the fact of evil and personal sin while affirming hope...
>
> The success of the Church's educational mission will also be judged by how well it helps the Catholic community to see the dignity of human life with the vision of Jesus and involve itself in the search for solutions to the pressing problems of society. Christians are obliged to seek justice and peace in the world. Catholics individually and collectively should join wherever possible with all persons of good will in the effort to solve social problems in ways which consistently reflect gospel values.

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Educational Pastoral, N.C.C.B.
To Teach as Jesus Did, Preface, 1972

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The educational mission of the Catholic community in our country, should be involved in searching for solutions to the pressing problems of contemporary society, helping to satisfy the legitimate needs of all men. Christianity, as the Roman Synod's statement "Justice in the World" has

stated boldly, implies an *absolute or radical demand for justice;* working for justice is no longer a "specialty" for some but is a *constitutive inherent element in preaching the Gospel and in being a Christian.* In short, no one can call himself or herself Christian if he or she is not concerned for and working for justice among men and women.

> Therefore, it is fully evident to us that work done in behalf of justice and the transformation of the world is also a constitutive dimension of the preaching of the gospel, as well as of the Church's mission in the redemption and the liberation of the human race through the manifestation and realization of God's plan. (1971 Synod document "Justice in the World," Introduction)

Included in the area of Christian education for justice, therefore must be 1) learning the process of reflection and discernment, measuring one's concrete experience and times by the teachings of Christ and the Church in a spirit of prayer; and, 2) developing some special competence to analyze and act upon concrete living situations, historical causation, social realities.

Meeting at Medellin, Columbia in 1968, the bishops of Latin America defined a liberating education as:

> ...that which converts the student into the subject of his own development. Education is actually the key instrument for liberating the masses from all servitude and for causing them to ascend "from less human to more human conditions...therefore, education on all levels must become creative, since it is necessary to anticipate the new society that we are looking for. It ought to base its efforts on the personalization of the new generations, deepening their consciousness of their human dignity, favoring their community spirit."

> (*The Church in the Present Day Transformation,* Second General Conference of Latin American Bishops, Part II.)

The Christian call expressed here is a serious one, given to every Christian, to transform self and the world. Christian education must therefore address itself to the two-fold task of proclaiming the good news (and preparing

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Christians to do the same) and embodying that proclamation in action.

Does this task mean that Christian education is necessarily a counter-cultural force? Assuredly the responsibility of Christian education to society is to benefit the nation by educating its graduates well to live in this nation responsibly and responsively as integrated, fully-developed human persons, rooted in the person and power of Jesus Christ. To the degree that these graduates are equipped to bring to bear the power of who they are, redeemed Christians, upon systemic moral weaknesses of a society, will Catholic education be an asset. If a contemporary society does not manifest Christian values in its life-style, effective Catholic education will necessarily come on as counter-cultural in teaching Christian values. This stance would seem to require of Catholic education a strong grounding in the concrete daily life of its learners and the nurturing of independent, courageous persons. Discernment, evaluation and serious reflection upon the values of society to determine their relationship to Christian values seem to be necessary educational experiences for such an education. Conversely, to the degree that Catholic Christian education *merely follows* the secular models provided by society, it becomes a duplication and an unjustifiable expenditure of the Church. Individual Christians may well have the civil right to be concerned about quality, style and other considerations which affect choice of schools or programs for themselves or their children; but if the Church as a community of faith must provide an education which is *different*, it must therefore provide *more* than the accepted secular model. The counter-cultural quality of Catholic education, then, lies precisely in the content and method of its teaching of values, beliefs, and the interpretation of history. Herein lies the desirability of being different, not necessarily in rites, rituals, language or other aspects of culture, as *Newsweek* misguidedly interpreted the current situation, but in the *message* and the *media.*

II. The Call to Justice as part of the Message.

What, in modern days, is the message to be? The Church is searching for answers; here it would be profitable to summarize briefly some of the latest statements of Pope Paul VI and the Bishops which shed light on the questions of education and justice in the world. Pope Paul, in his *Call to Action,* urged Christian communities to analyze objectively the situation in their own society, to shed on it the light of the Gospel, and to draw principles for analysis, evaluation and action therefrom. Solidarity in this action is a matter of greatest urgency. (*Call to Action,* Nos. 4 and 5.)

The *Call to Action* clearly identifies certain questions of social justice which "must take first place among Christians in the years to come." These include human conditions of production, fairness in the exchange of goods, and in division of wealth, sharing of responsibility to shaping society. (No. 7) Emphasis must be on the common good and the necessity to subordinate the economic processes of society to a political process where all men are included in decision making. (46-47). In his earlier encyclical, *Development of Peoples* Pope Paul stated unequivocally that ownership of property and wealth, and freedom to use it for one's own interest are *not* absolute rights, in the Christian world view; responsibility to the poor and to fellow man *are* absolute duties. (Nos. 22-23) Because this teaching is contradicted in practice by society, especially in western society, it is indeed "counter-cultural."

More recently the Bishops meeting in Rome made strong suggestions about Christian education, questioning the impact of modern education on a world torn by poverty, injustice, racism, discrimination, hatred and war. In the document *Justice in the World* the Bishops called for an examination of conscience to see if the Church is falling short in forming the "just man". Many Christians may not be living a life of justice. Why is this so? The search for answers calls for an examination of the pressures of life which Christians experience with the rest of mankind -- pressures which make conformity to secular life-styles a facile, almost unconscious process; and for an examination of Catholic values-education to look for the causes of failure to communicate Christ. The Bishops described contemporary western secular culture as a life-style which exalts possessions, individual security and power, profit and guaranteed growth; one which creates a marketplace, competitive, "make-it" mentality among individuals. Such a culture promotes an established order which, of necessity, creates divisions and selfishness. Those educated by and for this culture are not "new men and women" but those made in the image of the established order.

> Educational methods should therefore be such, that men
> are taught to live life in its encompassing reality and
> according to the evangelical principles of personal and
> social morality, which find expression in vital Christian
> witness. In fact, it is clear what impediments to progress
> concern us for our own sakes and for the sake of all men.
> The system of education which often still exists in our
> day, favors a narrow-minded individualism. Part of the
> human family lives, as it were, immersed in a mentality

which exalts possessions. Schools and the communications media, often hindered by the established order, only allow for the formation of a man desired by the same established order, that is a man formed in its own image; not a new man but a reproduction of man as such. (Synod Document, *Justice in the World.* III, Education for Justice).

The Synod, furthermore, called for the nurturing (education) of people thirsting for justice and working for: ordered relationships (by Love); self-dignity; self-determination; meaningful participation by all members in the making of society; community-consciousness: sharing the goods of earth *and* methods to secure them; basic rights to development.

Therefore, according to the Christian message, the attitude of man towards men is at one with his attitude toward God; his response to the love of God which saves us through Christ becomes efficacious only in the love and service of men. So, Christian love of neighbor and justice cannot be separated. In fact, love implies a radical demand for justice, and that involves a recognition of the dignity and rights of one's neighbor. And, in its turn, justice arrives at its interior fullness only in love. For thus, each man is the visible image of the invisible God and a brother of Christ, from which it follows that the Christian sees God himself and his absolute demand of justice in each man.

The actual situation of the world, in the light of faith, appears as a new event in the history of salvation. It calls us to return to the essential core of the Christian message, creating in us a profound realization of its true sense and its urgent demands. The mission to preach the gospel requires that each of us dedicate himself today to the total liberation of man, beginning with his actual existence in this world. If in fact the Christian message of love and justice does not manifest itself in the world through action for justice, it will have difficulty gaining credibility among the men of our times.

(Synod Document, *Justice in the World,* II, The Message of the Gospel and the Mission of the Church.)

In short, the People of God in this time are called to a life of justice lived in the evangelical virtue of poverty of spirit — not a life of self-sufficiency but one of radical *actual* dependence upon God and the community of the faithful.

> The Christian lives under the law of interior freedom, a law lived in the perennial vocation of conversion of heart, by passing from self-sufficiency to trust in God, and from egoism to the sincere love of neighbor. In this is one's liberation and his gift for the liberation of men. (Section II)

This statement may be expanded upon by the first lines of section 45 of the *Call to Action:*

> Today men yearn to free themselves from need and dependence. But this liberation starts with the interior freedom that men must find again with regard to their goods and their powers; they will never reach it except through a transcendent love for man, and, in consequence, to serve through a genuine readiness.

Catholic education, since it shares the basic missions of the Church, must reflect both a teaching function (didache) and a community service function (diakonia) in order to nurture such a People.

> In the social sphere, the Church has always wished to assume a double function: first to enlighten minds in order to assist them to discover the truth and to find the right path to follow amid the different teachings that call for their attention; and secondly to take part in action and to spread with a real care for service and effectiveness, the energies of the Gospel. (*A Call to Action* no. 48.)

Integral to this task is the reality and power of Christian community.

> Community is at the heart of Christian education not simply as a concept to be taught but as a reality to be lived. Through education men must be moved to build community in all areas of life; they can do this best if they have learned the meaning of community by experiencing it. Formed by this experience, they are

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better able to build community in their families, their places of work, their neighborhoods, their nation, their world.

Educational Pastoral. NCCB.
To Teach as Jesus Did. Community,
1972

III. Education as Process

How does education call forth an authentic Christian response to life? And what is the process of educating for justice so that values and skills are formed to deal with real situations? Obviously, religious and values-education requires a delicate respect for the action of the Holy Spirit and the learner's self. This personal independence factor cannot be overestimated...people cannot be indoctrinated. The Gospel *is* good news but it is demanding, composed of "hard sayings," and the freedom it assures issues from painful truth. Motivation to accept the Word is not the only problem, however. Discernment and application of the Word to contemporary situations, combined with thorough knowledge and understanding of the personal and social factors involved, is also necessary and very difficult to achieve. To teach literally the words of Christ, expressed in a different time, a different culture and different technology, as a methodological solution to the problems of poverty, injustice, racism and war — could be a very real pitfall. Knowing about the value-statements of a historical person, even the God-man, cannot alone empower and sustain a person in the 20th century who "thirsts for justice," i.e. who is trying to *live justly.* Only a living experience of the Spirit of Jesus Christ, personal, redemptive and contemporary, can call forth a contemporary response that is radical and humble — one that produces:

(1) a longing to know *more* of the person of Christ, (scripture, church teaching, prayer, the Eucharist)

(2) a need and a desire to search for and share this Person and this Power, (sense of community).

(3) a *service* relationship toward all men (the Christian vocation).

(4) an ability to discern how to understand the Word of God in these times, drawing principles for action from it.

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In order to relate these concepts to Catholic education, it is necessary to return to an earlier statement: Catholic education must be unique in its message and its media (method.) To manipulate the time or identify the precise moment of a person's conscious experience of Christ and hence of his baptismal ratification is nearly impossible. Can, therefore, formal education help either to prepare for this experience, or to sustain it? When a school or other formal educational structure insures that learning occurs within the context of meaningful problem-solving, applying codified knowledge to real questions faced by the learner, so that the experience of others is made one's own, a relevant catechesis can occur. A school should assist the learner to *trust* and *value* his/her own responses and judgments; and by this process assist him/her to become a mature Christian of discernment and commitment.

Educational research has shown that in terms of behavioral growth, persons retain 20% of what they learn by hearing, 30% of what they learn by seeing, 50% of what they learn through hearing and seeing combined, 70% of what they learn by a verbal articulation of the knowledge, and 90% of what learners discover by doing. Only some kind of action-reflection dialectic can approach the 80-90% retention rate, by virtue of its concrete dynamics. This is where the learner must engage the total self in a process of growth and questioning. True knowledge and education results from reflection upon personal experience, so that understanding of that experience and application of others' experience (codified information/test book knowledge) can occur. Once reflection has assimilated previous experience, the learner can proceed to act on the new understandings.

In the transfer of values and attitudes American and western education in general seems not to have applied this very old and very tried pedagogical ground rule. Instead highly verbalized, formalized and abstract knowledge has been presented, creating a dry value-dictation process. Educators are discovering this abstraction method has not worked. Catholic education in its imitation of secular scientific educational methods has also fallen prey to this method.

What is needed perhaps is a harder look at the definition of education. *Primarily,* education is a process, one in which a person comes to know himself — his limitations and his capabilities — in relation to the world around him. However, education is more than a process. Realistically, education in the United States is also both a system of accreditation (curriculum) in which basic skills are set as the norm of achievement, adulthood and advancement; and an institution — an amalgam of resources, systems, personnel, facilities, and services. All three of these components —

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process, accreditation, *effective sensitive* institutions, require a balances in terms of goals. Herein lies the problem. Where any one outbalances the others, a distortion occurs and western education fails to offer the full benefits of its unique potential.

If education is a process of growth which involves integration of *experience* and *development* of human sensitivities and coping skills (process) it must involve the world outside the classroom, address itself to concrete experience, and answer the needs of learners at their particular developmental state. Such a process is education as a *creative act of knowing* where persons learn skills by using them in a living context, because they need them now. The process is both experiential and cerebral, not merely cerebral, and learning is made relevant and exciting in a problem-solving, experimental context. For young people this learning process, the most natural aspect of education, occurs constantly and probably more in the family and home than in schools. Among adults, it occurs more in the peer group and at work rather than in college classrooms, or any formal "adult education" program.

The American approach to education, indeed western education, has been criticized for being institutional, self-serving and divorced from developmental needs, forcing the learned to look elsewhere for *meaning* and causing institutional education to be in many cases an experience of irrelevance. Catholic education in the U.S. seems to have shared in this deficiency.

Although the sciences and increasingly the humanities, are discovering new methodologies to facilitate learning, the teaching of values is among the last educational arenas to be examined. It is precisely here that Catholic education is mostly seriously involved, since its *raison d'etre* is the communication of the Christian understanding of history, doctrine, and operative Christian values. Christianity as a lifestyle of justice falls into this realm of questioning. The 1971 Synodal document on World Justice indicts modern western education for not producing people who thirst for justice, but rather persons whose values are determined by their own self-interest, by the "make it" myth. This survival-skill and profit/investment syndrome which belies the Christian idea of a community of service and love, accounts largely for the deplorably unjust distribution of world goods: "the rich get richer and the poor get poorer." The Bishops' statement urges systems of education geared to such goals to move from the narrow-minded individualism which is basically un-Christian because "hindered by the established order, the systems allow for the formation of a man desired by

the same established order, that is a man formed in its own image: not a new man but a reproduction of man as such."

IV. Education as Curriculum and Institution.

The "reproduced man" is not educated to be open to pluralism or sensitive to injustice. He is caught; he too is powerless, poor in the spiritual and sociological sense because he is motivated by fear and isolation. The spiritual poverty of such persons cut from the established mold becomes the causal barrier which locks other men into socio-economic poverty. Education which aims at graduating reproductions of current society actually educates "away from" rather than *toward* the community of the world.

The Synod statement further identifies the need for deepening an awareness of sin in its individual and social manifestations. This type of awareness demands of education the development of:

> That critical ability which leads to reflection on the society in which we live and on its values, preparing men to abandon those values which serve to lessen justice for all men. Because such education makes men more human, it will help free men in the future from manipulation, either by means of communication or by political forces. It will make them able to take their own destinies into hand and build truly human communities...it is also a pratical education, because *it comes through action and participation* (emphasis ours) as well as through vital contact with *situations of injustice:*

Perhaps the most important stress here is the forming of critical responders to life, who value and trust their own ability to be critical of what is. Such a person must be aware of who he is — culturally, spiritually, socially. He must welcome diversity as an enrichment and pluralism as a constituent of the American dream.

The formation of a "reproduced" man is the result in part of over-emphasis on the second function of education — accreditation. Basic

elementary and secondary education to some extent teach a general education to prepare students to live in this society. The society must teach *its ways,* the skills needed to enable new adults to perform well and continue the society, to be good citizens and not a burden or detriment. Hence, socialization in the basic skills and values is also conducted in secondary and collegiate education. The *content* and *method* of the matter to be taught bespeaks the nature of the society doing the teaching.

How does this analysis apply to Christian values — education, specifically the value of justice? It cannot be denied that formal organization is necessary in our society to harbor the resources and manpower, and promote the research to improve education. The challenge therefore is to design a formal educational system which does not emphasize rigid accreditation and structure over personal growth, one which somehow incorporates personal, neighborhood or community experiences into the curriculum so that education as process is assured. Education should address itself to skills needed at developmental stages. It should stress attitudinal growth, development of identity, development of an ability to confront, creatively, new situations. In the case of Christian education, the institution should teach in the context of Christian community and operative values, not merely in the narrow framework of parish and morality code. Such an approach calls for an analysis of content and method in curriculum.

There remains the unique problem for any religious educational system: How can education respect developmental stages of growth and still present the deposit of values and teachings handed down by the Christian community, without either artificially and rigidly imposing Christian values where they are not interiorized, or simply encouraging a directionless process of reflection and self knowledge? Let us consider a schematic breakdown of different aspects of teaching Christian values.

1. *Transference* — The presentation and handing on of the Christian heritage, tradition and teaching must be explained, related historically, in other words...transferred. This transfer is formalized and it should be accurately and thoroughly taught. The social teachings of the Church, among other content areas, are not taught with accuracy or thoroughness in many educational settings, even in many seminaries.

2. *Reflection* on personal/group experience. This process is necessary to produce awareness of self, needs, personal experiences and values. Relating oneself, discovered in reflection, to the deposit of Christian thought must occur in a comparative context. The measurement of one's own experience against Christian teaching hopefully *will suggest Christianity*

as the best way to live. Then the entire question of values can rise to the surface.

3. *Action-living* of Christian precepts to realize Christian values in personal or group lifestyle. Christian values issue from a community heritage, and describe a lifestyle. This is the point St. Paul makes in his letters...Christ calls us to a lifestyle of faith and trust in the Lord and in the community of love. Christian values are included if they are truly being lived by the community. In other words, justice as a value cannot be "taught"...it must be lived. No school, teacher, family or community can teach justice or any other value if that values is not a living, motivating force in that school, teacher, family or community. No community can teach justice or any other value if the learners experience injustice within the classroom, at home, at work, in society. In such a situation justice becomes a verbal, cerebral value — a myth which students, who have acute insight, see as a sham.

Moreover, experience suggests that Christ's demands are meant to be lived with the supportive sustenance of Christian community, that is, a situation of group commitment and group action. What is said about schools, teachers and communities having to thirst for justice before they can offer true values-education suggests that possibly institutional settings are not the place to initiate attitudinal change. Perhaps the teachers are the starting point. More importantly, the family and entire faith community must thirst for justice. Teachers, the family, parents and community situation must be taken more into account if values-education is to occur in this context. Furthermore, the three aspects of teaching Christian precepts, *Transference, Reflection,* and *Action, are not separable* nor are they capable of planned timing into separate stages of life. They must be in a *continual dialectical* interrelationship — beginning with the learner's needs and life situation. The entire life experience of the learner must be an experience of justice and faith — his whole life must be his classroom.

This is what can be called the theory of the new catechesis, as explained by Father Albert Shamon, in the May/June 1972 issue of *Religion Teacher's Journal*: Here he analyses the new catechesis, using the historical fact of the Exodus as his example:

> In this event, (the Exodus) we see the catechetical process. The "new" catechetics begins with a life experience. In this particular instance, it was degrading slavery and the escape from it. They saw that God is involved in life — in their lives in particular. They learned

that God wanted them to be free. That God is a God of Love, One who cares. They learned this from experience, from something that happened to them. Their response, was to accept the pact that God wished to make with them to become His people. To reinforce this commitment, they talked about what God had done in the Exodus, sang about it, celebrated it, until gradually their lives were changed. This is the basic process of religious education. So the catechetical process for the Chosen People began with a human experience: slavery and liberation from it. Next, Moses proclaimed the message revealed to him that God was the one who had freed them: "I am the Lord, your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt." The people themselves discovered the relationship between the human experience and the message: it told them volumes about this God of their fathers. So they responded with song and a covenant with God. All catechesis nowadays employs these four steps: *Human experience, revealed message, discovery, response.* That is why the new catechetics is called a process. It is more than giving the revealed message as in the old catechisms. It is more complex.

The new catechetics is experiential because it takes a human experience and probes it. However, confusion often arises about this method when people conclude that probing a human experience is the entire teaching process. Doctrine must also be brought to bear on the contemporary experience of God. This phase of the catechetical process requires that teachers be men and women of faith and prayer, and that the community of learners worship together.

Overemphasis on any one of the three aspects of transference, reflection or action leads to errors. Overemphasis on transference leads to rigid catechesis, indoctrination, formularizing or abstract memorization...all of which may or may not affect behavior. An overemphasis on reflection can lead to self-centered, introspective and perhaps existentially directionless behavior. Some people criticize expressive, sensitivity-type or unstructured free discussion educational dynamics for fear that they may lead to abstract humanitarianism or hedonism.

Overemphasis on action can lead to mindless, compulsive activism, experiencial ethics, to misdirected or misunderstood expenditures of energy, and possibly to frustration and bitterness. Compulsive action misses the

need for prayer, reflection, community, and priority determination. Only a constant interrelated dialectic of these three elements can produce Christian values development, capable of influencing attitudes and behavior.

In the past, Catholic education was accused of falling into the first error, overemphasis on transference, rigid catechesis. Currently many people find fault with innovations on the basis of the second error, a too unstructured and "undisciplined program." Still others have been accused of the third error, hyper-activism, which looks for a cause and immediate solutions. Most critics, seizing upon one element, miss the need for a dialectical relationship among all three. To incorporate the three aspects will require curriculum innovation and a re-thinking of many educational methods. Teacher training in the significant social teachings of the Church and in methods of teaching the process of valuing will be a primary consideration. Innovation in formal programs, more outside-the-school education, free time, and more involvement of the parents and the total community need to be incorporated into educational planning.

V. Adult Education and the Community of Faith.

Adult education and continuing catechesis should develop mature and committed Christians capable of effective education of their children and of action in their own community. This is necessary because Catholic education has often presented morality too abstractly on the level of an individualistic morality code rather than as a community life-style. Consequently response has been difficult for most adult Christians because they have not been living justice in a supportive faith community, but rather living an abstract morality code in isolated situations within a fragmented society.

How can one ask a white steelworker to love the poor black or Puerto Rican down the street when his only assets are his job and overly-mortaged house, when he is trying to save money to send his children to college, when his schools are full of drugs and apathy; his neighborhood full of crime; his home deteriorating, and he is unable to get insurance or renovation loans because he is in a high risk district? He sees the poor as the source of his problems, and, in our society, rarely is there a base which takes defensive pressure off, liberating him to become a Christian.

The problem is even more difficult, although less emotional, in attempting to develop identification on the part of the affluent towards the poor. The Church of the affluent person often fails to challenge him or her to relate directly to the poor and the oppressed. Secondary, distant

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relationships, such as collections, are encouraged instead. His world view, his needs and self-interests, his problems are completely different from the poor man's. He rarely sees a poor person or neighborhood. Unlike the laboring class, blue-collar man, he does not share the same socio-economic problems as the poor. Therefore, instead of seeing the poor as a threat, competitor for jobs and housing and neighborhood in a limited environment, the affluent person does not see the poor at all. And yet, his cities, his safety, his social order are being corroded by the poverty he does not see.

The process of education, then, must reach beyond formal schooling, into the community it socializes, and to the adults who also have problems to solve. A process of reflection and action upon the needs, values, resources and priorities of the community must occur — the dialectic of experience, faith and reflection must be alive in a faith community of adults — otherwise the values taught in schools will be hollow, formal, official morality and not operative values in a dynamic community. Such a process gives priority to adult education, issue-education, and the incorporation of the family in discussion of operative Christian values. Catholic schools alone, it would seem, cannot effect attitudinal change; however, fortified by concurrent, supportive efforts in other areas of society, they can be a powerful agent for change. The family, the parish, the local community must enter into the process of change in order to reinforce the changes taking place within formal educational settings. In short, significant change cannot begin and take hold in any one of these areas *first* (in order of time). All areas are interrelated and therefore, depend on mutual reinforcement.

Education for social justice then should take place on all levels.

VI. Practical Steps and Examples.

Some practical suggestions, relative to the three aspects of contemporary education follow:

1. *Education as a Process.* The process of learning skills for coping with life in a problem-solving context, could be included in the curriculum of educational programs. If a parish or Christian community or school faculty is not trying to deal with situations of injustice within their respective communities, then injustice is not a priority problem. Consequently learning about the Christian value of justice in the nation or in the world will be an irrelevant exercise for the learners. On the other hand, coming to grips with real situations of injustice will bring students and teachers into a learning-team situation. This experiential process opens the classroom up to

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the life of the family, the block, the town. For lack of this very element of the experiential, westernized Catholic education has relegated the learner's real life to "after hours." Values, too have been "official-ized" in this process, among them the Christian value of justice and concern for one's brother.

Successful experimentation in this experiential method has been made, for example, by the Religious Leadership Development Program of the Community Service Corps in the Archdiocese of Philadelphia under the Catholic Youth Organization. High school students participate in a three-semester training (equal and substitute accreditation with regular high school religion course) program of values clarification by reflection on significant service activities with poor people. Through small group field experience and discussion under the direction of qualified personnel, students are assisted in the experiential process of defining values through group investigation and application. Not only are religious doctrine and prayer brought to bear on personal experiences, but practical community skills training is also a coordinated aspect of the youth leadership program.

2. *Education as Accreditation. Curriculum Innovation.* Involved in this element of achievement/advancement levels is the curriculum, or a series of learning experiences selected for their formative impact on the learners. An inter-disciplinary curriculum on justice must then relate to two aspects of curriculum: content and methodology. The content of such a curriculum, laced into social studies, religious education and humanities programs, should focus on:

a.   the social teachings of the Church

b.   statistics on poverty, racism, social conflict and divisions among groups

c.   analyses of the causes of these realities

d.   a study of the cultural values and life-styles which affect the every-day life of the learner
Since faith cannot be taught as an individual morality code but as a life-style in a community context, the method of communicating this content should be experientially grounded in real issues.

New techniques and theories of learning values, as stated above must be implemented, lest Christian social values be just as widely missed and ignored as the Synod feels happened in the past. Values clarification, action-reflection methods, classroom of the

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community must be developed as significant learning methods. Teacher training to assist teachers understand new methods is necessary. No less necessary is explanation to parents of new ideas and methods, so that the future environment in which the child learns will be supportive. Two significant Diocesan efforts can be cited here as examples of large-scale planning and involvement of the total community:

1) The Value Clarifying Process:
A method of Unifying Curriculum for Human Development. Sioux Falls, South Dakota (K-12). By focusing on values-ladened humanities curricula this pilot program will assist students to develop personal values.   Three   current methodological approaches are utilized:

   a) problem-solving through the use of multi-media tutorial units for small groups and individuals.

   b) inquiry through mini-course offerings

   c) value probing and clarification techniques and theory, developed especially by Dr. Sidney Simon, are central to this pilot program.

2) The Commission on Catholic Community Action, Diocese of Cleveland — a massive adult education "social awareness" process involving over 7000 adults in over 40 parishes. Through problem-solving engagement and training experience with local agencies, adults become resources to the total community. By linkage with organizations of powerless people, the participants can identify their role as developer within their communities and promoter of human dignity for all men and women. This study of community problems and alternating action is done in the framework of Jesus' teachings and social doctrine of the Church.

3. *Education as Institution*...As a rich amalgam of persons, resources and facilities, education can respond by serving the local community with its resources. If there are poor people living near the school, the facilities of the school can be put at the service for recreational activities, cultural enrichment programs especially in the summer, pre-school programs, adult education, remedial education and high school equivalency, among others.
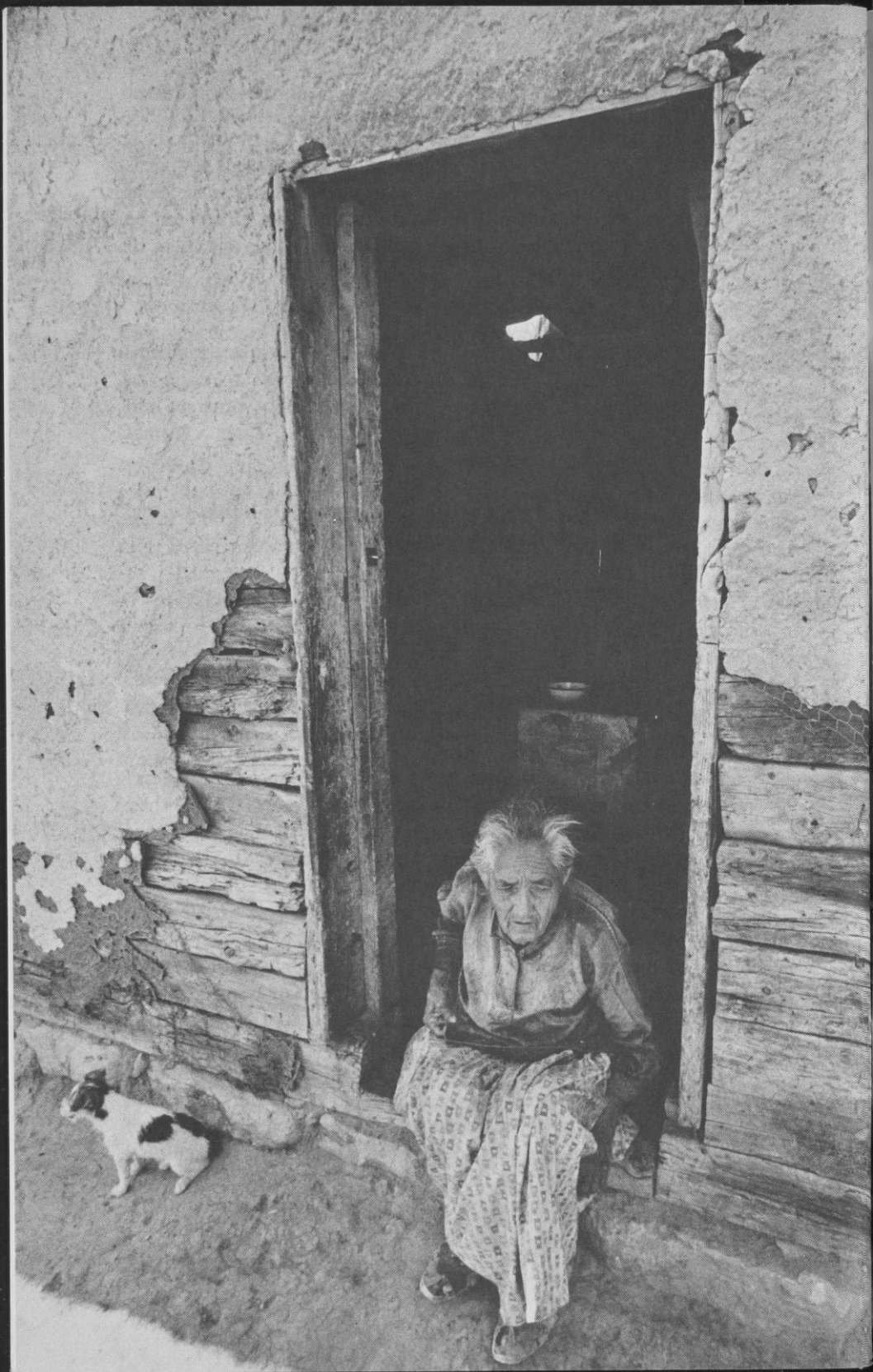
The school, faculty and parent associations can become channels for communication about Church social teachings, current issues and programs such as the Campaign for Human Development.

Summary. The Church has served as a protective integration mechanism; it is called now *to become a people* who live a group lifestyle of evangelical poverty of spirit, trust in the Lord, and prayer; community and social mission must be high priorities. The institutions should be at work for justice, within and outside of the communities in which they are situated; otherwise, the values are false and the learning becomes unreal — a banking of the "official" teaching or values. The challenge and urgency of the times are powerful. What is the vision for Catholic education? Surely a response to life in which teachers as well as students are learners, and viceversa...where family and community converge on life and are mutually empowered by action/reflection on realities around them. To the degree that Christian education re-thinks its goals in these terms, selects priorities or a priority (be it peace, cultural pluralism, justice, racial equality), and works out its program accordingly, will education for justice take place, will it become not only an asset to our nation, but more important, a manifestation of Christ's Kingdom on earth.

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