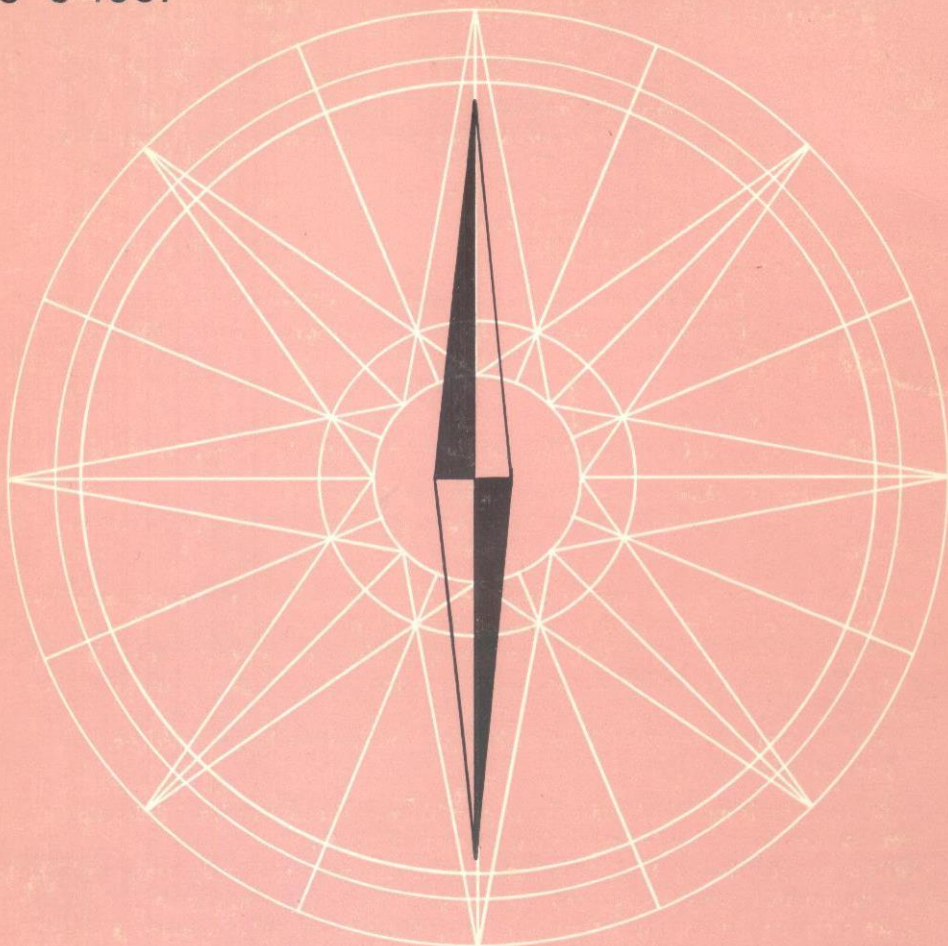


SOCIAL COMPASS

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Outline of a history of the Church in Latin America *

E. DUSSEL

Dans cette article, l'auteur se propose de donner les principales hypothèses de travail pour une esquisse générale d'une histoire de l'Eglise en Amérique latine; jusqu'à présent cette histoire n'a pas encore été écrite.

Un tel ouvrage exige un travail d'équipe, qui présuppose une étude précise d'une division en périodes. Dans cet article, E. Dussel expose les diverses périodes par lesquelles, selon lui, a passé l'Eglise latino-américaine; les diverses phases de sa construction, de son développement, de son établissement, sa crise et enfin sa renaissance au 20e siècle.

Il s'agit donc ici d'une introduction, mais qui s'avère nécessaire. L'auteur a fait une étude sur Les évêques hispano-américains, évangélisateurs et protecteurs des indiens (1504-1620) et ce sur base des milliers de lettres d'évêques, conservées aux Archives générales indiennes (Archivo General de Indias). La version originale de cette étude n'a jamais été éditée (1500 p.).

Le travail de synthèse ne met pas en cause le travail d'analyse, la déduction ne s'oppose pas à l'induction. Bien au contraire, toutes deux trouvent leur place et se complètent.

When history — that human event in the communal and temporal sense — is scientific, it not only informs us of causation in the past but represents, in the present, the 'cultural conscience' of every individual and of all peoples. 'Cultural conscience' is none other than the attitude, more or less informed, more or less clear-sighted, and the manner, more or less resolute, voluntary or involuntary, which an individual or people adopts toward history. A man who, through amnesia let us say, knew nothing of the history of his life would quite simply have lost his identification with himself, and thus could *start to be a man but would not have been one*. When a nation forgets its past, it has no future, inasmuch as its future is an extrapolation — on the plane of intent — from the depths of its past. When a man is aware of all the dimensions of history, of world history, of the history of his country, of his district and of himself, when he is fully conscious of historical relationships then can he 'place' himself in his world and in his allotted task in that world, and fulfil his mission, his vocation, as a full human being.

* Translation of "Hacia una historia de la Iglesia latinoamericana", *Stromata/Ciencia y Fe*, julio-dic. 1965, año XXI no. 3-4. This article is a summary of a book, which will appear in German under the title *Das Christentum in Lateinamerika*.

If all this can be said of mere secular history, how much more so of the history of the Church. For the history of the Church is not only a series of exemplary anecdotes but constitutes the substantial essence of Dogma, the 'theological abode' par excellence, the very marrow of the revelation. History, that is *sacred history*, is none other than the evolution of the interpersonal relationships of the Trinity with humanity, from the Creation to the Parousia, through its Church.

Now to be a *Christian in Latin America* is a very positive way of *being a Christian*. In order truly to be a Christian on a conscious, human and real level, one must be able to define one's position before this sacred, essential fact of dogma — the history of the eschatological Assembly (the Church), the history of the spreading of the Kingdom of Christ in Latin America. It often happens that scholars, plunging in without adequate preparation, come to the realisation that the history of the Church is very important to them by way of guidance in the present and, once applied to the task, they find that they can read to their heart's content about the Jewish people, the primitive Christian community around Jesus, the Patristic epoch, of Constantine, the Early and Late Middle Ages and, finally, the history of the Church in Europe. When, however, the time comes to enquire *how it is that we are Christians* in Latin America there is a great void; so that all they have surveyed before, from the people of Israel to modern Europe, (which is merely an introduction to the existential present which we are now living), all this seems like a mighty tree without fruit.

Faced with this situation many believe that the Latin American Church has no history, or else that it is lacking in interest — which is quite erroneous. There are others who have had a European training — either in Europe or in America — and who develop a dangerous dualism in their characters: that of trying to be Europeans in Latin America.

All this moves us to point out to the reader the importance of the history of the Latin American Church, not merely as one more subject for theological school, or as a pastime for the interested and aware layman, but as a discipline which is central and fundamental to present-day theology, and to the formation and exercise of the Christian vocation in our time.

In these few pages we shall only indicate the main lines and the central themes of the various stages of what might be called a 'History of the Church in Latin America'. We shall leave on one side the entire problem of methodology, which is so important, as also the bibliography and the sources, which only have interest as supporting evidence, since it would be impossible even to suggest including these in the short space of an article.

The history of the Latin American Church falls into two clearly definable periods: the first, that of '*Christendom in the colonies*'; the second, the Post-Independence era of the *new Nations*. Let us, then, quickly review the main phases and their sub-divisions.

I. COLONIAL ERA OR 'NEW CHRISTENDOM' OF HISPANO-AMERICA (16th. to 18th. centuries)

This entire period is characterised by the encounter between Hispanic civilisation (from the Peninsula) and the Pre-Hispanic civilisations of the Indians, and by the slow emergence of a new civilisation with its own culture. Within this

historical evolution the Church had its well-defined place, though its course was not always clear.

Under the 'Patronato' system (the Monarch's right to appoint certain ecclesiastical dignitaries) the Church was supported, guided and, in reality, governed by the Monarchs of Spain and Portugal. The conquest of America followed the 'Reconquista' (the reconquest of Peninsular territory from the Moors) not only in *time* — remember that Granada was finally captured from the Arabs in 1492 — but also in *space*: since the discovery of what was to be America should be seen as a prolongation of the voyages begun in the East Atlantic and off Africa. The 'Crusade' of the Catholic Monarchs (Ferdinand of Aragon and Isabel of Castille) against Islam was transformed into a missionary crusade to convert the native inhabitants of the newly discovered realms in the 'West Indies'.

The new Church was born under the protecting, and at the same time dominating, influence of the Catholic State of Spain. Tithes, the nomination of the Bishops, the sending of missionaries, the demarcation of limits of jurisdiction etc., all gradually became either the property, the right or the prerogative of the Monarch. Ferdinand of Aragon achieved the definitive organisation of the 'Patronato' system — as Leturia has shown — and in the future it was to undergo only minor adjustments, all re-affirming the absolute regalism (the Spanish equivalent of Gallicanism) of the Crown.

Let us now briefly pass in review the main phases in the history of the Church in Latin America during the colonial period.

1. *The first stage: the first steps (1493-1519)*

There was no priest on the first expedition of Columbus in 1492 but nevertheless a cross was planted as a sign of the sovereignty assumed by the Spanish Monarchs over the newly discovered lands. In the bull *Piis Fidelium* (26-6-1493) powers were granted to Fr. Bernal Boyl, who was the first ecclesiastic to arrive in the 'Indies of the West'. Boyl, who came into conflict with Columbus, returned in 1494, leaving behind two lay brothers, who, in their turn, came back in 1499. The evangelisation of the island of Española really began in 1500 with the arrival of the first Franciscan mission, which was to be reinforced in 1502 with sixteen new friars.

On 15 November 1504 Julius II established three dioceses (whose names are not entirely clear): *Bayuense*, *Maguence* and *Ayguacese*. Ferdinand did not approve this establishment because his right of 'Patronato' had been ignored. It was only in 1511 that the first American dioceses were actually founded: *Santo Domingo* (which became an archbishopric in 1546), *Concepción de las Vegas* (which was to be joined to *Santo Domingo* in 1527) — both of these on the island of Española itself — and *Puerto Rico*. Upon the discovery of the mainland in 1513 there followed the foundation of the diocese of *Santa María de la Antigua del Darién* (which years later was to be transferred to the Pacific coast and called Panama) in Castilla de Oro. This entire period of rudimentary and poverty-stricken beginnings was marked by the fundamental opposition between Hispanic civilisation, which was imposed by force of arms (against which Bartolomé de las Casas was to rebel) and the primitive civilisations of the Caribbean. Nevertheless the first experiments in missionary methods were accomplished. The 'encomenderos' (conquistadores who had been granted tracts of Indian land, together with

the Indians upon the land) organised the exploitation of the Indians and the missionaries obviously encountered enormous difficulties in their evangelising of the natives. We are now in the first phase of the Mission.

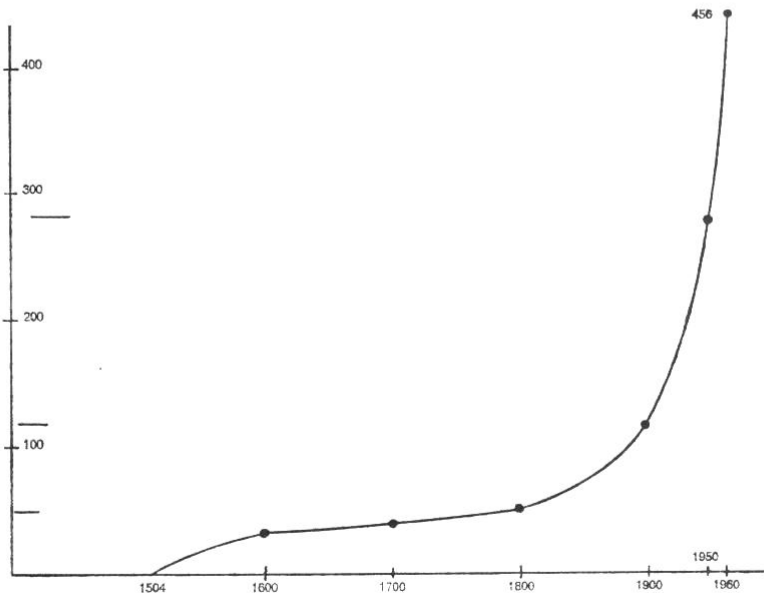
2. *Second stage: the missions to New Spain and Peru (1519-1551)*

From the very beginning of the conquest of Mexico, Hernán Cortés had counted among his collaborators the mercenary Fr. Bartolomé de Olmedo and the secular priest Juan Díaz, who ministered Christianity to the Indians (although, of necessity, in a very inadequate manner.) Only in 1524, thanks to the 'Twelve Apostles' (Franciscans), did evangelisation en masse begin for the first time in the Americas. On 2 July 1526 twelve Dominicans landed; on 22 May 1533 came the Augustinians. By 1559 the Franciscans alone had 80 houses in Mexico with more than 380 religious; the Dominicans 40 with 210 religious and the Augustinians 40 with 212 religious.

The Aztec Empire had achieved no great success in the unification of the country, so that, although 'Nahuatl' was the best-known language, there nevertheless existed innumerable dialects of it, besides many other families of languages. The missionaries quickly progressed from preaching through interpreters to learning the languages themselves, which led to the appearance of dictionaries, grammars, catechisms, confessionals, collections of sermons etc., etc. in Nahuatl, Tarasco, Tlaxcalteca, etc.

DIAGRAM 1

Number of dioceses and mission territories in Latin America (1504-1960)



In 1519 the diocese of *Carolense* was established and Julián Garcés was nominated first Bishop of Mexico, over an indeterminate territory in Yucatán (the diocese

afterwards being transferred to Tlaxcala and finally to Puebla). The second diocese was that of Mexico (1527) and its first Bishop, Zumárraga; afterwards there were established: *Antequera* (Oajaca) in 1532, *Guatemala* (1534), *Mechoacán* (1536), *Chiapa* (1538), *Guadalajara* (1548) and *Vera Paz* (1556). In the Caribbean region the following dioceses were founded: *Tierra Florida* (1520, but afterwards abolished), *Cuba* (1522), *Caracas* (originally Coro) and *Comayaguen (Honduras)* (1531), all under the authority of the archdiocese of Santo Domingo. While the northern part of Latin America was governed from Mexico and Santo Domingo, the South had its capital in Lima. It is a well-known fact that the conquest progressed from North to South and from the Pacific to the Atlantic. The Church, too, was first organised in *Darién* (bishopric in 1513), *Nicaragua* (1531) and *Santa Marta* (1534).

Pizarro invaded the Kingdom of the Incas starting from Panama and landing at Tumbez; among his party was a group of Dominicans under the leadership of Vicente de Valverde, the first Bishop of Cuzco. On 15 November 1533 a cross was raised in the square of Cuzco. After the illfated attempt to found the first diocese at *Tumbez*, Paul III designated *Cuzco* as the episcopal see in the person of Valverde, who assumed charge of his bishopric on 5 September 1538. *Cartagena de Indias* was inaugurated as a diocese in 1534 (which, together with *Santa Marta* and, some time afterwards, *Popayán*, were to constitute the Archdiocese of *Santa Fe*). There followed *Lima* (1539) with Jerónimo de Loayza (archdiocese in 1546), *Quito* (1546), *Popayán* (1546), *Asunción del Paraguay* in 1547 (the furthest point in the advance of the Conquistadores from the Atlantic, reaching the River Plate), *Charcas* or *La Plata* (1552), *Santiago de Chile* (1561), *Bogotá* (1562, replacing *Santa Marta*), *La Imperial* (1563, later to be transferred to *Concepción*), *Córdoba del Tucumán* (1570, whose episcopal see was *Santiago del Estero*), *Trujillo* (1577) etc.

The Dominicans were the first to begin the task of missionary work. In 1539 Paul III created the Peruvian province of the Order of Preachers. In 1549 it had more than 50 members. The Franciscans thoroughly re-organised themselves a few years later and saw an extraordinary increase in their numbers in the succeeding years. The four Orders undertook the evangelisation of the entire territory under the direction of the Archdiocese of Lima.

In Brazil, the diocese of *Bahía* was founded in 1551.

We are now in the second phase of the missions. The Indians were pacified, sometimes by force of arms, but in the main by the missionaries, who administered the sacrament of baptism to them after a religious inculcation that was at times extremely summary. Then came the attempt to organise the 'reducciones' (settlements of converted Indians). Outstanding among all the 'reducciones' of the 16th. century were the 120 villages established among the Tarasco Indians by the saintly Bishop of Mechoacan, Vasco de Quiroga. But under the 'encomienda' system, which was reinforced after the failure of the *New Laws*, the converted Indians became the labour force for the exploitation of the mines or in agriculture.

3. *Third stage: the organisation and stabilisation of the Church (1551-1606)*

This period extends from the *First Provincial Council of Lima* (1551-1552) to the death of Saint Toribio of Mogrovejo. From the Council of Loaysa (1552) to the Diocesan Council of Comayaguen (1631) numerous councils were called in

Hispano-America, all serving to give the newly-founded Church a character of its own. The *Second Peruvian Council* (1567-1568) and the *Third Mexican Council* (1585) were, in equal measure, the American equivalents of the European Council of Trent, but outstanding among all the councils was that convoked by Toribio de Mogrovejo, the *Third Provincial Council of Lima*, 1582-1583. From the 16th. century to 1899 there was no further legislation in the Latin American Church: during the 17th., 18th., and 19th. centuries it stood on the foundations laid down by those first apostles.

From the small *First Apostolic Council* of 1524 in Mexico — called by the Franciscans — we proceed to those convened by Zumárraga. In 1532, 1536 and above all in 1539 the Mexican Bishops met to unify their attitude vis-à-vis the 'Patronato' system, to co-ordinate their work with the religious Orders and to continue their mission, within the framework of an established Church.

It was Alonso de Montúfar who called the *First Mexican Council* (1555) and the *Second* (1565). Don Pedro Moya y Contreras convoked the famous *Third Council* (1585).

In the South, Loaysa called together the representatives of the dioceses, from Nicaragua to Charcas, in 1551-1552, and again in the following decade. Saint Toribio, after convoking the Diocesan Council of 1582, called the Provincial Council for the same year. With the collaboration of José de Acosta, this Council, essentially a pastoral one, laid its accent on the reform of the clergy, the strengthening of episcopal authority over against the religious and to the encouragement and organisation of missions among the Indians. It demanded that parish priests should learn the Indian languages so that the converts might understand what was being preached, that the sacrament of the Eucharist should be administered to the Indians and that they should be permitted to enter the priesthood if they complied with the conditions laid down by the Council of Trent. Through the foundation of seminaries and universities there was, in this epoch, a great resurgence of lay clergy, especially in Peru under the leadership and example of Toribio de Morovejo.

There were many Councils, for example: the Provincial Council of Bogotá (1582); the ten Diocesan Councils of Saint Toribio in Lima; the Councils of Quito (1584) and Santiago de Chile (1586), the Second of Quito (1593), those of Charcas (1604), Portorrico (1624), the Second Provincial Council of Bogotá (1635), Comayaguen (1631) and Caracas (1626). Besides these, councils were called in Tucumán, Asunción, etc. By the beginning of the 17th. century the Church in Latin America had at its disposal the necessary institutions for the continuation of the task it had undertaken.

4. *Fourth stage: the conflicts between the missionary Church and Hispanic civilisation (17th. century)*

The Crown (through the Patronato) had organised mission work with what funds were available from tithes, and the mendicant religious orders had broken the ground: both Crown and Orders protected the rights they had won. At this point two forces began to become more aware of their function: the Episcopate and the secular clergy, — whose chief concern was the common good of each diocese — and the Jesuits, who by reason of their fourth vow and their universal view of the Church, organised their missions from Rome and opposed any internal interference

from the Patronato. Moreover, from 1622 the *Propaganda* was to seek every means (although fruitlessly) to begin direct missionary work in Hispano-America. The first Jesuits went to Brazil under the leadership of Father Manuel de Nóbrega and arrived at Bahia in 1549 with the Tomé de Sousa expedition. They set up the famous school called '*Meninos de Jesús*'. In 1551 they were already in Espíritu Santo, in the following year in Rio de Janeiro and in 1553 they collaborated in the foundation of São Paulo, penetrating as far as La Laguna. In 1586, thanks to an invitation from Francisco de Vitoria, the first resident Bishop of Tucumán, they went on into what is now Argentine (in those days the Crown of Portugal was in the hands of the Kings of Spain). The Spanish Jesuits also went to Florida but it was not until 1572 that they arrived in Mexico. From Lima they were to spread to the north of present-day Perú, to Bolivia and to northern Argentina. The Bishops, for their part, ill-content with the old order of things and powerless to throw off the yoke of the Patronato all at once, strove to undermine its power in particular cases. It might be in the choice of candidates for the '*doctrinas*' (settlements of converted Indians) or parishes, or over tithes, or over benefices, etc. Toribio de Mogrovejo in Lima, Villaroel in Santiago, Palafox in Puebla are examples of the efforts made by the Bishops to maintain their apostolic dignity. The missions went from strength to strength. It was the century of the '*reducciones*': the celebrated ones of Paraguay, under the exemplary lead of Lorenzana and Roque González, those of Brazil, Perú, Colombia, Venezuela and Mexico.

The Franciscans maintained 80 religious houses in the diocese of Mexico, 54 in Mechoacan, 22 in Guatemala, 22 in Yucatán and 12 in Nicaragua. The Jesuits in Mexico numbered 345 in 1603.

For the first time vast missionary zones have come into direct contact with the Church without the mediation of Spanish arms. This marks the third phase of the Mission.

5. *Fifth stage: Bourbon decadence (18th. century)*

Philip V, the first Bourbon King of Spain, reigned from 1700 to 1746. After the Treaty of Utrecht in 1713 Spain and Portugal lost command of the seas. The English had been in Jamaica since 1665. The Church in Latin America was profoundly affected by the decadence of Spain, all the more so since this was the time of her own decadence. Moreover the critical state of missionary work in the entire European Church exacerbated the problem in the Americas.

The missions continued to make progress. Let us take, for example, the north of Mexico. In 1697 the Jesuits penetrated into California but the severity of the task obliged them to abandon the undertaking. It was the brilliant Fr. Junípero Serra (1713-1784) who, with his Franciscan companions, instigated missionary work in this region 'in the spirit of the early Mexican days'. With 16 Franciscans he began, in 1768, the organisation and foundation of '*reducciones*' or settlements, beginning at San Diego and reaching San Francisco in 1776. The Dominicans established many '*reducciones*' in Upper California.

Since the 16th. century the universities — often only seminaries, founded, as always, by the Church — had been forming an indigenous élite, ecclesiastical as well as lay. The University of Santo Domingo was founded in the years 1536-39, that of Lima in 1552, in the Dominican convent of San Marcos; the University of

Mexico in 1553, of Cuzco in 1592, Quito in 1591; Santa Fe de Bogotá, 1573; Córdoba, 1613, etc. In 1572 the same rights and dignities were granted to the Universities of Santo Domingo, Mexico and Lima as those which obtained in the Universities of Salamanca and Alcalá, whereas the University of Córdoba, established at the suggestion of the Bishop of Trejo and Sanabria, was only a Jesuit college with the right to grant degrees. Sucre had its own university in 1632, Santiago in 1738, etc. In 1539 the first printing press in America was set up in Mexico at the instigation of Zumárraga, the first Bishop, to print the catechism for the Indians. The prime event of the 18th. century was the expulsion of the Jesuits in 1767. They were suppressed by the Bourbons, in France in 1764, and in Spain on 31 March 1767. There departed from America more than 2,200 Jesuit Fathers, the cream of the Hispano-American clergy.

CRITICAL EVALUATION OF THE ERA OF COLONIAL CHRISTIANITY

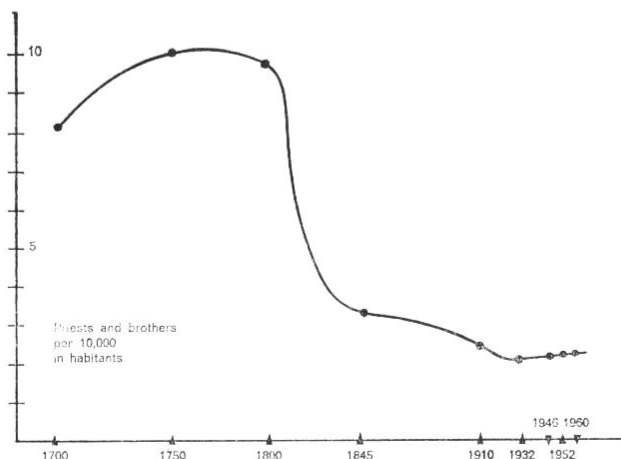
Equally unacceptable are the 'Black' and the 'White' legends: the 'Black Legend', uncritical and unscientific, highlights the negative side of Spain's and the Church's operations, particularly in the Caribbean area, as we know from the pronouncements of that great priest and Bishop, B. de las Casas; the 'White Legend', is the position adopted by a number of 'Hispanists' who gloss over many facts in order to shed an aura of perfection over the work of the Spanish Crown. One must undertake the patient task of the reconstruction of objective reality, neither overlooking its heroic and positive content nor, on that account, omitting the fundamental errors and shortcomings which the later period of decadence was to occasion.

To carry out this 'critical assessment' it would be necessary to use a battery of technical terms which it would be impossible to explain in this short article. I have therefore limited myself to certain general considerations.

The Church was thoroughly organised in Latin America, with a hierarchy, native

DIAGRAM 2

Proportional growth of the numbers of religious in Chile



clergy, with universities and great educational centres. However, there was, in fact, considerable social opposition to the acceptance of Indians into the priesthood, which certainly hindered a wider diffusion of the Gospel among the Indian peoples.

Was there any question of a mixed, semi-pagan or hybrid religion among the bulk of the Indians or half-breeds?

a. *In a deep sense*, that of intent, of the Faith, the majority of the Indians who had been reached by the missionary effort did not adopt Christianity superficially or in mere appearance, but they *began to adopt it*, radically, substantially and genuinely. This is no juxtaposition of two religions, nor a mixture of them, but the 'chiaroscuro' through which the believer must 'pass' (the 'Passover') during the catechumenical period. The three 'colonial' centuries were only the beginning of this process of *initiation* into Christianity (although it advanced under immense difficulties owing to the doubts caused by the union between *Hispanic civilisation* — necessarily full of corruption, as are all civilisations — and the *Christian religion*). b. *On the level of 'expressions of Faith'* the Catholic liturgy was the *official 'expression'*. But alongside this appeared countless substitutes or 'paraliturgies': processions, the cult of the dead, of local hermits, of saints, etc., just as in the Christian world which was born in the Roman Empire, where the elements, attitudes and symbols, in sum, the 'vehicles' and 'intercessionary media' typical of the ancient religions were subsumed into the Christian expression of the Faith. Can these accretory forms be called mixed religions? Not at all: what, in the last analysis, could be so called would be 'hybrids' at the popular, non-official level, which arise to fill the gap left by the antisyncretic 'tabula rasa' method, and which would disappear with the eventual completion of the evangelising mission. All that remains of the ancient pagan religions, whose fundamental structure has collapsed, is the manifestation of attitudes which are still not entirely Christian! The achievement of Spain, and, to a lesser degree, of Portugal, has been unique in the history of missions, although, for all that, by no means perfect.

II. THE ERA OF INDEPENDENCE OR TRANSITION TO A SECULAR CIVILISATION (19th. and 20th. centuries)

The young communities had to face a very complex crisis: the birth of the new nations, the advent of political organisations, secularisation, economic colonialisation imposed by international liberal capitalism (of English-speaking origin), the emergence of a pluralist society, etc. The Church was to find itself in some confusion amid all these conflicts and on the defensive to retain its ancient privileges until, having lost nearly all of them, it was to embark on vigorous reforms, some of whose first fruits are only being gathered today. The main lines of reform, as far as a history of the Church is concerned, were: transition from the 'Patronato' system to direct contact with Rome, after a temporary phase of national and Creole 'Patronatos'; transition from the system of Universal Christendom to a pluralist and secular society. The Church was not yet to function through the legal instruments of State, but by means of the *Christian institutions*, which were to come under ever greater pressure during the evolution of contemporary society.

The history of the *Latin American Church* — no longer now the *Hispano-American Church*, since a process of '*universalisation*' had occurred which opened

up former Hispano-America to all Europe and, ultimately, to the whole world — falls into two main phases in the era of independence: the movement from a wholly Christian society to a pluralist society (1808-1898), and the gradual creation of new institutions for the evangelisation of contemporary society (from 1899 onwards).

A. THE CHURCH IN TRANSITION (1808-1898)

This period might well be considered the 'Dark Ages' in the history of the Latin American Church, from whence it will emerge poor, but reformed and purified.

6. *Sixth stage: the crisis of the Wars of Independence (1808-1825)*

In the task of securing independence an essential role was played by the clergy, lay as well as regular, whilst the bishops were more inclined to support Royalist claims. Obviously, the Bishops nominated by the King were his most loyal adherents, but, on the other hand, supporters of the cause of self-determination were not lacking: one, Don Cuero y Caicedo, in Quito, was president of the Second Chamber and chairman of the Constituent Assembly. Members of the clergy, such as Hidalgo or Morelos in Mexico, Deán Funes in Argentine and José María Castilla in Guatemala, were some of the thousands who participated in the emancipation and made it possible.

The new governments maintained a conservative attitude and sought to keep alive, for their own benefit, the old 'Patronato' system which the Spanish Crown had enjoyed: it was a question of power and prestige. The secularising reforms (even those of Rivadavia in Argentine) must be seen as the product of the 'colonial' mentality, influenced by French liberalism and the *Aufklärung* (18th. century Enlightenment).

The two waves of Wars of Independence in 1810 and 1820 (for in 1814 only the area covered by present-day Argentine had gained its freedom) caused the complete disorganisation of the Church — in the hierarchy, in the parishes, the seminaries and the universities; together with the loss of many churches and libraries and, above all, the loss of that spirit of seclusion, prayer and love which is necessary to priests and missionaries. The struggles for liberation militated against the spirit of the Gospel. Nevertheless the new governments still included in their constitutions a clause claiming to 'defend, as the one true religion, the Catholic, Apostolic and Roman Faith'. Rome had kept outside the theatre of conflict, and in many countries the entire Episcopate had disappeared.

7. *Seventh stage: the crisis deepens (1825-1850)*

In general this period signals the return to a more traditional and conservative standpoint, principally through the measures taken by Rome to prevent the separation of the young nations from the Universal Church.

In his encyclical *Etsi longissimo* (30-1-1816), Pius VII presents the revolutionaries as promoters of sedition (*in seditiosis*) and criticises them adversely, in consonance with his commitments to the *Holy Alliance*. But soon afterwards the débâcle of Ferdinand VII — particularly at Aix-la-Chapelle — and the reports received from

Bishop Lasso de la Vega y Orellana, moved the Holy See to inaugurate a new policy. Thanks to the good offices of Tejada, Rome decided to nominate bishops direct (although only '*in partibus*', in order not to wound too much the susceptibilities of the Spanish monarchy). The Muzi Mission had already been sent in 1823 but it failed in Buenos Aires and in Santiago, too. On 18 January 1827 Leo XII named the first six bishops (*in partibus*) for Gran Colombia, to the great rejoicing of Bolívar, who exclaimed: 'We are united this day by the greatest of causes: the good of the Church and the good of Colombia' (28-10-1827). On February 28, 1831, Gregory XVI named the first six resident bishops of Mexico, and soon the hierarchy was reorganised throughout Latin America, directly by Rome without any interference from the Patronato, which had now lapsed.

From a political and economic point of view the situation was now critical. Instability was the law of the day, and breaking new trails become a difficult operation. In *Brazil*, Peter II (1840-1889) was in power; in *Mexico*, on the other hand, it was the conservatives (1824-1857); in *Central America* the break-up of the Confederation in 1831 brought about a dissipation of effort; in *Colombia*, instability reigned after the resignation of Bolívar in 1830, but not until the presidency of Hilario López (1840) was there any break with the Church; in *Venezuela*, José Antonio Páez (1829-46) maintained a conciliatory policy, as did Rosas in Argentine (1835-52); in *Ecuador*, Flores, Rocafuerte and then García Moreno followed the same course; in *Chile* the 'pipiolos' (local term for liberals) dominated the scene until 1861.

The Latin American 'Dark Ages' became even darker. And, to add to this, a serious crisis had arisen in the European mission field, which made it impossible for the stricken Church to expect help from abroad.

In sum, the very sources of regeneration had been drying up and there seemed no justification for hopes of any rejuvenation.

8. *Eighth stage: the break comes (1850-1898)*

In the sphere of *civilisation*, the new nations began to feel the influence of the 'Anglo-Saxon' world (i.e. English and American), via schools, technological progress, engineering, trade, etc. In the field of *culture*, of the ultimate intentional group elements, it was the French who dominated the intellectual climate: romanticism, positivism and secularism. On the *social* level, the socialist viewpoint very slowly began to make its presence known, among groups of urban immigrants and the industrial proletariat.

The break with the past — with 'colonial Christianity' — happened almost imperceptibly, but one can take 1850 as the approximate turning point. In *Colombia* the liberals were to hold power from 1849 to 1866 and under them religious persecution began; in 1853 Church and State were separated; in 1863 the Church was declared not to be a 'legal person'. In *Brazil*, although the liberals had been in power long before 1889, the constitution of the Republic in this year marked a new era. In *Argentine*, liberalism came in with Mitre, but nevertheless, on the cultural level, it was positivism and secular education (1884) which caused the break with the past. The liberals came to power in *Chile* with Pérez (1861); for a time Balmaceda prevented the separation of Church and State, but it was finally sanctioned in 1925. The 'colorados' (local name for liberals) dominated

Uruguay during this entire period (1852-1903). In Bolivia an attempt to reach a concordat failed in 1851.

In *Mexico* the constitution of 1857 produced a coolness between Church and State. The 'Reform' group was opposed to the 'continuistas' (i.e. those who wished to maintain the status quo). The triumph of Benito Juárez, a liberal, and, even more so, of Porfirio Díaz (1876-1911), a positivist, established the government of the 'scientists', with anti-christian, capitalist and urban sympathies. The revolt of the rural Indians under the 'caudillos' Zapata and Pancho Villa, which overthrew Díaz, prepared the ground for the revolution of 1917, which, for reasons which are difficult to determine, turned against the Church.

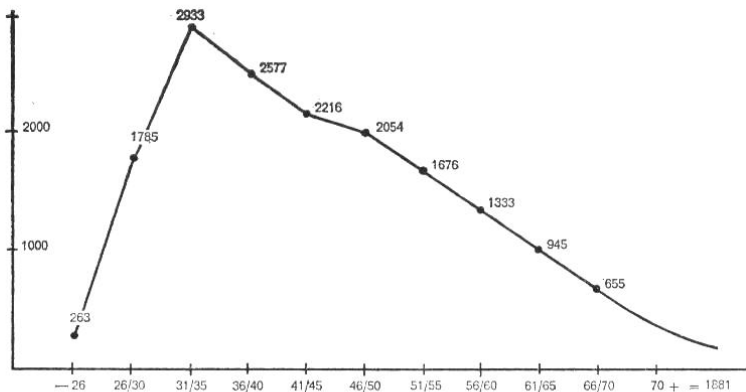
The old pastoral organisation of the *New Colonial Christendom* seemed powerless to cope with the influx of immigrants (both from Europe and from 'the interior'). The positivists controlled the universities, and the liberals the political parties. The end of the 19th. century was truly a grievous time for Catholicism, a time of almost tragic despair.

B. THE CHURCH CONFRONTED BY A PLURALIST AND SECULAR SOCIETY (1899)

We have only lived through a small part of this period, a period which is so important in the history of the world and even more so in the history of Latin America. It is an era when civilisation has become universal, technical, 'bureaucratised' and impersonalised on the one hand, and yet on the other, demands that each of its members shall make their own, personal, conscious choices in conditions of extreme tolerance.

DIAGRAM 3

Age of priests in Latin American dioceses (18,431 priests in 1960)



9. *Ninth stage: unification and regeneration of Catholic minorities in Latin America (1899-1955)*

We are now in contemporary history, the history we have personally lived. In 1899 the *First Plenary Council for Latin America* met in Rome, at the inspiration of Monsignor Casanova. It was convoked on 15 December 1899 by the Apostolic

brief *Cum Diuturnum* and attended by 13 archbishops and 41 bishops, being the first Council of the Catholic Church to embrace a whole continent and the one which elaborated the norms which were to be retained in the Codex of Canon Law (1917). It dealt with paganism, superstition, religious ignorance, socialism, freemasonry, the press, etc. Primarily it was a pastoral council. The most important feature of the gathering was the re-birth of a feeling of collegiate unity among the Episcopate of Latin America.

The period closes with another episcopal meeting, the General Conference of the Latin American Episcopate at Rio de Janeiro, from 25 July to 4 August 1955. It is too soon to assess the value of this conference, which laid the bases for future action for a century or more. Latin America is recovering the unity of the days of the 'New colonial Christendom' but without retaining the old system and its many inherent disadvantages. At this Council the 'Consejo Episcopal Latinoamericano' (CELAM, Latin American Episcopal Council) was formed.

Between these two events occurred a regeneration of certain Catholic minorities, the creation of a militant élite with great social mobility. We refer to the birth of *Catholic Action*, which can be placed at around 1930, although the Catholic Action of Cuba was already in existence in 1920; it was formed in Argentina in 1930, in Costa Rica in 1935 and in Bolivia in 1938. Catholic Action was the fruit of many scattered movements, such as the *Catholic Association* (1867) of Félix Frías or the *Catholic Congress of Mexico* (1903). After the Second World War came the spread of the specialised Catholic Action groups (chiefly the JOC, the JUC, and, in our day, the JAC; the Chilean groups being the prototypes of this powerful movement).

The intellectual revival has followed a similar path. After the isolated thinkers of the 19th. and 20th. centuries — Manuel Estrada, Mamerto Esquiú, Jackson de Figueiredo (at the beginning of the century), Trinidad Santos, etc. — came the organisation of schools, Catholic universities, philosophical and theological journals, etc., which permit the claim that Christian thought in Latin America is a reality — albeit still, in truth, an immature reality. Tristão de Ataíde is already a mature product of the present generation. The challenge of positivism and secularism is yielding fruit!

In the social field the *Latin America Federation of Christian Trade Unions* bears witness to the work of many decades. There is today no scarcity of Christian institutes for social research, and publications in this field, or of individual and group experiments. The challenge of Marxism is bearing fruit!

On the political plane, certain Catholic minorities have realised the importance of 'commitment' in this vital sector of community life, and all over Latin America are slowly emerging many and diverse manifestations of this sense of responsibility, which are being crystallised into opinion 'pressure groups'.

The revival in the spheres of contemplative life, theology, liturgy, Bible and catechetical study and parochial life deserves a volume to itself. Truly these are the 'fountainheads' of the present-day renaissance in the Church.

10. *Tenth stage: the present and the future* (1955)

History is not concerned with the present, which comes into the province of sociology: it cannot, therefore, figure in our article. We can say, however, that the Vatican Council has authorised a certain sector of Latin American Catholicism

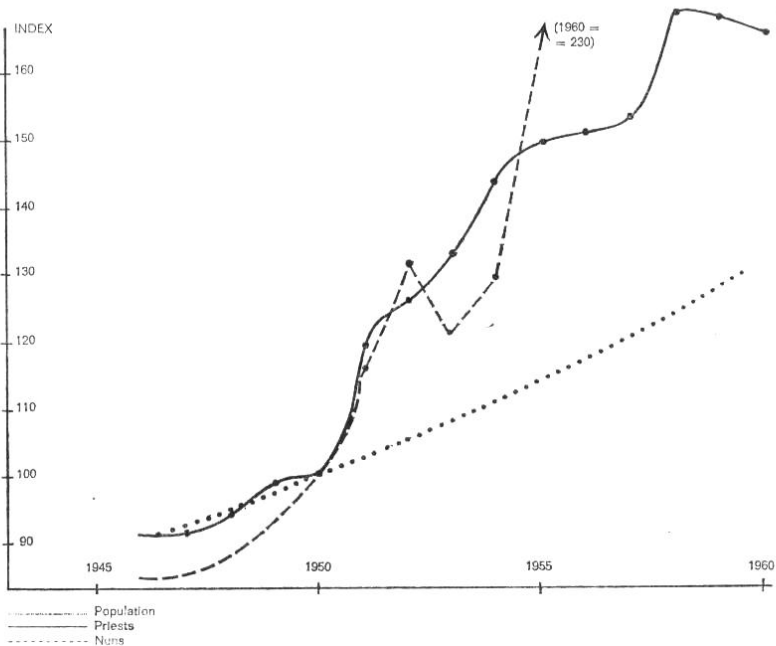
which formerly had to remain silent. This sector will now be able to think out, both from the theological and the pastoral point of view, a *modus vivendi* for the Christian way of life within the universal technological civilisation which is slowly being established in Latin America and which is sometimes called 'The Modern World'. This world needs minds which are clear, open, alert, and educated to meet the demands of the *day and age*. It would be a mistake to think that the Church has now been remodelled, for as Paul VI so well said: 'the Church is always renewing itself'. The capacity for belief, adaptation, and absorption in meditation is essential to *life* and for any real progress. Thus, just as after the Council of Trent it fell to a Toribio de Mogrovejo to reform the Peruvian Church, so the Lord will inspire many others to carry out the reforms being suggested by the Second Vatican Council.

EVALUATION OF CONTEMPORARY LATIN AMERICAN CATHOLICISM

A scientific evaluation of this nature is quite impossible. We shall only suggest certain general lines which might serve to bring us nearer to such an assessment. The major present-day problem is the dialectic which is being established between a genuinely Catholic minority and the baptised masses, who are only nominally or vaguely Catholic; between a Church which is very conscious of its Faith and

DIAGRAM 4

Increase in population, priests and nuns in Venezuela



'the rest', whose faith is so 'hazy' that one has theological scruples in so calling it. On the other hand, we have the conservative mentality of those who would like somehow to return to 'colonial Christianity', when the Christian way of life, being a genuine social reality for the majority, functioned from within the personality and was kept so 'internalised' by the outside pressure of general opinion. This outlook comes into conflict with that of people who have been converted to a sense of personal awareness by their Catholic faith, who feel no bond with the colonial past, but rather with the pluralist and technological civilisation that is now taking shape — these are the ones who keep faith with the future. Some are on the defensive — they remember; others are on the offensive — they hope.

The only way to bring Catholicism to the *masses* is through the agency of *Catholic institutions*. Concerning these another question arises. Some would like to keep the old parochial, educational and social institutions: others, however, are thinking in terms of reforming these institutions in order to adapt them to contemporary needs. The groups are formed according to temperament, family and educational background, etc., and this is just as true within the Catholic hierarchy itself as among clergy and laymen.

One must, however, examine reality in the light of the Faith, illumined by history — that is, *Sacred History* — and accept it as the 'guide line' of life. History shows us that the past is irreversible and that the attempt to buttress inefficient institutions is a losing battle and a waste of energy. On the contrary, it is vital to make the crucial '*pastoral choice*', that is to say, one must face up to the pluralist world and create the institutions which it needs, so that the Sign of Jesus may shine in the midst of darkness and be understood by men of today. This will demand the abandonment of many Christian methods and structures, and involvement — like that undertaken by the first Christians in the Roman Empire — in world civilisation, of which Latin America is only a part and in which it will be necessary to participate more and more actively.

In all this the formation of Catholic minorities is essential, as is the elaboration of a predominantly missionary theology which can adequately assert itself in the context of modern cultural trends and in a society which is temporal, secular, pluralist, worldly and respectful of liberty.

CONCLUSION

Our aim has been to give a short account of the main aspects of the history of the Latin American Church — a fragment of the history of the Universal Church. We know that many authors will disagree on this point but, in fact, we know of no other connected account of the history of the Latin American Church. That being so, in breaking fresh ground we shall have made mistakes: if we are corrected, we shall advance in learning.

The present weaknesses of the Church, and above all of the 'Catholicism' of the Latin American masses, cannot be attributed solely to the mistakes of the original evangelisation, nor to the fact that the Church has been organised too rapidly, nor to any shortcomings in Latin American man. The Latin American Church has been one with Latin American civilisation — together they flourished, together they declined and together they are beginning a new regeneration — all

this is explained by the *Law of the Incarnation*. Stagnation under the Bourbons, the chaotic decadence of the 19th. century, systematic persecution by the liberals, these purified, impoverished and weakened the Church. Today it finds itself prevented from fulfilling its function as a *Church in Christendom* and forced into the position of being a missionary Church, although many in it, perhaps the majority, refuse to accept this. This mission will be accomplished by a Christian majority which, keeping abreast of the times, is slowly finding a *modus operandi* in a secular and pluralist world. There is no room for easy optimism, for the situation is desperate, nor yet for pessimism, for a regeneration has already begun, but rather for HOPE — because hope is the yearning for Charity, reaching on into the future, and there, in that future, shall be found the Parousia of the Risen Christ.

SOME OF THE MAIN FACTS AND DATES IN THE HISTORY OF THE LATIN AMERICAN CHURCH

I. ERA OF THE 'NEW COLONIAL CHRISTENDOM' (XVI - XVIII centuries)

1. *The first steps (1493-1519)*
 - 1493 Fr. Boyl, first priest in America
 - 1500 The Franciscans in the Caribbean
 - 1504 Manso, Deza and García Padilla, the first three American Bishops
 - 1511 The first preaching of Montecasinio on the island of Española
 - 1514 Las Casas protests against the 'encomiendas'
2. *The missions to New Spain and Peru (1519-1551)*
 - 1519 Julián Garcés, first Bishop of Mexico
 - 1524 Arrival of the 'Twelve Apostles' in Mexico (Franciscans)
 - 1526 Arrival of the first Dominicans in Mexico
 - 1538 Vicente de Valverde, first Bishop of Peru (Cuzco)
 - 1539 Foundation of the University of Santo Domingo and setting up of first printing press in America (in Mexico) by Bishop Zumárraga
 - 1551 F. Sardinha, first Bishop of Brazil, in Bahía
3. *Organisation and consolidation of the Church (1551-1606)*
 - 1551-52 First Provincial Council of Lima, under Loaysa
 - 1555 First Provincial Council of Mexico, under Montufar
 - 1565 Second Mexican Council (Montufar)
 - 1567-68 Second Council of Lima (Loaysa)
 - 1582-83 Third Council of Lima (St. Toribio of Mogrovejo)
 - 1585 Third Council of Mexico (Moya and Contreras)
 - 1591 Fourth Council of Lima (St. Toribio)
 - 1601 Fifth Council of Lima (St. Toribio)
 - 1606 Death of Saint Toribio of Mogrovejo

4. *The conflicts between the Church and Hispanic civilisation* (17th. century)
 - 1609 Inauguration of the Guaranic Republic of Paraguay
 - 1620 Carranza becomes first Bishop of Buenos Aires
 - 1638 The Jesuits in the Amazon
 - 1692 10 'reducciones' established among the Chiquitos Indians in Bolivia
5. *Decadence under the Bourbons* (18th. century)
 - 1738 Foundation of the University of Santiago
 - 1759 Expulsion of the Jesuits from Brazil
 - 1767 Expulsion of the Jesuits from Hispano-America
 - 1768 Junipero Serra begins his work in California

II. THE ERA OF INDEPENDENCE (XIX - XX centuries)

6. *The crisis of the Wars of Independence* (1808-1825)
 - 1808-11 First phase of the War. The new governments oppose Napoleon and support the Church
 - 1814 The Argentine is the only independent country. The Episcopate has been almost completely disorganised
 - 1817-25 Second phase of Wars of Independence. The Church en bloc supports movement for emancipation against the Spanish liberals
 - 1823 Leo XII sends the Muzi Mission to Chile
 - 1824 Encyclical *Etsi iam diu* of Leo XII
7. *The crisis deepens* (1825-50)
 - 1826 Despoliation of the Religious Orders in Bolivia
 - 1827 Leo XII establishes direct relations with New Granada (Colombia)
 - 1836 First direct contact between Mexico and Rome
 - 1845 Monsignor Valdivieso begins his ecclesiastical rule
8. *The break comes* (1850-1898)
 - 1849 José Hilario López persecutes the Church, expells Jesuits
 - 1850 Liberals in power in Brazil
 - 1857 Freedom of worship proclaimed in Mexico
 - 1874 Lemos writes in Brazil his work: *Comte, Philosophie positive*
 - 1884 Secular education in the Argentine (Law 1420)
 - 1889 Separation of Church and State in Brazil
9. *Unification and regeneration of Catholicism* (1899-1955)
 - 1899 *First Plenary Council of Latin America*, in Rome
 - 1930 Creation of 'Acción Católica' in the Argentine
 - 1955 *General Conference of the Latin American Episcopate* in Rio de Janeiro
 - 1962 Start of Second Vatican Council

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