

WAS PUEBLA A RETREAT FROM MEDELLÍN?  
A RE-EXAMINATION OF THE SECOND AND THIRD GENERAL CONFERENCES  
OF THE LATIN AMERICAN EPISCOPAL COUNCIL

BY

DANA M. SAWCHUK

A Thesis  
Submitted to the Faculty of Graduate Studies  
in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements  
for the Degree of

MASTER OF ARTS

Department of Religious Studies  
University of Winnipeg  
Winnipeg, Manitoba

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ISBN 0-315-77818-0

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## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I could not have completed this project without the help and support of a number of people.

The guidance of my advisor, John Badertscher (Religious Studies/University of Winnipeg), has been particularly indispensable. I have come to consider him a true friend and mentor in every respect.

The members of my thesis committee--Carl Ridd (Religious Studies/University of Winnipeg), Dawne McCance (Religion/University of Manitoba), and Tim Anna (History/University of Manitoba)--have also been generous with their time and expertise since the beginning of this project.

Finally, my mother and father, and my sisters, Laura and Lisa, deserve special recognition. I especially thank them for their kindness, their patience, and their love.

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## INTRODUCTION<sup>1</sup>

The creation of the Latin American Episcopal Council (CELAM) in 1955 was one of the most important events in the history of the Latin American Roman Catholic Church. Prior to that time, no formal continental expression of the Latin American Church existed. A meeting of Latin American bishops had been held once before, in Rome, in 1899. But not until the First Latin American Episcopal Conference met in Rio de Janeiro and formed CELAM was there an actual episcopal organization devoted to studying the affairs and co-ordinating the activities of the Church in that region as a whole. As such, CELAM came to be an extremely powerful force in the operation of the Church in Latin America over the years.<sup>2</sup>

In the beginning, nonetheless, CELAM did not attract much attention from the worldwide Church. Although its General Secretariat was located in Bogotá, Colombia, instead of Rome, CELAM's form and function were kept under strict control of the Holy See.<sup>3</sup> Moreover, its first annual meetings dealt primarily with organizational matters and pastoral issues specific to Latin America. Such subordination to Rome and generally unexceptionable concerns accounted for CELAM's relatively low international profile

in an era of Church history otherwise dominated by the Second Vatican Council.

The rest of the world was thus somewhat surprised when CELAM took the post-conciliar lead in calling for the committed action of the Church on social justice issues. The Second General CELAM Conference, held in 1968 in Medellín, Colombia, was intended to be an opportunity to apply Vatican II to the Latin American situation. However, something far beyond this was accomplished. As Gary MacEoin summarized it:

CELAM II opted positively for the poor, the voiceless, the oppressed. It identified the source of oppression as institutionalized violence, the neocolonialism of the national oligarchies, and the external neocolonialism of "the international monopolies and the international imperialism of money"; a situation calling for "global, daring, urgent and basically renewing change." The commitment to radical transformation was unambiguous: "a thirst for complete emancipation, liberation from every subjection, personal growth, and social solidarity."<sup>4</sup>

At Medellín, therefore, CELAM appeared to become an institutional Church proponent of the phenomenon known as liberation theology.

The years between Medellín and CELAM III in 1979 were filled with conflict and change in Latin America. Among other things, liberation theology had flourished; violence, repression, and poverty had escalated; and CELAM had come under the control of extremely conservative forces. Consequently, many observers were anxious to see whether the



bishops meeting in Puebla, Mexico, would reaffirm the positions taken at Medellín.

Although the supporters of liberation theology were forced to compromise on certain issues, according to almost all accounts Puebla did not represent a retreat from Medellín. Instead, it was widely lauded as a confirmation of Medellín's liberationist stance. Moreover, the commonplace references to the tradition of "Medellín and Puebla" since 1979 indicate that this evaluation has remained largely unchallenged.

This thesis uses a broad socio-historical approach, inspired by the work of Antonio Gramsci, to re-examine the conferences at Medellín and Puebla as well as the assumed relationship between them. By analysing the shifting political-economic and religious-institutional conditions which provided the context for CELAM's activities in the 1960s and 1970s, I hope to illumine the factors which led the bishops at each conference to promote "liberation," and to suggest the significance of such for change in the Church and Latin America in general. In doing so, this thesis presents an alternate interpretation of two crucial moments in the life of the Latin American Church, and perhaps can provide a useful framework with which to approach the Fourth General CELAM Conference, to be held in Santo Domingo in October 1992.

## CHAPTER ONE: METHODOLOGICAL CONSIDERATIONS

An adequate re-examination of the CELAM conferences at Medellín and Puebla cannot consist merely of a description of the conference proceedings and a summary of or commentary on the final documents. While these elements are necessary components of an investigation, they do not allow one to understand the various factors at work "behind" or surrounding the main events studied; in themselves they provide an insufficient basis upon which to evaluate these events. Therefore, an approach must be taken which interprets the conferences as part of a larger context. The methodological considerations which such an approach implies for this thesis are the subject of this chapter.

### The Sociology of Religion

Referring to liberation theology, Georges Casalis once wrote that "good ideas do not fall from the sky."<sup>1</sup> The same can be said of all theology and religious ideas, including those ideas which eventually come to be expressed as "official" statements of CELAM. The ideas which make up the Medellín document on poverty, for instance, did not fall from the heavens, but rather were formulated by human beings who were living at a particular time and in a particular

place, and who were subject to particular experiences unique to their socio-historical context. Thus, as Neal Wood argues, thinkers and their theories must be "contextualized" and seen as influenced by the social, political, and economic turmoil of their age.<sup>2</sup>

However, as far as religion is concerned, it is not a matter of societal forces unilaterally influencing the formation of religious thought. For, as Andrés Opazo Bernalles observes, "historically speaking, religion is never an incorporeal reality which floats in the consciousness of humans, it is always incarnated in institutions."<sup>3</sup> Religious actors produce and express religious ideas, which are further incarnated in certain institutions on whose behalf these actors function. These institutions are in constant interaction and tension with other social, political, economic, and cultural institutions, and with them help to direct and regulate the actions of a society's members. Therefore, as much as historical context in part determines religious thought, religion also inevitably influences its surrounding environment.

Once these principles are acknowledged, it appears that a sociological approach to religion (and its expression in the CELAM conferences) is warranted. It should be, as Otto Maduro precisely puts it, a sociology that studies ". . . religions as phenomena that are socially produced, socially situated and limited, socially orientated and

structured, and have an influence upon the society in which they find themselves."<sup>4</sup>

#### The Life and Work of Antonio Gramsci

One of the earliest thinkers to treat religion in this sociological manner was Antonio Gramsci. Born in Ales, Sardinia in 1891, Gramsci moved to Turin in 1911 to study at the University. While in Turin, he became involved with the Socialist Party and wrote prolifically for the socialist press. Eventually, he became one of the key figures responsible for the publication of the weekly Socialist Party paper Ordine Nuovo. When it became a daily paper of the communist faction of the Party at the beginning of 1921, Gramsci assumed its editorship.

Shortly after, Gramsci helped found the Italian Communist Party, and as one of its leaders became embroiled in the Party's external endeavours and ongoing internal controversies. Not surprisingly, his political activities led to his arrest in 1926. In 1928 the fascist regime sentenced him to 20 years, four months, and five days in prison.

In 1929, Gramsci began writing his famous Quaderni del carcere, better known in English as the Prison Notebooks.<sup>5</sup> His actual notebooks, 33 in total, consist of fragmented notes and organized essays on topics such as Italian history, Marxism, philosophy, religion, politics, and "Americanism." These notebooks were to represent his

final political act. Although he was granted conditional liberty in 1934 to seek medical attention for his worsening illnesses, he never regained his health and died on April 27th, 1937.<sup>6</sup>

One may wonder what a communist such as Gramsci could contribute to the study of religion. After all, in many of his writings Gramsci referred to religion using such phrases as "useless, absurd faith" and an "imbecile immortality"; he also once called Jesus "an electoral canvasser for the liberal-masonic bourgeoisie" and the Jesuit order "a real association for sinning".<sup>7</sup> It appears from such statements that Gramsci fits the stereotype of "just another Marxist" whose treatment of religion amounts to little more than scathing polemics.

Nothing could be further from the truth. Although such vehement remarks are scattered throughout many of his articles, other of his writings contain quite sophisticated reflections on Christianity and especially Catholicism.<sup>8</sup> Many of these more theoretical formulations can be found in the Prison Notebooks.

Basically, Gramsci's treatment of religion is related to his main political and theoretical interests.<sup>9</sup> Gramsci's primary political commitment was to bringing about the transition to a socialist society, something which he thought could only be achieved through an alliance between the peasants and the working class. When he pondered the

"peasant question" (i.e. "How can the proletariat vanguard win over the peasants for the socialist revolution?"<sup>10</sup>), he recognized that he would have to contend with the enormous influence that religion had on the Italian peasantry. Further, as Gramsci sought to explain theoretically the dynamics of power in past and present societies, he necessarily had to examine the central role the Church played in the feudal era, and the way this role was transformed under capitalism. Thus, Gramsci's reflections on religion were closely tied to the main themes of his work.

Having stated this, it is not my intention to proceed with a complete reconstruction of Gramsci's theory of religion, with the aim of mechanically imposing it on the Latin American context to "prove" the predictive powers of the theory. For various reasons, such a reconstruction would be nearly impossible to perform.<sup>11</sup> Yet, even if such a task were possible, it certainly would not be desirable in this case. This project is not primarily concerned with Gramsci himself, nor with trying to "fit" CELAM's activities into a Gramscian model. Rather, I am seeking to draw upon certain Gramscian insights to guide my re-examination of the Medellín and Puebla conferences. Therefore, what follows is merely a sketch of Gramsci's general theory, and an attempt to elaborate those concepts which will be most relevant to the study of religion in Latin America.

This task will be aided by the writings of various

commentators on Gramsci and the Prison Notebooks, and especially by the work of Otto Maduro. Maduro not only has written about Gramsci's theory of religion,<sup>12</sup> but has systematically elaborated his own sociological position on religion which is unmistakably "Gramscian" in persuasion.<sup>13</sup> Since Maduro is also a Catholic Latin American (Venezuelan), well-versed in the religion and the politics of the region, some of his formulations will be included in my discussion of Gramscian theory.

#### The Dynamics of Power in Society

As stated earlier, one of Gramsci's main theoretical preoccupations in the Prison Notebooks is his attempt to understand the relations of power in society. For him, this investigation begins with an analysis of the "historical bloc" characteristic of a particular society. Specifically, a "historical bloc" consists of the combination of structure and superstructure.<sup>14</sup> These two key components are the mainstays of much Marxist theory: structure representing material or economic relations; superstructure representing the ideological realm (and thus including elements of religion and politics).

Like most Marxists, Gramsci posits that ". . . the complex, contradictory and discordant ensemble of the superstructures is the reflection of the ensemble of the social relations of production."<sup>15</sup> However, Gramsci's conception goes far beyond the simplistic maxim that economic realities

determine ideological forms. For him, the claim ". . . that every fluctuation of politics and ideology can be presented and expounded as an immediate expression of the structure, must be contested in theory as primitive infantilism. . . ." <sup>16</sup> Instead, the relationship between superstructure and structure is one of "necessary reciprocity," a "real dialectical process." <sup>17</sup> As he explains:

Material forces are the content and ideologies are the form, though this distinction between form and content has purely didactic value, since material forces would be inconceivable historically without form and the ideologies would be individual fantasies without the material forces. <sup>18</sup>

This recognition that the superstructure is not unilaterally dependent on the structure, i.e. of the relative autonomy of the ideological realm, represents one of Gramsci's main advances over the classical Marxist theory of religion, <sup>19</sup> and, as we shall see, contributes to the sophistication of his theory of power.

Using the framework of the historical bloc, Gramsci proceeds to outline the distinctly superstructural means by which the ruling class(es) in society dominate the subaltern class(es). According to him, the supremacy of a social group manifests itself through both "political society" and "civil society"; that is, through a combination of force and consent. <sup>20</sup> Political society represents the domination of the subaltern classes through the apparatus of State power: police, military, judiciary, etc. However, in most cases (the exceptions being dictatorships), such coercive elements



serve only as back-up legal enforcement for the moral, intellectual, and political leadership exercised through the institutions of civil society.

In civil society, the dominant class is able to cultivate the active consent of the subordinate classes to its rule. By its links to ideological apparatus (schools, churches, political parties, mass media, etc.), the ruling class inculcates in the masses the worldviews, customs, morality, and ways of thinking and acting which correspond to the needs of the productive forces in society (and hence to the interests of this dominant class).<sup>21</sup> For Gramsci, when a group attains such ideological predominance, it is said to have established "hegemony."<sup>22</sup>

Essential to the development and maintenance of the hegemony of a social group is the support of what Gramsci terms "organic intellectuals." These intellectuals are created alongside a class and give that class homogeneity and an awareness of its economic, political, and social function.<sup>23</sup> They are ". . . distinguished less by their profession, which may be any job characteristic of their class, than by their function in directing the ideas and aspirations of the class to which they organically belong."<sup>24</sup> In other words, their role is to help the class to which they are allied reinforce its hegemonic rule.

Importantly, organic intellectuals are to be distinguished from what Gramsci labels "traditional intellec-

tuals": professional figures in fields such as literature, science, academia, or religion (writers, teachers, lawyers, priests, etc.).<sup>25</sup> Both dominant and subordinate classes produce such intellectuals, although they may at times present themselves as autonomous and independent of social class. Groups developing dominance aim to conquer "ideologically" the professionals from the subordinate class, in order to consolidate their hegemony further.<sup>26</sup> Therefore, the hegemonic class functions with the aid of its own organic and traditional intellectuals, and with additional support garnered from traditional intellectuals of subordinate class origins.

Nonetheless, according to Gramsci these functionaries of the superstructure need not always support bourgeois hegemonic rule. Ideally, the proletariat would generate its own stratum of organic intellectuals who would remain faithful intellectuals of their own class. Then, together with support from traditional proletarian intellectuals and disaffected bourgeois professionals (who, once genuinely converted, can also function as organic intellectuals of the working class), they could develop the alternative hegemony (or "counterhegemony") needed before the proletariat can rule.<sup>27</sup>

As this implies, the hegemony of a leading class is never total nor completely stable. In fact, in order to maintain its hegemony, the dominant group must take into

account the interests and tendencies of the subordinate groups and make certain economic compromises on their behalf.<sup>28</sup> Further, the organic intellectuals of the ruling class can also attempt to cast the ruling ideology in terms of the traditional worldviews of the popular sectors (leading to the recognition of the ruling class as representative of the whole nation).<sup>29</sup> Hegemony would not be plausible if it were completely total; by at least appearing to represent the interests of the dominated groups, the ruling group maintains a hegemonic equilibrium. Of course, any sacrifices made by the dominant group cannot be related to the essential economic basis of their rule--compromise only functions to help reinforce consent to dominance.

However, despite these and other efforts, hegemonic rule is never guaranteed to last. Occasionally, a "crisis of hegemony" occurs. For example, this may happen when the hardship experienced by a group becomes intolerable (and no mitigating forces are visible in society), when the ruling class has failed in a major political undertaking (e.g. war), or when the masses pass suddenly from political passivity to activity.<sup>30</sup> In such cases, the contradictions inherent in the historical bloc can no longer be contained:

The ruling class has lost its consensus, i.e. is no longer "leading" but only "dominant", exercising coercive force alone, this means precisely that the great masses have become detached from their traditional ideologies, and no longer believe what they used to believe previously, etc.<sup>31</sup>

At this point, if the working class' organic intellectuals

are in place and the appropriate revolutionary consciousness has been raised, the movements towards building the proletarian counterhegemony are particularly likely to succeed. Thus, Gramsci not only analyzes the dynamics of power as they are manifested in capitalist society, he also discusses the means by which the transition to alternative socialist rule can occur.<sup>32</sup>

As we have seen, Gramsci's approach to society in the Prison Notebooks is one which emphasizes the role played by superstructural institutions and actors, and hence which highlights the relative autonomy of the superstructural elements within the historical bloc. Turning now to analyze one specific area within the ideological realm, that of religion, it will become evident that general concepts such as ideological apparatus, hegemony, intellectuals, and counterhegemony can also apply to religious phenomena. Therefore, through an examination of these ideas of Gramsci as they relate to religion,<sup>33</sup> along with a discussion of the relevant contributions of other sociologists of religion, we can arrive at the basic concepts needed to guide our study of religion in Latin America.

#### The Gramscian Approach to Religion

As discussed above, Gramsci's analysis treats religion as an ideological form located in the superstructure, and also as related to the socioeconomic structure of a particular historical bloc. Therefore, following Maduro, we

can posit that religion is ". . . situated in a specific human context, a concrete and determined geographical space, historical moment, and social milieu,"<sup>34</sup> as well as being ". . . situated in a specific mode of production."<sup>35</sup> As Maduro also suggests, a

religion's activity is limited by the social context in which it operates. That is, its alternatives for activity (for thinking, speaking, and practising its religious message) are limited by that context (independently of any consciousness of this, or intentions to this effect on the part of members of the religion).<sup>36</sup>

Therefore, no religious phenomenon can be examined independent of the context which limits and orientates it.

Of course, of primary concern in the present study is one specific expression religion takes in Latin America: the Roman Catholic Church, and CELAM within it. At one level, it must be acknowledged that the Church in Latin America is part of civil society, and has traditionally functioned as an ideological apparatus supportive of ruling class hegemony. Moreover, Church support for the dominant classes has not been accidental, but rather has been actively sought by those classes who aim to consolidate their hegemony through a sacralization of their dominance.<sup>37</sup>

These efforts have typically involved many dimensions and may include family, juridico-political, educational, cultural, and economic strategies. For example, the dominant classes may seek to create bonds of affinity with the clergy by favouring baptismal sponsorship, church marriages,

or a religious vocation for some of their children, thereby fostering sentiments of indebtedness in the clergy and helping to incorporate them into the dominant class lifestyle. The creation of legal mechanisms, such as concordats or patronage agreements, fulfills the same function and can further be interpreted as transactions in which the dominant classes grant privileges to a religion in exchange for control over counterhegemonic religious activity. Economic strategies are particularly useful, as privileges and property bestowed on the clergy help to incorporate them directly into the form of economic organization promoted by the dominant classes.<sup>38</sup> In addition, it should be noted that the Latin American Church's excessive financial dependence on State and foreign financial support also serves to dissuade the clergy from actively challenging the dominant hegemonic rule.<sup>39</sup>

Over the years, therefore, many of the clergy have become economically, politically, and culturally linked to the leading classes in Latin America. These bishops and priests (some of Latin America's "traditional intellectuals") have in turn tended to produce and disseminate a religious discourse that supports (often by failing to criticize) the existing structures of domination.<sup>40</sup> In this way, the Church's existence in society can never be said to be neutral.

However, despite all this (and as even the casual

observer of Latin America will note), the Church has not been completely allied with the minority ruling class. The development of liberation theology, as we shall discuss in Chapter Two, suggests that religion as an ideology can motivate both the exploited and the exploiters. Gramsci recognizes this when he comments that despite its attempts to retain a surface unity, Catholicism

is in reality a multiplicity of distinct and often contradictory religions: there is one Catholicism for the peasants, one for the petits-bourgeois and town workers, one for women, and one for intellectuals which is itself variegated and disconnected.<sup>41</sup>

Similarly, it is impossible to speak of "one" Latin American Catholicism.

This suggests that we must also appreciate the complexity of the Church in Latin America as an institution. An insightful formulation in this regard comes from Hugo Villeda, as he characterises the Church as an "interclass social space." According to him, within the Church

diverse social classes of the society converge and interact. These classes are the bearers of contradictory social projects and when they interact within the Church they do not dispose of them, but rather seek in "religious reason" an additional argument for the legitimation of their projects.<sup>42</sup>

This implies, as Maduro also agrees,<sup>43</sup> that patterns of domination, subordination, and conflict in society are reproduced in the religious field.

Therefore, although the Gramscian analysis emphasizes the manoeuvres of the dominant groups within the Church and its overall support for the ruling sectors in society, it

does not dismiss the possibility of the religious institution or ideology supporting or constituting a genuinely counterhegemonic force. At times, when the State forbids the free formation and activity of political organizations, the religious apparatus may become the only remaining channel for popular expression.<sup>44</sup> Actions that may be repressed when performed under the auspices of unions or political parties can sometimes be permitted when they are seen as part of Church programs or missions. The literacy programs and neighbourhood improvement strategies tackled by the grassroots Christian organizations known as Comunidades Eclesiales de Base (CEBs, or Basic Christian Communities, BCCs), for example, are at times spared from attacks by regimes unwilling to antagonize the Church directly.

In addition, therefore, just as the religious realm can support ruling class dominance, religion can also be an active factor in favour of a new hegemony. When Catholic priests and religious become intellectuals of the subordinate classes, expressing and directing their aspirations for autonomy and a new society, the counterhegemonic movement gains strength.<sup>45</sup> By supporting those innovations which challenge religious justification for inequitable dominance (while still remaining somewhat within acceptable limits of Catholic religious tradition), Catholic intellectuals can become another force for change within the Church and society as a whole. As we shall see in the following chap-



ters, in the Latin American Church the liberation theologians and their clerical supporters have become these counterhegemonic intellectuals.

However, it must be stressed once more that within a Gramscian framework, the religious field is treated as relatively autonomous. Structures, conflicts, and changes occurring on the level of an entire society do not directly or mechanically influence religious actions; the internal characteristics of the religious realm also play a role in determining religious expressions.<sup>46</sup> Referring specifically to the Catholic Church, Gramsci writes that

if, for every ideological struggle within the Church one wanted to find an immediate primary explanation in the structure one would really be caught napping: all sorts of politico-economic romances have been written for this reason. It is evident on the contrary that the majority of these discussions are connected with sectarian and organisational necessities.<sup>47</sup>

Having said this, it becomes evident that many of the actions of the clergy within the Church are related to the dual institutional necessity of self-reproduction and self-preservation. Over time, the Church has institutionalized certain mechanisms to ensure that its internal structure of religious power is reproduced, and also that its influence in the larger society is preserved despite social changes.<sup>48</sup>

Ecclesiastical strategy in this regard responds to the key demands of unity and continuity.<sup>49</sup> For example, the institution is organized so that individuals are contin-

ually reasserting their allegiance to the Church throughout their lifetimes (through the sacraments). Further, attempts are made to minimize the likelihood of geographical splits (through centralization) and doctrinal schisms (through theological conformity to orthodoxy and papal authority). Finally, the Church tries to guard itself against divisions among the faithful by recruiting clergy from the lower classes, and by striving to avoid a separation between the religion of the intellectuals and that of the majority.<sup>50</sup> These represent some of the more permanent mechanisms in place to help safeguard the reproduction and preservation of the Church.

Occasionally, however, the institution is forced to improvise and cope with the existence of movements within the larger society that threaten Church control. For example, some Brazilian bishops in the early twentieth century felt uneasy about currents of communism, Protestantism, and syncretism competing with Catholicism. They then imported the lay organizational form of Catholic Action from Italy, where it was begun by the Pope as a means of restoring Church influence over society through the laity.<sup>51</sup> Often, when existing Church forms prove unable to deal with potential rival forces, the most expedient action is to create such "conjunctural organizations" to help counterbalance the danger.<sup>52</sup>

Nonetheless, despite such efforts, the fact remains

that the Catholic Church in Latin America has the qualities of an interclass social space. Any Catholic unity is therefore fragile at best (i.e., as fragile as the relationships between the classes). The conflicting class interests within the Church imply one final type of institutional strategy. As Maduro explains:

Internal ecclesiastical innovations arising from outside the center tend to assume heretical traits, which gradually develop until central reaction to them comes. This reaction of the hierarchic center usually involves excluding the refractory innovators and recovering the hesitant, but is often followed by some incorporation of the innovations themselves, so as to preserve the unity of the Church by gaining possession of factors threatening that unity.<sup>53</sup>

Gramsci himself gives the historical example of the heretical movements of the Middle Ages, which he saw as a reaction against scholastic philosophy and the "politicking" of the Church. According to Gramsci, these movements were based on the social conflicts arising from the birth of the Communes and represented a split between the Church's intellectuals and masses. This split was "stitched over" by the birth of the popular religious movements which were reabsorbed by the Church through the formation of the mendicant orders.<sup>54</sup> Frequently, the evolution of the structure and doctrine of the Church can be seen as a result of this institutional strategy of preserving unity.

#### A Gramscian Approach to Medellín and Puebla

Each of the foregoing facets of the Gramscian sociol-

ogy of religion has certain concrete implications for this thesis. For example, recognizing that religion is always socially situated stipulates that before we can analyze the actions of CELAM members at the Medellín and Puebla conferences, certain components of Latin American history must be traced. Therefore, the discussion of each conference will be preceded by a summary of some of the key social, political, and economic factors operant on the continent during the relevant period. In essence, a description of the historical bloc necessarily will take place before the focus narrows to deal with specifically religious phenomena.

Accepting the definition of the Church as an inter-class social space dictates that care must be taken to discuss the various people and groups involved in the Latin American Church as tied to, or affected by, certain social strata, political conditions, and economic realities. It cannot be sufficient to refer to "the Catholic bishops" or to "the laity" as if they were homogeneous groups. Beyond ascertaining the societal and cultural locations from which these actors operate, some attempt will be made to categorize their respective projects as rooted in either the "liberationist" or the "conservative" range.

Moreover, because a reciprocal relationship between the structure and the superstructure has been posited, this thesis will also examine some of the possible effects that the CELAM conferences have had on Latin American society as

it exists beyond the boundaries of strictly religious influence. Although my primary goal is to evaluate the significance of Medellín and Puebla for the institutional Roman Catholic Church, I will also reflect on the more general societal implications of such matters as the conference documents' discussions of violence.

Finally, the Gramscian consideration of the organizational roots of ideological innovations and debates will also be taken seriously. Therefore, in addition to looking outside of the Church for possible explanations for CELAM's positions, I will also investigate the internal structure and institutional dynamics of the Latin American Church itself and as part of the worldwide Church centred in Rome. Hopefully, this adoption of the multi-faceted Gramscian approach to religion will lead to a re-evaluation of Medellín and Puebla which accurately portrays the conferences in their full political-economic and religious-institutional contexts.

## CHAPTER TWO: THE MEDELLÍN YEARS

A Gramscian approach to religion implies that events such as the Second General Conference of the Latin American Episcopal Council cannot be treated as if they occurred in a social-historical or religious-institutional vacuum. To appreciate fully the significance of the 1968 CELAM conference at Medellín, it must be viewed as part of the Latin American secular and Church history of the era, and as both influenced by and influencing this context. This chapter seeks to treat the conference in this way, by discussing Medellín and its implications only after it is demonstrated how they came to be located in the midst of a particular historical bloc and Church moment.

### The Latin American Historical Bloc between 1959 and 1968<sup>1</sup>

Perhaps the single most important event in Latin America during the late 1950s was the Cuban Revolution of 1959. A guerilla army led by Fidel Castro overthrew the dictator Batista and established a revolutionary government which was to affect the continent in the years to come more by virtue of its mere (but lasting) existence than by its particular actions. For many factions in the Americas (including much of the Latin American Church, as we shall

discuss later), the existence of Castro's Cuba represented a "communist threat."

Significantly, the U.S. government saw itself as one of the threatened parties. Although the CIA had successfully engineered the overthrow of the reformer Arbenz in Guatemala in 1954, it became increasingly evident that Castro could not be disposed of so easily. As part of its plan to prevent "another Cuba," the U.S. implemented the Alliance for Progress, an aid programme intended to foster Latin America's social and economic development and thus to quell any other revolutionary agitation on the continent. Also to this end, the U.S. financed much of the military repression of "subversive" elements in Latin America throughout the 1960s.<sup>2</sup>

Latin America's largest country fell victim to such widespread repression in 1964. The military coup began a period of extreme violence in Brazil, underpinned by the doctrine of National Security. This ideology, which grants absolute power to military dictatorships, stresses the importance of the "geopolitical" view that all groups and individuals must be subordinate to the State. In order to ensure its security, much energy is expended on protecting the State from a variety of "subversive communist" forces (which frequently include people simply trying to secure a basic standard of living). Often, this ideology justifies the suppression of basic civil rights, jailing, exile,

torture, murder, and "disappearances" as means to defend the interests of the State.<sup>3</sup> Harsh dictatorships had long existed in much of Central America by this time, a military dictatorship based on National Security had taken power in Argentina in 1966, and others were to follow during the 1970s.

Interestingly, although a 1973 coup was to install one of the most brutal regimes in Chile, this same country in 1964 elected a representative of a different brand of politics. Eduardo Frei became president of Chile as the leader of the Christian Democrats, a political party of European Catholic origins which was imported to Latin America in the 1930s. Although Venezuela was the only other country to elect a Christian Democrat to the presidency prior to Medellín (in 1968), the mayors of Lima (1963) and San Salvador (1964) have also been Christian Democrats, and the party was represented in many other parts of Latin America during the 1960s.<sup>4</sup>

In part representing a reaction against the trend towards political laicism (in which the Church is completely subordinate to the liberal-bourgeois State), Christian Democracy was seen as one means by which a "New Christendom" could be installed in Latin America. As such, it attracted sectors of the middle class laity, who used it as a vehicle to pursue a more influential role for the Church in society (and for themselves in the Church and society). Moreover,



Christian Democracy promoted a utopian vision of a new society, based on a "third way" between atheistic communism and the excesses of capitalism. However, this rather vague idealism, while it appealed to groups from a variety of classes (each of which interpreted the third way according to its own socio-economic position), also ultimately contributed to the downfall of the party and its elected representatives.<sup>5</sup>

It should also be noted that Christian Democracy embraced, along with several other influential actors in Latin America of the time, a cluster of economic strategies which can be classed under the general heading of "developmentalism." According to its advocates, Latin America's economic (and social) problems would be solved once it had passed through the same stages of economic growth as had the developed countries, leading to the necessary "take-off" stage.<sup>6</sup> In order to facilitate this process, industrialization was heavily promoted and foreign investment (primarily in the form of U.S.-based multinational corporations) vigorously pursued. It was assumed that some of the economic wealth generated would trickle-down and alleviate the sufferings of the poor.

Becoming "modern" and industrialized did in fact lead to high rates of economic growth in some countries (many remarked, for example, that Brazil experienced an "economic miracle"). However, in general, the poor continued to

suffer and watch the gap between themselves and the elites widen.<sup>7</sup> More and more Latin Americans simply did not have access to adequate food, water, shelter, education, or health care.

Observing the effects of the new economic strategies, several Latin American social scientists began to formulate what came to be known as "dependency theory." They argued that many of Latin America's social and economic problems stemmed from its dependence (through multinationals or through patterns of exporting raw materials/importing manufactured goods) on the developed capitalist nations. Some noted that an internal dynamic of dependence within Latin American countries also existed, with the impoverished masses subjugated to the powerful oligarchies (who in turn were allied with the multinationals in what could be conceived of as the continent's "Third Colonial Pact"). The changes they advocated were intended to increase Latin American autonomy and promote more equitable progress.<sup>8</sup>

Of course, intellectuals were not the only ones to react to the social consequences of such plans. Revolutionary movements irrupted in several countries (e.g., the Tupamaros in Uruguay or the Movement of the Revolutionary Left [MIR] in Chile). Moreover, people from many walks of life--peasants, students, unionists, even clergy and religious<sup>9</sup>--participated in a variety of strikes, protests, and uprisings. Often, such activism was met with harsh repression

and persecution (justified by the ideology of National Security).<sup>10</sup> Unfortunately, this pattern of agitation followed by crushing violence was a common feature of this tumultuous period in Latin American history.

#### The Latin American Church in the 1960s

Of course, while much was happening outside the Church in the 1960s, within Roman Catholic circles activity was also intense. Undoubtedly, one of the most significant events was the Second Vatican Council.<sup>11</sup> Convened by Pope John XXIII in 1962 and closed by Pope Paul VI in 1965, Vatican II represented the aggiornamento (renewal or updating) of the Roman Catholic Church. By its conscious effort to understand the modern world and to define the Church's role within it, Vatican II brought the Church into the twentieth century.

The Council also physically and intellectually brought together bishops and their periti (advisors) from all over the world, including Latin America. Over six hundred Latin American bishops were present at the Council<sup>12</sup>--contributing to, as well as gaining from, the proceedings.

While only a few individual Latin Americans made an impact at Vatican II,<sup>13</sup> as a group the Latin American bishops were able to present the realities of the Church in the underdeveloped world to the Council. When the theologians of middle Europe wrote a paragraph dealing with pov-

erty for the Dogmatic Constitution on the Church (Lumen Gentium), the Latin Americans (along with the Africans and Asians) were able to challenge the validity of the description. It was obvious the Europeans had never "lived" poverty, and they were forced to expand their vision and learn from the experiences of the Third World bishops.<sup>14</sup> CELAM members also facilitated this process by distributing, in various languages, a summary of the principles of socio-religious inquiry used by the Latin American Federation of Religious and Social Studies (FERES). Therefore, although it had been believed that the Latin American bishops would merely follow the tendencies expressed by the Spanish and Portuguese conciliar fathers, it can be seen that they represented a distinctly Latin American perspective at Vatican II.<sup>15</sup>

Despite these contributions however, as Edward Cleary notes, the Latin American Church was more a learner than a pacesetter at the Council.<sup>16</sup> Vatican II allowed the Latin Americans to experience first-hand the debates and processes surrounding the issues that were considered to be of crucial importance to the Church. Perhaps more significant were the actual encounters between the Latin Americans and the other bishops, and among the Latin Americans themselves. For the Latin American bishops (as for the other delegates), much of the benefit of Vatican II derived from this convergence of ". . . immense numbers of contacts, discoveries,

coordination, personal knowledge, institutions, and theological reflection."<sup>17</sup>

However, Vatican II and its presiding Popes also provided the Latin Americans with something far more tangible than the encounters of peoples and ideas. In the conciliar documents themselves, as well as in the encyclicals of John XXIII and Paul VI, the more progressive bishops could find encouragement and support for their own investigations into development and liberation. Pope John's encyclicals represented the first major attempt of the Church hierarchy to deal with societal problems beyond those of the condition of workers and industrial relations.<sup>18</sup> In Mater et Magistra (1961) and Pacem in Terris (1963), he discussed economic development at length, making it clear throughout that inequality, the distribution of wealth, economic aid, disarmament, and urbanization, etc. are all matters with which the Church is properly concerned.<sup>19</sup> In Gaudium et Spes, similar issues were examined and the inductive methodology of "see/judge/act" was given unprecedented ecclesiastical sanction.<sup>20</sup>

The same methodology was used after the council by Paul VI in his encyclical Populorum Progressio (1967).<sup>21</sup> Devoted entirely to development issues, Populorum Progressio stressed that while the poor themselves have the primary responsibility to work for their own development,<sup>22</sup> the advanced nations also have an obligation to help the less

developed countries.<sup>23</sup> Further, although the Pope was for the most part opposed to violence, he did recognize that a revolutionary uprising cannot be unequivocally prohibited:

We know, however, that a revolutionary uprising--save where there is manifest, long-standing tyranny which would do great damage to fundamental personal rights and dangerous harm to the common good of the country--produces new injustices, throws more elements out of balance and brings on new disasters. A real evil should not be fought against at the cost of greater misery.<sup>24</sup>

Granted, only one fragment of one sentence constitutes the "recognition." Yet, this phrase does add to the tone of urgency which permeates the whole document. Further, as we shall see, much of Paul's approach reverberated in CELAM and in other Latin American religious circles of the 1960s.

During the Council, CELAM had become more active and had begun to transform itself. The bishops assembled in Rome in 1962 for the opening of Vatican II, and although they did not hold a regular meeting that year, CELAM met annually in Rome in 1963, 1964, and 1965. This gave the CELAM bishops a chance to discuss Vatican II's innovations and implications within the immediate context of the Council. It also provided the impetus for a re-organization of CELAM, which included the creation of ten special departments and the decentralization of CELAM's services.<sup>25</sup> It was as if new life had been injected into CELAM and when Manuel Larraín declared at the end of Vatican II that "the meetings of the Council end now, but the Council begins in our dioceses,"<sup>26</sup> the Latin American bishops were ready to

go to work.

When they returned home, the bishops undertook a variety of initiatives: across the continent meetings were held, declarations drafted, and study groups formed, all with the intent to put into practice the findings of Vatican II.<sup>27</sup> One of the most significant of the meetings was the CELAM extraordinary assembly of 1966, held in Mar del Plata, Argentina on the topic of "The Active Presence of the Church in the Development and the Integration of Latin America."<sup>28</sup> At the conference, CELAM took the unprecedented step of analysing the condition of the Church and its peoples continentally (rather than nationally or by individual diocese as had been done in the past). It is also noteworthy that in their theological reflections on development and their discussions of structural transformation and pastoral action, the bishops at Mar del Plata touched upon some of the issues that would come to occupy a central place at Medellín two years later.<sup>29</sup>

Meanwhile, certain segments of the Latin American clergy were becoming increasingly radicalized. There were the Golconda group of priests in Colombia, the Iglesia Joven in Chile, and the Movement of Priests for the Third World in Argentina, with similar clusters scattered across the continent.<sup>30</sup> Many of these people were admirers of Camilo Torres (the priest who took up arms and was killed in battle in Colombia in 1966), while others were inspired or had

their actions legitimated by the statement issued by the Bishops of the Third World shortly after the close of Vatican II.<sup>31</sup> The statement, signed by 18 bishops (half of whom were Brazilians, including Archbishop Helder Câmara<sup>32</sup>), was important because it took Paul's comments on revolution much further by stating that "not all revolutions are necessarily good. . . . But history shows us that certain revolutions were necessary."<sup>33</sup> This implies that revolution for the sake of justice is acceptable. Understandably, these revolutionary groups and individuals attracted a great deal of attention in Latin America during the 1960s.

A related religious phenomenon was also beginning to become influential at this point. By the time CELAM II opened in 1968, the theology of liberation had been developed and was represented at the conference by figures such as Gustavo Gutiérrez, Juan Luis Segundo, Leonardo Boff, Hugo Assmann, Jon Sobrino, Enrique Dussel, Segundo Galilea, and Pablo Richard.<sup>34</sup>

Although their individual emphases vary, liberation theologians share certain fundamental convictions. Using social science methodologies to critique the unjust structures of society and denouncing the resulting oppression and poverty of people as sinful, they call upon the Church to break its traditional alliance with the elites and work for "liberation." A multi-faceted concept, liberation can be



said to encompass at least three levels: "the political liberation of oppressed peoples and social classes; man's liberation in the course of history; and liberation from sin as condition of a life of communion of all men with the Lord."<sup>35</sup>

As this implies, liberation theologians argue that there should be no distinction or opposition between the sacred religious realm and the secular political one. Just as Jesus Christ's redemptive work was enacted in the fullness of history, work for liberation today cannot be categorized as either a religious or political act. It is both at the same time--to know God is to do justice.

These actions for liberation should above all begin and end with the poor and oppressed. This means respecting that the poor retain an epistemological privilege (of knowing more accurately than others the reality of oppression) and therefore also adopting an authentic "view from below" as a guide. Further, although the poor themselves must be the central agents of liberation, the entire Church should place itself on their side in word and in deed (as the Bible clearly shows God was and is). According to the liberation theologians, only in concrete solidarity with the poor can the Church fulfil its duty to work for liberation in Latin America.

In addition, liberation theology itself cannot be said to be generated by intellectuals in universities and

seminaries, isolated from the conditions of everyday existence. Even though it eventually comes to be disseminated in the books and articles of trained theologians and scholars, liberation theology originates in the experiences and the reflections of the poor themselves.

In Latin America since the 1960s much of this reflection has taken place within the context of the CEBs (Comunidades Eclesiales de Base). Although CEBs have taken a variety of forms, very often they are small, lay-led groups whose members meet to discuss Scripture and its relation to their basic life experiences. Through a process which Paulo Freire has labelled "conscientization,"<sup>36</sup> these people are "learning to perceive social, political, and economic contradictions, and to take action against the oppressive elements of reality."<sup>37</sup> Quite often then, the CEBs are the context in which laypeople organize and implement concrete plans for improving their life situations.

Of course, the CEBs were not the only forum for lay organization and mobilization during this period. Catholic Action (a service organization which also formed part of the New Christendom programme), its offshoots such as JAC (Juventud Agrícola Católica, for agrarian youth), JUC (Juventud Universitaria Católica, for students) and JOC (Juventud Obrera Católica, for young workers), Popular Action, the Basic Education Movement, and various Catholic labour unions were some of the other ways that people par-

icipated in political action as Catholics.

### The Medellín Conference

The CELAM conference at Medellín was another important religious event in this historical context. The conference was formally announced in 1967, and several preparatory activities followed.<sup>38</sup> Some consultation with the national episcopal councils occurred, and CELAM commissions and institutes conducted several meetings to prepare for the writing of the preparatory documents. In early 1968, experts (including social scientists and liberation theologians such as Gustavo Gutiérrez) collaborated with some of the Brazilian bishops to produce a preliminary Working Document for the conference.<sup>39</sup> Using the Gaudium et Spes methodology, the Document began with a view of Latin American realities, moved to theological reflections on these realities, and concluded with pastoral projections for Church action. This Document was circulated to the national episcopal conferences and the Vatican and, after certain suggestions were incorporated and changes made, the official Working Draft of the conference was issued.<sup>40</sup> This Draft, along with seven ponencias (position papers written by bishops and experts on themes such as "The Signs of the Times in Latin America" and "The Pastoral Care of the Masses and the Elites") formed the basis for discussion at the conference.<sup>41</sup>

On August 24th, 1968, Pope Paul VI opened CELAM II,

which had as its official theme, "The Church in the Present-Day Transformation of Latin America in the Light of the Council." Importantly, the Pope was not a ribbon-cutting figurehead who opened the conference with empty words before returning to Rome. Instead, he had come to intervene at Medellín (the reasons for which will become obvious as this thesis progresses). During the preparations for the conference, tensions between the Vatican (specifically the Pontifical Commission for Latin America) and CELAM had been high, as the Holy See attempted to control the conference organization and contents. Occasionally it had prevailed (e.g., it rejected, at the last minute, four experts invited by CELAM),<sup>42</sup> other times it failed (e.g., it was unable to impose its changes on the Working Draft).<sup>43</sup> This manoeuvring originating in Rome had met with only moderate success, but the Pope's visit to Latin America was probably expected to have more influence.

In his addresses in Colombia, the Pope's intentions became clear: he had come to Latin America to speak against violent revolution.<sup>44</sup> Worried that Populorum Progressio's loophole for revolutionary violence as a last resort would be exploited by the bishops at the conference (the Working Draft had already appeared very sympathetic to those who were "tempted to violence"),<sup>45</sup> Paul repeatedly rejected violence as un-Christian.<sup>46</sup> Instead of violent revolution, Paul preached that charity and love should be the force of

change.<sup>47</sup> However, as we shall see, this altering of the papal position on violence did not completely take hold at Medellín.

During the conference, the attention of the 249 participants was focused on the production and ratification of individual documents on certain key themes.<sup>48</sup> Specific committees worked on their respective documents, but each individual text was voted on by all the voting members. Only bishops and the heads of religious orders could vote; the experts (although many have remarked that they were responsible for the bulk of the documents)<sup>49</sup> were denied such privileges, as were the rest of the delegates. In the end, the following sixteen documents were published as the conference Conclusions: Justice, Peace, Family and Demography, Education, Youth, Pastoral Care of the Masses, Pastoral Concern for the Elites, Catechesis, Liturgy, Lay Movements, Priests, Religious, Formation of the Clergy, Poverty of the Church, Joint Pastoral Planning, and Mass Media.<sup>50</sup>

Following Gaudium et Spes and the Working Draft of the conference, each Medellín document begins with an outline of the Latin American reality, continues with doctrinal reflections on the issues at hand, and concludes with directives for pastoral action. While this in itself is significant, the Medellín documents are most noteworthy for their contents. Essentially, three key themes can be detected: the conflictual nature of society, the commitment to change,

and the option for the poor.<sup>51</sup>

### The Conflictual Nature of Society

In their observations on the Latin American reality, the bishops highlight its conflictual aspects, focusing on injustice, inequality, tensions, and violence. Specifically, the bishops distinguish between three categories of injustice. First, the bishops describe "tensions between the classes and internal colonialism" within Latin American countries themselves.<sup>52</sup> According to the documents, there exists in Latin American countries a situation of extreme inequality between the social classes. This inequality is perpetuated by the unjust nature of certain political and economic systems, and by insensitivity and willful oppression towards those who have been marginalized. Further, this situation is aggravated because the oppressed peoples are becoming more and more aware of their situation and are finding their legitimate aspirations to equality, education, and better living and working conditions to be repeatedly frustrated. The overall effect of such internal injustice, the bishops observe, is widespread misery and a climate of tension and anguish.<sup>53</sup>

The bishops describe similar problems on a larger scale, as they refer to "international tensions and external neocolonialism."<sup>54</sup> Here the bishops, to a large extent following the arguments of the dependency theorists, concentrate on the relative impoverishment of Latin American

countries in the international realm. According to them, the poverty of Latin American countries is largely due to their dependence on a centre of economic power outside themselves.<sup>55</sup> The fault for Latin America's economic dependence is said to rest with those powers that are inspired by the greed which leads to economic dictatorship and the deplorable "international imperialism of money."<sup>56</sup> Related to this is an equally unacceptable ideological imperialism in the political realm.<sup>57</sup> Overall, this external neocolonialism is said to constitute a source of internal and external tensions.

The third category of injustice noted in the documents concerns the tensions between Latin American countries themselves.<sup>58</sup> The bishops argue that the lack of social, political, cultural, religious, and racial integration within Latin America disturbs relations among nations and prevents their constructive collaboration. Excessive nationalism and the squandering of money on armaments are seen as further impediments to unified progress.<sup>59</sup> Although the bishops only devote passing attention to this type of injustice, they do at least recognize that conflict can also occur at an intermediate level.

According to the bishops, sin lies at the root of these injustices. The unjust lack of goods and their inequitable distribution, the oppressive social structures, the widespread hunger, misery and ignorance--all these are

the fruit of human sin.<sup>60</sup> In the Medellín documents therefore, sin is acknowledged to occur not only on a personal level, but on a social or collective scale as well.

Moreover, this sinful injustice is treated by the bishops as a negation of peace,<sup>61</sup> and so it is labelled "violence." According to the bishops, when structural deficiencies of agriculture, industry, the national and industrial economies, and of cultural and political life deprive people of their independence, initiative, and basic life necessities, "institutionalized violence" is said to exist.<sup>62</sup> In this understanding, the inhuman and destructive structures themselves are diagnosed as violent.

Repressive violence is closely related to institutionalized violence in the Medellín documents. Certain dominant groups, who benefit from the violent structures of the established order, may use force in order to prevent the transformation of these structures. Any attempts at opposition are repressed and, although repressive measures are often masked as being "anti-communist" or as necessary to maintain "peace and order," repressive force is nonetheless violent. Like institutionalized violence, repressive violence has as its victims the impoverished masses.<sup>63</sup>

This being the case, the bishops are not surprised that among the people there is a "temptation to violence." Revolutionary violence is directly provoked by the institutionalized and repressive violence to which people are



subjected, and is fuelled by the increasing awareness of the poor of their situation.<sup>64</sup> Referring to the "climate of collective anguish" and to "explosive consequences," the bishops powerfully indicate the potential for revolutionary violence in Latin America.<sup>65</sup>

When we take these descriptions of violence together with the discussions of injustice, tensions, inequality and colonialism in the Medellín documents, one conclusion is inescapable. Quite clearly, the participants at CELAM II, in attempting to outline the nature of reality in Latin America, assessed it to be pervaded with conflict.

In doing so, they were challenging the dominant hegemonic order. The bishops were revealing that the elites' development plans of industrialization and integration into the world capitalist system were a failure in real human terms. Further, they were delegitimizing inequality by portraying it not as an unavoidable and immutable fact of life in Latin America, but rather as the result of an unjust and unnecessary situation--one of sin. By desacralizing dominance in this manner, they were contributing to the development of class consciousness, which in turn potentially leads to the transformation of the structures of domination.<sup>66</sup>

In addition, by recognizing the conflictive class basis of society, the bishops are also (consciously or not) affirming that within the Church itself all are not socially

and economically equal. Discussions of the poverty of the masses are in Latin America to a large extent discussions of the poverty of large numbers of Catholics. Catholics are also inevitably to be found among the minority who often selfishly guard their excessive power and wealth. Further, as we shall see, the documents also contain confessions concerning the luxurious lifestyles of certain clergy. Finally, instead of outlining the pastoral care and concern of the "faithful," a distinction is made between the "masses" and the "elites." This beginning of the bishops' recognition that the Church itself has the quality of an interclass social space has significant implications. As will be discussed in subsequent chapters, the notion of class conflict within the Church seriously challenges the central institutional Catholic Church value of unity.

#### The Commitment to Change

The delegates to the Medellín conference were concerned with more than simply describing reality. Once the bishops discussed the problems of Latin America, they were also prepared to work for a change in the situation. Overall, they made extensive use of the categories and concepts of liberation theology.

Thus, in the Medellín documents, the bishops also announce a message of "liberation" and of "integral human development." They call for a liberation from hatred and injustice, and for a development of people from conditions

that are less than human to those which are more human--a development that includes not only economic, but also political, cultural, social, and spiritual growth.<sup>67</sup>

This liberation is the work of God and also implies certain human responsibilities.<sup>68</sup> God, who once delivered Israel from the slavery of Egypt, sent His Son for the new people of God, so that He would liberate them from the hunger, misery, oppression and ignorance to which sin has subjected them. Yet, for our authentic liberation, we need to undergo a profound conversion and in turn should be motivated to work for social justice. For humans then, not only an attitudinal change is required, but also certain "all-embracing, courageous, urgent and profoundly renovating transformations" of structures must take place.<sup>69</sup> According to the documents, liberation is both spiritual and social.

Quite obviously, then, the temporal and spiritual realms are not completely distinct. In fact, because human history is seen as situated within a salvific framework, working for justice in the world is closely related to salvation. According to the bishops, it is artificial to make a separation between temporal tasks and spiritual commitments, because after all God's salvific work in Christ is performed in the course of human history. Therefore, for the Latin American episcopate, there is no excuse for the Church to remain aloof and separate from the world; it is a

Christian's responsibility to work for change in society.<sup>70</sup>

Consistent with this conviction, the bishops in their pastoral recommendations outline the various types of transformations they support: these include economic, industrial, agricultural, judicial, and political changes.<sup>71</sup> Interestingly, the bishops appear to fit into the "revolutionary" (as opposed to "traditionalist" or "evolutionist") category of their own classification system, because they "question the socio-economic structure . . . [and] desire a radical change in goals as well as in implementation."<sup>72</sup> However, far more significant than the particular labels used is the fact that the bishops explicitly link this transformation of the social order with the Christian spiritual commitment. We have already noted how the bishops' treatment of inequality as rooted in sin served to desacralize the relations of dominance in Latin American society; their placement of a transformative historical project within a salvific framework grants religious legitimacy to the struggle against this dominance. Not only do the Medellín documents indicate a break of the Latin American bishops from the hegemonic project of the elites, they also help to the sacralize the efforts of the counterhegemonic forces in their society.

Importantly, it should be noted that the means for social change are assumed by the bishops to be nonviolent. Accordingly, the bishops generally stress that peace is the "Christian ideal."<sup>73</sup> Nonetheless, at one point in the

document on peace a slight allowance is made by the bishops for legitimate revolutionary violence. Crucially, they acknowledge that:

If it is true that revolutionary insurrection can be legitimate in the case of 'evident and prolonged tyranny that seriously works against the common good of the country', whether it proceeds from one person or from clearly unjust structures, it is also certain that violence or 'armed revolution' generally 'generates new injustices, introduces new imbalances and causes new disasters; one cannot combat a real evil at the price of a greater evil.'<sup>74</sup>

Although Pope Paul's words from Populorum Progressio are used,<sup>75</sup> the sense imparted is different. Following Donal Dorr, we can note that Paul's original statement contained two elements, the most important being that revolution is an unacceptable reaction to injustice because it engenders greater evils. Paul's second point--relegated to a phrase set off by dashes--contains the admission that certain rare exceptions to this guideline may exist. The Medellín document quotes from both parts of the Pope's statement, but significantly, the order is reversed. Not only is the exception for revolutionary violence released from the dashes, it is placed before the warning that insurrection often engenders new injustices. As Dorr comments, although the Medellín passage does not distort the meaning of Populorum Progressio, it is certainly bolder and less vague,<sup>76</sup> explicitly stating that "revolutionary violence can be legitimate." In light of the lengths that the Pope had gone to just before the conference to warn against violence, the

bishops' statement appears even more audacious.

With this one passage, CELAM potentially provides legitimation to those who believe that violence can be necessary to achieve ultimately just ends. In the Latin American context of the time, and especially within Catholic circles, this would not have gone unnoticed. We have already seen that Camilo Torres had become somewhat of a hero and prototype for certain other Christian revolutionary groups and organizations. Further, during the Medellín conference itself, a group of nine hundred priests issued a statement on the subject of violence. They asked that "the unjust violence of the oppressors (who maintain this despicable system)" not be equated with "the just violence of the oppressed (who feel obliged to use it to achieve their liberation)."<sup>77</sup> Moreover, although they did "not wish to draw an idyllic picture of violence," they affirmed "the right of any unjustly oppressed community to react, even violently, against its unjust oppressor."<sup>78</sup> A definite trend toward Church legitimation of revolutionary violence was thus already rising in Latin America; the additional authority of a continent-wide bishops' conference behind it gave this movement unprecedented support.

#### Option for the Poor

Significantly, in their reaction to injustice and in their resultant commitment to change, the bishops wish to profess an "option for the poor." Here the bishops also

reflect some of the themes of the liberation theologians, especially those of Gustavo Gutiérrez and his work on poverty.<sup>79</sup> In the Medellín documents, the bishops demonstrate this option in several ways: by accepting the implications of a certain understanding of poverty, by promoting a specific type of education, and by endorsing the continued formation of CEBs.

One of the main themes of the option for the poor is the need for the Church to make a renewed commitment to poverty--she must become a poor Church. The bishops take care to outline precisely what this entails, and start with a nuanced definition of the three types of poverty. First, there is material poverty defined as a lack of goods necessary to live worthily as humans in the world. Seen as contrary to the will of the Lord, this poverty is often the result of human injustice and sin. Second, the bishops define spiritual poverty as the condition of openness to God. Although those who are spiritually poor value worldly goods, they are not attached to them and also recognize the greater value of the Kingdom's riches. Finally, there can be poverty as a commitment, a loving and voluntary assumption of the conditions of the needy, which is a witness to the evil of these conditions and also to spiritual freedom in the face of material goods. To be committed to poverty in this way is to follow Christ's example of "becoming poor."<sup>80</sup>

The position of a poor Church in this context is clear. She must denounce the poverty which is an unjust lack of goods, and must preach and live in spiritual poverty. Further, the Church is bound to material poverty, and her members must live out evangelical poverty each according to his or her own personal vocation.<sup>81</sup> Overall, "the poverty of the Latin American Church and its members ought to be a sign and commitment--a sign of the inestimable value of the poor in the eyes of God, and an obligation of solidarity with those who suffer."<sup>82</sup>

This commitment and solidarity take certain concrete forms. For example, the Church's resources and personnel are to be distributed in such a way that gives preference to the poorest sectors. Modest lifestyles, functional institutions and works, and financial arrangements separate from the administration of sacraments are also to characterize the Church. Admitting that great buildings and the luxurious lifestyles of some of the clergy have added a grain a truth to the stereotype that the Church is rich and allied with the rich, the bishops stress that bishops, pastors and religious must support the cause of the poor.<sup>83</sup> Solidarity with the poor implies a full assumption of the struggles of the poor, to "feel the problems, perceive the demands, share the agonies, discover the ways, and cooperate in the solutions."<sup>84</sup> It is in this desire to be one with the poor and serve them that the preferential option of the Church is



most clearly expressed. However, this option is also evident in other recommendations the bishops make in the documents, in the preferential attention and encouragement given to the poor as agents of change in society.

CELAM's endorsement of the CEBs is one form of this support. The bishops stress that the CEBs have an important role to play in the Church and in the process of development. Referred to in more than one document, these groups are seen to be both a focal point for evangelization and as essential factors in development, the consolidation of rights, and the search for justice.<sup>85</sup> By promoting CEBs in this manner, the bishops appear to be affirming the ability and the duty of the poor to take part in their own development.

This impression is confirmed by the bishops' views on basic education. They denounce the predominant educational system, which they claim is oriented to maintaining the dominant and oppressive socio-economic structures.<sup>86</sup> Instead, according to the documents, education should mean something much deeper for the students; it should be a "'liberating education', that is, one which converts students into the subjects of their own development. Education is actually the key instrument for liberating the masses from all servitude."<sup>87</sup> This educational strategy is based on Freire's concept of conscientization. By broadening the social and political awareness of people, by awakening "a

living awareness of justice, infusing in them a dynamic sense of responsibility and solidarity,"<sup>88</sup> a conscientizing education is the means by which the poor can be participants in overall social change.<sup>89</sup> By focusing on the oppressed and assigning them a role in the construction of a new society, the bishops are reinforcing the preferential option for the poor to which they commit themselves as members of a poor Church.

In explicitly Gramscian terms, not only have some of the Church's traditional intellectuals (the truly progressive CELAM bishops) disassociated themselves from the hegemonic project of the dominant classes by opting for the poor, but they also have begun to encourage the formation of organic intellectuals of the dominated classes.<sup>90</sup> This is consistent with the crucial demand of the liberation theologians that the poor themselves become the agents of their own liberation. Through the process of conscientization in the context of the CEBs, the subordinate classes can begin to generate their own intellectuals, who necessarily come to challenge the powerful both inside and outside the Church.

One of the most significant of these challenges is to the traditional power structure of the Church. If the Medellín message with its option for the poor is taken seriously, the potential for what Boff has called a "reinvention of the Church" exists. Above all, the concretization of this option in the CEBs implies a shift

away from the authoritarian and monarchical model of the Church, and towards a model of the Church as the People of God, a Church that is from, of, and with, the poor. Historically in the Church, according to Boff, the bishops and priests received all the religious "capital" and produced all the religious "goods," with the faithful relegated to consumer status only. In the Church born of the people's faith, this religious production is no longer the monopoly of the hierarchy, but can and also should originate "from below." Sacred power is redistributed in the Church, and new energy is directed toward the essential tasks of political and spiritual liberation.<sup>91</sup> By affirming the need for CEBs, the documents are suggesting a reform and renewal of the long-standing Church structure--changes which would undoubtedly be viewed as threatening by many of those whose power and status are linked to the traditional institutional form.

#### An Analysis of the Conference

These were the most significant themes of the conference. The Medellín documents contained the acknowledgement that Latin American society was plagued by structural injustice and violence, a commitment of the Church to work for a transformation of these conditions and the development and liberation of people, and the declaration that this strategy for change would involve a meaningful, concrete, and multifaceted option for the poor and powerless. Of all the

matters that were discussed at the conference and in the documents, these were the topics that were to have the greatest repercussions.

Of course, it should be noted that the CELAM documents did not necessarily express the positions of the entire Latin American Church, nor even of all the bishops affiliated with CELAM. At most meetings and conferences, delegates do not all participate equally in the preparations and proceedings; rather, they discuss largely predetermined matters and tend to arrange themselves into various factions which follow the lead of their articulate and often charismatic spokespeople. The Medellín Conference was no different. A select core of Brazilian bishops and experts had produced the ponencias and the Working Draft--they were largely responsible for setting the liberationist agenda before CELAM II began. When it came to the conference itself and the voting on the documents, Dom Helder Câmara and an extremely progressive group of Brazilian bishops appeared to have had an enormous influence (perhaps even attracting the support of a number of delegates who as individuals would not have taken such a bold stand).<sup>92</sup> However, this progressive wing did not completely prevail: the majority of the Colombian bishops voted against them and issued their own (much more conservative) report instead.<sup>93</sup>

Nonetheless, the Brazilians' disproportionate influence and the Colombians' dissent aside, the majority of the

delegates did--of their own free will--vote for the documents as they were outlined above. The reasons for the bishops' support of the Medellín stance are found both outside and within the institutional Church of the time.

Perhaps most obviously, many of the bishops had observed the hardships of the people. Even if the bishops themselves lived comfortably and economically isolated from the poverty of the majority of the faithful, they often were not physically isolated from it. Urban slums or impoverished villages were an inevitable component of many dioceses. Moreover, the modus operandi of the Latin American bishops also helped to awaken their awareness. Since the bishops spent much of their time "receiving" people (mostly average citizens with any number of problems), they often heard first-hand about the people's basic struggles in life.<sup>94</sup>

In addition, some bishops at Medellín no doubt felt pressured by the sociopolitical ferment outlined at the beginning of this chapter.<sup>95</sup> As J.B. Libânio summarizes it:

A violent revolutionary upsurge on the left was shaking the continent, but there was a no less violent reaction from the conservative forces who were trying to defend their traditions and [who] identified with the neocapitalist economic system. While leftist forces were on the rise in some countries, just the opposite was true in Brazil [and other countries].<sup>96</sup>

The CELAM delegates had lived through a decade in which poverty, inequality, intervention, revolution, repression,

and dictatorship were all visibly present. Certainly, the bishops' support of the Medellín documents was to an extent a reflection of their experience of these conditions.

However, while the recognition that the Medellín documents' depiction of reality was authentic may have persuaded some delegates to approve them, it is unlikely that this factor alone was responsible for all the positive votes. Some of the bishops (led by the progressive Brazilian faction) did genuinely adhere to the class-based analysis found in the documents, but class affiliation and ideological biases would have made it difficult for many of the more conservative bishops to accept Medellín's liberationist message wholeheartedly. The fact that many of these bishops helped ratify the documents suggests that other possible motives should be considered for their support. This leads us to look, as Gramsci would advise, not merely to politico-economic factors, but also to organizational necessities which would influence the acceptance of the documents.

Much evidence exists to suggest that Church support for innovations like those endorsed by Medellín is part of a defensive reaction to a number of threats to Church influence. As is well-known, the Catholic Church has traditionally held a great deal of influence over Latin American society, so much so that Madeleine Adriance has referred to its privileged position as one of "religious hegemony."<sup>97</sup> However, in the twentieth century the Church has felt its

dominance threatened by a variety of extra-institutional trends, including secularism, syncretism, Protestantism and communism.

As secularism has seeped into Latin American society, the clergy have begun to realize that although the majority of Latin Americans can be classified as Catholic, most of them are only nominally so. While many are baptized, married, and buried in the Church, fewer and fewer receive significant amounts of religious education, and consistent participation in Church worship and activities is becoming rarer. Although a great number of Latin Americans are "emotionally tied" to their Church, the traditional religious values no longer permeate the lives of many Catholics.<sup>98</sup> At least part of this trend is due to increased migration to the cities, which often forces people to sever ties with the folk religion rooted in rural village customs.<sup>99</sup>

The high rate of urbanization in many Latin American countries has also been responsible for the increased visibility of "syncretism" (the combination of folk Catholicism with African and indigenous religions) in these societies. As Adriance points out, syncretism had always been a part of rural life, yet it often remained less visible to the clergy. However, when large numbers of people moved to the cities, the number of urban cultic temples rose significantly. Therefore, syncretism appeared to be more prevalent and

was often viewed as a threat to "authentic" Catholic traditions and practices.<sup>100</sup>

At the same time that syncretic tendencies appeared to be on the rise, the number of Protestant (particularly Evangelical) missionaries also increased. Although historically the Protestant churches had ministered mainly to immigrant German- or English-speaking populations, many middle class Catholics and large masses of the rural and urban poor had begun to be attracted to Protestant sects.<sup>101</sup> Also in the 1960s, Protestant groups distributed hundreds of thousands of Bibles and millions of scripture passages to Latin Americans,<sup>102</sup> an action sure to have caught the attention of Catholic leaders.

Finally, the noticeable activities of communists and socialists would also have appeared as threatening the influence of the Catholic Church. The Cuban Revolution (and the subsequent difficulties experienced by the Church in Cuba) was still fresh in many minds during the 1960s, and various other leftist movements had arisen in its wake. In addition, the peasant leagues (which had the reputation of being "red") had attracted many of the rural poor, and communist and socialist ideologies and movements had made inroads into the universities.<sup>103</sup> Besides the fact that the success of such movements would have disrupted the social order with which the Church was intertwined, the left wing's supposed "atheistic materialism" would also have



been seen as one of its greatest dangers by many Church leaders of the time.<sup>104</sup>

The Church's position in society becomes even more insecure in the face of these various threats because it enters the "struggle" against them from a position of weakness.<sup>105</sup> By 1970, the continent of Latin America had the lowest proportion of priests per Catholic population in the world, with some countries having only a ratio of one priest for over 10,000 inhabitants.<sup>106</sup> The population explosion, a low level of priestly vocations, and the loss of ordained priests (though laicization, assassination, or the return home of expatriate missionaries) all contributed to this shortage of priests.<sup>107</sup>

Latin American bishops have long been aware of these problems. As early as 1899, at the Plenary Latin American Council, the bishops were discussing "paganism, superstition, religious ignorance, socialism, Masonry, and the press. . . as well as other anti-Christian movements."<sup>108</sup> At the inaugural meeting of CELAM in Rio de Janeiro in 1955, much attention was again paid to spiritualism, superstition, Masonry and Marxist communism.<sup>109</sup> In addition, CELAM's fourth annual meeting (held in Fômeque, Colombia in 1959) was centred on the problem of communist infiltration in Latin America in social, educational, and public opinion sectors.<sup>110</sup> Consistent with these historical concerns, the Medellín documents also contain scattered references to

secularization, decreasing participation in religion, nonpracticising Catholics, semi-pagan ethnic groups, superstitious practices, and the scarcity of apostolic personnel.<sup>111</sup>

Faced with these pastoral challenges prior to Medellín, the Church had often reacted by starting or encouraging the operation of numerous lay Catholic organizations. For example, Catholic Action was originally imported to Brazil under the guidance of the Cardinal-Archbishop of Rio, as part of his plan to extend Church influence over society. His successor, who also believed that the Church should exert some authority in society, reorganized Catholic Action in 1950. As Adriance comments, "it is no coincidence that this change came about shortly after the Communists had been organizing a peasant movement, Protestants increased their missionary efforts, and syncretism became more visible."<sup>112</sup> Other Church-supported groups such as Popular Action, the Basic Education Movement, and Catholic unions, also helped the Church "remain competitive." To use Gramsci's term, they can be seen as "conjunctural organizations," the creation of which helped the Church to deal with rival social forces.

A similar dynamic was in operation at Medellín. While Frederick Turner is justified in stressing that "it would be inaccurate as well as uncharitable to see the basic motivation of Church leaders resulting from fear for the

institutional position of the Church,"<sup>113</sup> it appears that at least some of the CELAM bishops supported the Medellín documents for more or less these same reasons (genuine liberationists and dissenting conservatives aside, of course). At a time when the survival of the Church as an institution in Latin America appeared to be in question, the Medellín innovations gave the Church somewhat of a "shot in the arm." Although the more conservative bishops may not have been responsible for formulating the liberationist elements of the documents themselves, endorsing them was an organizational necessity: it was one way to ensure that if these ideas and programs were going to attract the laity, it would be the Catholic Church behind them.

Further, their support of Medellín's ideas and proclamations would have seemed relatively harmless at the time. After all, Medellín's themes appeared to have been in the same vein as Vatican II and Populorum Progressio. Vatican II had condemned the imbalances and inequalities in the modern world,<sup>114</sup> proclaimed the Church and the world to be mutually related,<sup>115</sup> and called for socio-economic reforms and universal changes in ideas and attitudes,<sup>116</sup> all the while paying new attention to the role of the laity. Paul VI's encyclical was even more explicit, as it defined the Christian demand for development and stressed the Christian obligation to work for change.<sup>117</sup> From the title of the Medellín conference, to its methodology, to its sources (219

references are from the Council and 76 are from Paul VI),<sup>118</sup> the Medellín documents could have easily appeared as simply the Latin American extension of an initiative begun by the Vatican and Popes John XXIII and Paul VI. This apparent consistency with Rome, coupled with the desire to protect the institutional Church from threats to its religious hegemony, likely won over many of the more conservative bishops at Medellín.

However, despite the similarities between Vatican II and Medellín, the Latin American bishops did progress much further than the conciliar framework. As Gustavo Gutiérrez summarizes:

Vatican II speaks of the underdevelopment of peoples, of the developed countries and what they can and should do about this underdevelopment; Medellín tries to deal with the problem from the standpoint of the poor countries, characterizing them as subjected to a new kind of colonialism. Vatican II talks about a Church in the world and describes the relationship in a way which tends to neutralize the conflicts; Medellín demonstrates that the world in which the Latin American Church ought to be present is in full revolution. Vatican II sketches a general outline for Church renewal; Medellín provides guidelines for a transformation of the Church in terms of its presence on a continent of misery and injustice.<sup>119</sup>

Considering these significant differences, it is clear why Robert McAfee Brown has commented that a more apt title for Medellín would have been "The Present-Day Transformation of the Council in the Light of Latin America."<sup>120</sup>

### Conclusions

The Medellín Conference was indeed bold. It came as

a fitting finale to a period in Latin American history which was filled with turmoil and change, and it capped off a phase of Church history which was equally as hectic. A definite counterhegemonic trend was rising in Latin America, with revolutionaries and dependency theorists challenging the status quo and its assumptions that capitalist growth and national security were goals to be pursued at almost any cost. Within the Church, counterparts to the secular revolutionaries arose, and liberation theologians helped to give expression to the conviction that the poor and powerless, who had already begun organizing themselves in small communities, should become the locus of future Church activity and liberated from oppression in the society at large. The official conclusions of the Second General Conference of the Latin American Episcopal Council, by emphasizing the conflictual nature of reality, a commitment to change, and an option for the poor, appeared to give authoritative ecclesiastical sanction to this counterhegemonic movement. The bishops, or at least the authors of the documents, had begun to function as organic intellectuals of the subordinate class, as those who responded to the conditions of that class and helped to articulate and legitimate its social and economic aspirations.

However, for some of the voting members of CELAM, the approval of the texts may not have been completely wholehearted and genuine. Considering the precarious situation

many felt the Church to be in at the time--the anti-Catholic forces of secularism, Protestantism, syncretism and especially communism threatening the influence of an institution already weakened by a shortage of vocations--the Medellín innovations may have appeared to be the least dangerous of an array of unpalatable evils. This motivation to preserve the religious hegemony of the Catholic Church in Latin America appeared at the time to take precedence over the desire to maintain the traditional structures of power within the Church.

The latter were still widely valued, of course. Yet, in the era of modernization in the Church inaugurated by Vatican II, and given the superficial similarities of Medellín with the changes emanating from Rome, it is understandable that many at that time would not have even thought that the established relations of dominance were endangered. Several of the CELAM bishops simply did not foresee the consequences of the conference, failing to recognize that the currents of change they promoted in order to preserve the external influence of the Church would eventually develop to threaten its internal hegemonic order.

Of the people who did sense the implications of Medellín, two broad groups can be distinguished: those who believed that a reinvention of the Church and its practices was to be welcomed and nurtured (the "liberationists"), and those whose fear of the disruption of tradition

and the redistribution of power led them to struggle to defend the Church against such changes (the "conservatives"). At the level of the CELAM bishops, this was in effect to become a struggle of the Church's traditional intellectuals: the conservatives in their attempts to protect and perpetuate the hegemony of the dominant group became pitted against the liberationists who had been converted to the counterhegemonic cause. The sides had thus lined up at Medellín; the battle was to take place in the decade leading up the Third General CELAM Conference at Puebla.

### CHAPTER THREE: THE TUMULTUOUS TIME BETWEEN

By the end of the Medellín conference, two distinct groups, with differing opinions about the nature of the Church and its role in social change, had undoubtedly been formed. But the actual dispute between the liberationists and the conservatives was still in its beginning stages and had not yet become public. This chapter aims to trace, within the Latin American historical context of the late 1960s and the 1970s, the development of each of these factions within the Church, and seeks to document their known points of conflict along the path to Puebla.

#### The Latin American Historical Bloc between 1968 and 1979

Sadly, the decade following Medellín was above all characterized by the exacerbation of the most disturbing trends of the 1960s. In almost all the Latin American countries, income distribution became increasingly skewed.<sup>1</sup> While the economic and political power of the elite minority continued to grow, the living conditions of the majority of Latin Americans dropped. Millions of people saw their real wages and the production of subsistence foods fall, while inflation, unemployment, underemployment, and landlessness spread rapidly. Disease, hunger, and poverty worsened



correspondingly.

The causes of this horrifying situation were complex and interrelated, but many had their origins in the economic strategies of the 1960s. The oligarchies continued to pursue industrial and agricultural modernization, and economic growth rates continued to "prove" their success. Unfortunately, the profitable multinational factories that produced the luxury goods wanted by the upper classes were not producing the daily staple items needed by the poor. In addition, although the wages these companies offered were meagre, they did succeed in attracting workers from the rural areas. However, industrial reliance on modern, capital-intensive production techniques meant that the supply of workers was much greater than needed, and the already over-burdened cities and slums grew steadily.

Yet, in many areas people remained eager and available to move to the cities--because of the effects of modernization in the agricultural sphere. Many peasants lost their land as plantation owners put their holdings into agro-export production, while other powerless agricultural labourers were forced to accept less-than-subsistence wages. More and more land was occupied by luxury crops, non-food crops such as coffee and cotton, and by beef production (much for export to North America), while any land remaining for staple food production (beans, rice, corn) was often of inferior quality. Forced or starved off the land, many

people had little choice but to migrate to the cities.<sup>2</sup>

By the late 1970s, the billions of dollars of foreign debt accumulated by the Latin American nations was also beginning to prove problematic. The elites had borrowed heavily for their "development priorities," but much of the money was lost to personal greed, inefficiency, prestige projects, and capital flight. In the early 1980s, this situation, coupled with the recession, increased interest rates, and plummeting prices for the continent's exports, precipitated Latin America's "debt crisis." The debts had grown so large that many countries, despite their continued borrowing (which just made matters worse), were having difficulty meeting debt service payments. As a condition of further aid, or in an attempt to guarantee debt servicing, the lending institutions (e.g., the International Monetary Fund, or the "IMF") often demanded austerity measures in the debtor nations: cuts to social spending, wage freezes, elimination of food subsidies, etc. Thus, the end result of foreign "aid" was often simply the worsening of poverty and inequality. While the crisis deepened dramatically in 1981 and 1982, by the time of the Puebla conference in 1979 some of its indicators had already begun to materialize.<sup>3</sup>

In all too many countries, military repression was the only way such unjust living standards and structures could be maintained. For example, military coups brought terror to Bolivia (1971), Chile (1973), Uruguay (1976) and

Argentina (1976), while brutal regimes persisted in Paraguay, Brazil, Nicaragua, Guatemala, and El Salvador. The money devoted to the military in these countries further depleted the funds that could have been used for the benefit of the poor. Moreover, the rates of torture, jailing, kidnapping, and murder escalated to unprecedented levels, as the dictators sought to crush any real or imagined opposition to their rule.<sup>4</sup> Once again, the doctrine of National Security provided ideological legitimation for the widespread persecution.

Renewed financial and military support in the battle against "subversive" forces came from the U.S. government, which had been re-alerted to the "danger" by the Rockefeller Report.<sup>5</sup> The Report, which was issued in 1969 after Nelson Rockefeller's tour of Latin America, contained warnings that numerous movements for social change were threatening national security and U.S. investments in the region. The continued struggles of revolutionary groups, along with the strikes and demonstrations of the peasants, students, and workers, were worrisome enough. But when the Marxist-Socialist coalition led by Salvador Allende was democratically elected in Chile in 1970, it was as if the worst fears of the Report had come true.<sup>6</sup> Among other things, Allende nationalized many enterprises (including the copper companies in which the U.S. had interests), stood firm in the face of IMF demands, and aimed for international non-align-

ment status. In response, considerable CIA funding was provided to help destabilize Allende's rule; however, the threat to U.S. interests was eventually eliminated in 1973 when Allende was overthrown and the dictator Pinochet was installed in his place.<sup>7</sup>

However, while the United States had intervened to thwart or suppress revolutionary currents throughout Latin America in the 1970s, it could not prevent the Frente Sandinista de Liberación Nacional (FSLN) from taking power in the Nicaraguan Revolution of 1979. The Sandinistas, who enjoyed a great deal of support from the majority of the Nicaraguan people (and who had, for a while, an alliance with middle and upper class moderates and business people), overthrew the corrupt dictator Somoza and began to reconstruct their country. Twenty years after the Cuban Revolution, a second revolutionary government had been established in Latin America. And although the triumph of the Sandinistas occurred in July 1979--six months after the Puebla conference--the anti-Somoza movement had begun years earlier.

#### Church History in the Years Leading to Puebla

Significantly, the Nicaraguan Revolution and the struggle leading up to it were not strictly "secular" phenomena. In fact, the revolutionary movement had a strong Catholic component. Despite the historically right-wing hierarchy and conservative policies of the official Church, a progressive sector of Nicaraguan Catholics had been grow-

ing since the 1960s. The core of this faction had been the members of CEBs,<sup>8</sup> as well as some extremely activist clergy, many of whom came to support, join, or collaborate with the FSLN in the late 1970s. Somoza's greed following the 1972 earthquake and the increased repression meted out by his National Guard were some of the chief factors that drew many Catholics to the anti-Somoza struggle and the FSLN.

Moreover, even the hierarchy had become increasingly liberalized during this period. Although the Nicaraguan bishops had vacillated in their position throughout the 1970s and had often preached against Marxism and revolutionary violence (promoting mediated reform instead), they made some breaks in their alliance with Somoza and occasionally even criticized the government. Eventually, they joined the majority of Nicaraguan Catholics and supported the revolutionary change led by the FSLN. In drastic contrast to the Cuban situation twenty years earlier, in which the institutional Church did not share in the revolution (and consequently saw many of its members imprisoned or expelled), in Nicaragua the Church played a significant role in revolutionary change.<sup>9</sup>

Certainly, Nicaragua was not the only country in which Catholics had joined the struggle against injustice. Throughout Latin America they were mobilizing to help transform the structures of oppression. Since Medellín tens of

thousands of CEBs had sprung up, and had facilitated tremendous lay involvement in reflection and action for social change.<sup>10</sup> Moreover, increased numbers of people viewed it as part of their Christian commitment to criticize regimes, collaborate with revolutionary movements, and form their own social justice organizations and documentation centres.<sup>11</sup> Of the political organizations, the Christians for Socialism movement gathered the most followers and attention, holding a landmark convention in Santiago, Chile in 1972. At the meeting, direct political participation in the construction of socialism was openly advocated.<sup>12</sup> This elevated level of political activism among Catholics was one of the most significant characteristics of the Church in the years immediately following Medellín.

To a certain extent, the worsening social and economic conditions in Latin America precipitated the political involvement of many of the laity, religious, priests, and bishops. Confronted with the severity of the situation, their own poverty and/or consciences impelled them to act. But crucially, such action had also been invited and legitimated by CELAM--an official organ of the institutional Church--in the form of the Medellín documents. Political activism was seen as simply a logical extension of Medellín's option for the poor and commitment to change.

Unfortunately, as the commitment of Catholics to liberation intensified, so did the persecution they faced

from the regimes and their agents. No one was immune: thousands of laypeople, religious, priests, and even bishops were harassed, arrested, kidnapped, expelled, tortured and murdered in the 1970s, all for their part in bringing the Church's option for the poor to life.<sup>13</sup> Many were victims of vengeful government plots such as the "Banzer Plan" in Bolivia, under which progressive Church leaders were systematically harassed, discredited, and arrested.<sup>14</sup> Such programmes were often supported by the U.S. government, which realized that the work of the liberationists threatened U.S. interests in the region.<sup>15</sup> Indeed, the progressive Church in Latin America had powerful enemies.

However, not all of the opposition to the liberationist cause came from sources outside the Church. Although the dissenting voices of the conservative Colombian bishops were largely ignored at Medellín,<sup>16</sup> within a few years representatives of their views had come to control influential positions within CELAM itself. A conservative backlash to Medellín was building.

This trend was gaining momentum as early as 1971, when the Belgian Jesuit Roger Vekemans arrived in Bogotá. The European-educated Vekemans had spent years in Chile working for the Christian Democrats and attempting to suppress the growing leftist sentiment in that country. To this end, he had channelled millions of dollars from the CIA to the Christian Democrats in the 1964 election campaign,

and had devoted other funds from reactionary foreign sponsors to the building of an anti-communist network.<sup>17</sup> When Allende was elected in 1970, Vekemans left and ended up in Colombia.

Once in Bogotá, Vekemans set up the Research Centre for the Development and Integration of Latin America (CEDIAL) and began publishing Tierra Nueva, a journal almost completely devoted to attacking liberation theology.<sup>18</sup> In this endeavour he was soon joined by Bishop Alfonso López Trujillo, a young and ambitious conservative in the Colombian hierarchy. Together, in their speeches and publications, they sought to drum up further opposition to liberation theology.<sup>19</sup> To help finance their crusade, funds were solicited from international agencies including Adveniat, the Third World aid agency of the conservative West German bishops.<sup>20</sup>

Meanwhile, López Trujillo was actively seeking a position of greater influence within the Church from which to further disseminate his anti-Medellín messages. With the help of Vekemans, he made numerous contacts among the conservative elements in the Latin American Church and the Vatican Curia. Among others, his allies included Colombia's right-wing Cardinal Aníbal Muñoz Duque, and Curial powers Cardinal Agnelo Rossi and Cardinal Sebastiano Baggio (who at the time was president of the Pontifical Commission for Latin America).<sup>21</sup> Evidently, this networking paid off, as



López Trujillo was elected to the post of Secretary General of CELAM at the bishops' 1972 assembly in Sucre, Bolivia.

Shortly after, López Trujillo began to reorganize CELAM. He dismantled those departments associated with Medellín (supposedly due to "budgetary reasons") and restaffed others with conservative European theologians.<sup>22</sup> He also reversed the decentralization CELAM had undergone in the 1960s by collapsing several of the CELAM training institutes into one located in Colombia, where it could be kept under his watchful eye.<sup>23</sup> Finally, although the moderate Eduardo Pironio and progressive Aloisio Lorscheider were the CELAM Presidents during this period, with the help of the other conservatives elected at Sucre (to lead the departments concerning Social Action and the Laity)<sup>24</sup> and with his connections in Rome, López Trujillo frequently overruled them and became the true manager of CELAM.<sup>25</sup> By the mid-1970s, the CELAM which had created Medellín had been largely transformed into the anti-liberationist office of the Latin American Church.

At this point, it is important to re-emphasize that López Trujillo and Vekemans were far from being the only ones in the Latin American Church who had concerns about Medellín. Of course, they were among the most vocal, active, and powerful critics of the liberationist currents encouraged and legitimated by CELAM II. However, they were merely extremist representatives of a movement on the part

of the bulk of the hierarchy that was pulling back from the implications of Medellín.<sup>26</sup> In other words, the backlash in the Church consisted of more than two people.

Several factors were responsible for the conservative resurgence among the bishops. In general, they began to recognize that the liberationist demands challenged the dominant hegemony with which many of them had been quite comfortably allied. In particular, some bishops began to experience the repercussions of the progressive Church's conflict with right-wing rulers in Latin America. At the very least, the Church in various countries often suffered a loss of financial support from the government when it persisted in using its resources to implement programs that did not meet with government approval.<sup>27</sup> Moreover, in the post-Medellín wave of military repression, promoting the option for the poor could conceivably cost a bishop his life (or the lives of the Church members around him). While some have argued that this persecution served to "purify" the Church and push its members to further protest,<sup>28</sup> it is certainly possible that some of the bishops' moves away from Medellín were provoked by fear.

Of course, fear as a motive was rarely (if ever) discussed. Instead, as we have seen, the conservative faction led by López Trujillo and Vekemans appeared to be more concerned about the growing popularity of liberation theology (which, in their minds, was an inseparable part of the

Medellín legacy). Certainly, since CELAM II liberation theology had flourished, with its books and articles enjoying extensive distribution in Latin America and translation and discussion worldwide. It had also matured; the emerging concepts of the 1960s had been elaborated, deepened and refined in the 1970s.<sup>29</sup> By the time the preparations for the Puebla conference began, the conservatives had found a developed and well-defined enemy in liberation theology.

Essentially, as I began to argue in the previous chapter, the liberationist agenda was viewed as dangerous because its implications jeopardized the Church's institutional imperative of self-reproduction. A most significant threat was directed at the traditional authority structures of the Church, in which the majority of power rested firmly in the hands of the Pope and bishops. At Medellín, liberationists called for an end to this vertical, top-down transmission of authority, and argued that a more horizontal ecclesiological model should be promoted so that the poor, lay majority could participate fully in the determination of the Church's course. In 1968 such a "reinvention" of the Church was to a large extent occurring only in the hopes and dreams of the progressives. However, the growing popularity of liberation theology and the increased mobilization of the laity in CEBs during the 1970s indicated that the transformation was beginning. The hierarchy's long-standing monopoly on the production of religious knowledge and stan-

dards had begun to weaken under the pressure exerted by the growing grassroots movements.

In addition, the threat to the traditional authority structures of the Church can also be seen as a threat to the unity of the Church. Unity, based on the belief that there is "one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, who is over all, and works through all, and is in all,"<sup>30</sup> has long been one of the central values of the institutional Church and was a key theme of Vatican II.<sup>31</sup> Crucially, unity is also seen to be preserved and represented by the Pope and bishops--and by obedience to them. Therefore, any challenge to their authority potentially undermines the valued unity of the Church.

It is clear that the liberationist model of the Church, which became known in Latin America as the "popular church," was treated by the conservatives as such a divisive phenomenon. Their portrayal of it as a "parallel church," with its own organization, magisterium, and doctrine (parallel and opposed to those which were supported by the hierarchy),<sup>32</sup> revealed their conviction that the popular church, if allowed to persist, would destroy Church unity.

It is also important to recognize why the liberationists did not share the conservatives' concern in this regard. Basically, they were not alarmed over threats to unity because they did not feel that the Latin American Church was characterized by it in the first place. As we

have seen, already in the Medellín documents a distinction was made between the masses and the elites among the faithful; the social and economic inequality among Latin Americans was also recognized. However, liberation theologians explicitly came to describe the Church as divided. As Gustavo Gutiérrez explained:

The Church is in a world divided into antagonistic social classes, on a universal scale as well as at the local level . . . . What is more, this fact exists within the Church itself. Indeed, Christians belong to opposing social classes, which means that the Christian community itself is split by this social division . . . . To try piously to cover over this social division with a fictitious and formalistic unity is to avoid a difficult and conflictual reality.<sup>33</sup>

Therefore, the liberationist use of a class-based analysis was in itself a challenge to the traditional notion of Church unity supported by the conservatives.<sup>34</sup>

Moreover, the choice liberationists demand that Christians make when confronted with a divided Church appeared to threaten a second important value of the institutional Church (one closely related to unity). Universality has always been, by definition, the hallmark of the Catholic Church. But the liberationist emphasis on the preferential option for the poor and oppressed necessarily implies an option against the oppressors,<sup>35</sup> something which the conservatives generally equated with "exclusivity." As a church of and for the poor, the popular church was seen as assuming the character of a "sect," which was contrary to the universal character and mission of the Church.<sup>36</sup> Since

it threatened to sabotage the very principle that made the Church "Catholic," it is no surprise that liberation theology was distrusted by many of the conservatives.<sup>37</sup>

Often, their distrust deepened when liberation theology was also linked to Marxism by the likes of López Trujillo.<sup>38</sup> The atheistic foundation it was often assumed to possess was frequently enough to convince many Catholics that Marxism and the Church were incompatible. However, López Trujillo preferred to warn that the Marxist analysis adopted by liberation theologians was a danger because, he said, it led to a politicization of faith and an inevitable promotion of violent revolution.<sup>39</sup> According to him, political neutrality is demanded of the Church, as much as violence and revolution are condemned, by the Gospel.<sup>40</sup> Once again, Church unity and universality are at issue: the class analysis diagnoses the Church as divided and the class struggle would pit Christian against Christian;<sup>41</sup> the revolutionary process potentially excludes those Christians who do not accept that particular political option.<sup>42</sup> In contrast to the 1960s, when communism was seen as a threat from outside the Church, in the 1970s Marxism was feared by the conservatives to be lurking within the Church in the form of the liberation theologians.

At this point, it is important to realize that although López Trujillo was vehemently anti-liberationist, he did not portray himself as "anti-liberation." In Liber-

ation or Revolution? he exhibits a great deal of concern for the poor and even preaches his own brand of liberation. However, for him liberation is based solely on spiritual categories and a non-historical interpretation of the Gospel; it is strictly an apolitical process. This concept of liberation is presented by López Trujillo as a correction to the progressives' "misguided" understanding of liberation, and represents his attempts to co-opt and control the definition of a potentially threatening term.

By this time the Pope too had become sensitized to similar issues, as is indicated by his treatment of liberation, Marxism, and violence in the papal documents of the early 1970s. Both the Apostolic Letter Octogesima Adveniens, issued in 1971 to commemorate the eightieth anniversary of Leo XIII's Rerum Novarum, and the 1975 Apostolic Exhortation Evangelii Nuntiandi, known in English as "Evangelization in the Modern World," revealed Paul VI's attempts to temper the liberationist formulations that may have been derived from Medellín.<sup>43</sup>

In Octogesima Adveniens, for example, the term "liberation" is used only rarely and in a sense which is markedly different from that of the Medellín documents. At Medellín, liberation was a core concept which was openly promoted and which clearly included both a spiritual conversion and structural transformations. But in Paul VI's document, the passing reference to liberation has it primar-

ily connected with the internal conversion of humans.<sup>44</sup> It appears that insofar as it is "promoted," liberation is not meant to be a political matter.

In fact, Paul distinctly warns against the political liberation promised by revolutionary ideologies, which he argues in the end enslaves humans, curtails freedoms, and establishes new injustices.<sup>45</sup> It is clear that he is referring here to Marxist ideology, which he warns justifies and leads to violence (for which no sympathy or allowance is given by the Pope this time).<sup>46</sup> Importantly, he further reminds those who accept elements of Marxist analysis that they cannot forget that such an analysis is intimately linked to this ideology, and hence also to class struggle and a totalitarian and violent society.<sup>47</sup> Although he never refers to them by name, it is safe to assume that Paul's warnings in Octogesima Adveniens were directed at the liberation theologians (who, after all, had adopted some of the Marxist categories) and their followers.

Yet, as we have seen (and apparently regardless of Paul's cautioning), the liberationist movement was continuing along the same paths and was growing stronger in the early 1970s. Perhaps that is why the Pope decided to tackle the concept of liberation head-on and define it thoroughly in Evangelii Nuntiandi in 1975. As Donal Dorr points out, "in this way he could take what was of value in the word while correcting inadequate or mistaken ideas about its



meaning or implications."<sup>48</sup>

Essentially, he defined liberation according to its links with the Gospel obligation of evangelization, the bringing of the Good News. According to Paul, the centre of the Good News is the proclamation of salvation:

that is, God's great gift which consists not only in deliverance [liberation] from all that oppresses men but especially in deliverance [liberation] from sin and the Evil One, together with the joy of knowing God and being known by him, of seeing him and of resting trustfully in him.<sup>49</sup>

As he explains in further passages, evangelization is a message of liberation; and liberation, according to the Gospel, is not limited to economic, social, or cultural spheres, but concerns the whole person in every dimension, including his or her relation to God. Therefore, while the Church has the duty of proclaiming liberation and of working for its completion, this liberation is not purely human: the Church reaffirms the primacy of her spiritual role.<sup>50</sup>

Through its location within a network of established theological concepts (salvation, evangelization, etc.), Dorr suggests, the term liberation is given "theological respectability" in Evangelii Nuntiandi. In this way liberation cannot be narrowly defined as revolution (in a purely politico-economic sense), but is primarily seen as a spiritual concept.<sup>51</sup> Of course, the liberation theologians have always maintained that political and spiritual liberation are inseparable. However, Paul clearly distinguishes his definition of liberation from that of the "liberation move-

ment," stressing its inadequacy even though it

tries to justify itself by one or the other passage of the Old and New Testaments; that it thinks its theoretical postulates and norms are supported by theological principles and conclusions; or that it believes itself to be the theology of our times.<sup>52</sup>

Besides clarifying that the Church should not preach the same liberation as the "movement," the Pope presents other stipulations. Importantly, he warns that violence is completely unacceptable: "even the death of a single man as the way to liberation" cannot be tolerated.<sup>53</sup> The CEBs, which he promotes as agents of evangelization, must remain "firmly attached to the local Church . . . and to the universal Church," remaining "in no way partisan."<sup>54</sup> Of those communities which are "marked by a spirit of bitter criticism of the Church," and which "openly rebuke and reject the hierarchy . . . [and] are in radical opposition to the Church," he remarks that "they cannot call themselves, except by an abuse of language, ecclesial base communities, even though, despite their hostility to the hierarchy, they vainly claim to remain within the unity of the Church."<sup>55</sup> Moreover, at other points he reiterates both the importance of Church unity and of openness to the universality of the Church, as well as reminds the faithful of the primacy of papal and episcopal authority.<sup>56</sup> Obviously, he appears to have taken the opportunity presented by Evangelii Nuntiandi to "set the record straight" on a number of issues that had arisen surrounding the liberationist movement in Latin

America. In the mid-1970s, then, Pope Paul shared with the conservatives in the Latin American Church the same concerns about the threat of violence and the threats to traditional Church authority, unity, and universality, which were supposedly posed by the liberationists.

### Conclusions

The years between Medellín and Puebla can best be described as ones in which the conflicts in both the secular and religious arenas intensified. Despite the modernization many nations underwent, the social and economic status of most Latin Americans actually worsened. Further, with the proliferation of military regimes in the region during this period, much of the opposition to such poverty and injustice was brutally repressed. Yet, protests continued and frequently they were rooted in or supported by the liberationist wing of the Catholic Church. Although even high-ranking Church leaders of the liberationist cause were no longer immune from persecution, the movement grew stronger in the years following Medellín.

However, the growth of phenomena such as CEBs, Christians for Socialism, and liberation theology was perceived as a threat by the conservatives of the Latin American Church. These reactionaries themselves had gained considerable power since 1968, above all by managing to gain control of CELAM in 1972. At the heart of the conflict between the liberationists and the conservatives was essentially the

matter of the reproduction of the traditional institutional Catholic Church. It became clear that if the liberationist model were implemented, the traditional form of the Church--as hierarchical, unified, universal, and politically non-partisan--would be challenged. As Gramsci would have predicted,<sup>57</sup> the organizational necessity to preserve and reproduce this form manifested itself in the ideological struggle over liberation theology.

Therefore, the conservatives--many of whom would have seen their positions and power threatened by the liberationist changes--began to work to protect the traditional Church. For the most part, their strategy was simple: attack and discredit, by any means available, the core of the threatening movement--liberation theology. However, in the mid-1970s we can detect in the writings of López Trujillo and the Pope (who also had a large stake in the preservation of the traditional Church) the emergence of a new anti-liberationist strategy. Instead of simply ignoring or condemning the liberationists, they also began to adopt and modify the term liberation, in an attempt to control its definition from above and neutralize any dangerous interpretations of it. As we shall see, this technique would not be forgotten by the conservatives.

Yet, despite the particular strategies used, the conservatives were consistent in their promotion of the values of unity, universality, and neutrality. More than a

simple endorsement of tradition, however, the conservatives were actually reinforcing the Church's position as an ideological apparatus of the dominant class. Their denial of class conflict and attempts for religious unification of the dominant and the dominated within a universal Church contributed to the symbolic concealment and transcendence of the socio-political conflicts present in Latin American society.<sup>58</sup> The failure to acknowledge such conflict hinders and contradicts the recognition by the oppressed classes of the injustice of their condition, and so converges with the hegemonic project of the dominant class.

Moreover, as Gutiérrez has pointed out, given the fact of the social influence of the Church,

not to exercise this influence in favor of the oppressed of Latin America is really to exercise it against them. . . . Not to speak is in fact to become another kind of Church of silence, silence in the face of the despoilation and exploitation of the weak by the powerful.<sup>59</sup>

The conservatives, by refusing to take a concrete political stand against the authoritarian regimes and for the poor, were in effect siding with the regimes--something that was completely opposite to the authentic message of Medellín and to the liberationist movement.

As Puebla approached then, the liberationists were anxious to see whether the spirit of Medellín would prevail and if the bishops could once again move CELAM and the official Church to the side of the poor. On the other hand, the conservatives, who by and large controlled the planning

of the conference, looked forward to Puebla as a chance to officially confirm their position and deal with the liberationist issues once and for all.

## CHAPTER FOUR: THE PUEBLA YEARS

Ten and one half years after the historic CELAM conference was held at Medellín, the Puebla conference was held by CELAM under intense scrutiny. This chapter aims to describe the preparations for and the process of the Puebla event, and to provide an indication of the contents of the Puebla Final Document in relation to themes of the documents issued at Medellín. In the analyses of the themes in the form in which they were recorded at Puebla, a distinct institutional Church strategy--already shown in previous chapters to have been motivated and activated in earlier years--once again becomes evident.

### Preparations for the Conference

On November 30th, 1976, CELAM was given the responsibility of organizing the Third General Conference of the Latin American Episcopal Council. Preparations for CELAM III, which was originally scheduled for October 1978, began shortly after. Among the first events held were several regional meetings, which were sponsored by CELAM to help the bishops prepare for the conference and its theme of "Evangelization in the Present and the Future of Latin America."

Unfortunately, these preliminary episcopal meetings

were reported to be characterized by "manipulation and deceit" in their "organization, agenda, and control."<sup>1</sup> For example, CELAM sent the bishops two books as "required reading" for the meetings. Both books were on Marxism, and both stressed the incompatibility of Marxism and Christianity while promoting the traditional outlook of the Church on social change.<sup>2</sup> The publisher of these books was CEDIAL (Vekemans' research agency in Bogotá), and it was obvious that they were part of the anti-liberation theology strategy of Vekemans and López Trujillo. In fact, none of the liberation theologians or liberationist bishops such as Helder Câmara were even invited to the meetings. During the sessions themselves, the organizers focused on teaching that the greatest danger to the Latin American Church was posed by those Church groups working for structural change in society. Clearly, the meetings were an attempt by the conservative CELAM team to pre-determine the tone and the agenda of the approaching general conference.

During this time, CELAM's efforts were also directed toward the formulation of a Preparatory Document, which was to discuss the main issues with which the Puebla conference was to be concerned. After the conference was officially convoked by Pope Paul VI on December 12th, 1977, the CELAM secretariat distributed the 214-page Preparatory Document to the national episcopates as part of a consultation process.<sup>3</sup>



The participation in the consultation was much greater than had been expected. The bishops examined the Preparatory Document, but so did thousands of other Latin Americans after the Document (or summaries of it) were reprinted and distributed en masse. Debate on the Document's social and economic themes spread through universities, unions, peasants' organizations, and women's groups. Along with other Church organizations, the CEBs also discussed the Preparatory Document. In Chile, the CEBs' comments were sent to larger committees and summarized as recommendations for CELAM III. As Penny Lernoux has noted, the release of the Preparatory Document and the widespread democratic debate it sparked was an extraordinary event on a continent dominated by dictators; it was also proof of the increasingly "horizontal" form of Latin American Catholicism.<sup>4</sup>

The overall response to the Preparatory Document was extremely negative. Critics charged that the Document appeared removed from the concrete Latin American historical situation, that it focused on secularization rather than oppression as the greatest danger on the continent. Several were angered that it relied on a diluted and spiritualized notion of poverty in which almost all Latin Americans could be considered "poor" (and in which the actual conditions of the material poor were largely ignored). Others noted its pre-Vatican II hierarchical and authoritarian ecclesiology

which excluded the concept of the CEBs. They also complained that the Document advocated a new Christendom to be built through an idealistic Christian Democrat-style third way between capitalism and socialism. Finally, many were dismayed that it was ambiguous in its treatment of multinational corporations, military regimes, and human rights violations. As Robert McAfee Brown summarized, the Preparatory Document was "a disaster to those who [took] Medellín seriously."<sup>5</sup>

Once CELAM had received the reports of the bishops' conferences (many of which had incorporated the critiques from other sources), a team guided by CELAM President Aloisio Lorscheider proceeded to revise the Preparatory Document. This second draft, known as the Working Document, was not submitted for further consultation and was used as the preliminary text for the Puebla conference.<sup>6</sup> According to one report, López Trujillo tried repeatedly to intervene in the revision process and eventually appended fifteen Notes at the end of the Document after its completion.<sup>7</sup> While generally acknowledged as an improvement on the Preparatory Document, the Working Document was nonetheless seen as maintaining the former's basic orientation.<sup>8</sup>

That the anti-Medellín tone of the Preparatory Document would be adopted again at Puebla was made more possible by the choice of delegates invited to the conference. As a result of the manoeuvring of López Trujillo and Curial

Cardinal Baggio (prefect of the Sacred Congregation of Bishops and president of the Pontifical Commission for Latin America), the conservatives greatly outnumbered the liberationists at Puebla. Of the 356 delegates, only 175 were elected by the national bishops' conferences; almost all the rest were appointed by López Trujillo and Baggio. Since the Latin American bishops were not permitted to select their own advisors and experts, no liberation theologians were officially invited to the conference (the bishops were to be helped instead by 117 Curial appointed advisors). The delegates chosen by López Trujillo and Baggio also included twelve additional bishops (all of whom were extremely conservative and some of whom were military chaplains). The lay participants included representatives from conservative aid institutions (e.g., Adveniat, the DeRance Foundation) and Jorge Skinner Klee, a Helena Rubenstein executive from Guatemala (who was also a lawyer for the United Fruit Company and a teacher at the school of military studies). Apparently, López Trujillo did not want to take any chances regarding the outcome of the Puebla conference.<sup>9</sup>

However, the conference planners did not have complete control over the events surrounding CELAM III. For even though no liberation theologians were invited as official delegates by CELAM, many of the individual bishops sponsored liberationists to come to Puebla to act as unof-

ficial advisors. According to reports, approximately forty liberation theologians and social scientists eventually arrived at the conference site and set up their own think-tank a short distance away from the seminary where the bishops were meeting. When a draft or document became available, a progressive bishop would leave the seminary and transport it to the liberationists, who would work feverishly to produce analyses and position papers. Within a short time, the outsiders' papers were circulating among the bishops inside the conference, and were potentially able to influence the drafting of the final texts.<sup>10</sup>

López Trujillo and his supporters had even less control over other crucial events that would ultimately affect the conference: namely, the deaths of Pope Paul VI and Pope John Paul I. When Paul VI died on August 6th, 1978, the Puebla conference, which he had convoked and which was due to begin in October, was postponed. After his successor, John Paul I, died unexpectedly a few weeks later, the conference plans were once again surrounded by uncertainty. However, shortly after John Paul II ascended to the papacy, he announced that CELAM III would indeed take place in Puebla from January 27th to February 13th, 1979. Moreover, he declared that he would himself participate in the conference in Mexico.<sup>11</sup>

#### The Pope and Puebla

While in Latin America, the Pope delivered over three

dozen speeches, addresses, and homilies, including the inaugural address of the Puebla conference itself.<sup>12</sup> Not surprisingly, opinions differed as to whether he supported the liberationist or the conservative cause. Aside from the predictable tendency of each faction to interpret the Pope's words in a light favourable to its own position, outside observers (including many of the hundreds of journalists present) also could not agree on the significance of the Pope's statements.<sup>13</sup> Further, the Pope's earlier speeches, such as the Opening Address to the conference and the Homily at the Basilica of Guadalupe were more cautious; the Oaxaca address focused more on matters of concern to the poor. To the frustration of many, then, the Pope's Latin American addresses could not be easily categorized.

However, certain points of interest to the present study were repeatedly emphasized by John Paul II. The Pope mentioned Medellín more than once. But, while he praised its accomplishments and encouraged its commitments, he also warned against the incorrect and contradictory interpretations of Medellín that had arisen in the previous decade.<sup>14</sup> In addition, John Paul consistently insisted on the continuing relevance of Paul VI's Evangelii Nuntiandi, declaring it to be an "obligatory touchstone" of the conference.<sup>15</sup> Not only did he explicitly state that the Puebla bishops were to draw heavily upon Paul VI's document, John Paul also referred to and quoted from it numerous times, professing

that "the whole set of observations on the theme of liberation that were made by Evangelii Nuntiandi retain their full validity."<sup>16</sup> As Donal Dorr suggests, instead of unequivocally supporting one side over the other, the Pope's Puebla addresses contained a great deal of "on the one hand. . . and on the other"; instead of making any major new statement concerning liberation, they reiterated the teaching of the Pope's predecessor.<sup>17</sup>

Given the state of the Catholic Church at the time of Puebla, and given the nature of the role of the Pope in the Church, John Paul's tactics were understandable. Puebla came on the heels of a year which saw three different men hold the office of the papacy, a year in which the chief symbol of unity in the Church had been anything but stable. Unity was also threatened by the conflict between the liberationists and the conservatives in the Latin American Church; the Pope at Puebla faced a highly polarized situation. By his strategic "balancing exercise," by offering the bishops of differing, even opposing, positions a "middle ground" on which they might agree,<sup>18</sup> he was attempting to prevent a further disruption of the already fragile Church unity. Further, his actions at Puebla affirmed that the spiritual leader of the Church also holds the role of organizational leader, one who must make choices that will meet the needs of the on-going Church organization (in this case, the need for unity), perhaps aside from his own personal

"spiritual" choices or those he might make if only the ultimate goals of the organization were at issue.<sup>19</sup> At Puebla, the need for the continuity of Church unity necessitated the Pope acting above all as a organizational leader.

### The Puebla Conference

Once the conference began, the delegates were divided into twenty-one commissions which were supervised by a single steering committee. Each group worked on a specific section of the Final Document, each draft of which was submitted to the bishops at a plenary assembly for their votes and suggestions for amendments. After four drafts, and one further amendment to one section, the Final Document was approved by the required two-thirds majority. The Document was then submitted to an editing committee and eventually to the Vatican for further revisions and, finally, papal approbation.<sup>20</sup>

Despite the fact that the work of the commissions was later synthesized into one Final Document, as opposed to remaining as separate pieces as at Medellín, the three key themes that were outlined at Medellín were all treated at length in the Puebla conclusions. Examining Puebla's expression of these themes reveals some important concerns of the Church in the late 1970s.

### The Conflictual Nature of Reality

Near the beginning of the Final Document, the bishops

profess to place themselves "within the dynamic thrust of the Medellín conference, adopting its vision of reality."<sup>21</sup> In fact, for the most part, the bishops' portrayal of the Latin American situation is marked by the same recognition of conflict and tension that existed in the Medellín documents. Inequality--among nations as well as between rich and poor within nations--is described and denounced as unjust, as are the concrete expressions of inhuman poverty in Latin America: high rates of infant mortality, inadequate housing, health problems, poor wages, unemployment and underemployment, malnutrition, compulsory migration, lack of education, and inadequate social and political participation.<sup>22</sup> Moreover, the bishops predict that as long as huge segments of society cannot satisfy their legitimate aspirations to basic rights while others indulge themselves to excess, the frustrations and tragic tensions will grow.<sup>23</sup> As can be seen, such comments are very similar to those issued by the bishops at CELAM II, with the delegates at Puebla further lamenting that the inequality and poverty have been worsening since Medellín.<sup>24</sup>

In the analysis of the causes of such problems, the Puebla Document also follows the Medellín pattern quite closely. Once again, the roots of injustice are exposed: the inadequate social, political, and economic structures; the lack of integration among Latin American nations (which prevents their collective lobbying in the international



arena); the multi-faceted dependency of Latin America on outside nations and multinational powers; the waste of resources on the arms race; and the crisis in moral values (as expressed in corruption, greed, lack of a sense of justice or solidarity, and the flight of capital resources and brain power).<sup>25</sup> Moreover, the underlying state of these conditions is one of sin; at several points in the Puebla conclusions the bishops remind us that where poverty and injustice reign, both individual and social sinfulness are present.<sup>26</sup> As at Medellín, the bishops at Puebla pronounce the nature of social reality to be both conflictive and plagued by sin.

However, despite these similarities in the documents, one noteworthy change has occurred in the bishops' treatment of violence. As we have seen, three distinct yet related types of violence are discussed in the Medellín documents: unjust structures themselves as violent (institutionalized violence); the force which serves to support these structures and those who benefit from them (repressive violence); and the violence provoked as a result of institutionalized and repressive violence (revolutionary violence). Also, it will be recalled that the first two types of violence are unequivocally condemned by the Medellín bishops, while some allowance is made for revolutionary insurrection. In the Puebla conclusions, a slightly different categorization of violence has significantly different implications.<sup>27</sup>

The discussion of violence in the Puebla conclusions becomes much more complex. Importantly, institutionalized injustice is no longer equated with violence. Rather, institutionalized injustice is seen as a cause of institutionalized violence. Here, institutionalized injustice refers in general to the same unjust structures which the Medellín bishops described, and in particular at Puebla to the "idolatrous" structures of liberal capitalism and Marxist collectivism. A second cause of institutionalized violence is considered to be those ideologies which advocate violence as a means to power (e.g., Marxism, with its promotion of class struggle, or a statist view, which leads to the establishment of regimes based on National Security principles). Moreover, institutionalized violence--the effect of either this injustice or these ideologies--can take two forms: repressive (e.g., a Marxist totalitarian regime or the National Security State) or subversive (e.g., revolutionary violence, terrorism). While at Puebla the terms repressive violence and subversive (or revolutionary) violence are defined similarly, a shift can be seen in the definition of institutionalized violence.

Basically, institutionalized violence is shifted from the "cause" side of the relationship (Medellín) to the "effect" side (Puebla). In the first instance, "institutionalized" refers to violence that has become ingrained in the structures--actually in the institutions--of a society.

As such, it can provoke revolutionary violence. In the second sense, seen as a result of injustice or ideology, violence is considered institutionalized because for some it has become legitimized as a way to seize or maintain power. Although the bishops at both conferences are referring to similar injustices and processes, a shift in labelling occurs.

The result of this shift becomes obvious when we realize that all violence is condemned at Puebla. Unlike the Medellín documents, where some exception was made for "legitimate" revolutionary insurrection, the loophole is closed at Puebla. There is none of the Medellín bishops' sympathetic understanding of the "collective anguish" or the "abused patience" of those who have been subjected to the tyranny of institutionalized and repressive violence. While both the injustice and the ideologies that are said to cause violence are condemned at Puebla, they are not considered in any way to excuse revolutionary violence. The faint recognition that existed at Medellín, that in some cases the only way to a better life for the impoverished majority may involve some degree of violence, has disappeared at Puebla.

Yet although one small loophole is closed at Puebla, another is opened. While on the one hand the bishops condemn the repression of those regimes based on the ideology of National Security, some ambiguity in the general treat-

ment of National Security remains. Note the following two examples in which the issue is discussed:

Economic development and the potential to wage war are given priority over the dire needs of the neglected masses. Now National Security is certainly necessary for any political organization. But when framed in these terms, it presents itself as an Absolute holding sway over persons.<sup>28</sup>

It elaborates a repressive system. . . . We fully realize that fraternal coexistence requires a security system to inculcate respect for a social order that will permit all to carry out their mission with regard to the common good.<sup>29</sup>

At Medellín revolutionary violence was generally condemned, yet a passage remained to provide some exceptions. At Puebla, States based on the ideology of National Security are generally condemned, but it is plausible that the passages above may be used by some regimes for their own advantage--particularly if these passages are recalled in conjunction with those that reaffirm that "authority, which is necessary in every society, comes from God (Rom. 13:1; John 19:11)."<sup>30</sup> Further, despite the repeated appeals of Archbishops Romero and Obando y Bravo, the Salvadoran and Nicaraguan governments' demonstrated disregard for human rights was also never specifically condemned in the Final Document.<sup>31</sup> In this way, the denunciation of repressive regimes at Puebla is substantially weakened.

Therefore, while Puebla's description of reality is marked with a similar recognition of conflict and the forms it takes in society, a disappointing change occurs in the discussion of violence. In the Puebla conclusions, the

bishops have closed off one avenue of change previously available on a limited basis to the poor, but also have allowed for the horrifying possibility for further justification of the repression of the impoverished majority.

#### The Commitment to Change

At Puebla, the bishops also presented themselves as committed to change and as reaffirming the Medellín call for liberation. However, the concept of liberation employed was slightly different than that used at Medellín, for at Puebla it was explicitly linked to evangelization, the official theme of the conference.

According to the Puebla conclusions, in Jesus Christ salvation is offered to all people. Salvation is liberation from everything that oppresses the human being--and above all it is liberation from sin.<sup>32</sup> Importantly, the sinfulness which enslaves human beings occurs on several levels: sin on a personal level as a break with God, which is also reflected in interpersonal relations and yet again on a larger scale as injustice, domination, and violence at a societal and worldwide level. Humans must be liberated from sin on all these planes, for this is the true meaning of "integral liberation." Liberation is not one-sided; it contains spiritual, interpersonal, and social dimensions.<sup>33</sup>

This treatment of liberation is similar to the Medellín definition in which liberation includes freedom from social, as well as spiritual, sin. The Puebla Document also

reinforces the Medellín assumption that temporal tasks are related to the spiritual realm. According to the bishops, since justice in the world is related to the Kingdom of God, the Church must necessarily be involved in worldly affairs.<sup>34</sup> While the Medellín documents are not cited directly at this point in the Puebla conclusions, the argument is similar.

However, one additional component of the Church's mission which was barely visible at Medellín becomes emphatically and repeatedly mentioned by the bishops at Puebla. This is the mission of the Church to announce the Gospel to all people and nations: the entire People of God should bear witness to God and proclaim the Good News of Jesus Christ.<sup>35</sup> Crucially, this evangelization is linked to liberation. The basis of evangelization is the proclamation of salvation (and hence liberation) in Jesus Christ. Moreover, when evangelization summons humans to conversion and to communion with the Father, God's charity is activated in them and they find inspiration to act in favour of peace and justice, and against violence and domination.<sup>36</sup> Therefore, the tasks of evangelization include both a transformation of human hearts and of societal structures.<sup>37</sup> In the end, the mission of the Church in Latin America is unambiguous. It should be:

engaged in an ongoing process of evangelization; an evangelized Church that heeds, explores, and incarnates the divine Word; and an evangelizing Church that proclaims, celebrates, and bears witness to this Word of

God, the Gospel, Jesus Christ, in its life. This same evangelizing Church must also help to construct a new society in complete fidelity to Christ and humanity in the Holy Spirit: denouncing situations of sin; summoning people to conversion; and committing believers to world transforming action.<sup>38</sup>

As may be obvious, these descriptions of liberation and its links to evangelization are taken almost directly from Paul VI's Evangelii Nuntiandi (which is cited and directly quoted many times in the bishops' discussion). In one sense, this can be seen as mere obedience to Pope John Paul II's directions that Paul's exhortation should guide the Puebla conference. However, the motivation of John Paul to suggest this in the first place, as well as the original strategy of Pope Paul in issuing Evangelii Nuntiandi, cannot be forgotten. As we shall discuss later in the chapter, some of the Puebla delegates would have recognized, with John Paul II, the necessity of a compromise position on the matter of liberation. Others, in the manner of Paul VI, saw an opportunity to modify and control the interpretation of a potentially dangerous term.

#### The Option for the Poor

The Puebla conclusions also appear to affirm the Medellín proclamation of the preferential option for the poor. In fact, in both the opening and closing articles of the chapter entitled "A Preferential Option for the Poor," the bishops explicitly state that they wish to continue this option in the spirit of Medellín.<sup>39</sup> However, an examin-

ation of Puebla's treatment of this issue will reveal that, although a certain affirmation of Medellín undeniably exists, a slightly different stance is taken overall at Puebla.

As in the Medellín document on poverty, an important aspect of Puebla's option for the poor involves a confession of the Church's past lapses and complicity with the established powers. Even since Medellín, the bishops admit, not everyone in the Latin American Church has done all that they could have in favour of, or in solidarity with, the poor. Despite the fact that many have made a deeper commitment to the poor since Medellín, the bishops resolve that efforts must continually be made to incorporate the option into the Church's work.<sup>40</sup>

At this point a difference between Medellín and Puebla arises. In the Medellín document the first task is to define the types of poverty and then to outline the role of the Church in relation to them. While the Puebla text eventually makes passing references to material poverty, spiritual poverty, and poverty as a commitment (or "evangelical poverty"), and defines and evaluates them in the same manner of Medellín,<sup>41</sup> a more immediate concern appears to be the explanation why the commitment to poverty should be made.

In general, the bishops argue that the "scandalous reality of economic imbalances in Latin America" demands the



preferential option for the poor.<sup>42</sup> Specifically, however, it is the Gospel and the example of Christ that call for this option. Above all, the poor merit special attention because they were the first ones that Jesus evangelized, and because he established solidarity with them by being born poor and by living with the poor. According to the bishops, Christians are to follow Christ's example and preferentially serve the poor. These instructions are also supported by extensive references to biblical passages (e.g., Mary's Magnificat) which all contain further exhortations regarding the appropriate response to poverty and the poor.<sup>43</sup> As can be seen, the bishops are clearly grounding the preferential option in the Christian tradition.

The bishops also use the Puebla conclusions to emphasize that the option for the poor, while being preferential, is by no means exclusive. The text on this point is clear: "this option does not imply the exclusion of anyone;"<sup>44</sup> and the sentiment is repeated at other points in the conclusions as well.<sup>45</sup>

The Puebla conclusions also represent a qualified continuation of Medellín in their encouragement of the poor as agents of change. Importantly, much support is shown for the CEBs. These communities are praised as forces for liberation and development, and further attention to the promotion and growth of the CEBs is strongly urged.<sup>46</sup> Moreover, the bishops claim that the "evangelizing poten-

tial" of the poor is often displayed in grassroots communities, in which the poor challenge the Church, summon it to conversion, and also incarnate evangelical values in their lives.<sup>47</sup> This support is tempered when some members and entire communities are chastised because they "have been drawn to purely lay institutions or have been turned into ideological radicals,"<sup>48</sup> but the Puebla conclusions appear quite encouraging of the CEB phenomenon.

However, this encouragement is further undermined by the bishops' less-than-enthusiastic treatment of conscientization, the pedagogical technique on which the CEBs are based. The fairly lengthy chapter on education in the Puebla Document is primarily concerned with conventional forms of education and the role of Catholic schools and universities, not with the predominantly informal style of education that takes place at the grassroots level. Indeed, references are made to education that is aimed at social change and justice, and to education that turns pupils into the active subjects of their own development.<sup>49</sup> Yet, a Medellín-style indictment of the prevailing educational structures is absent, the term "conscientization" is never used, and the phrase "liberating education" is employed only once.<sup>50</sup> Therefore, while the Puebla treatment of education cannot be said to contradict Medellín's bold discussion, it nonetheless only provides conscientization with muted, rather than ardent, support.

It is important to emphasize that this in fact is the overall tone of Puebla's treatment of the option for the poor: it is certainly not condemned, nor unequivocally endorsed, but rather carefully promoted in a qualified form. The preferential (but not exclusive) option for the poor is supported, but is more firmly rooted in a Christological and biblical basis. CEBs are encouraged, but warnings are issued against ideological radicalism. Finally, while education is recognized as a key to development, the concept of conscientization is conspicuously absent from the discussion. With their qualifications, the bishops are performing yet another balancing act on the most controversial issues in the Church.

#### Concluding Analysis of the Conference

Considering the Final Document and the conference as a whole as outlined above, it is not surprising to see why observers commonly interpreted Puebla as a compromise.<sup>51</sup> Both the liberationists and the conservatives could find reasons to be satisfied with the Document. For example, the conservatives could be pleased that some of Medellín's most controversial stances (e.g., on violence) were tempered.<sup>52</sup> The liberationists, on the other hand, could be relieved that none of Medellín's central themes were condemned or reversed. As one commentator remarked, "the visiting team [the liberationists] managed a tie."<sup>53</sup> However, when cast in a Gramscian light, such a "draw" has inter-

esting characteristics and significant implications.

Clearly, the manoeuvring of the conservatives in Latin America and the Vatican had the markings of the classic institutional Church strategy described in Chapter One. Recall that Maduro explained that ecclesiastical innovations, arising from outside the centre, develop until a central reaction to them occurs. This reaction most often involves an exclusion of the innovators, but can also include "some incorporation of the innovations themselves, so as to preserve the unity of the Church by gaining possession of factors threatening that unity."<sup>54</sup>

Years before the Puebla conference began, as we outlined in the previous chapter, the liberationists and liberation theology had already been perceived as threatening by the traditional centre of the institutional Church. A reaction had begun, in part consisting of the vehement critique of liberation theology by López Trujillo and Vekemans, and later taking the form of López Trujillo's and Pope Paul's more subtle attempts to adopt and modify the potentially dangerous interpretation of the term "liberation."

By the time of the conference itself, the original threats posed by the liberationists to the traditional characteristics of the institutional Church had not disappeared; Church unity was further threatened by the recent deaths of two popes. In response, the liberationist innovators were

literally excluded from the conference. Never officially invited, they were forced to work at a location away from the conference site. Nonetheless, some of the liberationists' contributions did find their way into the conference proceedings. In fact, some liberationist themes eventually ended up being approved by the bishops at the plenary voting sessions, permitted by the CELAM editing team, and allowed by the Vatican monitors.

However, as we have tried to emphasize, the liberationist components of the Puebla Final Document are not found in their original formulation; they are most definitely qualified. To a large extent, this qualification has taken the form of a continuation of the Evangelii Nuntiandi tactic of reacting to threatening terms by accord- ing them a restrictive theological respectability. In the Puebla Document, the two most obvious examples of this are found in the treatments of liberation and the preferential option for the poor. Liberation, defined in the same manner as it had been in Evangelii Nuntiandi, becomes almost impossible to treat as solely a political or socio-economic concept: it is inseparably linked to the unequivocally Christian task of evangelization. Moreover, the preferen- tial option for the poor is firmly anchored in a Christo- logical and biblical base, once again making extreme or unorthodox interpretations difficult. These tactics, along with other cautions (against ideological radicalism in the

CEBs or exclusivity in the Church, for example), provide a solid guard against what the conservatives would call "misinterpretation," but have actually diluted the counter-hegemonic potential of the genuinely liberationist message.

Once the final, amended, and Vatican-approved Puebla Document was released, the incorporative process was completed. Originating from the struggles of the poor at the base of Church, and elaborated by the liberation theologians and a select few within the hierarchy, the innovative concepts of liberation posed a serious threat to the traditional Church structure (and its representatives) which had long emphasized unity, universality, and hierarchy. Despite warnings and attempts to defuse the threatening elements, they became more widespread and elaborated, and found concrete expression in the growing numbers of CEBs in Latin America. Finally, unable to deny the persistence of the liberationist phenomenon or to extinguish the threat it posed to the hegemonic core and traditional institutional Church, the dominant group appropriated the most dangerous conceptual weapons of the liberationists. They modified these using the most powerful tools at their disposal (papal documents, established Christian concepts), and hence were able to control the definitions from above and neutralize many of the interpretations discrepant to their goals. The Gramscian diagnoses of the "evolution" of religious doctrine as largely determined by the organizational needs

of the Church appears appropriate to describe this process.<sup>55</sup> Institutional necessities were best served at this point in Church history not by an anathematization of the threatening innovations, but rather by their incorporation and purposeful re-elaboration.

Yet, however accurate a portrayal this may be of the motivations and manoeuvres of some of the conservative forces at Puebla, it would be overly simplistic to depict Puebla as wholly the outcome of such calculation. After all, other delegates than the staunchly conservative ones had a hand in the drafting and approval of the Documents. Some of them, with the Pope, recognized the necessity of achieving a compromise position in view of the enormous importance of the Puebla conference not only for Latin America, but for the worldwide Church.

Puebla was not just another Latin American bishops' conference (although, as we have seen, the importance of such should not be minimized). In certain respects, even before the conference began it was anticipated that Puebla would reveal and resolve some of the Church's most important issues. Puebla would give the world one of its first chances to see the new Pope in action and to hear his pronouncement on the controversial liberation theology. Moreover, decisions made by the Latin American bishops, aside from affecting a huge Catholic population on that continent (and a predicted minimum of fifty percent of all Catholics

by the year 2000<sup>56</sup>), would perhaps foretell what was to occur in the rest of the Church, to which liberationist themes and debates had already spread. Worldwide attention was thus focused on the process and the delegates of the Puebla conference.

Of course, the presence of over two thousand journalists at Puebla only served to heighten the sense of the magnitude of the conference.<sup>57</sup> They were in a position to offer quick analyses and reports of the conference to their readers, viewers, and listeners around the world, and so played a major role in the early interpretations of Puebla. However, the tendency of many of the press to depict the conference as a "clerical version of The Shoot-Out at the O.K. Corral"<sup>58</sup> was potentially damaging to the Church in that it focused the spotlight on controversy and polarization, and thus magnified the Church's shaky unity. The inherent significance of the matters discussed at Puebla themselves, along with the amplification of certain issues by the press, provided strong pressures to the delegates to either draft--or feel satisfied with--balanced, compromised statements, rather than bold or dramatic assertions. As John Paul had recognized, the attempt for (and a portrayal of) Church unity was crucial for the Church at the time. Insofar as real or apparent unity was achieved via the Puebla conference, the imperative of the Church for institutional reproduction was again served.



In relation to this, a moderate Final Document would have appeared to serve a further institutional requirement in relation to the wider political climate. Given the number of right-wing regimes in Latin America at the time, and their demonstrated brutality towards Church members in the years leading to Puebla, a softer approach to certain issues may have been seen by the delegates as one means to protect the Church from further persecution. Therefore, not only concerns for internal self-reproduction, but also those for self-preservation within the larger society influenced the participants at Puebla.

Finally, as we shall discuss in the Conclusion, many of the liberationists later expressed their satisfaction with the conference outcome. To a certain extent, whether or not the enhanced spiritualization of the liberationist concepts served the necessity to preserve institutional form, the increased theological respectability they were given could certainly be used to advance the liberationist agenda. Although the liberationists' concepts had always been theological, the Puebla Document makes it clearer that working for liberation and promoting the option for the poor are Christian responsibilities. This perhaps may make it easier for the uncommitted Christian to become interested in living in solidarity with the poor and working for social change. When demonstrated in the Final Document to be in line with the Bible, the life of Christ, and the mission of

the Church to evangelize, liberationist concepts would appear less "radical" and more acceptable, even obligatory, to many Christians.

The legitimation that Medellín had given to the their movement had not been forgotten by the liberationists. Puebla could have conceivably been used in a similar fashion. Regardless of by whom or how the liberationist concepts came to be employed, that they remained visible and accessible in the high-profile Puebla Final Document would have been a happy achievement for that side. As such, the Document in its final draft (despite the disappointing ambiguity on the theme of National Security) was supported by some liberationists, who recognized their fortune that their position had not been completely delegitimized at a time when the ecclesiastical machinery at Puebla was almost completely controlled by the conservatives.<sup>59</sup> As Enrique Dussel was said to have commented, for the liberationists "it was the kind of contest in which even a tie symbolizes victory."<sup>60</sup>

According to the preceding analysis, therefore, as a compromise Puebla had something to offer to both the liberationists and the conservatives. Neither group walked away from Puebla empty-handed; and neither could claim complete and total victory. The power of tradition and the Church hierarchy, the control of CELAM, and institutional imperatives were pitted against a growing counterhegemonic

trend in the Church. Although the internal hegemonic order of the institutional Church remained largely intact, the liberationist elements could not be completely repressed. Overall, however, the Puebla conference had implications much greater than those which the compromise suggests; a discussion of these follows in the concluding chapter.

CONCLUSION: WAS PUEBLA A RETREAT FROM MEDELLÍN?

As we have indicated, the Puebla conference was widely regarded as a compromise with which neither the conservative nor the liberationist faction could be entirely disappointed. In fact, several liberationists and progressive observers, far from appearing discouraged by the outcome, actually expressed a certain amount of satisfaction and even optimism immediately following the event. Many of their comments took the form of assertions that Puebla, far from being a rejection of Medellín, was actually a confirmation of the earlier conference. Pablo Richard, a liberation theologian who attended Puebla as an unofficial consultant to certain bishops, was one of the most enthusiastic commentators, exclaiming that "contrary to all the attempts to make Puebla an anti-Medellín, Puebla became a super-Medellín."<sup>1</sup> Others were slightly more subdued, yet appeared to agree that Puebla did not constitute a betrayal, but instead should be considered a "strong reaffirmation," a "continuation," or a "validation and reinforcement" of Medellín.<sup>2</sup>

This is not to imply, however, that the shortcomings of the conference and its Final Document were ignored. On the contrary, Puebla was criticized for its inadequate or

superficial treatments of women, ecumenism, popular religiosity, Christology, and martyrdom, among other things.<sup>3</sup> Nonetheless, in spite of these criticisms, the overall evaluations of Puebla remained quite favourable.

Years later, throughout the 1980s, these views of Puebla remained largely intact. Progressive observers, such as Edward Cleary and Penny Lernoux, continued to characterize the conference as a "continuation" and a "reaffirmation" of Medellín.<sup>4</sup> Perhaps more revealing were the consistent evaluations of Puebla by Gustavo Gutiérrez, one of liberation theology's most prominent representatives. In an article written immediately after CELAM III in 1979, he argued that it genuinely followed "in the footsteps of Medellín," and in certain respects went even further than had the former conference. When this article was subsequently re-released in an English translation of an anthology of Gutiérrez' writings in 1983, no changes in his position on the subject were recorded. As late as 1988, when he wrote a new introduction to the revised edition of A Theology of Liberation, he once again treated Puebla as a ratification of Medellín.<sup>5</sup> Finally, Gary MacEoin, a prolific progressive writer on Latin America, also recently has written as fact that Puebla "reaffirmed Medellín's stand."<sup>6</sup> According to all these indicators, the answer of most commentators, if asked whether Puebla was a retreat from Medellín, undoubtedly would have been--and still is--

"no."

### The Mixed Legacy of Puebla

Clearly, since Puebla certain sectors in the Latin American Church have initiated or persevered in their genuinely liberationist struggles.<sup>7</sup> Insofar as these efforts have been inspired or legitimated by the Puebla conference and Document, the optimistic evaluators of CELAM III are, to a certain degree, vindicated. However, to permit the verdict to stand as such would be to ignore the continued struggles of the conservatives in the Church, efforts which have actually intensified since Puebla, and which lead us to consider the merit in Segundo's hint that the phrase "'Medellín and Puebla' today constitutes a formula as overused as it is mistaken."<sup>8</sup>

The renewed assaults on the liberationists began just one month after Puebla, when López Trujillo was elected president of CELAM and other extremely conservative bishops were elected to the positions of first vice-president and secretary general.<sup>9</sup> The conservatives were thus in an advantageous position to promote their own interpretation of Puebla. They attempted to do so, for example, by directing the progressive Brazilian bishops not to sponsor evaluations of the Document without first notifying CELAM and obtaining its official guidelines for the correct interpretation and implementation of Puebla.<sup>10</sup> Having gained almost complete

control over the CELAM machinery obviously granted the conservatives an enormous power base from which to continue the anti-liberationist attack.

However, an appointment made a few years later in Rome had even more significant implications for the liberationists and the survival of their message. In 1982, the Pope appointed Joseph Ratzinger, a reactionary German cardinal, to the position of Prefect of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith (formerly known as the Holy Office of the Congregation of the Universal Inquisition). A powerful ally to the Latin American conservatives, Ratzinger was responsible for the Congregation's notorious 1984 "Instruction" on liberation theology,<sup>11</sup> in which liberation theology was treated in a manner of which López Trujillo would have approved.

In the Instruction, the biblical foundations of liberation and the teachings of the magisterium are emphasized, and Christians are cautioned against restricting liberation to its political or social dimension. Above all, the Instruction is devoted to drawing

the attention of pastors, theologians, and all the faithful to the deviations and risks of deviation, damaging to the faith and to Christian living, that are brought about by certain forms of liberation theology which use, in an insufficiently critical manner, concepts borrowed from various currents of Marxist thought.<sup>12</sup>

Atheism, the advocacy of class struggle and revolutionary violence, a narrow politicization of the faith, and a chal-

lenge to the Church's sacramental and hierarchical structure are all potential deviations risked when the theologies of liberation adopt the use of Marxist "analysis," from which these other evils are assumed to be inseparable.

While no individual theologians were named in the Instruction, before it was released Ratzinger had already issued "Ten Observations on the Theology of Gustavo Gutiérrez,"<sup>13</sup> in which Gutiérrez' reliance on Marxist interpretation was attacked. In addition, Ratzinger had also already begun his now-famous barrage against Leonardo Boff and his book, Church: Charism and Power.<sup>14</sup> According to Ratzinger, his former student's work had endangered the sound doctrine of the faith because, among other things, it contained "radical criticisms directed at the hierarchic structure of the Catholic Church."<sup>15</sup> Boff had done so, Ratzinger elaborates, by speaking of "a 'grave pathology' from which . . . the Roman church ought to liberate itself [and which] is constituted by the hegemonic exercise of the sacred power which, besides making the Roman church an asymmetrical society, has also deformed it."<sup>16</sup> Of course, we have already discussed Boff's alternative to this situation.<sup>17</sup> It is his formulation (in the Medellín tradition) of the liberationist option for the poor, in which the potential and necessity for a "reinvention" of the Church is promoted, and which implies a redistribution of sacred power within the Church. Thus it was not only Boff's critique of



the abuse of power in the Church that had alarmed Ratzinger, it was also his prescription for reform, which threatened to deny the magisterium its age-old monopolization of Church power.

It was not surprising, then, that Ratzinger issued the doctrinal condemnation. However, this theoretical chastisement was also accompanied by a more tangible punishment: on May 9th, 1985, Leonardo Boff was sentenced to a year of "penitential silence," in which he was not allowed to publish or lecture, nor to continue editing the progressive Brazilian theological magazine Vozes. Although the silencing was prematurely lifted during the Easter of the following year, the surveillance of Boff's work continued. He has since been prohibited from travelling and granting interviews outside Brazil (for a period in 1989),<sup>18</sup> and has more recently been forced to resign as editor of Vozes and to spend a year away from his teaching post at the Institute of Theology in Petrópolis, Brazil.<sup>19</sup> These Curial tactics are indicative of a new phase in the anti-liberationist battle, in which more subtle attempts to control the liberationist themes (e.g., the conservatives' manipulation of the term "liberation" from a position of power) are bolstered by the blatant attempts to suppress the conveyors of these themes.

Yet, Boff was only part of the Vatican's problem. He may have been writing about the reinvention of the Church

and the redistribution of religious power, but the millions of Latin American Catholics involved in the CEBs and other conscientizing work were actually enacting it. As for Gutiérrez, his Marxist analysis allowed him to express the reality of class conflict in Latin America and the Church's unavoidable involvement in it, and helped him to argue that the Church should therefore exercise its social influence on the side of the oppressed in that struggle. But, it was thousands of members of the popular church in Nicaragua, for example, who actually helped to bring about a revolution. Boff, Gutiérrez, and any number of other liberation theologians are not themselves the chief architects of change threatening to the Church, they are merely those whose sympathetic expression of the counterhegemonic struggle helps to legitimate it. They are the disaffected traditional intellectuals of the dominant classes, those who have truly joined the organic intellectuals of the subordinate classes, and as such have helped to elaborate the political function of these classes both within the Church and the society at large. The chastising and punishing of these liberationist intellectuals could only go so far in the elimination of the actual threat they represented. Therefore, Vatican repression could not, and did not, remain restricted to the theologians. It necessarily also had to be directed towards the base of the Church.

Of course, Vatican control over the subordinate

classes remains to a certain extent mediated by intellectuals in the form of those bishops, priests, and religious who are more active in the daily administration of the Church than some of the professional theologians. And it is the work of these other Church intellectuals in Latin America that has also been restricted by the Vatican since Puebla. Therefore, we have seen the appointments of several dozens of conservative bishops in Latin America, including that of Archbishop José Cardoso Sobrinho, who replaced the retired Helder Câmara. He has since dismantled much of Câmara's work and forbidden him to speak publicly in the archdiocese. Also in Brazil, the huge archdiocese of São Paulo, which under the two decade leadership of Dom Paulo Evaristo Arns had become home to several liberationist clergy and a strong CEB network, has been divided into five (with conservative bishops appointed in four of the new dioceses).<sup>20</sup> In Nicaragua, the anti-Sandinista Archbishop Miguel Obando y Bravo has been made a cardinal, and has transferred many pro-Revolution priests and nuns out of their parishes, some even out of the country.<sup>21</sup> Finally, the Latin American Conference of Religious (CLAR), which has long supported liberation theology and has implemented its own programs as part of the preferential option for the poor, has been censured and placed under direct Vatican control.<sup>22</sup> By these and other manoeuvres, the Vatican is undermining those structures which have given the most

legitimation to the grassroots struggle for the reinvention of the Church.

Moreover, this renewed conservative trend shows little sign of abating as the CELAM IV draws near. Even though López Trujillo (who was also made a cardinal and who had continued his own local anti-liberationist struggle in the period described above)<sup>23</sup> has been moved to Rome and no longer controls CELAM, the preparations for the October 1992 meeting in Santo Domingo are reminiscent of those for Puebla. Once again, the Vatican will have an inordinate amount of control in the choice of delegates and voting members.<sup>24</sup> In addition, the Preparatory Document is reported to be a pre-Conciliar, Eurocentric text which attacks liberation theology, replaces the preferential option for the poor with developmentalist papal teaching, and contains more warnings for the CEBs while praising certain cases in which the military has taken a leading political role in Latin America.<sup>25</sup> In light of this, and in consideration of the number of conservative bishops imposed upon Latin America prior to the preparations for CELAM IV, it appears that the liberationist point of view has only the narrowest of chances of being expressed at Santo Domingo.

Of course, all this seems strikingly similar to the situation as it existed in the years preceding Puebla: conservative forces in firm control of much of the official

Church institution in Latin America, and no shortage of doctrinal and organizational weapons with which to discredit the liberationists. Nonetheless Puebla, according to the sources we have surveyed, emerged from this situation as a "victory" (or, at worst, a compromise) for the liberationists. This perhaps implies that all hope should not be lost for the fate of the liberationist cause at Santo Domingo.

More importantly, it also means that the Puebla conference should be viewed in a particular way. If Puebla was such a reaffirmation of Medellín, if it was such a victory for the liberationist side, then we are forced to treat it as an aberration in the otherwise uninterrupted trajectory of conservatism to which CELAM and the Latin American Church have been subjected since the early 1970s. In the midst of twenty years of anti-liberationist struggle at that level of the institutional Church, a validation of Medellín supported by CELAM and the Vatican must be seen as quite an exception.

It is, I suggest, too much of an exception to continue to take for granted. Perhaps, as we discussed in the previous chapter, given the situation of the liberationists within the Church in 1979, the mere survival of their concepts at Puebla may have been construed as a victory for them. It also might have appeared genuine, or may have seemed advantageous, to portray this situation as evidence of continuation with Medellín. However, the events of the

years since Puebla challenge this persistent evaluation. It should not be forgotten that a true confirmation of Medellín necessarily would have involved a transformation of Church structures, or at least a move towards the redistribution of power in the Church. It is clear that this has not occurred at all at the level of the Church which formulated Puebla. If anything, power has become even more entrenched and has been wielded in an increasingly repressive and authoritarian manner since the conference. In short, because the legacy of Puebla has been so different from what we would expect from a reaffirmation of Medellín, it seems reasonable to consider whether Puebla was actually such a departure from conservatism in the first place.

#### Puebla Reconsidered

The analysis we have already performed of Puebla provides us with the starting point for our reconsideration. As outlined in the previous chapter, the outcome of Puebla was largely determined by the reaction of conservatives against the liberationist elements which endangered the reproduction of the Church's traditional institutional structure. The Final Document displayed the culmination of a process, begun by Pope Paul VI and López Trujillo years earlier, in which the dominant forces in the Church had appropriated liberationist concepts from their source, qualified them, and finally resubmitted them to the rest of the Church in a relatively non-threatening form. Therefore,

liberation emerges at Puebla as a component of the Christian obligation of evangelization; the option for the poor, as established in Christological precedent and by biblical commandment. Two of the core concepts of the liberationist movement thus become "spiritualized" in an unprecedented manner.

Strictly speaking, there is nothing wrong with emphasizing the spiritual components of liberation. The theological dimensions of liberation have never been denied by the liberationists. In fact, as we noted, this enhanced spiritualization of concepts may have been seen as beneficial by the liberationists at Puebla, in the sense that it provided their concerns with increased legitimacy within the Church. However, this movement toward spiritual legitimation must also be seen in relation to Puebla's overall movement away from political actuality and away from the poor as agents of change, a trend which is anti-liberationist in its essence.

Initially, to charge that Puebla represents a movement away from political actuality appears to contradict our earlier demonstration of the bishops' recognition of conflict and inequality in Latin American society. In fact, the Puebla bishops' acknowledgement of this conflict cannot be denied. However, the potential of this recognition to contribute to a Medellín-style desacralization of the relations of dominance and legitimation of counterhegemonic

struggle is seriously undermined by the Puebla conception of the Church's relationship to this conflict.

For example, in the Puebla Final Document, no candid admission of the internal conflicts and divisions within the Latin American Church can be found. While allusions are made to "tensions" within the Church, these are generally quite vague. Moreover, at one point, such tensions are described as "gradually being overcome."<sup>26</sup> This is a denial of the intense struggle between the liberationists and the conservatives that was raging at the time of Puebla, a conflict which was highly visible to all those involved in the conference.<sup>27</sup>

While concerns for unity were no doubt responsible for the lack of frank discussion of the matter, they do not mitigate the consequences of this situation. As we discussed in Chapter Three, the conservatives' denial of class conflict within the Church contributed to the symbolic concealment and transcendence of socio-political conflict in the larger Latin American society, and thus helped to legitimize and maintain an unjust status quo. A similar dynamic was in operation at Puebla: the liberationist-conservative debate can be conceived as a conflict between the intellectual representatives of opposing social classes. By ignoring or minimizing the intellectual conflict, the Puebla Document served to downplay the underlying class conflict of which this debate was one expression. In turn, this pro-



vided support for those who benefit from the maintenance of the existing order as opposed to those whose hopes lie in its transformation.

The relationship between evangelization and politics as outlined in the Puebla Document also indicates a certain denial of political reality, and a further failure to provide support for counterhegemonic change. On the surface, the bishops appear to encourage Church involvement in social transformation when they proclaim that the Church, as part of its obligation to evangelize the whole of human life, has a duty and a right to be present in the realm of political activity.<sup>28</sup> Nonetheless, this affirmation is closely followed by a distinction between politics "in the broad sense," which is concerned with attaining the common good, and "party politics," in which groups of citizens "pursue and exercise political power to solve economic, political and social problems in accordance with their own criteria and ideology."<sup>29</sup> According to the Document, politics in general is of interest to all members of the Church, including the clergy, but party politics should be restricted to the realm of the laity. Bishops, priests, and religious, as ministers of unity, must divest themselves of partisan political ideology and activity.<sup>30</sup>

The problem with this formulation stems from the fact that it is based on a faulty assessment of Latin American "politics" in 1979.<sup>31</sup> Given the military repression and

authoritarianism under which much of the continent operated, the majority of Latin Americans could not "pursue and exercise political power" freely. Most often, opposition to oppression was not based in legal, well-defined, political parties or unions which were permitted to propose alternative plans for society; party politics in this sense was virtually non-existent.

Instead, the political activism of the laity was expressed in a variety of popular movements, movements whose struggles were concerned with social and economic transformation, and which were by definition partisan. Crucially, these popular organizations were often supported by members of the clergy, whose involvement in such movements had the effect of legitimating or sacralizing their struggles. The Puebla Document, by prohibiting the involvement of the clergy in such political activities, thereby withdraws this important source of spiritual sanction for the counterhegemonic forces.

Of course, at the base of this prohibition is once again an appeal to unity based on a denial of the nature of the Church as it exists in a class society, and on the denial of the fact that within such a society, when the Church professes to be neutral or non-partisan, it is actually taking the side of the powerful elites against the oppressed majority. The link between evangelization and social justice in the Puebla Document may appear to

strengthen the liberationists' tenet that working for historical liberation is a spiritual obligation. However, the Puebla contention that evangelization means that the Church's involvement in the sociopolitical arena should be exclusively religious and "not prompted by any aim of a political, economic, or social nature,"<sup>32</sup> is in direct contradiction to the liberationist project. Further, as Gary MacEoin has commented, it "is music in the ears of the military dictatorships and the international exploiters," who would certainly benefit if the hierarchy's role in society were restricted to "baptizing, marrying, and burying."<sup>33</sup>

In addition, as we began to discuss in Chapter Four, Puebla's ambiguous treatment of National Security also potentially benefits the military regimes. However, the Puebla analysis of violence can be shown to have further anti-liberationist implications. Recall, to begin, that the bishops consider certain "ideologies" to be a cause of institutionalized violence in their society. As Phillip Berryman notes, this tends to reinforce the idea that people go to the guerillas after reading books, a notion which is drastically different from the political reality in Latin America. Instead, as he (along with the Medellín documents) has pointed out, the spiral of violence begins with the violence inherent in the structures of society, structures which provoke protest, which in turn prompts repressive

violence, which finally provokes revolutionary violence.<sup>34</sup> Revolutionary violence is not the "next step" from ideology, it is a last, desperate step of those whose suffering has become unbearable and who have little choice but to react against their oppressors. The ideology of National Security also does not cause repressive violence, but repressive violence becomes necessary when a government fails to maintain the consent of its citizens to an unjust socio-economic order. Violence may be legitimated by certain ideological formulations, but it is certainly not generated directly by them, as Puebla suggests. Once again, the conflictive conditions of Latin American society are distorted in the conference document.

Despite the obvious differences between repressive and revolutionary violence as implied above, the Puebla Document generally condemns them both (the National Security loophole notwithstanding). This disregards the fact that while repressive violence is unjust at its core (its ultimate aim to preserve an order and excess privileges which are inherently inequitable and which deny others life), revolutionary violence is used by and on behalf of the poor, often in self-defense of what little they have, and is fuelled by the legitimate aspiration for a basically secure life. To render such an undifferentiated judgement of them, as does Puebla, denies the obvious inequality in the life conditions and in the legitimacy of motivations of those

compelled to use violence. To treat both types of violence equally fails to acknowledge the reality of circumstances which in themselves justify the force of the oppressed as opposed to that of the oppressors. Almost needless to say, when the loophole for National Security is factored into this discussion, the bias against the poor becomes even more pronounced, as any possible exceptions to the prohibition of violence are granted to the regimes.

This argument can be extended when we examine the second cause of institutionalized violence given in the Puebla Document. Along with ideologies, unjust structures are also charged with being a cause of institutionalized violence. On the surface, this proposition would seem to compensate partially for the implausibility of the notion that ideologies cause violence. It also appears to re-establish Puebla as consistent with Medellín, since both acknowledge the role inequitable structures play in provoking violence. However, the different labels given at the two conferences to the structural cause of violence once again become crucial.

At Medellín, the unjust structures which generate violence are themselves labelled "violent." This not only is an accurate depiction of the first step in the spiral of violence, but it also grants a certain legitimacy to the violence to which the poor are forced in turn. Medellín recognizes that as victims of a prior violence, the recourse

of the poor to their own violence is understandable and may be legitimate. At Puebla, however, inequitable structures remain unjust, but are not said to be violent in themselves. Again, Puebla misrepresents the spiral of violence--this time by implying that the first violence is that of the revolutionaries, instead of those who maintain the oppressive structures.<sup>35</sup> Moreover, by labelling the structures as merely unjust but not violent, Puebla helps to perpetuate the idea that the reaction of the revolutionaries--violence--is out of proportion and thus unjustified. Therefore, what appears as only a semantic difference at Puebla in fact provides tacit support for the overt contention that revolutionary violence can never be legitimate.

Although denouncing revolutionary violence appears less biased against the poor than does potentially legitimating National Security, it is anti-liberationist nonetheless. To recall the words of the more than nine hundred priests at Medellín, it is clear

that one cannot condemn oppressed people when they feel obliged to use force for their own liberation; to do so would be to commit a new injustice. If such a condemnation were to issue from the Latin American Church, it would seem to be once again the "opiate of the people," the servant of those who for centuries have practised the violence of exploitation and oppression leading to hunger, ignorance, and poverty.<sup>36</sup>

Therefore, to condemn the revolutionary violence of the oppressed is one more manner in which to opt for the oppressors.

Moreover, forbidding the use of force by the oppressed also becomes a matter of restricting the role of the poor as agents of change. According to the liberationists, the option for the poor means allowing that they are the chief and central artisans of their own liberation. By not granting any legitimacy to the violent means the poor have sometimes felt impelled to use to this end, Puebla is withdrawing from this option. It is, once again, a question of the distribution of authority within the Church. In a truly reinvented Church, one in which authority can originate from the base, the decision of those at the base (who also form the majority in the Church)--even if it is a decision to use violence--cannot be unequivocally denied. Puebla's predetermined and absolute prohibition of revolutionary violence therefore rescinds the right of the poor to determine for themselves the path to their own liberation.

In addition, Puebla's position on the CEBs further restricts the efficacy of the poor as agents of nonviolent change. We noted in Chapter Four that the Puebla Document appears encouraging of the CEB phenomenon, but that warnings against ideological radicalism temper this support. This apparently moderate position on CEBs can now be seen as consistent with the overall tone of the Document which emphasizes the spiritual to the virtual exclusion of the political.

In the Final Document, the experience of the Word of God and of the Eucharist in the CEBs is accentuated, but relatively little attention is paid to the role of the CEBs in the transformation of the world.<sup>37</sup> In fact, the Document largely ignores the fact that the CEBs had been the cells in which much of the grassroots action for change in Latin America had occurred in the years leading to Puebla.<sup>38</sup> Granted, that CEBs have become "moving forces for liberation and development"<sup>39</sup> in Latin America is praised. Yet one is forced to question the type of liberation to which the bishops are referring when this praise is almost immediately followed by regrets that "in some areas, clearly political interests try to manipulate them [CEBs]."<sup>40</sup>

Liberation is concerned with matters such as the transformation of unjust socio-economic structures and the equitable distribution of resources--issues which are most certainly "political" in nature. The CEBs, as involved in the struggle for this genuine type of liberation, are inescapably political themselves. In the liberationist view, this does not mean that they are not "spiritual," spiritual and political liberation are inseparable facets of the same mission. Puebla, on the other hand, introduces a false distinction between the spiritual and the political in the struggle for liberation by minimizing and criticizing the political nature of the CEBs. As such, once again, it with-



draws the Church's powerful sacralizing support from the struggle of the poor for social change.

Interestingly, however, denying and forbidding the political agency of the CEBs appears to contradict Puebla's contention that while bishops, priests, and ministers cannot be involved in party politics, such is the realm of the laity. Of course, we have already seen that at the time of Puebla lay participation in party politics (in the strict sense) was largely impossible. But now it also seems that even those organized in CEBs cannot "pursue and exercise political power to solve economic, political, and social problems in accordance with their own criteria and ideology." The laity, apparently, can therefore only become political actors if they do so outside the bounds of the Church.

This, however, is still problematic from the liberationist point of view because it indicates again that the Church itself should (and can) be devoid of all concrete political activity. Not only are bishops, priests, and religious not allowed to exercise partisan political options, but the laity are also prohibited from exercising their political will within the context of the Church as it is expressed in the CEBs. At this point, the separation between the spiritual and the temporal, or between the religious and the political, becomes nearly complete. The liberationist tradition of placing a transformative histori-

cal project within a salvific framework, and thereby granting religious legitimacy to the struggle against dominance, becomes drastically weakened by Puebla's position on the laity.

Finally, the increased autonomy and authority granted to the laity through the option for the poor is also contradicted by Puebla's stance on the CEBs. The revolutionary option has already been pre-empted; the laity's nonviolent means to change are also restricted by the hierarchy in its insistence that the Church not be political. Even within the CEBs, the laity are not granted the right to decide for themselves the means to their own liberation.

That this is a lack of willingness on the part of the bishops to relinquish authority to the CEBs is underscored by the Puebla treatment of the "popular church," which both the liberationists and the Puebla Document state the CEBs comprise. The problem with the concept of the popular church, states Puebla, is that it "suggests a division within the bosom of the Church and seems to imply an unacceptable denial of the hierarchy's function."<sup>41</sup> The attack on the popular church (and by extension the CEBs) is thus seen to be based directly on the appeal to hierarchical authority.

It is at this point that the conservative agenda at Puebla becomes most obvious, as the popular church and the CEBs are treated in precisely the same way as they had been

by the conservatives in the years preceding Puebla.<sup>42</sup> Not only is hierarchical authority invoked in the attack on the popular church, but the link between this authority and Church unity is implied by the remark concerning "division in the bosom of the Church." In the conservatives' view, because the Pope and bishops are the representatives and guardians of Church unity, threats to their authority are seen to undermine Church unity. Moreover, the casting of the popular church at Puebla in terms of the problem of "parallel magisteria,"<sup>43</sup> also implies that it was viewed as a divisive phenomenon. Disregarding the fact that, as outlined by the liberationists, the unity of the Church cannot be assumed to exist in a society torn by class conflict, the Puebla Document instead claims unity is endangered by the popular church itself and views of it that "could well be inspired by 'familiar ideological forms of conditioning.'"<sup>44</sup> Importantly, therefore, the conservative emphasis on both hierarchical authority and anti-communism is evident in Puebla's critique of the popular church.<sup>45</sup>

Clearly, the Puebla Document advocates a model of the CEBs which is markedly different from that of the liberationists. Overall, it appears that the distinction between the two conceptions can be expressed in terms of a differing understanding of "base." Puebla only promotes CEBs insofar as the "base" implies a sub-unit to (i.e., a unit subordinate to) the hierarchical structures of the

institutional Church. However, in reality, as the liberationists would argue, "base" also indicates a basic social group, in terms of the CEBs' subordinate class character and their location at the foundation of a social pyramid.<sup>46</sup> Puebla's steadfast denial of the political implications of this model of CEBs is simply another facet of its commitment to anti-communism and hierarchical authority.

These themes, as we have shown, recur throughout the Puebla Document: the appeals to unity and the denial of the interclass nature of the Church and class conflict throughout society; the attempted withdrawal of the Church from political choices its social position indicates it cannot actually avoid; the restriction of the right of the poor from determining the course of their own liberation. They are not incidental to the text, but are articulated in the Puebla treatment of liberation, politics, violence, CEBs--the matters central to the Church in Latin America at the time. As such, they cannot be depicted as merely the other half of a compromise otherwise acceptable to the liberationists. These are positions which undermine and override the liberationist project as a whole. In the end, they prove Puebla to be a retreat from, and not a confirmation, strengthening, or reaffirmation of, Medellín's liberationist message.

### Concluding Reflections

Seen this way, Puebla cannot be considered significantly different in overall orientation from the conservative periods immediately surrounding it. The insistence on unity, political withdrawal, anti-Marxism, and the authoritarian subordination of the poor laity were present before, during, and after Puebla. The apparent differences in position were actually ones of form, or, more accurately, of strategy in the propagation of the same anti-liberationist ideas by the same anti-liberationist players.

In the years following Medellín, the attacks on the liberationists were led by López Trujillo and in part took the form of an overt critique and condemnation of liberation theology. However, these direct strikes were supported by more subtle tactics in which López Trujillo and the Pope attempted to counter the liberationists by taking control of their dangerous concepts and diluting their politically threatening elements.

Puebla represented the continuation of this latter strategy at a new level of sophistication. The Final Document (over which, we must not forget, the conservatives had ultimate control) retained enough liberationist phraseology and posturing to be taken as a satisfactory compromise by the progressives. Yet underneath the spiritualization and qualifications were conservative positions that negated the possibility of Puebla being a truly liberationist statement.

That it nonetheless could be construed as such was an added bonus for the conservatives, because it served to strengthen their dominance.<sup>47</sup> The hegemony of a dominant group can never be total; it can only be plausible if the ruling ideology is elaborated in terms of the interests of the subordinate class. The conservative agenda at Puebla could not have been presented unvarnished; instead, it was cast in the terms of the subordinate group and their organic intellectuals. Puebla appeared to represent the interests of the liberationist group and so prevented its outright revolt. It thereby served to enhance the conservatives' control.

Soon after Puebla, however, such strategies no longer proved sufficient and had to be supplemented by further direct attacks on the liberationists and by the use of repressive force. The conservatives' reformulations of liberation and the option for the poor were obviously not adopted in the manner they had intended them to be. Catholics participated in the Nicaraguan Revolution. Priests took positions in the Sandinista government. Boff's book attacked the authoritarian exercise of power in the modern Church and called for its transformation. It was painfully obvious to the conservatives that their view was far from prevailing unchallenged in practice. Coercive force was therefore needed in order to secure their dominance against further challenges. The conservatives' agenda had not

changed since Puebla, only their method of enforcing it.

The question that inevitably arises then, given the more than two decades of conservative entrenchment in the Church, is whether we can realistically hope for anything but more of the same from the Latin American bishops and the Vatican at CELAM IV and beyond. Can the Church wholeheartedly come to promote genuine liberation both in the society at large, in terms of a redistribution of resources, and within itself, in terms of a redistribution of authority?

In view of what we have discussed throughout this thesis, it appears unlikely. Insofar as genuine liberation in the temporal sphere necessitates the dismantling of the world capitalist order, the institutional Church will not be a leader in this regard. The Church and capital are quite intertwined. The Vatican holds stock in multinational corporations and Church leaders in Latin America have historically owed their privileged existence to their links with the dominant classes.<sup>48</sup> As we have also seen, the relationship has often been mutually enhancing, with the Church generally condemning socialism and delegitimizing struggles against the prevailing order. Even if the Church were to refrain from producing a discourse inherently supportive of capitalism, the logic of hierarchical and centralized organization which the Church dictates leads to the unconscious interiorization by the faithful of a respectful

attitude towards its hierarchy, authority, and centralized power. In turn, this inculcation of hierarchical logic facilitates the submission of the faithful to other forms of social hierarchy, including that of capitalist economic dominance.<sup>49</sup> Indeed, all these complex ties between the Church and capitalism will prove difficult to sever.

Moreover, a liberating redistribution of authority in the Church stands in contradiction to the monopolization of power upon which the hierarchy is based. The institutional imperative of the preservation and reproduction of the Church's internal hegemonic order ensures that any threatening movement to established power relations is countered. Whether answered through anathematization or attempted absorption, serious challenges to the authoritarian exercise of power are rarely allowed to persist.

Despite these conditions, of course, Medellín's liberationist message did manage to emerge. However, after all the discussion of the anti-liberationist Puebla as a outcome of manoeuvring largely motivated by interests to maintain the traditional power relations within the Church, we must not lose sight of the fact that Medellín was in part the result of similar motivations. Much of the approval of Medellín's conclusions stemmed from the need to protect the influence of the Church from threatening currents in the larger Latin American society. Although at Medellín concerns to preserve the Church's external religious hegemony



prevailed while at Puebla the need for maintenance of the internal hegemonic order appeared decisive, institutional imperatives played a role in the outcome of both conferences. Though Medellín was genuinely liberationist at its core and hence drastically different in content from Puebla, both can be seen as significantly influenced by the needs of the institutional Church.

In addition, while Medellín did occur, its liberationist message was soon countered within the Church by the new leaders of CELAM and by the Vatican. Within five years of the conference, reactionary forces had gained control of CELAM and soon after, with no apparent resistance from the Vatican, had converted its official position to the anti-liberationist side. Overall, then, the prospects for CELAM sponsoring another Medellín do not seem great.

Nonetheless, reasons for hope do certainly exist. While conservatives control CELAM and the Vatican, they do not constitute the entire hierarchy, much less the whole Church. Liberationist bishops and priests can still be found and, even though they are systematically being excluded from positions of great authority in the institutional Church, they continually work to promote and legitimate the liberationist cause in their individual spheres of influence. In addition, even though some liberation theologians are being silenced, what they have already written persists, they will write again, and others continue to

write, teach, and otherwise promote the liberationist view. The Medellín position may no longer be that of the official Church as a whole, but it certainly lives on in many smaller expressions of it.

Further, these proponents of liberation can still draw on the Medellín documents--and their influence as official Church statements--to support their position. Medellín's powerful conclusions need not only be used in distorted ways to support the status quo; they can be and are used to serve the genuine cause of liberation. That these liberationists use the Puebla Final Document successfully for the same worthy purpose cannot be denied, even though we have shown that the affinity of the two conferences can no longer be assumed. Hopefully, there will be enough room for a liberationist reading of any future Church documents, so that any underlying conservatism they express also does not remain unchallenged.

The most important basis for hope, however, is the people whom the liberationists and intellectuals represent. No matter how much the powerful attempt to deny and suppress the reality of class conflict throughout society, the fact remains that the Church itself is an interclass social space. Those at its base, those who originally expressed the aspiration to liberation, continue to do so and are not going to fade away. Over the years, in the CEBs and through their own conscientization, and with the support and guid-

ance of other liberationist intellectuals, the poor within the Church have become empowered and mobilized in an unprecedented way. They are the living proof that religion as an ideology can inspire the oppressed as well as support the oppressors. They are the reason that, despite the disappointment of Puebla and the conservatism of CELAM, the liberationist cause and hope cannot yet be said to be lost.

## ENDNOTES

### Introduction

1. The style guide followed throughout this thesis is: Kate L. Turabian, A Manual for Writers of Term Papers, Theses, and Dissertations, 5th ed., revised and expanded by Bonnie Birtwistle Honigsblum (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1987).

2. Histories of CELAM include: Juan Botero Restrepo, El CELAM: Elementos para su historia (Medellín, Colombia: Consejo Episcopal Latinoamericano, 1982); François Houtart, "L'Histoire du CELAM ou l'oubli des origines," Archives de Sciences Sociales des Religions 62, no. 1 (juillet-septembre, 1986): 93-105; and Cecilio de Lora Soria, "History, Structure, and Present Activities of CELAM," in The Church and Social Change in Latin America, ed. Henry A. Landsberger (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1970), 173-90.

3. See Houtart, "L'Histoire," 94-96.

4. Gary MacEoin, "The Church of the Poor?--An Editorial Introduction to the Issue." Cross Currents 28, no. 1 (Spring 1978): 1-2.

### Chapter One

1. Quoted (with no reference given) in Michael Gismondi, "Conceptualizing Religion from Below. The Central American Experience," Social Compass 35, nos. 2-3 (1988): 344: "las buenas ideas no caen del cielo."

2. Neal Wood, "The Social History of Political Theory," Political Theory 6, no. 3 (August 1978): 346-50. Although Wood is referring to political theorists in this article, as Gismondi indicates, the same principle applies when dealing with producers of religious knowledge. Gismondi, "Conceptualizing Religion," 348-49.

3. Andrés Opazo Bernales, "La fonction de l'Eglise

dans la lutte pour l'hégémonie," Social Compass 26, nos. 2-3 (1979): 254: ". . . la religion historiquement parlant, ce n'est jamais une réalité incorporelle qui flotte dans la conscience des hommes, elle s'est toujours incarnée dans des institutions."

4. Otto Maduro, Religion and Social Conflicts, with an Introduction by Marie Augusta Neal, trans. Robert R. Barr (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1982), 19. Obviously, and as Maduro also points out, this sociological approach necessarily implies a "methodological materialism" in this thesis. Methodological materialism is ". . . the provisory bracketing off of . . . the supernatural . . . . [I]t is necessary to render oneself capable . . . of putting one's own religious beliefs and preferences in parentheses, in suspension." Ibid.

5. Antonio Gramsci, Selections from the Prison Notebooks of Antonio Gramsci, trans. and ed. Quintin Hoare and Geoffrey Nowell Smith (New York: International Publishers, 1971).

6. Such basic biographical details can be found in Alberto Pozzolini, Antonio Gramsci: An Introduction to His Thought, trans. Anne F. Showstack (London: Pluto Press, 1970), 25-58; and Gramsci, Prison Notebooks, ix-xcvi. For a more comprehensive biography of Gramsci, see Giuseppe Fiori, Antonio Gramsci: Life of a Revolutionary (London: New Left Books, 1970).

7. Pozzolini, Antonio Gramsci: An Introduction, 124-26.

8. However, according to Mario Caceres, at only one point in his writings was Gramsci ever openly generous in regard to Christianity. Once, in an article in Ordine Nuovo, Gramsci drew a parallel between Primitive Christianity and communist revolution. Mario Caceres, "Gramsci, la religion et les systèmes socio-économiques," Social Compass 35, nos. 2-3 (1988): 281-82.

9. John Fulton, "Religion and Politics in Gramsci: An Introduction," Sociological Analysis 48, no. 3 (1987): 197; Otto Maduro, "New Marxist Approaches to the Relative Autonomy of Religion," Sociological Analysis 38, no. 4 (1977): 361-62; and Hugues Portelli, Gramsci et la question religieuse, avec une Préface by Jean-Pierre Cot (Paris: Editions Anthropos, 1974), 13-16.

10. Maduro, "New Marxist Approaches," 362. Gramsci discusses this question in part in Antonio Gramsci, "The Southern Question," in The Modern Prince and Other Writings,

trans. Louis Marks (New York: International Publishers, 1959), 28-51.

11. For example, some of Gramsci's writings have yet to be translated from the original Italian, other articles attributed to him are unsigned. There are also suspicions that political considerations have resulted in certain editorial liberties taken in the publication of Gramsci's works. See Pozzolini, Antonio Gramsci: An Introduction, 22-23. Perhaps more crucially, many difficulties have plagued translators of the Prison Notebooks, the writings in which Gramsci's most extensive comments on religion are found. As stated earlier, much of the original manuscript consists of fragments and unorganized material. This is at least partially attributable to Gramsci's failing health and the poor prison conditions. In addition, apart from the problems usually associated with translating theoretical terminology, difficulties sometimes arise because Gramsci was forced to alter many of his phrases in order to slip his work past the prison censor. See Gramsci, Prison Notebooks, x-xiv. Obviously, to try to arrive at the "definitive" Gramsci would prove futile.

12. See Otto Maduro, "Marxist Analysis and the Sociology of Religion: An Introduction," Social Compass 22, nos. 3-4 (1975): 305-22, as well as his previously cited "New Marxist Approaches," 359-67.

13. See Maduro, Social Conflicts.

14. Gramsci, Prison Notebooks, 137.

15. Ibid., 366.

16. Ibid., 407.

17. Ibid., 366.

18. Ibid., 377.

19. Maduro, "Marxist Analysis," 310-16.

20. Frequently, Gramsci refers to this combination of civil and political society as the "State." Gramsci, Prison Notebooks, 239, 244, 263. However, other interpretations of Gramsci's definition of the State do exist. See Martin Carnoy, "Gramsci and the State," chap. in The State and Political Theory (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1984), 65-88. These alternate definitions need not concern us here. The important point is that Gramsci consistently recognizes the coupling of force and consent. See also Gramsci, Prison Notebooks, 12, 57, 169-70.

21. Ibid., 181-82, 242, 258-59.

22. Once again we see that Gramsci has broken with the Marxist tradition. While the classical Marxist theory of the State posits that the dominant class rules primarily through force, Gramsci's more nuanced discussion considers both force and consent as means of maintaining the power of the ruling class. See Anthony Mansueto, "Religion, Solidarity and Class Struggle. Marx, Durkheim and Gramsci on the Religion Question," Social Compass 35, nos. 2-3 (1988): 270-72.

23. Gramsci, Prison Notebooks, 5-6.

24. Ibid., 3.

25. Ibid., 6-7.

26. Ibid., 10.

27. Ibid., 4, 6, 9, 15-16, 57, 207; and Carnoy, "Gramsci and the State," 85-86.

28. Gramsci, Prison Notebooks, 161.

29. Mansueto, "Religion, Solidarity and Class Struggle," 272.

30. Gramsci, Prison Notebooks, 184-85, 210.

31. Ibid., 275-76.

32. Gramsci discusses strategic considerations for revolutionary action at great length in the Prison Notebooks. See, for example, the comments on the "war of position" and the "war of manoeuvre" in Gramsci, Prison Notebooks, 108-10, 229-39.

33. Not all of Gramsci's writings on religion will be directly relevant to the present discussion. Three areas treated by Gramsci which will not be dealt with in detail in this thesis are as follows: 1) Gramsci's critique of religious doctrine. Refer to Caceres, "Gramsci, la religion et les systèmes," 283-84; and Portelli, Gramsci et la question, 29-34; 2) Gramsci's classification of the levels of religion and culture into: folklore, religion of the people, religion of the intellectuals, (cultural) folklore, common sense, and philosophy. See Fulton, "Religion and Politics," 203-7; and 3) Gramsci's discussions of the history of European and Italian Christianity. See Fulton, "Religion and Politics," 207-13; and Portelli, Gramsci et la question, 51-304 passim.

34. Maduro, Social Conflicts, 41.
35. Ibid., 46.
36. Ibid., 43.
37. This is discussed in more detail in Ibid., 72-74, 122-135.
38. These examples are taken from Ibid., 123-24.
39. As Brian Smith points out, even though many of the post-Revolutionary Latin American constitutions allowed for varying degrees of Church-State separation, they also often provided for the continuance of public support to Church ministries. The implementation of controversial Church programs of which the government does not approve therefore potentially threatens the Church's financial viability. Brian H. Smith, "Religion and Social Change: Classical Theories and New Formulations in the Context of Recent Developments in Latin America," Latin American Research Review 10, no. 2 (Summer 1975): 18-19.
40. Maduro, Social Conflicts, 127-28. Maduro provides an excellent list of 17 types of Catholic religious production that indicate a cooperation of the clergy with the hegemonic strategy of the ruling class in Latin America. For example, he writes that the clergy may produce a religious discourse that denies the existence or the importance of fundamental social divisions in society, or may produce a discourse that denies legitimacy to the struggle against such division and domination. They may also produce a discourse that accepts the prevailing order as something beyond question or as divinely sanctioned. Such cooperation may also take the form of nonproduction of discourse encouraging the struggle against domination. Maduro further cites as cooperation the attendance of clergy at activities or in institutions whose purpose is to support or expand the established order.
41. Gramsci, Prison Notebooks, 420.
42. Hugo Vilella, "The Church and the Process of Democratization in Latin America," Social Compass 26, nos. 2-3 (1979): 267.
43. Maduro, Social Conflicts, 92-94.
44. Portelli, Gramsci et la question, 45.
45. Maduro, Social Conflicts, 143-45.



46. Ibid., 87.

47. Gramsci, Prison Notebooks, 408.

48. The English edition of the Prison Notebooks contains only fragmentary references to these ecclesiastical strategies. However, more systematic discussions can be found in: Maduro, "New Marxist Approaches," 363; Maduro, Social Conflicts, 103-5; and Portelli, Gramsci et la question, 177-85, 203-25 passim.

49. Maduro, Social Conflicts, 104-5.

50. Gramsci, Prison Notebooks, 328.

51. Madeleine Adriance, "Opting for the Poor: A Social-Historical Analysis of the Changing Brazilian Catholic Church," Sociological Analysis 46, no. 2 (1985): 134-35; and Gramsci, Prison Notebooks, 398.

52. Maduro, "New Marxist Approaches," 363; and Maduro, Social Conflicts, 105.

53. Maduro, "New Marxist Approaches," 363; also Portelli, Gramsci et la question, 206-7.

54. Gramsci, Prison Notebooks, 331.

## Chapter Two

1. Of course, several problems are inherent in any discussion of the "Latin American historical bloc between 1959 and 1968." At the very least, it must be recognized that to artificially isolate one decade in the history of a continent for the purposes of examination is extremely artificial. To do so neglects the fact that the events and trends of the late 1950s and the 1960s originated in and/or were conditioned by events and trends occurring in earlier decades and even centuries. Attempts to discuss "Latin American" history are equally doomed. Although certain generalizations can be made, Latin America is a large, diverse, and changing continent. Countries vary in size, population, population density, language, social and economic structure, cultural and ethnic patterns, and political history (among other things). As Daniel Levine points out, many of these same variations occur within nations by region and social stratum, and also occur over time as societies themselves change. Daniel H. Levine, "From Church and State to Religion and Politics and Back Again," Social Compass 37, no. 3 (1990): 332. Acknowl-

edging this does not solve the problems; however, in a work of this length little more can be expected. The following summary thus attempts to outline the period concerned by highlighting the most important events and relevant trends for the subject of this thesis.

2. Trevor Beeson and Jenny Pearce, A Vision of Hope: The Churches and Change in Latin America (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1984), 21-22.

3. Two concise discussions of the features of the ideology of National Security are found in Phillip Berryman, Liberation Theology: The Essential Facts about the Revolutionary Movement in Latin America and Beyond (New York: Pantheon Books, 1987), 118-22; and José Comblin, "The National Security System in Latin America," chap. in The Church and the National Security State (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1979), 64-78.

4. Karl M. Schmitt, "Introduction," in The Roman Catholic Church in Modern Latin America, ed. Karl M. Schmitt (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, Inc., 1972), 23. As for the post-Medellín years, it should also be noted that the Christian Democrat Napoleón Duarte was president of El Salvador in the 1980s.

5. This interpretation of Christian Democracy is taken from Otto Maduro, "Christian Democracy and the Liberating Option for the Oppressed in Latin American Catholicism," in The Church and Christian Democracy, Concilium Series, vol. 193, ed. Gregory Baum and John Coleman (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1987), 106-19.

6. The best-known exposition of this theory is found in Walt W. Rostow, The Stages of Economic Growth: A Non-Communist Manifesto (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1960).

7. For statistical evidence and a discussion of the dynamics of this income inequality, see the essays in Alejandro Foxley, ed., Income Distribution in Latin America (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1976).

8. Some of the most important works of the dependency theorists (who, it should be noted, do not form a completely homogeneous school of thought) include: Fernando Henrique Cardoso and Enzo Faletto, Dependency and Development in Latin America, trans. Marjory Mattingly Urquidi (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1979); Theotonio Dos Santos, "The Structure of Dependence," American Economic Review 60, no. 2 (May 1970): 231-36; and of course, the writings of the German-born, American-schooled, Andre Gunder Frank, who

taught and did research in Latin America during the 1960s. See Andre Gunder Frank, "The Development of Underdevelopment," Monthly Review 18, no. 4 (Sept. 1966): 17-31; Andre Gunder Frank, Capitalism and Underdevelopment in Latin America (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1967); Andre Gunder Frank, Latin America: Underdevelopment or Revolution. Essays on the Development of Underdevelopment and the Immediate Enemy (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1969); Andre Gunder Frank, On Capitalist Underdevelopment (Bombay and New York: Oxford University Press, 1975).

9. The term "religious" is commonly used as a noun in Roman Catholicism to refer to men and women who are members of religious orders.

10. See the "Martyr Survey" in Penny Lernoux, Cry of the People: The Struggle for Human Rights in Latin America--The Catholic Church in Conflict with U.S. Policy (New York: Penguin Books, 1982), 463-70.

11. See Austin Flannery, ed., Vatican Council II: The Conciliar and Post Conciliar Documents (Northport, NY: Costello Publishing Company, 1987).

12. While this number is high, Enrique Dussel notes that Latin American bishops comprised only twenty-two percent of the total bishops at the Council, even though the Catholic population of Latin America at the time was thirty-eight percent of the world Catholic population. Further, there were only fifty Latin American periti on the staff of the study commissions. Europe, which then had about the same Catholic population, sent 219 periti. Enrique Dussel, History and the Theology of Liberation: A Latin American Perspective, trans. John Drury (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1976), 112.

13. For example, Cardinal Antonio Caggiano of Buenos Aires was on the presiding board; Cardinal Achille Liénart of Lille started the Council with his now-famous remark "Mihi non placet"; Bishop Manuel Larrain, who was elected President of CELAM in 1963, was one of the participants who intervened to suggest numerous procedural changes at the beginning of the Council; and Bishop Helder Câmara of Brazil organized many informal meetings between bishops and periti, which helped to keep conciliar discussions alive and relevant. Dussel, History and the Theology of Liberation, 112-13; Enrique Dussel, A History of the Church in Latin America: Colonialism and Liberation (1492-1979), trans. and revised by Alan Neely (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1981), 140; and François Houtart, "L'Histoire du CELAM ou l'oubli des origines," Archives de Sciences sociales des Religions 62, no. 1 (juillet-

septembre, 1986): 99-100.

14. Mark G. McGrath, "Church Doctrine in Latin America after the Council," in The Church and Social Change in Latin America, ed. Henry A. Landsberger (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1970), 102.

15. Houtart, "L'Histoire," 100.

16. Edward L. Cleary, Crisis and Change: The Church in Latin America Today (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1985), 19-20.

17. Dussel, History of the Church, 140.

18. Joseph Gremillion, ed., The Gospel of Peace and Justice: Catholic Social Teaching since Pope John (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1976), 11.

19. Pope John XXIII, "Mater et Magistra," in The Gospel of Peace and Justice: Catholic Social Teaching since Pope John, ed. Joseph Gremillion (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1976), 143-200; and Pope John XXIII, "Pacem in Terris," in The Gospel of Peace and Justice: Catholic Social Teaching since Pope John, ed. Joseph Gremillion (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1976), 201-41.

20. See Second Vatican Council, "Gaudium et Spes," in Vatican Council II: The Conciliar and Post Conciliar Documents, ed. Austin Flannery (Northport, NY: Costello Publishing Company, 1987), 903-1014. Such an inductive and exploratory methodology, in which theology and pastoral action are grounded in human reality, represents a dramatic movement away from the deductive and dogmatic methods of traditional theology. Cleary, Crisis and Change, 22.

21. See Pope Paul VI, "Populorum Progressio," in The Gospel of Peace and Justice: Catholic Social Teaching since Pope John, ed. Joseph Gremillion (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1976), 387-415.

22. See for example, Pope Paul VI, "Populorum Progressio," nos. 15, 77.

23. Ibid., nos. 44, 48.

24. Ibid., no. 31.

25. Until this time the CELAM Secretariats had all worked in Bogotá. Now, the individual departments (e.g., liturgy, education, vocations, etc.) were able to carry out their work in different countries. Cecilio de Lora Soria,

"History, Structure, and Present Activities of CELAM," in Landsberger, The Church and Social Change, 180-81; and Juan Botero Restrepo, El CELAM: Elementos para su historia (Medellín, Colombia: Consejo Episcopal Latinoamericano, 1982), 86-87.

26. Restrepo, El CELAM, 100: "las reuniones del Concilio terminan ya, pero el Concilio comienza en nuestras diócesis."

27. Some of these are discussed in Dussel, History of the Church, 141.

28. See Consejo Episcopal Latinoamericano, Presencia Activa de la Iglesia en el Desarrollo y en la Integración de América Latina (Salvador, Brasil: Departamento de Acción Social de CELAM, 1967).

29. Restrepo, El CELAM, 105.

30. See Michael Dodson, "The Christian Left in Latin American Politics," in Churches and Politics in Latin America, ed. Daniel H. Levine, with a Preface by John P. Harrison (Beverly Hills and London: Sage Publications, 1979), 111-34.

31. Bishops of the Third World, "A Letter to the Peoples of the Third World," in Between Honesty and Hope: Documents from and about the Church in Latin America where the Crisis Deepens and Violence Threatens, Peruvian Bishops' Commission for Social Action, trans. John Drury, Maryknoll Documentation Series (Maryknoll, NY: Maryknoll Publications, 1970), 3-12.

32. Dom Helder Câmara, as he is most commonly known, is one of the most charismatic and influential figures in the Latin American Catholic Church. Born and later made an archbishop in the impoverished northeastern region of Brazil, he initiated the establishment of the National Conference of Brazilian Bishops (CNBB) in 1952. His tireless work on behalf of the oppressed and his opposition to violence and dictatorship made him one of the most famous of the Church's early liberationists. For an intimate look into his life and work, see José De Broucker, Dom Helder Camara: The Violence of a Peacemaker, trans. Herma Briffault (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1970).

33. Bishops of the Third World, "Letter," 4.

34. Gary MacEoin and Nivita Riley, Puebla: A Church Being Born (New York: Paulist Press, 1980), 55. It is often mistakenly assumed that liberation theology was born at

Medellín. In fact, much evidence exists to suggest otherwise: Segundo worked on a distinctly Latin American theology in the early 1960s, several theologians (including Segundo and Gutiérrez) met formally to discuss their work at Petrópolis in 1964, Gutiérrez taught a course on poverty in Montreal in 1967, and the basis for what was eventually to become A Theology of Liberation (still considered to be the Magna Carta of liberation theology) was presented by him at a conference in Peru one month prior to Medellín. See Juan Luis Segundo, "The Future of Christianity in Latin America," in Liberation Theology: A Documentary History, ed. Alfred T. Hennelly (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1990), 29-37; Roberto Oliveros Maqueo, "Meeting of Theologians at Petrópolis," Ibid., 43-47; Gustavo Gutiérrez, A Theology of Liberation: History, Politics and Salvation, trans. and ed. Sister Caridad Inda and John Eagleson (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1973), 302 fn. 1; and Gustavo Gutiérrez, "Toward a Theology of Liberation," in Hennelly, Liberation Theology, 62-76.

35. Gustavo Gutiérrez, "Notes for a Theology of Liberation," Theological Studies 31, no. 2 (June 1970): 248. Consistent with the greater awareness recently displayed by liberation theologians that their terminology has been gender specific, the 15th Anniversary Edition of A Theology of Liberation employs gender neutral language. Gustavo Gutiérrez, A Theology of Liberation: History, Politics, and Salvation. Revised edition with a New Introduction. Trans. and ed. Sister Caridad Inda and John Eagleson (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1988).

36. Freire originally used the Portuguese form, conscientização; in Spanish the term is concientización.

37. Paulo Freire, Pedagogy of the Oppressed, trans. Myra Bergman Ramos (New York: The Seabury Press, 1970), 19. Conscientization is also discussed at length in Paulo Freire, Education for Critical Consciousness (New York: The Seabury Press, 1973).

38. The following discussion of the preparations relies to a certain extent on Cleary, Crisis and Change, 33-41.

39. The document was officially commissioned by CELAM, the President of which at that time was the Brazilian bishop Avelar Brandao. David E. Mutchler, The Church as a Political Factor in Latin America: With Particular Reference to Colombia and Chile, with a Foreword by Irving Louis Horowitz (New York: Praeger Publishers, 1971), 98.

40. See Consejo Episcopal Latinoamericano, "The Working Draft of the Medellín Conference," in Between

Honesty and Hope: Documents from and about the Church in Latin America where the Crisis Deepens and Violence Threatens, Peruvian Bishops' Commission for Social Action, trans. John Drury, Maryknoll Documentation Series (Maryknoll, NY: Maryknoll Publications, 1970), 171-92. According to Mutchler, there was widespread opposition to the original document from both some of the national episcopates (most notably the Colombian) and the Vatican. Although some changes were made, it is Mutchler's contention that the document remained essentially unchanged. Mutchler, The Church as a Political Factor, 98-112.

41. All the papers are contained in Second General Conference of Latin American Bishops, The Church in the Present-Day Transformation of Latin America in the Light of the Council, vol. 1, Position Papers, ed. Louis Michael Colonnese (Bogotá, Colombia: General Secretariat of CELAM, 1970).

42. Houtart, L'Histoire, 100-101.

43. Mutchler, The Church as a Political Factor, 103-5, 110, 112.

44. Ibid., 113-17; also David Abalos, "The Medellín Conference," Cross Currents 19, no. 2 (Spring 1969): 113-14.

45. Consejo Episcopal Latinoamericano, "Working Draft," 179.

46. For example, speaking to about 300,000 campesinos at a rally sponsored by Acción Cultural Popular, the Pope said, "allow Us, finally, to exhort you not to place your trust in violence and revolution. That is contrary to the Christian spirit." Pope Paul VI, "Honoring Christ in His Poor," Address in San José, Colombia, on August 23, 1968, in The Pope Speaks 13, no. 3 (1968): 236. In addition, while celebrating a mass on "Development Day" in Bogotá, he warned that "violence is not in accord with the Gospel, that it is not Christian." Pope Paul VI, "Changing Social Structures: A Time of Crisis," Address in Bogotá, on August 23, 1968, in The Pope Speaks 13, no. 3 (1968): 240.

47. Also at the mass on Development Day, the Pope told the workers that "your charity should have a force of its own, the force of numbers, the force of social dynamism; not the subversive force of revolution and violence." Ibid., 242. Further, he repeated to the CELAM bishops in his opening address that "the strength of our charity is not to be found in hatred and violence." Pope Paul VI, "The Work is Not Finished," Inaugural address at the Second General Assembly of the Latin American Bishops, on August 24, 1968,

in The Pope Speaks 13, no. 3 (1968): 256.

48. Of the delegates, there were: 8 cardinals, 45 archbishops, 92 bishops, 70 priests and religious (male), 6 religious (female), 19 lay people, and 9 non-Catholics. Restrepo, El CELAM, 155.

49. See for example, Mutchler, The Church as a Political Factor, 128; and MacEoin and Riley, Puebla: A Church Being Born, 55.

50. These documents are found in Second General Conference of Latin American Bishops, The Church in the Present-Day Transformation of Latin America in the Light of the Council, Vol. 2, Conclusions, Second Edition (Washington, D.C.: United States Catholic Conference Division for Latin America, 1973). For the Spanish text, refer to Consejo Episcopal Latinoamericano, Medellín Conclusiones: La Iglesia en la actual transformación de América Latina a la luz del Concilio (Bogotá, Colombia: Secretariado General del CELAM, 1990). Since the numeration within the documents of both these texts is almost completely identical, future references to them will refer to the English text only (except in the case of discrepancies or direct quotations). Further, citations of the documents will refer to "CELAM" as the author, followed by the name of the individual document concerned and the appropriate section numbers.

According to Cleary, only three of the sixteen documents (the ones dealing with justice, peace, and poverty) made a strong impact, "the rest of the sections are mostly throwaways--unimaginative statements typical of international meetings." Cleary, Crisis and Change, 42-43. While Cleary is largely correct in this judgement, the document on education should also be included in the group of bold and influential sections. Further, it should be noted that although the remainder of the documents may be for the most part "unimaginative," they nevertheless do not contradict the fundamental themes of Medellín as outlined in the following sections.

51. Gregory Baum offers a similar, but four-fold, classification of Medellín's themes: a conflictual understanding of society; the double aim of structural change and new consciousness ("liberation"); the recognition that the struggle for justice is an essential element of the faithful Christian life; and, the emphasis on the raising of consciousness among the masses of ordinary people. Gregory Baum, "Class Struggle and the Magisterium: A New Note," Theological Studies 45, no. 4 (1984): 690-92.



52. CELAM, "Peace," nos. 2-7.

53. CELAM, "Justice," no. 1; "Peace," nos. 4, 7; "Youth," no. 3; "Lay Movements," no. 2; and "Poverty of the Church," nos. 2-3.

54. CELAM, "Peace," no. 8-10.

55. As a consequence of such dependence, such nations: have little power in economic decisions affecting them, are subjected to unfair trade conditions and prices for their exported materials, face capital flight and the loss of trained personnel to foreign countries, witness the tax evasion of foreign and even national firms, and are burdened by a "progressive" debt. Ibid., nos. 8-9.

56. Ibid., no. 9. The phrase "international imperialism of money" was used by Pope Paul in "Populorum Progressio," no. 26, but was originally used in Pope Pius XI, "Quadragesimo Anno," in The Papal Encyclicals: 1903-1939, ed. Claudia Carlen Ihm (Wilmington, NC: McGrath Publishing Company, 1981), no. 109.

57. CELAM, "Peace," no. 10.

58. Ibid., nos. 11-13.

59. See also Second General Conference of Latin American Bishops, "Message to the Peoples of Latin America," in The Church in the Present-Day Transformation of Latin America in the Light of the Council, Vol. 2., Conclusions, Second Edition (Washington, D.C.: United States Catholic Conference Division for Latin America, 1973), 27; Consejo Episcopal Latinoamericano, "Mensaje a los pueblos de América Latina," en Medellín Conclusiones: La Iglesia en la actual transformación de América Latina a la luz del Concilio (Bogotá, Colombia: Secretariado General del CELAM, 1990), 30.

60. CELAM, "Justice," no. 3; and "Poverty of the Church," nos. 4-5.

61. CELAM, "Peace," nos. 1, 14.

62. Ibid., no. 16.

63. Ibid., nos. 6, 14, 17.

64. Ibid., nos. 14-20.

65. Ibid., no. 7; CELAM, "Justice," no. 1; also "Youth," no. 3.

66. See the discussion of religion as an active factor in the struggle of the subaltern classes in Otto Maduro, Religion and Social Conflicts, with an Introduction by Marie Augusta Neal, trans. Robert R. Barr (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1982), 136-38.

67. CELAM, "Justice," no. 3, and "Education," nos. 7-8. The concept of development as involving a shift from less human to more human conditions is taken from Pope Paul, "Populorum Progressio," nos. 20-21.

68. CELAM, "Justice," nos. 3-5, and "Peace," no. 14. Also see Second General Conference of Latin American Bishops, "Introduction to the Final Documents: Presence of the Church in the present-day transformation of Latin America," in The Church in the Present-Day Transformation of Latin America in the Light of the Council, Vol 2., Conclusions, Second Edition (Washington, D.C.: United States Catholic Conference Division for Latin America, 1973), no. 6.

69. CELAM, "Peace," no. 16; El CELAM, "Paz," no. 16: "Tal situación exige transformaciones globales, audaces, urgentes y profundamente renovadores." See also CELAM, "Justice," nos. 10, 14, 16.

70. See CELAM, "Justice," nos. 3-5; "Youth," no. 16; "Pastoral Concern for the Elites," no. 13; "Catechesis," no. 4; "Lay Movements," nos. 9-11; "Priests," nos. 18-19; "Religious," no. 8; and "Formation of the Clergy," no. 18.

71. Details of the bishops' recommendations for change are found in CELAM, "Justice," nos. 6-23; "Peace," nos. 20-33; and "Education," nos. 10-31.

72. CELAM, "Pastoral Concern for the Elites," no. 8; El CELAM, "Pastoral De Elites," no. 8: "Los revolucionarios cuestionan la estructura económico-social. Desean su cambio radical, tanto en los objetivos como en los medios." The bishops' three-fold classification is defined in CELAM, "Pastoral Concern for the Elites," nos. 5-8.

73. CELAM, "Peace," nos. 14-19.

74. Ibid., no. 19; El CELAM, "Paz," no. 19: "Si bien es verdad que la insurrección revolucionaria puede ser legítima en el caso de 'tiranía evidente y prolongada que atentase gravemente a los derechos fundamentales de la persona y damnificase peligrosamente el bien común del país', ya provenga de una persona ya de estructuras evidentemente injustas, también es cierto que la violencia o

'revolución armada' generalmente 'engendra nuevas injusticias, introduce nuevos desequilibrios y provoca nuevas ruinas: no se puede combatir un mal real al precio de un mal mayor." Note also that the material in single quotation marks is taken from Pope Paul VI, "Populorum Progressio," no. 30.

75. See page 32 of this thesis.

76. Donal Dorr, Option for the Poor: A Hundred Years of Vatican Social Teaching (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1983), 160-61.

77. Nine Hundred Priests from Latin America, "Latin America: A Continent of Violence," in Between Honesty and Hope: Documents from and about the Church in Latin America where the Crisis Deepens and Violence Threatens, Peruvian Bishops' Commission for Social Action, trans. John Drury, Maryknoll Documentation Series (Maryknoll, NY: Maryknoll Publications, 1970), 84.

78. Ibid.

79. See Gutiérrez, A Theology of Liberation (1973), 287-302.

80. This definition is found in CELAM, "Poverty," no. 4; see also "Youth," no. 15.

81. CELAM, "Poverty," nos. 5-6; see also "Priests," no. 27; "Religious," no. 13; and "Formation of the Clergy," nos. 11, 13.

82. CELAM, "Poverty," no. 7; El CELAM, "Pobreza de la Iglesia," no. 7: "La pobreza de la Iglesia y de sus miembros en América Latina debe ser signo y compromiso. Signo del valor inestimable del pobre a los ojos de Dios; compromiso de solidaridad con los que sufren."

83. Ibid., nos. 2-3, 9-16.

84. CELAM, "Message," 26; El CELAM, "Mensaje," 29: "Queremos sentir los problemas, percibir sus exigencias, compartir las angustias, descubrir los caminos y colaborar con las soluciones."

85. CELAM, "Justice," no. 20; "Peace," no. 27; "Catechesis," no. 10; "Formation of the Clergy," no. 21; "Poverty of the Church," no. 16; and "Joint Pastoral Planning," nos. 10-12.

86. CELAM, "Education," nos. 2-4.

87. Ibid., no. 8; El CELAM, "Educación," no. 8: "la 'educación liberadora'; esto es, la que convierte al educando en sujeto de su propio desarrollo. La educación es efectivamente el medio clave para liberar a los pueblos de toda servidumbre."

88. CELAM, "Peace," no. 21; El CELAM, "Paz," no. 21: "una viva conciencia de justicia, infundiéndoles un sentido dinámico de responsabilidad y solidaridad."

89. The bishops also promote conscientization at several other points in the documents. See CELAM, "Justice," nos. 17, 23; "Peace," no. 18; and "Mass Media," nos. 2, 5-6, 15.

90. A similar point is made in Phillip Berryman, Liberation Theology: The Essential Facts about the Revolutionary Movement in Latin America and Beyond (New York: Pantheon Books, 1987), 36-37.

91. These ideas can be found in Leonardo Boff, Church: Charism and Power. Liberation Theology and the Institutional Church, trans. John W. Diercksmeier (New York: Crossroad, 1985), chapters 1, 9, and 10; and also Leonardo Boff, Ecclesiogenesis: The Base Communities Reinvent the Church, trans. Robert R. Barr (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1986), chapters 1 and 3.

92. Their influence appears to have stemmed from a variety of factors. Numerically, the Brazilian delegation was the largest at the conference, with thirty-eight representatives (the Colombian delegation, the next largest, had only twenty). Several Brazilians had also been appointed by the Brazilian CELAM President to chair working committees. In addition, Helder Câmara was reportedly an extremely charismatic and dominating figure during meetings, press conferences, etc. Madeleine Adriance, "Opting for the Poor: A Social-Historical Analysis of the Changing Brazilian Catholic Church," Sociological Analysis 46, no. 2 (1985): 142-43, and Mutchler, The Church as a Political Factor, 118-21.

93. This report is discussed in detail in Mutchler, The Church as a Political Factor, 133-39. Discussions of the evolution and implications of the conservatism in the Colombian Church can be found in Daniel H. Levine and Alexander W. Wilde, "The Catholic Church, 'Politics,' and Violence: The Colombian Case," Review of Politics 39, no. 2 (April 1977): 220-49; and Daniel H. Levine, "Continuities in Colombia," Journal of Latin American Studies 17, no. 2 (1985): 295-317.

94. Cleary, Crisis and Change, 29.
95. J. B. Libânio, "CELAM III: Fears and Hopes," Cross Currents 28, no. 1 (Spring 1978): 21-23.
96. Ibid., 22.
97. Adriance, "Opting for the Poor," 133.
98. Cleary, Crisis and Change, 127; Renato Poblete, "The Church in Latin America: A Historical Survey," in The Church and Social Change in Latin America, ed. Henry A. Landsberger (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1970), 48-49; and Frederick C. Turner, Catholicism and Political Development in Latin America (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 1971), 222-23, 230.
99. Adriance, "Opting for the Poor," 134.
100. Ibid.
101. Cleary, Crisis and Change, 127-28.
102. Turner, Catholicism and Political Development, 242.
103. Adriance, "Opting for the Poor," 133, 137-38; and Cleary, Crisis and Change, 128.
104. Interestingly, Vallier comments that political movements of the left and salvation-oriented Protestant sects are particularly threatening to the cultural monopoly of Catholicism. They appear as such because beyond preaching a new framework of salvation and reward system, assuming a militant posture against the existing social order, and articulating a cohesive set of anti-Catholic values, they also provide followers with a "program," a "strategy for action" in society, and a lay ethic which allowed peoples full participation in the movement. Ivan Vallier, Catholicism, Social Control, and Modernization in Latin America (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1970), 58-60.
105. Turner, Catholicism and Political Development, 226-30.
106. Poblete, "The Church in Latin America," 39, 46.
107. Cleary, Crisis and Change, 129; Poblete, "The Church in Latin America," 47; and Turner, Catholicism and Political Development, 227-29.

108. Dussel, History of the Church, 106.
109. Restrepo, El CELAM, 24, 29-30.
110. Ibid., 64-68; and Soria, "History, Structure, and Present Activities," 180.
111. CELAM, "Pastoral Care of the Masses," nos. 1-4; "Catechesis," no. 2; "Lay Movements," no. 3; "Priests," no. 3; "Religious," nos. 3, 10; and "Formation of the Clergy," nos. 1, 5.
112. Adriance, "Opting for the Poor," 135.
113. Turner, Catholicism and Political Development, 230. It should be noted that Turner here is not referring to the Medellín Conference per se, but rather to the trend towards progressivism in the Latin American Church as a whole during the same general period.
114. For example, Second Vatican Council, "Gaudium et Spes," nos. 4, 8, 29.
115. Ibid., no. 40.
116. Ibid., no. 63.
117. These themes run throughout the encyclical, but some of the more noteworthy passages are: Pope Paul VI, "Populorum Progressio," nos. 14-21, 67, 74, 81-82, 85.
118. Joseph Gremillion, "The Impact of Gaudium et Spes: Medellín, Puebla, and Pastoral Creativity," in The Church and Culture since Vatican II: The Experience of North and Latin America, ed. Joseph Gremillion (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1985), 67.
119. Gutiérrez, A Theology of Liberation (1973), 134.
120. Robert McAfee Brown, Theology in a New Key: Responding to Liberation Themes (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1978), 52-53.

### Chapter Three

1. See Howard J. Wiarda and Harvey F. Kline, "The Acceleration of Modernization, 1930 to the Present," in Latin American Politics and Development, 2d ed., ed. Howard J. Wiarda and Harvey F. Kline (Boulder and London: Westview Press, 1985), 44-45.

2. This discussion of the effects of modernization in Latin America is based on Phillip Berryman, Inside Central America: The Essential Facts Past and Present on El Salvador, Nicaragua, Honduras, Guatemala, and Costa Rica (New York: Pantheon Books, 1985), 15-20; Penny Lernoux, Cry of the People: The Struggle for Human Rights in Latin America--The Catholic Church in Conflict with U.S. Policy (New York: Penguin Books, 1982), 247-60; and Wiarda and Kline, "The Acceleration of Modernization," 37-51.

3. For discussions on the debt crisis see Hugo Assmann, "Democracy and the Debt Crisis," This World no. 14 (Spring-Summer 1986): 83-103; Susan George, A Fate Worse Than Debt (London: Penguin Books, 1988); and Ten Days for World Development, Paying Dearly: The International Debt Crisis (Toronto: Ten Days for World Development, n.d.).

4. Penny Lernoux, "The Long Path to Puebla," in Puebla and Beyond: Documentation and Commentary, ed. John Eagleson and Philip Scharper, trans. John Drury (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1979), 16.

5. Nelson A. Rockefeller, The Rockefeller Report on the Americas: The Official Report of a United States Presidential Mission for the Western Hemisphere, The New York Times edition, with an Introduction by Tad Szulc (Chicago: Quadrangle Books, 1969).

6. Lernoux, "The Long Path to Puebla," 12-13.

7. For revealing accounts of the widespread covert involvement of the U.S. in Latin America see Lernoux, Cry of the People.

8. The most famous of the Nicaraguan CEBs is undoubtedly the one which was located at Solentiname. The discussions of this group were facilitated and recorded by Ernesto Cardenal, the poet and priest (and later Minister of Culture in the Sandinista government). See Ernesto Cardenal, The Gospel in Solentiname, trans. Donald D. Walsh (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1976).

9. Of course, this brief account cannot adequately portray the complexity of the situation of the Church in pre-revolution Nicaragua, which included continuously shifting alliances. Moreover, the situation changed again after the Revolution. While priests were ministers of foreign affairs, culture and of social welfare, and also held other government posts in the Sandinista government, tensions and divisions between the conservatives and liberationists within the Nicaraguan Church arose soon after the victory. For example, some conservatives in the

hierarchy questioned the validity of having priests in the government and were concerned about the Sandinista's Marxist tendencies. For detailed discussions which portray the complexity of the Church's role in Nicaragua, see Phillip Berryman, The Religious Roots of Rebellion: Christians in the Central American Revolutions (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1984), 51-89, and 226-67; Manzar Foroohar, The Catholic Church and Social Change in Nicaragua (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 1989); and Philip J. Williams, "The Catholic Hierarchy in the Nicaraguan Revolution," Journal of Latin American Studies 17, no. 2 (1985): 341-69.

10. Gary MacEoin and Nivita Riley, Puebla: A Church Being Born (New York: Paulist Press, 1980), 11.

11. See Berryman, The Religious Roots of Rebellion; Edward L. Cleary, Crisis and Change: The Church in Latin America Today (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1985), 45-46; and Michael Dodson, "The Christian Left in Latin American Politics," in Churches and Politics in Latin America, ed. Daniel H. Levine, with a Preface by John P. Harrison (Beverly Hills and London: Sage Publications, 1979), 117-30.

12. See John Eagleson, ed. Christians and Socialism: Documentation of the Christians for Socialism Movement in Latin America, trans. John Drury (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1975).

13. Documentation of these human rights violations against the Church can be found in many sources, including: Carolyn Cook Dipboye, "The Roman Catholic Church and the Political Struggle for Human Rights in Latin America, 1968-1980," Journal of Church and State 24, no. 3 (Autumn 1982): 506-12; Enrique Dussel, A History of the Church in Latin America: Colonialism and Liberation (1492-1979), trans. and revised by Alan Neely (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1981), 224-27; Lernoux, Cry of the People, 463-70; and Lernoux, "The Long Path to Puebla," 16-18.

14. This "Plan" was laid down in a leaked 1975 document of the Bolivian government under General Hugo Banzer, and was endorsed by ten Latin American governmental delegations at the 1977 meeting of the Latin American Anti-Communist Confederation. It suggested tactics such as planting subversive documents on Church premises and closing or censoring Church newspapers and radio stations. Phillip Berryman, Liberation Theology: The Essential Facts about the Revolutionary Movement in Latin America and Beyond (New York: Pantheon Books, 1987), 101.



15. Penny Lernoux's book, Cry of the People, which was originally subtitled United States Involvement in the Rise of Fascism, Torture, and Murder and the Persecution of the Catholic Church in Latin America, contains a great amount of information in this regard. See also Fernando Martínez Heredia, "Christianity and Liberation: A Cuban Study of Latin American Liberation Theology," Social Compass 35, nos. 2-3 (1988): 319, fn 15; and Lernoux, "The Long Path to Puebla," 12, 17.

16. Although the Colombians were the hosts of the Medellín conference, no concessions were made to them and the alternate document they presented to CELAM was virtually ignored. David E. Mutchler, The Church as a Political Factor in Latin America: With Particular Reference to Colombia and Chile, with a Foreword by Irving Louis Horowitz (New York: Praeger Publishers, 1971), 139.

17. Berryman, Liberation Theology: The Essential Facts, 98; Lernoux, "The Long Path to Puebla," 13; and MacEoin and Riley, Puebla: A Church Being Born, 22-23.

18. Tierra Nueva is reviewed in Daniel H. Levine, "Religion and Politics: Drawing Lines, Understanding Change," Latin American Research Review 20, no. 1 (1985): 195-97.

19. For an indication of their views, see Alfonso López Trujillo, Liberation or Revolution? An Examination of the Priest's Role in the Socioeconomic Class Struggle in Latin America (Huntington, IN: Our Sunday Visitor, Inc., 1977).

20. As Penny Lernoux explains, Vekemans' emphasized a relationship between Christians for Socialism and liberation theology in his appeals to the Germans. Although Christians for Socialism did not fare well under military repression in Latin America, it had emerged strongly in Europe and, with Euro-Communism, led some Church leaders to fear a Marxist election victory in their own countries. Despite the surge in totalitarianism in Latin America during the 1970s, the Europeans were led to believe that the Marxist threat was strong there as well. Because liberation theology was portrayed by Vekemans as a "Trojan horse" for Marxism, Adveniat helped to sponsor his smear campaign against it. Lernoux, Cry of the People, 305-10; and Lernoux, "The Long Path to Puebla," 20-22. The protest of several prominent German theologians against the links between the German Church, Vekemans, and the CIA in the attack on liberation theology is found in German Theologians, "We Must Protest," Cross Currents 28, no. 1 (Spring 1978): 66-70.

21. Lernoux, Cry of the People, 415-16; and Lernoux, "The Long Path to Puebla," 14.
22. Lernoux, "The Long Path to Puebla," 14.
23. Berryman, Liberation Theology: The Essential Facts, 99.
24. Dussel, History of the Church, 224.
25. Lernoux, Cry of the People, 416.
26. Phillip Berryman, "What Happened at Puebla," in Churches and Politics in Latin America, ed. Daniel H. Levine, with a Preface by John P. Harrison (Beverly Hills and London: Sage Publications, 1979), 59.
27. Brian H. Smith, "Religion and Social Change: Classical Theories and New Formulations in the Context of Recent Developments in Latin America," Latin American Research Review 10, no. 2 (Summer 1975): 18-19.
28. Lernoux, Cry of the People, 11.
29. Alfred T. Hennelly, "Courage with Primitive Weapons," Cross Currents 28, no. 1 (Spring 1978): 12-17.
30. Eph. 4: 5-6.
31. See Second Vatican Council, "Lumen Gentium," in Vatican Council II: The Conciliar and Post Conciliar Documents, ed. Austin Flannery (Northport, NY: Costello Publishing Company, 1987), nos. 1-4. For a more comprehensive discussion on the topic of Church unity, see Pope John Paul II, "Unity of the Church," Homily at Mass in 'July 19 Square' in Managua, Nicaragua, on March 4, 1983, in The Pope Speaks 28, no. 3 (1983): 206-10.
32. Pablo Richard, "The Latin American Church: 1959-1978," Cross Currents 28, no. 1 (Spring 1978): 42.
33. Gustavo Gutiérrez, A Theology of Liberation: History, Politics and Salvation, trans. and ed. Sister Caridad Inda and John Eagleson (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1973), 276-77, see also p. 137.
34. While the liberationists may reject the artificial unity of the conservatives, they nevertheless promote Christian unity--along the lines of a unified commitment to the poor. See: Berryman, Liberation Theology: The Essential Facts, 83-84; Gutiérrez, A Theology of Liberation (1973), 138, 277-78; and Richard, "The Latin

American Church," 42-43.

35. Gutiérrez, A Theology of Liberation (1973), 275, 301.

36. Richard, "The Latin American Church," 42.

37. Again, the liberationists propose their own form of universality, based on universal love and the liberation of both the oppressed and the oppressors. Gutiérrez, A Theology of Liberation (1973), 275-76; see also Richard, "The Latin American Church," 43.

38. His book, Liberation or Revolution?, is essentially a 128-page (often vicious) polemic against what he sees as the distortion of the Christian message and the Medellín call to liberation by theologians who have become enamoured of "fashionable," but fundamentally objectionable, Marxist categories and analysis. However, it is important to recognize that López Trujillo makes little distinction among liberation theologians and generally fails to differentiate between their varying uses of Marxist concepts. He also fails to recognize that few, if any, liberation theologians accept Marxism uncritically. For more sophisticated analyses of the relation between liberation theology and Marxism, see: Gregory Baum, "Liberation Theology and Marxism," The Ecumenist 25, no. 2 (January-February 1987): 22-26; and Christine E. Gudorf, Catholic Social Teaching on Liberation Themes (Washington, DC: University Press of America, 1981), 170-74.

39. For example, see López Trujillo, Liberation or Revolution?, 36-37, 40, 62-63, 66, and 93. Note that Christians for Socialism, the Third World Priests, or the followers of Camilo Torres could be made ready examples to support López Trujillo's point.

40. Ibid., 17, 46, 66-69.

41. Ibid., 46, 87-88.

42. Ibid., 105.

43. Pope Paul VI, "Octogesima Adveniens," in The Gospel of Peace and Justice, ed. Joseph Gremillion (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1976), 485-512; and Pope Paul VI, "Evangelization in the Modern World," The Pope Speaks 21, no. 1 (1976): 4-51. The following discussion of these two documents is in part dependent on Donal Dorr, Option for the Poor: A Hundred Years of Vatican Social Teaching (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1983), 164-68 and 193-200.

44. Pope Paul VI, "Octogesima Adveniens," no. 45.
45. Ibid., nos. 28, 45.
46. Ibid., nos. 28, 34.
47. Ibid., no. 34.
48. Dorr, Option for the Poor, 193.
49. Pope Paul VI, "Evangelization," no. 9. Dorr translates deliverance as "liberation," a choice which seems appropriate in light of Paul's use of the term in the rest of the document. Dorr, Option for the Poor, 193.
50. Pope Paul VI, "Evangelization," nos. 29-34.
51. Dorr, Option for the Poor, 194.
52. Pope Paul VI, "Evangelization," no. 35.
53. Ibid., no. 37. Once again, no "Populorum Progressio" style loophole for violence is permitted by the Pope. In fact, he quotes the statements he made in Colombia in 1968, in which he unequivocally condemns violence as un-Christian.
54. Pope Paul VI, "Evangelization," no. 58.
55. Ibid.
56. Ibid., nos. 62-64, 67, 77.
57. See page 19 of this thesis.
58. Otto Maduro, Religion and Social Conflicts, with an Introduction by Marie Augusta Neal, trans. Robert R. Barr (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1982), 133-34.
59. Gutiérrez, A Theology of Liberation (1973), 139.

#### Chapter Four

1. The source of these and the following allegations is the Costa Rican Ecumenical Council, members of which had attended the CELAM meeting for Mexico, Panama, and Central America in San Jose, Costa Rica. The Council's report is found in Costa Rican Ecumenical Council, "The Manipulation of CELAM," Cross Currents 28, no. 1 (Spring 1978): 60-65.

2. The two books were listed by the Costa Rican Ecumenical Council as: Paul D. Dognin, Introducción a Karl Marx (Bogotá, Colombia: CEDIAL), n.d.; and Georges Cottier, Esperanzas encontradas: Cristianismo y Marxismo (Bogotá, Colombia: CEDIAL), n.d. Ibid., 60. Interestingly, Dognin was a consultant to the Vatican Secretariat for Christian Unity at the time, while Cottier was a consultant to the Vatican Secretariat for Non-Believers. Gary MacEoin, "The Stakes at CELAM III," Commonweal 105, no. 15 (4 August 1978): 497.

3. III Conferencia General Del Episcopado Latinoamericano, La Evangelización en el Presente y en el Futuro de América Latina: Documento de Consulta (Bogotá, Colombia: CELAM, 1977); reprinted in III Conferencia General Del Episcopado Latinoamericano, Puebla: Comunión y participación, con un prólogo de Mons. Alfonso López Trujillo (Madrid: Biblioteca de Autores Cristianos, 1982), 1-181.

4. Penny Lernoux, Cry of the People: The Struggle for Human Rights in Latin America--The Catholic Church in Conflict with U.S. Policy (New York: Penguin Books, 1982), 417-18.

5. Robert McAfee Brown, "Why Puebla Matters," Christianity and Crisis 38, no. 13 (18 September 1978): 210. The preceding complaints are also found in: Enrique Dussel, A History of the Church in Latin America: Colonialism and Liberation (1492-1979), trans. and revised by Alan Neely (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1981), 230-31; Gustavo Gutiérrez, "The 'Preparatory Document' for Puebla: A Retreat from Commitment," Christianity and Crisis 38, no. 13 (18 September 1978): 211-18; Penny Lernoux, "The Long Path to Puebla," in Puebla and Beyond: Documentation and Commentary, ed. John Eagleson and Philip Scharper, trans. John Drury (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1979), 23-24; MacEoin, "The Stakes at CELAM III," 497; Gary MacEoin and Nivita Riley, Puebla: A Church Being Born (New York: Paulist Press, 1980), 34-40; Peruvian Theologians, "Our Martyrs Give Hope of Resurrection," Cross Currents 28, no. 1 (Spring 1978): 47-54; Pablo Richard, "The Latin American Church: 1959-1978," Cross Currents 28, no. 1 (Spring 1978): 43-46; and Sergio Torres, Puebla 1979: The III Conference of the Latin American Bishops, Theology in the Americas Documentation Series, no. 7 (New York: Theology in the Americas, 1979), 3-4.

6. III Conferencia General Del Episcopado Latinoamericano, La Evangelización en el Presente y en el Futuro de América Latina: Documento de Trabajo, (Bogotá, Colombia: CELAM, 1978); reprinted in III Conferencia

General Del Episcopado Latinoamericano, Puebla: Comunion y Participación, con un prólogo de Mons. Alfonso López Trujillo (Madrid: Biblioteca de Autores Cristianos, 1982), 183-378.

7. Lernoux, Cry of the People, 419-20. These Notes can be found in III Conferencia General Del Episcopado Latinoamericano, Documento de Trabajo, 325-378.

8. James R. Brockman, "Seventeen Days in Puebla," America 140, no. 9 (10 March 1979): 181; Lernoux, "The Long Path to Puebla," 24; and Sergio Torres, Puebla 1979, 4.

9. The efforts of López Trujillo to influence the conference, some of which assumed soap-operatic proportions, are reported in a variety of sources. These include: Harvey Cox and Faith Annette Sand, "What Happened at Puebla?" Christianity and Crisis 39, no. 4 (19 March 1979): 57-58; François Houtart, "L'Histoire du CELAM ou l'oubli des origines," Archives de Sciences Sociales des Religions 62, no. 1 (juillet-septembre 1986): 102; Lernoux, Cry of the People, 420-22; Lernoux, "The Long Path to Puebla," 24; Dean Peerman, "CELAM III: Measured Steps Forward," The Christian Century 96, no. 12 (4 April 1979): 374; Faith Annette Sand, "A Protestant's View of Puebla," Missiology: An International Review 7, no. 3 (July 1979): 280-81; and Moises Sandoval, "Report from the Conference," in Puebla and Beyond: Documentation and Commentary, ed. John Eagleson and Philip Scharper, trans. John Drury (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1979), 30-31.

10. Cox and Sand, "What Happened at Puebla?" 57-58; Lernoux, Cry of the People, 423; Sand, "A Protestant's View of Puebla," 281; and Sandoval, "Report from the Conference," 35-36.

11. For two detailed and fascinating discussions of the popes of 1978 see: Peter Hebblethwaite, The Year of Three Popes (London: Collins, 1978); and Carl Marzani, "The Vatican as a Left Ally?" Monthly Review 34, no. 3 (July-August 1982): 17-29.

12. Pope John Paul II, "Opening Address at the Puebla Conference," in III General Conference of Latin American Bishops, Puebla: Evangelization at Present and in the Future of Latin America, Conclusions, Official English edition (Washington, D.C.: National Conference of Catholic Bishops, 1979), 1-15; other important addresses include: Pope John Paul II, "Homily at the Basilica of Guadalupe," in Puebla and Beyond, 72-76; Pope John Paul II, "Homily in Puebla," 77-80; and Pope John Paul II, "Address to the Indians of Oaxaca and Chiapas," in Puebla and Beyond, 81-83.

13. Interpretations of the Pope's speeches at Puebla can be found in: Phillip Berryman, "What Happened at Puebla," in Churches and Politics in Latin America, ed. Daniel H. Levine, with a Preface by John P. Harrison (Beverly Hills and London: Sage Publications, 1979), 63; Donal Dorr, Option for the Poor: A Hundred Years of Vatican Social Teaching (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1983), 210-17; Virgilio Elizondo, "The Pope's Opening Address: Introduction and Commentary," in Puebla and Beyond, 47-55; Lernoux, Cry of the People, 425-32; MacEoin and Riley, Puebla: A Church Being Born, 64-77; Dean Peerman, "Did the Pope Apply the Brakes at Puebla?" The Christian Century 96, no. 7 (28 February 1979): 203-4; Sandoval, "Report from the Conference," 32-34; Jon Sobrino, "The Significance of Puebla for the Catholic Church in Latin America," in Puebla and Beyond, 292-95; and Torres, Puebla 1979, 5-8. In addition, a review of the American secular and religious press commentary on the same topic is found in James V. Schall, "The American Press Views Puebla," in The Pope and Revolution: John Paul II Confronts Liberation Theology, ed. Quentin L. Quade, with a Foreword by Richard John Neuhaus (Washington, D.C.: Ethics and Public Policy Center, 1982), 86-96.

14. See Pope John Paul II, "Opening Address," 1; Pope John Paul II, "Homily at Guadalupe," 74; and Pope John Paul II, "Homily in Puebla," 78.

15. Pope John Paul II, "Opening Address," 2.

16. Ibid., 13.

17. Dorr, Option for the Poor, 211.

18. Ibid.

19. For a valuable discussion on the Pope as both the Catholic Church's spiritual and organizational leader, and the relationship between these two roles, see Thomas P. Imse, "Spiritual Leadership and Organizational Leadership: The Dilemma of Being Pope," Social Compass 16, no. 2 (1969): 275-80.

20. Discussions of this process can be found in: Juan Botero Restrepo, El CELAM: Elementos para su historia (Medellin, Colombia: Consejo Episcopal Latinoamericano, 1982), 239-49; Brockman, "Seventeen Days in Puebla," 182-83; MacEoin and Riley, Puebla: A Church Being Born, 92-94; Sandoval, "Report from the Conference," 39-40.

21. III General Conference of Latin American Bishops, Puebla: Evangelization at Present and in the Future of Latin

America, Conclusions, Official English edition (Washington, D.C.: National Conference of Catholic Bishops, 1979), no. 25; III Conferencia General Del Episcopado Latinoamericano, La Evangelización en el Presente y en el Futuro de América Latina: Documento de Puebla, (Bogotá, Colombia: CELAM, 1979); reprinted in III Conferencia General Del Episcopado Latinoamericano, Puebla: Comunión y Participación, con un prólogo de Mons. Alfonso López Trujillo (Madrid: Biblioteca de Autores Cristianos, 1982), no. 25: "Así nos situamos en el dinamismo de Medellín, cuya visión de la realidad asumimos." Since the numeration of the English and Spanish documents is identical, future references will cite the English edition only (unless the Spanish translation is also noted). Further, citations of the English document will refer to "CELAM" as the author, followed by "Final Document" and the appropriate section numbers. References to the Spanish document will cite "III Conferencia General Del Episcopado Latinoamericano" as the author, followed by "Puebla" and the appropriate section numbers.

22. CELAM, Final Document, nos. 28-46, 1264-67.

23. Ibid., no. 138.

24. Ibid., nos. 487, 1260.

25. Ibid., nos. 30, 64-69, 501.

26. Ibid., nos. 28, 70, 281, 487, 1258.

27. The following discussion is based on the treatment of violence as found in Ibid., nos. 42-49, 509-10, 531-43, 1259.

28. Ibid., no. 314, emphasis mine; III Conferencia General Del Episcopado Latinoamericano, Puebla, no. 314: "El desarrollo económico y el potencial bélico se superponen a las necesidades de las masas abandonadas. Aunque necesaria a todo organización política, la Seguridad Nacional vista bajo este ángulo se presenta como un absoluto sobre las personas."

29. CELAM, Final Document, nos. 547-48, emphasis mine; III Conferencia General Del Episcopado Latinoamericano, Puebla, nos. 547-48: "Desarrolla un sistema represivo. . . . Una convivencia fraterna, lo entendemos bien, necesita de un sistema de seguridad, para imponer el respeto de un orden social justo que permita a todos cumplir su misión en relación al bien común."

30. CELAM, Final Document, no. 499; III Conferencia General Del Episcopado Latinoamericano, Puebla, no. 499:



"La autoridad, necesaria en toda sociedad, viene de Dios."

31. Carolyn Cook Dipboye, "The Roman Catholic Church and the Political Struggle for Human Rights in Latin America, 1968-1980," Journal of Church and State 24, no. 3 (Autumn 1982): 521; and Lernoux, Cry of the People, 436.

32. CELAM, Final Document, nos. 351, 354.

33. Ibid., nos. 328-29.

34. Ibid., nos. 187-97, 475, 483, 515.

35. Ibid., nos. 356-57, 394.

36. Ibid., nos. 351-55.

37. Ibid., nos. 281, 362, 395.

38. Ibid., no. 1305; III Conferencia General Del Episcopado Latinoamericano, Puebla, no. 1305: "en proceso permanente de evangelización, una Iglesia evangelizada que escucha, profundiza y encarna la Palabra y una Iglesia evangelizadora que testimonia, proclama y celebra esa Palabra de Dios, el Evangelio, Jesucristo en la vida y ayuda a construir una nueva sociedad en total fidelidad a Cristo y al hombre en el Espíritu Santo, denunciando las situaciones de pecado, llamando a la conversión y comprometiendo a los creyentes en la acción transformadora del mundo."

39. CELAM, Final Document, nos. 1134, 1165.

40. Ibid., nos. 10, 1135, 1145.

41. Ibid., nos. 1148, 1156-58.

42. Ibid., no. 1154; III Conferencia General Del Episcopado Latinoamericano, Puebla, no. 1154: "exigida por la realidad escandalosa de los desequilibrios económicos en América Latina."

43. CELAM, Final Document, nos. 1142-50.

44. Ibid., no. 733; III Conferencia General Del Episcopado Latinoamericano, Puebla, no. 733: "esta opción no supone exclusión de nadie."

45. See for example, CELAM, Final Document, nos. 1145, 1156, 1165.

46. Ibid., nos. 96-98, 156, 261, 368, 640-48.

47. Ibid., no. 1147.

48. Ibid., no. 630; III Conferencia General Del Episcopado Latinoamericano, Puebla, no. 630: "atraídos por instituciones puramente laicas o radicalizadas ideológicamente."

49. CELAM, Final Document, nos. 1029-30, 1033, 1045.

50. Ibid., no. 1026.

51. For example, Berryman, "What Happened at Puebla," 78-79; Robert McAfee Brown, "The Significance of Puebla for the Protestant Churches in North America," in Puebla and Beyond, 344; William Conrad, "Puebla: All Things to All Bishops," Christianity Today 23, no. 12 (23 March 1979): 46-48; Peerman, "CELAM III," 376; and Sand, "A Protestant's View of Puebla," 285.

52. Berryman, "What Happened at Puebla," 78-79. It is worth noting at this point that observers have reported that the official Final Document is slightly different in parts than the one approved by the delegates at Puebla, owing to the intervention of the CELAM editing team and the Vatican. These commentators have noted that the changes made have had the effect of softening some of Puebla's bolder statements. See: MacEoin and Riley, A Church Being Born, 92-93; A. Von Rehnitz, "Cambios en el Documento de Puebla," Diakonia 10 (mayo-julio): 81-87, as cited in Berryman, "What Happened at Puebla," 80, 83-85; and G.Z. "Mille modifications du secrétariat du CELAM dans les documents de Puebla," Informations Catholiques Internationales, no. 540 (15 juillet 1979): 18-19. However, since the only available editions of the Final Document are the Vatican-approved and revised editions, it is impossible to verify these claims. In any case, if such modifications have occurred, they remain in line with the other attempts of Church elites to qualify potentially controversial statements.

53. As quoted in Berryman, "What Happened at Puebla," 78.

54. Otto Maduro, "New Marxist Approaches to the Relative Autonomy of Religion," Sociological Analysis 38, no. 4 (1977): 363.

55. See pages 19-21 of this thesis.

56. MacEoin and Riley, Puebla: A Church Being Born, 24.

57. A bishop at the conference reported the figure to be 2000 journalists. M. McGrath, "Puebla: Vision General," Mimeo, 1979, p. 5, as cited in Berryman, "What Happened at Puebla," 55. Another report claims that 2,600 accredited journalists were present. Luis Ugalde, foreword to Religion and Social Conflicts, by Otto Maduro, with an Introduction by Marie Augusta Neal, trans. Robert R. Barr (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1982), xviii-xix.

58. Schall, "The American Press Views Puebla," 87.

59. Berryman, "What Happened at Puebla," 78-79.

60. As quoted in Brown, "The Significance of Puebla," 344.

### Conclusion

1. Pablo Richard, "Puebla: Hope of the Poor," trans. Robert Lazear Missiology: An International Review 7, no. 3 (July 1979): 292.

2. See, for example, Helder Câmara as quoted in Harvey Cox and Faith Annette Sand, "What Happened at Puebla?" Christianity and Crisis 39, no. 4 (19 March 1979): 57; Enrique Dussel, A History of the Church in Latin America: Colonialism and Liberation (1492-1979), trans. and revised by Alan Neely (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1981), 232; Joseph Gremillion, "The Significance of Puebla for the Catholic Church in North America," in Puebla and Beyond: Documentation and Commentary, ed. John Eagleson and Philip Scharper, trans. John Drury (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1979), 310; Dean Peerman, "CELAM III: Measured Steps Forward," The Christian Century 96, no. 12 (4 April 1979): 378; Moises Sandoval, "Report from the Conference," in Puebla and Beyond, 40; Jon Sobrino, "The Significance of Puebla for the Catholic Church in Latin America," in Puebla and Beyond, 302; and Sergio Torres, Puebla 1979: The III Conference of the Latin American Bishops, Theology in the Americas Documentation Series, no. 7 (New York: Theology in the Americas, 1979), 9, 14.

3. These complaints are discussed in Robert McAfee Brown, "The Significance of Puebla for the Protestant Churches in North America," in Puebla and Beyond, 333-34; Dussel, History of the Church, 234; Peerman, "CELAM III," 375-76; Sobrino, "The Significance of Puebla for the Catholic Church," 298-301; and Torres, Puebla 1979, 11-13.

4. Edward L. Cleary, Crisis and Change: The Church in Latin America Today (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1985), 50; and Penny Lernoux, People of God: The Struggle for World Catholicism (New York: Viking, 1989), 353.

5. See Gustavo Gutiérrez, "Liberation and The Poor: The Puebla Perspective," in The Power of the Poor in History, trans. Robert R. Barr (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1983), 125-65; and Gustavo Gutiérrez, A Theology of Liberation: History, Politics, and Salvation. Revised edition with a New Introduction. Trans. and ed. Sister Caridad Inda and John Eagleson (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1988), xvii-xlvi passim.

6. Gary MacEoin, "Columbus, Rome's New Evangelism, and the New World Order," Cross Currents 41, no. 4 (Winter 1991-92): 455.

7. Ample evidence of this can be found in: Phillip Berryman, The Religious Roots of Rebellion: Christians in the Central American Revolutions (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1984); and Lernoux, People of God.

8. Juan Luis Segundo, Theology and the Church: A Response to Cardinal Ratzinger and a Warning to the Whole Church, trans. John W. Diercksmeier (Minneapolis, MN: Winston Press, 1985), 2.

9. Penny Lernoux, Cry of the People: The Struggle for Human Rights in Latin America--The Catholic Church in Conflict with U.S. Policy (New York: Penguin Books, 1982), 443.

10. Gary MacEoin and Nivita Riley, Puebla: A Church Being Born (New York: Paulist Press, 1980), 114-15.

11. Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, "Instruction on Certain Aspects of the 'Theology of Liberation,'" in Liberation Theology: A Documentary History, ed. Alfred T. Hennelly (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1990), 393-414. A most thorough and detailed response to the Instruction is Segundo, Theology and the Church.

12. Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, "Instruction," 394.

13. Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, "Ten Observations on the Theology of Gustavo Gutiérrez," in Liberation Theology: A Documentary History, ed. Alfred T. Hennelly (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1990), 348-50.

14. See: Leonardo Boff, Church: Charism and Power.

Liberation Theology and the Institutional Church, trans. John W. Diercksmeier (New York: Crossroad, 1985); Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, "Notification Sent to Fr. Leonardo Boff regarding Errors in His Book, Church: Charism and Power," in Liberation Theology: A Documentary History, ed. Alfred T. Hennelly (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1990), 425-30; Leonardo Boff, "Defense of His Book, Church: Charism and Power," in Ibid., 431-34; Leonardo Boff and Clodovis Boff, Liberation Theology: From Confrontation to Dialogue, trans. Robert R. Barr (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1986); and Harvey Cox, The Silencing of Leonardo Boff: The Vatican and the Future of World Christianity (Oak Park, IL: Meyer Stone Books, 1988).

15. Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, "Notification," 427.

16. Ibid., 429.

17. See pages 52-53 of this thesis.

18. Karla Bruner, "Father Boff Accepts New Restrictions on Travel, Interviews," Catholic New Times, 5 November 1989, 1.

19. Catholic New Times Staff, "Boff Fired as Editor of Vozes," Catholic New Times, 9 June 1991, 1. Not surprisingly, this continual pressure has finally led Boff to decide to leave both the Franciscan order and the priesthood. Catholic New Times Staff, "Leonardo Boff Quits Franciscans," Catholic New Times, 19 July 1992, 1.

20. For information on Brazil, see: Dean Peerman, "Trying to Hold On to the Medellín Legacy," Christian Century 106, no. 13 (19 April 1989): 404; and Brady Tyson, "Brazil: End of an Era?" Christianity and Crisis 49, no. 9 (12 June 1989): 193-94.

21. Andrew Reding, "Getting to Know Managua's New Cardinal," Christianity and Crisis 45, no. 12 (22 July 1985): 307-10.

22. Leslie Wirpsa, "Vatican Clampdown on CLAR Continues," National Catholic Reporter, 15 February 1991, 14; Gary MacEoin, "Vatican Hammers Latin American Orders, Whose Members Stay Vowed but Unbowed," National Catholic Reporter, 24 May 1991, 9; and Leslie Wirpsa, "Latin American Religious Protest Rome Actions," National Catholic Reporter, 11 October 1991, 19.

23. See Leslie Wirpsa, "The Rise and Rise of Medellín's López Trujillo," National Catholic Reporter, 5

July 1991, 13-14.

24. Gary MacEoin, "Santo Domingo to Show Concentration of Roman Power," National Catholic Reporter, 11 October 1991, 19.

25. Gary MacEoin has offered his own comments on the text and summarizes the critiques of others in a series of feature articles: "CELAM Text Charts New 'European' Foray into Americas," National Catholic Reporter, 20 September 1991, 17; "In Joust for Latin America, Rome Seeks Option for Rich," National Catholic Reporter, 8 November 1991, 18; and "Leaving No Word Unturned, Theologians Tackling Texts," National Catholic Reporter, 24 January 1992, 18. See also MacEoin, "Columbus," 458-59.

26. See III General Conference of Latin American Bishops, Puebla: Evangelization at Present and in the Future of Latin America, Conclusions, Official English edition (Washington, D.C.: National Conference of Catholic Bishops, 1979), no. 102. Since the numeration of the English and Spanish documents is identical, references will cite the English edition only (unless the Spanish translation is also noted). Further, future citations of the English document will refer to "CELAM" as the author, followed by "Final Document" and the appropriate section numbers.

27. Sobrino, "The Significance of Puebla," 298-99.

28. CELAM, Final Document, nos. 515-16; also refer to pages 103-105 of this thesis.

29. CELAM, Final Document, no. 523; III Conferencia General Del Episcopado Latinoamericano, La Evangelización en el Presente y en el Futuro de América Latina: Documento de Puebla. Bogotá, Colombia: CELAM, 1979. Reprinted as part of: III Conferencia General Episcopado Latinoamericano. Puebla: Comunión y participación. Con un prólogo de Mons. Alfonso López Trujillo. Madrid: Biblioteca de Autores Cristianos, 1982, no. 523: "grupos de ciudadanos que se proponen conseguir y ejercer el poder político para resolver las cuestiones económicas, políticas y sociales según sus propios criterios o ideologías." Note that future references to the Spanish document will cite "III Conferencia General Del Episcopado Latinoamericano" as the author, followed by "Puebla" and the appropriate section numbers.

30. CELAM, Final Document, nos. 524-29.

31. Phillip Berryman, "What Happened at Puebla," in Churches and Politics in Latin America, ed. Daniel H.

Levine, with a Preface by John P. Harrison (Beverly Hills and London: Sage Publications, 1979), 74-75; and MacEoin and Riley, Puebla: A Church Being Born, 96-99.

32. CELAM, Final Document, 519; III Conferencia General Del Episcopado Latinoamericano, Puebla, 519: "no la anima ninguna intención de orden político, económico o social."

33. MacEoin and Riley, Puebla: A Church Being Born, 97-98.

34. Berryman, "What Happened at Puebla," 78.

35. MacEoin and Riley, Puebla: A Church Being Born, 99.

36. Nine Hundred Priests from Latin America, "Latin America: A Continent of Violence," in Between Honesty and Hope: Documents from and about the Church in Latin America, Peruvian Bishops' Commission for Social Action, trans. John Drury, Maryknoll Documentation Series (Maryknoll, NY: Maryknoll Publications, 1970), 83.

37. CELAM, Final Document, 640-43.

38. See Brian Smith, "Churches and Human Rights in Latin America: Recent Trends on the Subcontinent," in Churches and Politics in Latin America, ed. Daniel H. Levine, with a Preface by John P. Harrison (Beverly Hills and London: Sage Publications, 1979), 158-72; and Johannes Van Vugt, "Christian Base Communities," The Ecumenist 24, no. 1 (November-December 1985): 1-8.

39. CELAM, Final Document, no. 96; III Conferencia General Del Episcopado Latinoamericano, Puebla, no. 96: "motores de liberación y desarrollo."

40. CELAM, Final Document, no. 98; III Conferencia General Del Episcopado Latinoamericano, Puebla, no. 98: "Es lamentable que en algunos lugares intereses claramente políticos pretendan manipularlas."

41. CELAM, Final Document, no. 263; III Conferencia General Del Episcopado Latinoamericano, Puebla, no. 263: "Esto implicaría una división en el seno de la Iglesia y una inaceptable negación de la función de la jerarquía."

42. See pages 78-80 of this thesis.

43. CELAM, Final Document, no. 262.

44. Ibid., no. 263. The phrase in single quotation marks is taken from the Pope's Opening Address at Puebla, Ibid., 7. III Conferencia General Del Episcopado Latinoamericano, Puebla, no. 263: "estar inspiradas por conocidos condicionamientos ideológicos."

45. Berryman, "What Happened at Puebla," 71.

46. This conception of the dual meaning of base is taken from Daniel H. Levine, "Continuities in Colombia," Journal of Latin American Studies 17, no. 2 (1985): 298.

47. See pages 12-13 of this thesis.

48. We have already discussed Latin America in Chapter One, see pages 15-16; see also Lee Cormie, "Charting the Agenda of the Church: Vatican Social Teaching in a Changing Capitalist World System," Social Compass 37, no. 2 (1990): 255-67; and Lernoux, Cry of the People, 455.

49. Otto Maduro, Religion and Social Conflicts, with an Introduction by Marie Augusta Neal, trans. Robert R. Barr (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1982), 134. Moreover, I believe a further parallel between the Church's authority structure and capitalism may be drawn. Capitalism involves the exploitative appropriation of the products of the working class' labour by the capitalist class; when the elites in the Church maintain their dominance by casting their ruling ideology in terms of worldviews of the popular sectors, they are in effect appropriating the products of the intellectual labour of the subordinate group.



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