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Post-Vatican II Alternatives - Holland and Peru

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## Abstract

The Roman Catholic Church until recently has been predominantly western in terms of its membership and geographical locations. By the year 2000, most Roman Catholics will be located in the southern hemisphere, and the decrees of Vatican II, which are regarded as normative for the whole Roman Catholic community, will no longer be interpreted solely from a European perspective.

The demographic change signals a shift in those sociological and cultural factors which will determine the reception of Conciliar teaching, and in turn create alternative ecclesial and theological expressions. Consequently, the assumption that any European interpretation of Vatican II might provide a norm for the whole Church is now called into question.

The two Conciliar documents which recognised and encouraged the growth of particular communities or local Churches, Lumen Gentium and Gaudium et Spes, were a response to the changing situation of the Church in the world - a situation where the importance of 'younger', poorer Churches was slowly being realised. The documents recognised the unique

character of local Churches - an affirmation which encouraged particular communities to develop in ways which offer alternative models of Church to the traditional 'Roman' model.

The Catholic Church in Holland will serve as an example of a European ecclesial community which offers an alternative to Rome, and the Catholic Church in Peru can be taken as illustrative of the Church's growing presence in the southern hemisphere. The histories of both of these communities are important as they provide a means of understanding post-Vatican II ecclesial and theological developments.

Vatican II authorised local Episcopal Conferences to determine the implementation of its decrees. It is at these Conferences in Holland and Peru that existing developments were confirmed and new directions were taken - directions which would create tension between these local Churches and the traditional centre of Catholicism, Rome. Particular Churches are developing particular or local theologies. The challenge which faces the Roman Catholic Church, which for so long defined Catholicism in terms of uniformity of practice and theology, as well as creed, is a positive response to

authentic, ecclesial developments. This will require a desire, on the part of papal authorities to foster the development of local communities in ways appropriate to their context, and at the same time to relate these developments to the changing shape of Catholicism. The experiences of Peru and Holland offer alternative visions of contemporary Catholic futures in which the local Church can be valued as an enrichment of the identity of the Church, and as a necessary context for the evangelisation of the world.

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## Introduction.

### The Migration of Peoples

We are in the middle of a process of change as a result of which the Church at home in the western world for almost 2000 years, will in a short time, have shifted its centre of gravity into the 'third world' where its adherents will be much more numerous.(1)

The Church which has until recently been predominantly western in terms of its membership and geographical locations, is undergoing a dramatic change. The explosion of populations in the southern hemisphere has changed, or is changing the shape of our world vision; so too the shape of the Church is changing. If by the year 2000 most Roman Catholics will be situated in the third world, then the decrees of Vatican II which are regarded as normative for the whole Roman Catholic community will principally be interpreted in the light of third world realities.

Growth in Church membership is taking place in the southern hemisphere. Such a reality cannot be ignored by a Church whose mission is universal. Bühlmann's work (2) traces the history and development of what he terms the 'three Churches'. The first he identifies as the Christian community which is located in the western world and includes the Roman Catholic, Protestant and Orthodox communions. By western Church Bühlmann means a

predominantly European Church and he includes those areas of eastern Europe where Christian communities have survived in spite of persecution by atheistic regimes. (3)

The second Church Bühlmann identifies as the post-Vatican II Church - those European communities which have implemented the changes proposed by the Vatican II; and the third Church denotes those areas in the third world where Christianity is flourishing. (The term 'third world' is used throughout this work in its customary meaning and refers to Latin America, Africa and some parts of Asia. It is not used in any derogatory sense.)

Bühlmann's thesis about the existence of these 'three' almost distinct Churches could be challenged. His classifications are somewhat simplistic and do not recognise the inaccuracies in describing the whole of Europe as the 'post-Vatican II Church'. One wonders where Archbishop Lefebvre (now excommunicated) and his Tridentine followers, based in Switzerland, would figure in Bühlmann's categorisation. However, his thesis does highlight the migration of peoples from a Church with a historic and specific European focus to the southern hemisphere. This movement comes at the end of a historical process, which in Roman Catholic terminology was called missionary endeavour. From the beginnings of the Church at the Pentecost event (4), the sense and reality of mission and apostolic mobility have been

constant factors. The indisputable fact of the movements of peoples has consequences for the Church which are theological as well as sociological.

In his work, "L'explosion démographique et l'avenir de l'église", published in Pro Mundi Vita (5), D.A. Barrett calculated the numbers of Christians and where they are located. By the year 2000, 70% of the world's Christians will be located in the southern hemisphere. Barrett's calculations also included the numbers leaving the Church, for example, Europe's Christian population in 1965 was 87% of the total population. By the year 2000, Christians will be 77% of the total population of the continent.

While the numbers of Christians in the first world are decreasing, the reverse trend is true in third world countries. In Latin America, which for the last five hundred years has been recognised as a predominantly Roman Catholic continent, the demographic explosion is massive and in Africa the numbers of newly baptised is even greater.(6) The fact of the shift in the Church's population, and its consequence for the universal Church traditionally centred in Rome, cannot be ignored and is a matter worthy of consideration.

By the year 2000, 30% of the world's Roman Catholics will be located in Europe and North America (380 millions). The remaining 70% (884 millions) will be located in the third

world. (7) (More recent research conducted for 'New Internationalist' confirms these statistics) (8).

The fact, supported by these statistics, is that the Church has moved into the southern hemisphere towards 'younger Churches' with younger populations. This shift means that the Church is gravitating towards poorer peoples. These facts do not negate or deny the reality of the European Church, but a situation now exists which demands that any European interpretation of the nature and the mission of the Church will not be definitive for the whole Church. The supremacy of a European understanding and implementation of the decrees of Vatican II in the life and practice of Church communities can no longer be assumed.

This gravitational shift southwards within the Roman Catholic Church will have consequences for the ways in which that Church defines and redefines its reality. The European experience of Christianity has appropriated to itself a normative and canonical role as touchstone of Christian truth. The presumption that what Europe did first, the rest of the world would gratefully follow, is now being severely scrutinised by third world Churches as they begin to establish their own identity over against their European, and colonial masters. Europe has presumed that its way was the only way and the present tension which exists between the 'coming of the third church', to use Bühlmann's phrase, and its continuing and

developing relationship within its historical roots in the European Church, is a challenge which must be addressed. There is a possibility that, as the centre of gravity moves away from Europe, the European Church may find itself considerably out of line with the rest of Catholicism. The post-Constantinian European Church, which has always assumed that its destiny involved adopting a powerful role in European and world power, is now being reminded by third world Churches that the Jewish/Christian tradition is, in origin, an expression of the faith experience of a third world people existing at the margins of Empires and power-blocs.

The Roman Catholic claim to oneness and universality, which previously meant European domination, will need to be redefined in order to cope with cultural and national differences within third world Catholicism. Until recently, the Roman Catholicism presented an image of the Church as a monolithic structure, uniform in ideology and policy as well as practice. In the post-Vatican II context, in which Rahner says, the Catholic Church finally becomes a 'world Church',<sup>(9)</sup> European primacy will have to be reworked to include a genuine proliferation of Catholic experiences within the cultures of the non-European world. The Roman Catholic Church has set itself the new task of fostering culturally diverse experiences of Christian identity within the koinonia of Catholicism.

It is not a matter of one particular focus, the European, being replaced by another, for example, an African or a Latin American one, but that the European focus take account of the experience of the Church in three continents, Asia, Africa and Latin America. Emile Durkheim's description of the Church as 'un monstre sociologique'(10) may be an apt description of the tensions which exist within the Roman Catholic community - tensions which require a creative response from the whole Church. Sociological tensions create a new theological agenda in which the unity of belief must be redefined to give a proper place to the diversity of experience which arises from the changed location of the majority of the members of this community called Church.

The event of Vatican II is the historical fulcrum of this change. The documents which were the fruit of Vatican II are regarded as normative for the whole Roman Catholic Church. An ecumenical Council is a rare event in the Roman Catholic Church and is therefore an important event for the whole Church. It is an event in the history of the Church when the 'whole household' of believers meets together, in unity, in order to discern the direction, in response to the Spirit, that the Church should take. The presence, at Vatican II of so many bishops from the third world (Latin America had the largest representation) witnessed to that gravitational shift mentioned above. However it is symptomatic of the European dominance of the Church that the contribution of these representatives from

the third world to the debates and the assemblies was minimal, with the notable exception of Dórn Helder Camára, the then Archbishop of Récife.(11)

Until Vatican II, complete uniformity reigned in the Roman Catholic Church - the same Catechism (12); the same Latin Liturgy obligatory everywhere; the same centrally monitored discipline - these were the characteristics of Roman Catholicism. It is interesting to note that the majority of Church histories focus on the history of the Church in the western world.

The new dimensions of the world Church bring pressing demands for the integration of the third world into the first world picture of the Church, whether for its understanding of Church or for evangelisation. (13)

The documents of Vatican II, especially those documents on the nature of the Church, Lumen Gentium, (14) and the mission of the Church in the Modern World, Gaudium et Spes, (15) were a response to the world in which the Church was situated, a world where the importance of newer and emerging nations and Churches in the southern hemisphere was slowly being realised. The Council recognised and acknowledged the importance of the local expressions of the universal Church in their diversity and their pluralism. The implications of this gravitational shift, however, were not considered at length or at depth.

The existing pluralism within the Church is present in the documents of the Council: it is recognised that the one, universal Church exists concretely in countless local or indigenous Churches, all of which have the right to exist, no longer as missionary fields of the European Church, but with their own particular cultural identity: they have come of age. The normative decrees of Vatican II became the basis for further pastoral, theological and ecclesial developments in local Church communities.

In this work, we will consider the Church's self-understanding, as expressed in the two documents on the nature and the mission of the Church in the modern world, and trace the appropriation or reception of the documents and the theological developments which ensued, in two distinct local Church communities - the Peruvian Church and the Dutch Church. The two contexts chosen are rather dramatic examples of the creative tensions and developments which have taken place within the universal Church since Vatican II.

I have spent some time in both particular Churches, where there appears to be differing interpretations or modes of reception of the Council documents. These two local Churches will serve as complementary illustrations of the local reception of Conciliar teaching within a European and a Latin American context.

The Roman Catholic Church in Peru, which constitutes 90% of the population, can be taken as illustrative of the Church's presence in the third world context of poverty and oppression. Previously a western-orientated Church, Peruvian Catholicism exhibits developments in post-Vatican II theology and ecclesiology which, although located in the particular experience of Latin America, has already had considerable influence in re-shaping worldwide Catholic theology and practice, and in challenging the presuppositions which have dominated European Christian thought.

The Catholic Church in Holland is also a dramatic example of an ecclesial European community which has attempted to receive the teachings of Vatican II. That this has caused difficulties in its relationship with Rome illustrates the ways in which Catholic cohesion has been put under pressure by the developments which followed Vatican II. Peru and Holland, then, can serve as particular instances, within very different cultural contexts, of the effect of Vatican II on the Roman Catholic Church. We shall see that these two examples are in fact a parable of the reality of the situation which exists in the worldwide Church, a situation which will be evident in an unprecedented way by the end of this century. The reality cannot be changed - is it possible or even necessary that both expressions of these ecclesial realities be recognised as legitimate expressions of that unity in diversity, that

'Catholicism' which should characterise the post-Vatican II Church?

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memorised. The purpose of this exercise was to prepare and enable Roman Catholics to defend their faith in a hostile world.

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14. Lumen Gentium - the Dogmatic Constitution on the Church. This title is taken from the opening words of the original Latin text, 'Christ is the light of all nations'. [The document is also referred to as De Ecclesia from the Latin of the title Constitutio Dogmatica de Ecclesia]. Hereafter it will be referred to as Lumen Gentium.

15. Gaudium et Spes - The Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World - the Document's official title. This document became known as Gaudium et Spes. The title is taken from the opening words of the Latin text - 'The joys and the hopes...' Hereafter this document will be referred to as Gaudium et Spes.

## Chapter 1.

### Vatican II - An Historical Introduction.

That afternoon when it was announced, 'Habemus papam', and it was Angelo Roncalli (John XXIII) I thought all is lost. This cannot be the Pope the Church needed. (1)

When Angelo Roncalli was elected, many Church-watchers regarded his appointment as transitional : he was ill and elderly, and there was no reason to think that his leadership of the Church would be significant or imaginative. But he was to be a pope of surprises, for 90 days after his election he announced that an Ecumenical Council of the Universal Church was to be summoned in order to open up 'the windows of the Church to the outside world'.(2) He described the Council as 'this little seed we planted with anxious mind and heart'.(3) He was right to be anxious, for such a programme of openness reversed an attitude of hostility to the outside world created by centuries of papal teaching; but his image was apposite, for seeds of renewal had been growing for some time in the Church - though not, it should be said, within the Vatican congregations.

A modern spirit was already abroad in the Church, particularly in France and Germany where theologians were

offering new approaches to secular reality and to the nature and mission of the Church. It was only a matter of time before their work, with its radical revision of Catholic teaching, made its presence felt at the highest level of Church deliberation. The Vatican Council was to be the occasion - a moment of renewal and reappraisal - at which the worldwide Catholic communion met symbolically in the assembly of all its bishops and turned the Church around.

The two preceding Councils, Trent (1545-63) and Vatican I (1870), were essentially responses to threats from outside: that of the Reformation and the dismembering of Catholic Europe in the 16th century, and the threat posed by contemporary democracy and social change in the 19th century. In both instances, the Church's response to social upheaval was defensive, forcing the Church to withdraw further into self-absorbed posture, setting itself in opposition to societal changes and modernity. The impact of both Councils on the Church's attitude needs to be briefly sketched if we are to provide a context within which Vatican II is to be understood. Until the dramatic challenge of the Reformation, the Church had taken its existence, nature and role in the mystery of salvation for granted. Its self-understanding was imbedded within secure theological frontiers of institutional clarity. The Reformation challenged the Church to define itself more biblically and authentically, but the post-Reformation Church's response focused on the hierarchical and institutional

dimensions of its life: the emphasis increased on Church structures, authority, the sacred power of the papacy, episcopacy, priesthood and unchangeability. The Church was the perfect society on earth whose visible structures were divinely authorized; as 16th century Jesuit Robert Bellarmine stated

The one and true Church is the community of men brought together by the profession of the same Christian faith, and conjoined in the communion of the same sacraments, under the government of the legitimate pastors and especially the one vicar of Christ on earth, the Roman Pontiff. (4)

The Council of Trent, a monoconfessional and monocultural council,(5) set its seal upon a form of Catholicism which thought of itself as under siege: in response to the challenge of the Reformation, the hatches were battened down, intellectually and institutionally, within an internally consistent, but severely limited mentality in which uniformity of thought and practice became the touchstones of Catholic orthodoxy. In particular, the Protestant concentration on the priority of the national Church made Catholicism wary of releasing the tight control exercised by Rome over all aspects of Church life. As we shall see, apart from the Gallican crisis, which was dealt with harshly by the Vatican, the diversity of local Churches within Catholicism became a viable issue again only with Vatican II.

If the Church had withdrawn towards its Roman centre in response to Reformation, its centripetal movement increased in reaction to the 18th century Enlightenment which unleashed revolutionary social, intellectual and philosophical forces which challenged not only socially reactionary Catholicism, but raised fundamental questions about the very possibility of theistic belief. The response of the Vatican to enlightened modernity in all its aspects was predictable : condemnation. Its stance is exemplified in the Syllabus of Errors (1864) which Pius IX promulgated: it expressed universal condemnation of what was taking place in European society.

If anyone thinks that the Roman Pontiff can and should reconcile himself with progress, with liberalism and with modern civilisation, let him be anathema.(6)

The Syllabus made it clear that the Church was an original, autonomous society, which by divine right possessed all the powers that it needed to attain its supernatural end and, consequently, that its interaction with the secular power was unnecessary, except when the Church so ordained it. And so it condemned the thesis that 'the Church is not a complete and true society; and it does not enjoy its own proper and permanent rights conferred on it by its founder: but it is for the civil power to define what are the rights of the Church and the limits within which it can exercise those same rights'.(7) This classical view of the relationship of the Church and the

secular world as two societies in competition and tension, one with another, continued even into the preparatory schema submitted by Vatican officials at Vatican II.

Each of the two societies was endowed with the faculties necessary to fulfil its own mission according to its norms; furthermore each of them is perfect, in its sphere it is supreme and consequently is not subordinated to any other, and is endowed with legislative, judicial and executive power.(8)

It is no small measure of the success of Vatican II that this approach to the nature of the Church and its relationship to the world was abandoned in favour of the more enriching symbols of sacrament and the pilgrim people of God. Yves Congar comments

had the Council Fathers done nothing else (other than reject the preparatory schema submitted to it) that action alone would have been credited to Vatican II - and Pope John XXIII - as a meritorious deed of the first importance : a refusal to succumb to an oligarchy, and a restoration of full freedom in the Church.(9)

The 19th century papacy was determined that the gates of the liberal and secular hell would not prevail against the power of the Keys, and at Vatican I, expression was given to this conviction in the form of the definition of papal infallibility by which a firm barrier was placed which defended the island of papal authority from secular pirates: whatever the insecurity

of the social changes sweeping through Europe, there was a definite zone of security and impregnability for Catholics in the exercise of Papal authority. In July 1870, amid thunder and lightning, the Council solemnly declared

It is a dogma divinely revealed, that the Roman Pontiff, whenever he speaks ex cathedra and defines a doctrine regarding faith and morals, is possessed of that infallibility with which the divine redeemer willed that his Church should be endowed for defining doctrine. (10)

Whatever the theological arguments about the possibility of trustworthy and irreformable judgements about Christian truth, it remains clear that the definition was prompted by the context of 19th century Catholicism within a Europe which was becoming increasingly secular and liberal, and that it contributed to the detachment of the Church from any positive involvement in the processes of historical change. As we shall see, it was only with Vatican II that there developed a real sense of the Church's role within, and not outside, the development of the world's history.

Yves Congar comments on one of the effects of this pre-Vatican II mentality as 'a religion without a world'. The counterpart of this was, of course, a world without religion.(11) The entries in the Dictionnaire de théologie catholique, published between 1903 and 1950 are instructive: several topics which become central in post-Vatican II theology

are entirely absent: work: nothing; economy: nothing; politics: nothing; world: nothing; history: nothing; woman: nothing; family: nothing; life: an article on eternal life; power: a long article of 103 columns on 'the power of the Pope in the temporal order'.(12)

The new direction which Vatican II gave to the Church was well expounded by Cardinal Montini, later to become Pope Paul VI

At the Council, the Church is looking for itself. It is trying, with great effort, to define itself more precisely and to understand what it is. After twenty centuries of history, the Church seems to be submerged by profane civilisations and to be absent from the contemporary world. It is therefore experiencing the need to be recollected and to purify and recover itself so as to be able to set off on its own path again with great energy. While it is undertaking the task of defining itself in this way the the Church is also looking for the world and trying somehow to come into contact with that society. How should that contact be established? By engaging in dialogue with the world, interpreting the needs of society in which it is working and observing the defects, the necessities and the sufferings, the hopes and aspirations which exist in men's hearts.(13)

As has already been indicated, the process of creating a new engagement with the world was already under way, thanks to the work of theologians in the years before Vatican II. Strangely, one of the unexpected by-products of Pius X's campaign at the turn of the century against Modernism was that certain areas of theology were avoided by theologians as too dangerous : serious scriptural exegesis, for example, along the lines developed in

Protestant Churches, was impossible in a Catholic Church which still felt the heavy hand of papal control. (It was only with the publication of Pius XII's letter, Divini Afflante Spiritu in 1947 that Catholic exegesis entered the twentieth century.) If Modernism had made the interpretation of Scripture dangerous, theologians looked elsewhere, and there began an immense retrieval of Patristic theology, and a revisioning of the symbolic pluralism of Patristic ecclesiology. Henri de Lubac's masterly study, Catholicism (14) which revived the social and symbolic imagery of the nature of the Church bypassed, and with Vatican II, replaced the juridical ecclesiology which had been dominant from the middle ages onwards.

The reappraisal of the nature of tradition and reform was undertaken by Yves Congar in his study Vraie et fausse réforme dans l'église.(15) In it, he correlates, in a way which anticipates what Vatican II would do, an awareness of the contexts within which the formulations of tradition take place, and the re-working of that tradition in order to meet the needs of the present.

To return to tradition...is to penetrate beyond what the Church has said in the face of a certain problem of the past to the spirit that inspired it, what (the Church) thinks in depth, what she says, and wishes to say through us in the face of the problems of the present. To return to principles, to return to the source, as they say now, is to reflect upon the situation in which we are now engaged in the spirit of all that an integral tradition teaches us of the sense of the Church.(16)

Congar had set his theology of reform within the context of God's plan for the salvation of humanity, a plan which is realised through history : the reform of the Church is an entry by the Church more deeply into the mystery of what God is doing to bring humanity to its consummation. Hence one of the characteristics of true reform is that it will involve the Church more authentically in the movement of the human race towards the full realisation of God's plan. With categories like these, Congar was able to propose a Christian vision of the relationship between the Church and the world which avoided the strict separation which, as we have seen, set the Church apart from the world in the rigid attitudes of post-Tridentine Catholicism.(17)

There was similar re-examination of the origins and character of the Church's liturgical traditions, which, after Trent, remained virtually unchanged : the Eucharistic Rite of Pius V had been a fixed and stylised ritual, a clerical ceremony celebrated by the priest, at which the laity were passive observers. Scholarly work of retrieval, undertaken by theologians such as Dom Odo Casel and Josef Jungmann, brought to light a new vision of the liturgy as the activity of the whole community of the baptised, through which the Church expressed, and communicated its involvement in Christ's salvation. Pre-conciliar advances towards popular participation were inspired by the European liturgical movement. Instructions from the Holy See from the early 1900s

on early and frequent Communion, the revival of Gregorian Chant (Pius X) and the Pius X's Encyclicals, Mystici Corporis (1943) and Mediator Dei (1947) in their own way led to the theological and liturgical climate which the later Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy, Sacrosanctum Concilium December 1963, would endorse.

In the twentieth century, the idea of the Church was regenerated, bringing with it an interest in the renewal of liturgical worship. The 1920s brought with them a new awakening which flourished in the youth movements of this time. Through liturgical reform came a renewed sense of Church, first in individual congregations assembled for worship and recognising themselves as 'Church' and at the same time as manifestations of the Church as a whole. Liturgical renewal goes hand in hand with the renewal of awareness in the Church itself, for liturgy is, in the last resort, nothing but the Church itself, the Church turning to God in prayer: liturgy is ecclesia orans. Ecumenical initiatives, such as those which took place at Malines between Anglicans and Catholics, opened up Catholic theology to serious engagement with Christians in other Churches. The time was ripe for a change of stance, from polemics to dialogue: just as the Church was beginning to explore the possibility of engaging with the secular world and its history, so too, as a dimension of this orientation, dialogue with other Christians changed the perspectives of many theologians. If Yves Congar is mentioned again in this

context, it is because he, more than any other, opened up the horizons of the pre-conciliar Church, and made possible the emergence of a Catholicism which was sensitive to synchronic pluralism.

The idea of the Church mentioned above, was rooted in the signs of new life which grew out of the lay movements in the Church. Such movements which began in the first two decades of this century as organisations of lay people (non clerics or religious) derived their inspiration from Leo XIII's Rerum Novarum (1891). The movements served several purposes: defense of Roman Catholic interests against anti-Catholic or secularist governments, the promotion of social justice and the promotion of a Roman Catholic culture. By the 1930s, the most important lay movements were well established in Europe, particularly Catholic Action. This movement emphasised a distinct and active role for lay-persons in society. Catholic Action was this worldly : it was international in membership and it nurtured a whole new generation of leaders. In sociological terms, such movements were important in the Church's understanding of its role in the world. Lay movements represented the Church's efforts to capture the loyalties of Catholic personnel in key status groups, and to use them as a basic resource.

Although we shall argue that Vatican II opened up Catholic attitudes towards the world and history, it is important to

place it in the context of the growing sense within Catholicism, of the need for the Church to be fully involved in the social and economic realities of the century. The Council's recognition of the Church's situation within history arose out of the initiatives which had been taking place in the lay movements earlier in the century. The theology prompted by Vatican II is rooted in all of the above developments which had been taking place in the Church. By the end of Vatican II, the Catholic Church not only presented itself with a new image of its identity, but also envisaged its relationship to the world in an astonishingly liberating way.

Lumen Gentium and Gaudium et Spes provide, respectively, the inspiration for the development of local Churches and the stimulus for the involvement of local Churches within the social and cultural contexts in which they are rooted. Vatican II was the setting for the Catholic Church's task of revaluing a principle upheld by the Reformers, namely, the primacy of the local Church within the broader umbrella of the universal Church. Thus it presented itself with the problem of maintaining its unity while at the same time promoting its internal diversity. The two documents signal the Church's changed attitude to the world, human history and the authority of local Churches as the concrete expressions of the universal Church. We will now consider the history and central themes of these documents and their contribution to the development of post-Vatican II ecclesial and theological alternatives.

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## Chapter 2.

### Lumen Gentium and the local Church.

With something like unanimity, it (Lumen Gentium) has been hailed as the most momentous achievement of the Council, both because of its important contents and because of its central place among the documents.(1)

#### 1. History of the Document.

Avery Dulles's judgment about the significance of Lumen Gentium highlights the importance of the document both in the development of Catholic ecclesiology, and in the history of the Council itself. There is universal agreement among commentators that the turning point in the history of the Council, and therefore the turning point in the broader history of Vatican II's importance for the Catholic Church, was the rejection by the bishops of the first draft of the Constitution on the Church which was offered to them by the Roman Curial officials, in favour of a new draft of the Constitution on the Church - Lumen Gentium. The Curial officials, the Vatican civil service, presented to the Council Fathers a schema which they presumed would be acceptable. There is no doubt that in the eyes of many people at the Council, including Pope John XXIII, this initial document represented an attempt on the part of the Curia to dictate to the bishops what they should do. 'Il concilio si deve fare malgrado la Curia'. [The Council

must go on in spite of the Curia], Pope John is reported as saying. (2) On another occasion when he spoke of the 'prophets of doom in our midst', it is recorded that he looked towards the members of the Curia as he spoke.(3) The resistance, in some quarters, to renewal in the Church is seen in the stormy and rather troubled passage which the document on the nature and mission of the Church, Lumen Gentium, had through the various stages in its composition and its recomposition. The history of this particular document is important because it highlights the tensions which existed between traditional Roman Catholic theology with its concerns of authority, institution and hierarchy, and the newer perspectives encouraged by the various movements mentioned above. In their rejection of the initial document, the Fathers of the Council established their own creative independence against forces which were intent on reproducing a calcified view of the Church which served the interests of the past rather than the present.

The Curia offered the following schema (4) to the Council on 1st December 1962.

1. The nature of the Church militant.
2. The members of the Church and the necessity of the Church for salvation.
3. The episcopate as the highest grade of sacramental orders; the priesthood.
4. Residential bishops.
5. The states of evangelical perfection.
6. The laity.
7. The teaching authority (magisterium) of the Church.
8. Authority and obedience in the Church.
9. Relationships between Church and State and religious tolerance.

10. The necessity of proclaiming the gospel to all people and in the whole world.
11. Ecumenism.

Antonio Acerbi's comment on the structure and content of this document is that it is 'a summary of the pontifical teaching of the past one hundred and fifty years'.(5) The emphasis was heavily institutional and juridical; there was considerable dependence on a view of the Church as a perfect society, visible and manifest in structural terms. As Cardinal Montini, later to become Pope Paul VI, said

In the same schema the primary elements of canon law are set out ; the truths however which refer more explicitly to the mystery of the Church, to its mystical and moral life, truths by which the Church's vitality in the real sense are absent.(6)

What was missing was a vision of the theological mystery of the Church's identity which could be expressed biblically and prophetically, with due reference for the presence of the Holy Spirit. Consideration of the Church as koinonia, rather than institution was absent; there was little regard for the movement of ideas - what could be called the geography of ideas - within the universal experience of the Church. Many of the Council Fathers stressed the need for new perspectives in which the retrieval of Biblical and Patristic ecclesiology, rather than medieval juridicism, should predominate. This was also

important if the Church was to present itself as an accessible dialogue-partner with other Christian traditions.

Bishop de Smedt of Bruges, whose speech was the most dramatic and bold attack on the schema, criticised it under three aspects: i) the Church should not describe its mission in triumphalistic terms; ii) it must not present itself as though it were bent on conquest; iii) it must not reduce its own life to the activity of the hierarchy and ignore the dignity of the laity. In addition, he suggested that the schema should be characterised by an evangelical character and spirit, open to the kerygmatic mission of the Church, and displaying the attitudes of humble service, rather than assertive power.(7)

A comparison of the initial structure of the schema with the final version of Lumen Gentium brings out the change in theological tone which took place at the Council. This document had a four-fold structure, each comprising two chapters.

The Mystery of the Church :

- c.1 - the mystery in general;
- c.2 - the mystery in visible historical form.

The Structure of the Church :

- c.3 - the hierarchy;
- c.4 - the laity.

The Purpose of the Church :

- c.5 - the holiness of the members in general;
- c.6.- the holiness of religious life.

The Final Goal of the Church :  
c.7 - the heavenly Church;  
c.8 - Our Lady.

The key to a unified understanding of the constitution lies in the concept of the Church as mystery. The change from the Church militant to the Church as mystery is symptomatic of the whole ecclesiological change which the Vatican II brought, and the first chapter begins with a quotation from Pope Paul's opening speech at the second session of the Council - 'the Church is a mystery'.(8) This mysterious character of the Church has important implications for the methodology used by the Council. To use mystery, a term rooted in Scripture, rules out the possibility of beginning with clear univocal concepts or definitions in the normal sense of that word. Concepts which have been abstracted from the realities of human experience are not totally applicable when the Church is referred to.

Some would therefore conclude that ecclesiology must be apophatic; that we only have a theological negativa of the Church, affirming not what it is, but only what it is not.(9)

While this is true in one sense, it is possible to use images or models to describe the nature of the Church in ways which relate to human experience, and Lumen Gentium does this by using models other than mystery to describe the Church.

The most significant result of the debate (on the schema of Lumen Gentium) was the profound realisation

that the Church has been described, in its 2000 years, not so much by verbal definition but by images. Most of the images are of course strictly biblical. The theological value of the images has been stoutly affirmed by the Council. The notion that you have to begin with an Aristotelian definition was simply bypassed. In its place, a biblical analysis of the significance of the images was proposed. (10)

As Paul VI noted in his opening address, already quoted, the Church must be always open to new and further exploration. The images used in chapter one to describe the Church include 'House of God', 'His Vine', the 'Temple or Tabernacle', 'God's People', 'God's Flock / Field / City / Pillar of Truth'; 'Mystical Body' and the 'Bride of Christ'. These images are used to develop an ecclesiology which retrieves Patristic categories hitherto lost through an over-emphasis on the juridical and institutional aspects of the Church.

This paradigm shift, away from legal/organisational categories towards the symbolic richness of metaphor, ensures that the Church's identity becomes subject to the redescriptive power inherent in figurative language: 'the symbol gives rise to thought'.(11) There is thus the possibility of developing ecclesiological models more attuned to the Church's character as the 'mystery hidden from all ages' (Eph 1.9) in God's purpose. In addition, the range of connotations made available through metaphor and symbol also gives rise to ecclesiological thought in which the continuing experience of the community can be expressed. Metaphorical language in ecclesiology has a

capacity to generate insights appropriate to contemporary experience in a way which brings them into a creative relationship with the Church's preceding experience. Such insights would always be validated ultimately in terms of what has been received in Scripture and Tradition but correlations would be established between the theory and praxis of the present and the theory and praxis of the past mediated through the continuing validity of symbol and metaphor.

## 2. Central themes - (i) The Primacy of lay experience

Chapter One discusses the Church's character as the 'mystery of God's election'. The Church is presented as a 'sacrament or sign of intimate union with God and of the unity of all mankind' (L.G.1). Later in the document the Church is described as the 'universal sacrament of salvation' (L.G.48) thus the mystery of the Church is defined by its union with God and its vocation as the focus of unity for the whole of humanity. The mystery of the Church is further related to the Kingdom of God: it is the sign in the world of the reality of God's action in His creation and of the hope that is extended to the whole of humanity. The Church's character as sacrament, according to Vatican II describes an essential feature of the Church's identity and mission, since just as Christ is the sacrament of God in history, so too the Church is the visible expression of Christ's continuing presence in the world.

Chapter Two, 'The People of God', treats of the visible, historical form of the Church's life. The inner reality of its unity with God has an outward manifestation in the human community of the Church as the presence of Christ in the world. God's saving action in history is directed towards a community of salvation in which the covenantal People of God are a sign of the loving destiny promised to all by God. It is important to stress the document's insistence on the universality of the salvation offered by God : hence Lumen Gentium offers, as a central metaphor of the Church's identity, the communal image of people.

So it is that this messianic people, although it does not actually include all men, and may more than once look like a small flock is, nonetheless a lasting and sure seed of unity, hope, and salvation for the whole human race.(L.G.9)

One of the significant retrievals which Lumen Gentium offers is the New Testament theme of the priestly and prophetic character of the whole People of God: the organic structure of the Church, with its differentiation of ministries and offices is founded upon the participation, through Baptism, in the priestly and prophetic work of Christ. The pyramidal image of the superiority and priority of the hierarchy over the laity is thus corrected by Vatican II's insistence on the common, foundational vocation and dignity of all believers. The experience of the laity is seen by Lumen Gentium as having its own particular priestly and prophetic quality which is not

superseded, or rendered redundant, by subsequent distinctions of presbyteral or episcopal office. Vatican II offers the Church an image of itself in which the experience of the laity is acknowledged as the primary source of the Church's vitality.

Chapters Three and Four direct the Church's attention to the dignity of laity and their experience: the Catholic Church had been notorious for its concentration on the hierarchical divisions, at the expense of an adequate understanding of the experience of lay people. Vatican II restores the balance: although it affirms the hierarchical distinctions within the Church as a permanent feature of the Church's identity, it places these distinctions within the context of a shared vocation to holiness and an equal participation by all in the priestly and prophetic work of Christ. As we shall see, when we examine the particular developments in Peru and Holland, this concentration on the quality of lay experience proves to be a major feature of the subsequent development in these local Churches.

#### Central theme (ii) The Universality of salvation in history

According to Lumen Gentium, all are called to be the People of God, and the document recognises not only that the Church's mission is universal, but even that those outside the Church already have their place within God's saving action.

Those who have not yet received the gospel are related in various ways to the People of God ... the plan of salvation also acknowledges the Creator, (Moslems)... those who can attain to everlasting salvation, who through no fault of their own do not know the Gospel of Christ or His Church... nor does divine providence deny the help necessary for salvation to those who have not arrived at an explicit knowledge of God. (L.G. 16)

This statement is important because it signals a denial of the principle that there is 'no salvation outside the Church'. By acknowledging that human history is already graced by God's self communication, the document directs the Church towards considering the nature of its relationship to the world and its history. No longer set over against the world, the Church is exhorted to think of itself as the articulate heart of the world's experience of God. The Church is to be the place where the character of the graced history of humanity is perceived as identical with God's gift of himself in Jesus.

One of the implications of this is that the Church cannot fulfil its identity and mission unless it addresses the reality of the world's complex social experience. It is no accident, therefore, that Vatican II was innovative in promulgating a Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World which arises directly out of the Dogmatic Constitution on the Church itself.

Chapter Five states that there is 'the universal call to

holiness', and marks a significant move away from the Church's traditional way of considering sanctity. No longer is holiness considered in terms of the 'two ways', the way of the counsels, (undertaken by monks and virgins) and the way of the commandments (the saeculares - Christians in the world), because such a distinction presents an unequal account of Christian experience which attributes greater importance to the former than to the latter. The Church's tradition had valued separation from the world more than a life which was led in the world. Chenu lamented the prevalence of Christian attitudes which belittled 'the truthfulness of natural realities', and that viewed the occupations of lay men and women as 'no more than the occasion for the sanctification of the Christian in the world, the dull locale of a provisional existence'.(12) No longer is the layman, according to the formula of Leo XIII, 'he who in the Church obeys and honours the clergy' because of the 'two orders by nature distinct : the pastors and the flock'.(13) Lumen Gentium refuses to relegate the holiness of laity to an inferior level: instead, it insists in Chapter five, that 'one and the same holiness is cultivated by all who are moved by the Spirit of God, and who obey the voice of the Father, worshipping God the Father in spirit and in truth'. After considering the different ways of life in which a life of holiness is led - bishop, priest, married people, widows, single people, manual labourers. The chapter ends with a positive statement.

All of Christ's faithful, therefore, whatever be the conditions, duties and circumstances of their lives, will grow in holiness day by day through these very situations, if they accept all of them with faith from the hand of their heavenly Father, and if they co-operate with the divine will by showing every man through their earthly activities the love with which God has loved the world. (L.G.41)

This recognition of the mission of the laity in the world was not due to a shortage of priests, or even to an increasing awareness of co-responsibility and co-operation in the world, although it could be argued that these factors were contributory. The essence of this recognition of the theological value of human life, in all its ordinariness, what hitherto would have been described as profane, arises from a clearer and deeper awareness of the Church itself and its mission in today's world.

The great act of Vatican II was to reaffirm that all Christians share a common bond. The Council made it clear that every Christian is an active responsible member of the Church. All are spiritual. All are Church. All have a role to play in the Church's one mission, to be a sign and a sacrament of salvation for the world. (14)

The affirmation of the the laity's theological mission is an important part of the aggiornamento or renewal of the Church in this century. The Council, in contrast to the many statements made in the past, for example 'A mother will have a lower place in heaven, because she is married, than her

daughter because she is a virgin '(15) stated that the laity's secular existence is not an admission of weakness but the response to a particular vocation within 'the universal vocation to holiness.'

Rahner says that the Church's life will not be drawn solely from the traditional sources of revelation - the revelation of God in Jesus Christ the Gospel which will always remain the same and whose revelation was closed with the death of the Apostles - but also from the situation in which the Church, the communio, is situated.

The Church has need of a non-revelatory kind of knowledge which does not belong to the depositum fidei, in order to be herself and to act.(16)

This reversal of a long tradition which viewed the world as inimical to the Church and as a sphere divided from the sacred to be converted and taught, now views human activity as a locus for a different type of revelation or means of attaining holiness which is no longer described in terms of principles to be applied, or typical cases or different classes of people, but as a reality rooted in concrete lives in concrete historical situations: what Ricoeur has called, 'the science of the individual'.(17) Salvation as it is worked out in the world, under the influence of grace, is a concrete visible life lived among other people in a public way. Holiness is no longer a privatised act which becomes possible only with the

renunciation of and withdrawal from the world. The radical dualism between the sacred and the profane has been broken down, because there is the recognition and the acknowledgement of one history in which the encounter with salvation occurs within encounters with the everyday world.

It occurs always in an encounter with the world and not merely in the confined sector of the sacred, or worship or religion in the narrow sense; it occurs in the encounters with one's neighbours, with the historical task, with the so-called world of everyday life and with what we call the history of the individual and the communities.(18)

Holiness, therefore is achievable in and through Christian praxis - participation in the world, as a member of a graced humanity. Human experience is therefore a constitutive element of the continuing revelation of God. Holiness acquires a social dimension or reality. Thus, local ecclesial communities or local Churches, in their engagement with their particular social reality, are recognised as having particular authority within the communion of the universal Church. Such authority has its basis in the universal call to holiness within a particular response.

### 3. Local Churches in the ecclesiology of the Document.

The highest truth, which can in the last analysis be applied to the Church as a whole is in fact asserted of the local community itself, namely, that in it Christ himself, his gospel, his love and the unity of believers are present. The Constitution recognises and explicitly states that the local and parish

community, so far from being a mere administrative subdivision in a major religious organisation called the Church is actually the concrete reality of the Church.(19)

Lumen Gentium recognises that the Church in all its universality or catholicity is realised in concrete historical form in the local Church. In this, this Constitution goes back to the linguistic usage found in Paul's letters, where he speaks of, 'the Church of the Thessalonians' (1 Thess. 1:1), or the Church of God which is in Corinth' (1 Cor. 1:2), and addresses them as 'the' Church and not 'a' Church. Although the Council texts do not present a finished systematic treatment of the status of the local Church Lumen Gentium does offer the foundational elements of an ecclesiology of the local Church which post-Conciliar thinking will use. Vatican II considers the universal Church as existing only as a communion of local Churches, and this document presents catholicity, in the words of Joseph Komonchak, as 'a concrete universal', which is to be realised through the development of particularity as a precondition for unity.(20) The local Church appears to have the character of an ecclesial subject who enters into union with the diversity of other subjects; the role of the Petrine ministry is to act as the focal point of an integration which does not diminish, but rather respects the diversity which it gathers together. This approach, which has the character of a Copernican revolution in Catholic ecclesiology, is an important counterweight to the

institutional centralisation which has been the dominant feature of Catholic ecclesiology, 'local communities are no longer administrative subdivisions'.(21).

In an important statement, Lumen Gentium identifies catholicity as the recapitulation of human diversity under the Lordship of Christ, initially through the formation of local communities which live out the Gospel in their situation, and achieve a unity through their relationship with the bishop. The movement expands outwards towards other Christian communities.

In virtue of this catholicity, the several parts bring their own gifts to one another and to the whole Church, so that the whole and its several parts grow by the mutual sharing of all and by a common effort towards the fullness of unity.(L.G.13.)

An essential feature of the development of local Churches is their fostering of forms of inculturated existence, in which expression is given to Christian belief in categories drawn from their cultural milieux. And so the conciliar document on the missions recommends that the Christian life be adapted 'to the genius and character of every culture, and particular traditions, along with the distinctive gifts of every family of nations, will be illumined by the Gospel and taken up into the Catholic unity'.(Ad Gentes 22) Hence Vatican II invites the Church to consider catholicity not as the geographical spread of a uniform Church, but rather as a unity founded upon

diversity.

This provokes a Christian community to foster a development which is truly inculturated and particular, if catholicity is to be created. Inculturated development is presented as a necessary feature of Catholicism: this affirmation is a remarkable reversal of previous Catholic practice which could not tolerate anything other than a highly uniform, Roman pattern in its liturgy, philosophical grounding and theological expressions. The Council not only tolerates diversity but sees it as the precondition for genuine Catholicism. Vatican II envisages a dialogue among all the members of the universal Church in which each local Church is enriched by the particular features of other local Churches: the self-realisation of a local Church is a particular achievement which of its nature enriches and gives encouragement to other ecclesial communities to effect something similar in their own context. It is important to stress this because the major local development in recent Catholicism is Latin American Liberation Theology : this has had an immense influence on every dimension of the worldwide Church. Liberation Theology exemplifies the strange paradox that it is only when particularity is fostered that genuine universality can be achieved. The condition of insights having a universal significance is that they are originally and intrinsically particular, and thus the vitality and authenticity of the universal Church is rooted in, and grows out of, the self-realisation of local Churches in

specific situations. But although the local Church is, on this reading, a microcosm of the great Church, it is also the foundational element of the Church's catholicity: 'in and from such individual churches there comes into being the one and only Catholic Church.'(L.G.23)

The Council's statements ( L.G.13;23;28 ) present a Catholic ecclesiology from below: they envisage a Church which is no longer colonial in its exportation of European attitudes and practices. It is in the light of this that Rahner's judgement that Vatican II marks the beginning of 'the world Church' is to be understood.

Can one venture this thesis and through it determine the meaning of Vatican II in the sense that there the Church, even if only initially and unclearly, proclaimed the transition of the Western Church to a world Church in a way that had previously only happened only once, when the Church changed from a Church of the Jews to a Church of the Gentiles.(22)

His view is that there are three periods in the Church's history: the first is the short period of Judaeo-Christianity, prior to the emergence, in Apostolic times of the second period which is the beginning of the mission to European Gentiles. This lasts until Vatican II, when the Church prescribes for herself 'a break, such has only occurred once before'.(23). The construction of Catholic identity in a way which respects particularity shifts the centre of Catholic influence away from

Europe towards the diversity of Third World Churches which are empowered by the Council to foster developments appropriate to their contexts. The universal Church in this period will be instructed as much by these churches at the periphery as by the Roman centre.

The inevitable tensions which will arise are already present within the Constitution which accepts and welcomes unity in diversity as the necessary consequence of catholicity's bipolar tension, that is, the Church's call to unity and its accompanying mission to embrace the whole world. The existence and recognition of the authority of local Churches has been promulgated by this document. Each local Church has the right and the duty to develop that form of Christian life and culture which is appropriate to its own particular life-setting. This recognition of the validity of each ecclesia particularis makes the construction of local theologies a distinct probability. When Lumen Gentium acknowledged the universal call to holiness and affirmed the primacy of lay experience as of the essence of the mystery of the Church, it initiated the rediscovery of its catholicity in terms which had hitherto been lost or forgotten. Vatican II, the Church in Council, attempted to reflect on its self-understanding, the ecclesia ad intra. This reflection created its own consequence - the need to explain itself to a world where human endeavour has been recognised as a source of revelation upon which cultural and historical influences play.

Vatican II had now to address itself to the world and Gaudium  
et Spes was the result.

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### Chapter 3

#### Gaudium et Spes and the local Church

##### 1. History of the Document.

While Lumen Gentium concerned itself with the ecclesia ad intra, the very mystery of the Church itself, and with the tensions which arise from this mystery existing in time and in particular places, it also expressed many theological perspectives which opened the way for further reflection on the nature and the mission of the Church in the world. It is significant that, although the papal proclamation which announced Vatican II affirmed that one of the intentions of the Council was to 'bring the modern world into contact with the vivifying energies of the Gospel', the original agenda for the Council prepared by Curial officials did not assign an opportunity to address the question. This is all the more remarkable, considering that there was a strong tradition of providing authoritative papal guidance on social matters, going back to Pope Leo XIII's innovative encyclical Rerum Novarum (1891). The rigid traditionalism which dominated much of the preparatory work leading up to the Council seems to have been impervious both to contemporary needs and to papal precedent.

However, the perspective of John XXIII that the Council be open to the world because 'each believer...as far as he is a Catholic is a citizen of the world,'<sup>(1)</sup> re-emerged in the course of the Council's deliberations from the intervention of

Cardinal Suenens on the floor of the Council. On December 4th, 1962, he asked: 'Church of Christ, what do you make of yourself?'(2) The intervention asked about the Church's identity in relationship to the world in which it is set. It raised for the Council the question of what was to be the central theme in its self-presentation to the world. The question, supported by Cardinal Montini, later to assume the direction of the Council as Pope Paul VI, was the immediate impetus for drafting what was to become the Pastoral Constitution, Gaudium et Spes.

If Lumen Gentium marked the rediscovery of the Biblical and Patristic understandings of the Church's identity, Gaudium et Spes was Vatican II's understanding of the ecclesia ad extra in the light of the nature of the ecclesia ad intra. This too is a complex document which covers a wide perspective of Church concerns as well as a great breadth of interests. This document merits study as it is without parallel in conciliar history. Its title, The Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World is unprecedented. The history of this document's passage through the machinery of Vatican II is both interesting and enlightening. Before its final completed form, there were five previous texts, each reflecting the differing theological perspectives held by the bishops, as they represented their particular ecclesial experiences. John XXIII had announced the Council in the name of Christian unity. As a papal legate (diplomat) before being elected Pope, he had had

the opportunity to see what Rome was like from Istanbul. As Patriarch of Venice, he was aware of the concrete needs of people in that city of extreme wealth and poverty. Unity and the world were the twin foci of John XXIII's thoughts. Such concerns were also held by many of the Council Fathers.

From the beginning, some people, especially in France and Latin America, emphasised the importance of the Council in a world which had changed and grown to an enormous extent in the preceding years. (3)

Not all of the Fathers were convinced of the ecumenical task, and this is shown in the preparatory schema which was produced as the preparatory text concerned with the Church in the modern world.

Like other documents, the preparations for discussions on the Church's relationship with the world were done by various commissions or working parties of theologians who then presented their initial conclusions to the bishops. Two commissions were concerned with 'social order' - the Theological Commission which concerned itself with social and international order, and the Commission for the Lay Apostolate which prepared a text on social action, and concentrated on the practical issues rather than the doctrinal considerations. This tension between the sociological and the the theological remain in the final text.

The Theological Commission emphasised the objectivity of the moral order - an emphasis which was later replaced by a more biblical perspective, and the first presentation of the document was in September 1962. It was representative of traditional fundamental Roman Catholic theology : errors had to be rejected and denounced; the two sources of moral law, lex naturalis and revelatio Dei were reaffirmed; and the Christian conscience, with its need for correction, was the place where the moral law was manifested. Subjective and ethical relativism were combatted (4) and distinctions were made between mortal and venial sins. While this draft exhibits the classical style of the fortress mentality of the pre-Vatican II Church, both in outlook and in approach, there was an attempt to express the link between the dignity of the human person within a rediscovered theology of imago dei. In nascent form, religious sociology provided perspectives which had widened the Roman approach in the direction of a more developed anthropology. Human dignity, defended by Church Law, can reach its fulness when an individual submits to God. Man as the 'image of God', was a theological theme which made its way into this first text, although the treatment of the theme was abstract and rather conceptualised. Man, is described as having stewardship over creation in terms of scientia, artes liberales, technica - areas of life which, in the final draft of the text, are called 'culture'.(5) The commissions which had produced the first, later rejected text had not taken dialogue with the world seriously.

The second draft text upheld the intrinsic dignity of the individual and the authority of humanity over creation, but there is a significant change, not in content but in perspective. The theses which have been postulated about man, made in the image of God and having dominion over creation, move from a timeless perspective to the concrete historical reality of the person situated within a particular historical 'moment'. In this second text, a phrase used positively would eventually become a by-word for renewal, i segni dei tempi, the signs of the times. In the Pope's speech of 11 September 1962, the distinction between the Church ad intra and the Church ad extra is mentioned. 'The Church is sought as it is in its internal structure - its vitality ad intra - and regarded in relation to its vitality ad extra, that is the Church in the face of the demands and the needs the nations'.(6) This speech outlines the immediate concerns of the Church, especially the poor, and will later form the essential structure of Gaudium et Spes.

While Pope John XXIII envisioned that the Church would enter dialogue with the world, he could not have seen the consequences of this. The Council had no commission set up for this purpose. There was of course, an absence of laypeople, who may have been able to contribute something to the Council's experience and reflection on the world. The question of dialogue between Church and world had been under discussion in other circles anyway. A Congress of Catholic Organisations had

taken the prospect of the Council seriously enough to organise meetings which discussed areas of concern - the position of women, the activity and involvement of Catholics in world organisations and participation in culture and technology. Cardinal Montini, later Pope Paul VI, spoke of the 'Council devoting special attention to the modern world with which the Church must dialogue'. (7) This whole movement of ideas which influenced the direction that this document would eventually take, was further reinforced by the interventions of Dom Helder Camára.

Are we to spend our whole time discussing internal Church problems while two-thirds of mankind is dying of hunger? What have we to say on the problems of underdevelopment? Will the Church express its concern about the great problems of mankind...is the shortage of priests the greatest problem of Latin America? No! Underdevelopment. (8)

From this, a small group of interested Council members which called itself, 'the Church of the poor', a secretariat was set up for the express purpose of studying underdevelopment. Camara thought that the group was rather spiritual, but saw the growing and potential influence that such structures would have for the Council and post-Conciliar Church. Later proposals focused around the two poles of ad intra and ad extra, and this won the approval of the Council Fathers. There was also an empathetic insistence on the necessity of making the Church of the poor a concern of Vatican II.

The second draft began with, ecclesia Christi lumen gentium in order to keep in tension the bi-polar themes. There were five versions of this second text which points to the underlying difficulties involved in writing this kind of document after the publication of Pacem et Terris which had avoided theological language, had real situations for its starting point and had aroused worldwide interest. Should this style be adopted by the Council Fathers for this document?

A third text introduced a more biblical perspective, and the fourth, fifth and sixth versions of the text concentrated more fully on the Church's interest in the pressing problems of the world in the light of the Gospels. Some thought that the theology here was too new, while others thought that the Council should spend its time addressing Europe's problem of atheism. Overall, there was an unease with the Church's concern with worldly matters. Eventually, there evolved a style which was clear and concrete, and it was decided that the whole of humanity should be addressed by the Constitution. The opening words of the Constitution were changed to 'Gaudium et Spes and while there were major reservations about the direction which the document was now taking, particularly with its optimism, its lack of emphasis on the Cross and on sin, the sixth text was approved.

It is interesting to note the recurring themes which survived the whole process and appear in the final text. A

Christian anthropology appeared throughout the various texts and drafts, and this theme was expanded. The importance and autonomy of secular activity also survived and the ambivalence to the world as a positive, as well as a negative, reality is consistently reiterated throughout. The theme of the Holy Spirit, creatively renewing man, and present in history in order to effect the completion of salvation, also recurred throughout the texts, and an ecumenical perspective was also preserved.

## 2. Central themes.

All previous Councils of the Church addressed modern or contemporary questions of doctrine and Church discipline which were causing difficulties. This Constitution is addressed to everyone in a constructive rather than a condemnatory fashion. Most of what the Constitution states is 'teaching already accepted in the Church'. [G.S.91] The document's use of the terms 'Church' and 'world' and its exploration of their inter-relationship must first be considered. There is no precise definition of Church, but by piecing together the elements of the early paragraphs of this document, we can say that by Church the Council means 'a community of men united by in Christ and led by the Holy Spirit on their journey towards the Kingdom of their Father.' [G.S.1] In this document, world means 'mankind and its history', 'the whole of the human family along with the sum of those realities in the midst of which the

family lives', 'the world as the theatre of man's history, carrying the marks of his tragedies and triumphs' [G.S.2]. What the document tries to relate, and this is one of its main themes, is not two static entities, or abstract concepts, but two histories, that of the community united by Christ journeying towards the Kingdom, and human history in its broadest sense. The Council says that these two histories are 'truly and intimately linked' [G.S.1], and it sets out to explain the 'presence and the activity' [G.S.2] of the community within the context of world history.

In essence, the Council is asking what it means to be Church in the contemporary situation. The answer will not be deduced from a set of timeless propositions related to some sort of timeless essence of the Church, nor from the Church's past history and tradition, but from an understanding of the contemporary situation in which the Church finds herself. The answer will include the acknowledgement that within Christian thought and experience, there will be a part played by areas of knowledge which are non-theological. Rahner argues that the Council affirms that profane or secular knowledge and experience, is an intrinsic part of its ecclesial and theological vision.

The Church issues a Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern world: in it she even describes this situation to which she wishes to take her stand, and the task which confronts her. But in this way she shows that she must have and must acquire a kind of

knowledge, essential to her activity, which however does not spring from divine revelation but from human experience. This profane knowledge which she possesses is won from a secular experience, scientifically and systematically gained through modern history, sociology, scientific psychology and futurology.(9)

He goes on to argue that the static vision of the Church involved 'with the world God created' is supplemented with a dynamic vision of the Church's involvement 'with that world which man is building as his work, as an embodiment of his decisions, dreams, utopias and of his scientific reflection'. The theology and ecclesiology appropriate to this task will necessarily give a high priority to considerations which arise from the impact of social perspectives on the Church's life. The contextuality and inculturated character of Christian reflection prescribes that areas of secular experience and analysis should enter into the formal character of theology, and into the particular elaboration of ecclesial reality.

This is the obverse of the process of the Council's rediscovery of Biblical and Patristic visions of the Church : if the latter is not to be simply regressive, there should be the complementary introduction of secular knowledge relating to the world in which the Church is set.

The Constitution is divided into two main parts. The first part deals with 'The Church and Man's Calling' and the 'Community of Mankind', [G.S.1 - 45], and the second part deals

with what are perceived as the urgent problems which face humanity and therefore the Church, [G.S. 50 - 93]. The preface stresses the intimate bond between the Church and humanity.

The joys and the hopes, the griefs and the anxieties of the men of this age, especially those who are poor or in any way afflicted, these too are the joys and the hopes, the griefs and the anxieties of the followers of Christ. This community realizes that it is intimately linked with mankind and its history. [G.S. 1-3]

The whole of humanity is addressed, and the focus of this Constitution is 'man himself' [G.S.2] The Church's task as a service offered to the whole of humanity, has impelled the Church to 'scrutinize the signs of the times', [G.S. 4], and the significance of this is a change in attitude - Vatican II changed the Church's rather negative attitude to history. The Church's 'anti-history' stance which passed negative judgements on modern history is well illustrated in Vatican I's dogmatic constitution on faith, which describes post-tridentine history as ' a progressive corruption of human beings due to the Protestant denial of authority', (10) and also Pius XI's Syllabus of Errors. The idea that Christian faith, rooted in Judaism, was anchored in history was not new, but the rear-guard action of the anti-modernists ensured that the historicity of Christianity with its accompanying anthropology had lost its impact. The rediscovery of the historicity of Christianity is evident in the the research and writings of M.Blondel. (11)

The Church's problem with history was not in its acceptance as some sort of necessary evil, but in its value as a locus of the presence and activity of God. Against this background, John XXIII's vision of the 'signs of the times' as a positive factor in the discernment of the contemporary mission of the Church completely reverses the former attitudes.

Nowadays the Spouse of Christ must apply the medicine of mercy rather than the medicine of severity; she believes that she will meet the needs by showing grounds for her teaching rather than by condemnation. It is not that there are no false doctrines, opinions, and dangerous ideas to be guarded against and warded off; but these are in such clear contrast to the right norm of honesty...that men and women on their own seem inclined to condemn them. (12)

Ruggieri (13) suggests that here Pope John XXIII has left history to correct itself, while the role of the Church is to concentrate on the positive character of the gospel message. For Congar

This category, (signs of the times), does indeed need more careful definition...what is of greater interest is the intention implicit in the language used. The aim is a full recognition of the historicity of the world and the Church itself...movements in the world must have their echo in the Church at least to the extent that they raise problems. (14)

The Church, then, is to take account of the times in which it is situated, because the decisive events become 'the signs of present expectation of the Messiah who has come, the signs

that the gospel is consistent with the hopes of human beings.'(15) This change of outlook is a change from a deductive to an inductive way of operating which reads in the signs of the times the hopes of humankind and their consistency with the proclamation of the gospel. The 'signs of the times' have become a theological category and have been recognised as an authentic place for the discernment of the presence of the Kingdom. While they do not provide a theology, they constitute a category which calls for a theology of its own - one which does not begin with conclusions (16) but which recognises history as a constitutive element of salvation rather than an accident.

Gaudium et Spes, for the first time in history, bases a solemn document on an analysis of the historical situation in order to draw directives from it : a consciousness of real situations becomes the basis for developing an entire hermeneutic of the human condition.

It could be said that the Church is no longer merely being involved with the world which God created and made available to simple (although still profane) everyday experience, but also with that world which man is building as 'his' work, as an embodiment of 'his' decisions, dreams, utopias and of his scientific reflection. This is a most strange and dangerous thing, and it has not so far been thought about at all in terms of an ecclesiology.(17)

In the first three chapters of Gaudium et Spes what Vatican II says about the dignity of the human person, the life of men in society and the significance of their earthly activities lays the basis for what it will state about the relationship between the Church and the world, and provides the basis for their mutual dialogue. Unlike Lumen Gentium, the Church in this document is considered in its life and action in the world, for each human activity has value because it is done by man. There is an increasing awareness of the complexity and inter-relatedness of the world which has become a global village, 'in our times a special obligation binds us to make ourselves the neighbour of every person'. [G.S.27] The expectations of the parousia should not alienate people from their earthly, or profane affairs for, 'the expectation of a new earth must not weaken but rather stimulate our concern for cultivating this one.' [G.S.39]

Chapter four begins with a simple but far reaching statement that the Church and the world are interrelated - there is mutuality.

Everything we have said about the dignity of the human person and about the human community and the profound meaning of human activity lays the foundation for the relationship between the Church and the world and provides a basis for the dialogue between them. [G.S.40]

This 'profound meaning of human activity' illustrates the Church's changed perspective - the Church receives as well as contributes to the upbuilding of the world: 'the Church knows how richly she has profitted by the history and development of humanity'. [G.S. 44] There is an attempt to end the divorce between the human and the spiritual, and yet there is still unease with the equation of 'world' and 'Church', the 'sacred' and the 'secular' - the dichotomy is retained.

The Council exhorts Christians as citizens of two cities to strive to discharge their earthly duties conscientiously and in response to the gospel spirit. They are mistaken who know that we have here no abiding city, but seek one which is to come, think that they may therefore shirk their responsibilities. [G.S.43]

This document illustrates the shift in thinking which was possible because of the entire re-thinking of the relationship between the 'natural' and the 'supernatural' that had taken place between the first and second Vatican Councils. The distinction has become a logical rather than a real one - there are not two histories running in parallel lines, side by side, concurrently, but salvation, if and when it takes place, takes place within human history. Eschatological hopes are now given an 'intra-worldly' dimension. One of the tasks of the Church therefore, is to 'interpret the many voices of our age' in order that the Church may respond with the 'truth', but a truth that is adapted and adjusted to the times.[G.S.44] The catholicity which previously was recognised as uniformity and

unanimity and as having its source from above is also derived and enriched from below, namely human experience and human nature.

### 3. Local Churches in the ecclesiology of the Document.

This recognition of the world as the locus for the practice of Christian faith, and human activity as a means of building up the Kingdom, leads into the Council's concern about society at large, focussing on the dignity of marriage and the family [G.S.47-52] for the 'proper development of culture'. Culture is defined as 'all those factors by which man refines and unfolds his manifold spiritual and bodily qualities' [G.S. 53] Gaudium et Spes noted that culture has both historical and social aspects, and provides a number of different definitions. The multiplicity of definitions is understandable, as this concept was a relatively new one for sociologists and anthropologists at the time of Vatican II. The important factor is that there was recognition that there existed a variety of cultural expressions, each with its own particular tradition.

There are diverse ways of using things,  
of labouring, of expressing oneself, of  
practicing religion, of forming <sup>ing</sup> c53]oms,  
of establishing laws...[G.S.53]

Vatican II recognised, and stated as valuable, the specific historical expressions which promoted cultural diversity, and at the same time stated that improved communication contributed to the development of a more universal form of human culture which would promote the unity of humankind. This unity is not about an imposed uniformity, with impoverishment as a result, but as a growth of unity in diversity, as a reawakened sense of catholicity. Particular values and insights would be respected and would open the Church up to a more universal outlook. (18) The communal responsibility through which humanity has become responsible for the building of a more just world constitutes a new humanism and highlights the value of human activity. Consequently, the Church must strive to be open to the many forms of culture, because in the history of the Church, the gospel has been adapted 'to the culture proper to different ages'. [G.S.58] One must ask whether this in fact was always the case : the history of Peruvian Christianity suggests that in colonial times, the Gospel was imposed in ways which did not respect cultural diversity. However, the Council recognised in this document that the Christian message is not tied to any particular culture, but always needs a particular cultural expression admits that the revelation of God must be transmitted in ways intelligible to any particular culture. This principle should lead the Church to 'enter into communion with her universal mission...into communion with various cultural modes, to her own enrichment and theirs'. [loc.cit].

Gaudium et Spes urged all Christians to work in order that all people have the right to 'human and civic culture'. [G.S.60]. In recognising this as an inalienable right, Vatican II also laid the foundations for the recognition of the cultural diversity of expressions which would develop in local ecclesial situations in their creative receptivity of the Council. There is an admission of past failures in this, where the Church has been slow to harmonize culture and Christian teaching. The whole renewal programme which was undertaken by the Council will mean more than rephrasing the conventional theological statements - 'theologians are invited to seek continually for more suitable ways of communicating doctrine to the men of their times'. [G.S.62] The Council could not have imagined that the 'lone, closeted theologians' who worked in Pontifical Universities in Europe would make way for theologies which would be 'the work of the people', those 'theologising communities' which would grow to trust their own experience and value their own particular cultures. What was required was a new theological language - not the replacement of Latin and scholastic definitions, but a language which spoke to and of the experiences of ordinary people in their ordinary lives. When 'profane' experience is recognised as a constituent of the continuing revelation of God, then the cultural expressions contain the language of a new theology, or of new ways of doing theology.

The recognition of the Church as existing in local communities created a new need - the need for mutual respect and regard within the Church itself. There is need for dialogue between the hierarchy and the laity, and between the 'legitimate' expressions of diversity which exist within the Church community. As Gaudium et Spes recognised the necessity of the Church's dialogue with the world, so too it recognises the necessity for dialogue within the community called Church, with itself, 'dialogue within our own house is the most difficult at present'.(19) This document called the Church to a general cultural accommodation whereby the Council began to recognise that 'Roman Catholic culture' had hitherto been nothing more than the imposition of a particular form of European culture as normative throughout the whole of the Roman Catholic community. There was a subculture which related to pastoral practice and theology, what Lonergan has called a 'classicist' notion of culture (20). Vatican II acknowledged that, 'the human race is involved in a new age of its history'[G.S.4]; 'that it is passing from a more static notion of the order of things to a more dynamic and evolutionary notion [G.S.5].

In effect, what Gaudium et Spes did was to undermine the cultural presuppositions on which modern Roman Catholicism had been founded. What had been normative - the language of worship, with its universal rites and rituals, its common, European theology - all of these were relativised, and

Catholics were called out of their cultural alienation. What was called for was the incarnation of Catholicism in the variety of cultural expressions in which it existed, in the variety of the world's cultures : in other words, Vatican II called for the recognition of the legitimate authority of local Churches.

No longer then could the 'younger Churches' be regarded as 'missionary' territories and dependencies : such ecclesial communities were now recognised as equal members of the universal Church. Their particular contribution is necessary in order that the Church be truly catholic, and consequently no longer centred on Europe. Local realisations of the Church in non-European cultures were no longer expected to be 'adaptations' of the European model, but inculturations of Christianity. This assumes that the local Church will be responsible for itself and the exercise of such responsibility can be seen in the Peruvian and the Dutch responses to this call from the Council. There is no longer some Church in abstract but a dialogue of local Churches in communion with their particular cultures and in communion with one another. The universal applicability of certain norms from the pre-Vatican II European Church would no longer be acceptable without some degree of questioning as to their suitability. Local Churches were challenged to construct themselves from below through grassroot communities. An inculturated Church cannot but share in the political and economic hopes and

aspirations of its people in ways which overcome the past alienation caused by the Church's association with the dominating colonial powers. Pluralism of expression also includes new emerging theologies which are the result of the reflection of any particular community on its particular cultural reality, in the light of the gospel.

The establishment of the local Churches is understood as the transformation of a culture by the implanting of the Gospel. This transformation is likened to the mystery of the incarnation, 'the Church must implant itself among all these groups in the same way that Christ by his incarnation committed himself to the particular social and cultural circumstances of the men among whom he lived.' [Ad Gentes 10] The affirmation of the historical dimension of the Church entails another element in the Church's self-understanding of her relationship with the world - the religious pluralism of the world. Thus the question is no longer what is the Church? but why the Church? or where is the Church? Any definition of the Church must be articulated in terms of the dynamic relationship of the Church to the world ('the Church in its various expressions of local Churches'), rather than definitions of the 'divine' nature of the Church which have no relation to the world.

What we have to learn...is not that the Church 'has' a mission, but the very reverse: that the 'mission' creates its own Church. (21)

While the mission of the Church remains the mission of Jesus Christ, the practice of that mission may be dependent upon the particular context within which the Church is inculturated. The mission of a local Church, situated in the southern hemisphere, and the praxis which ensues may be different from a local Church in another historical reality. In this realisation, the Council had already set the parameters of the agenda for the next twenty years. Culture, with particular context and history, becomes an intrinsic aspect of evangelisation, since culture is an essential part of the human condition. Culture distinguishes people from one another; it establishes the ways in which people understand and construe the more important, fundamental meanings/dimensions of their lives. The concept of local Church is also intrinsically related to the Church's encounter with different cultures - the question which is raised therefore is, what is the relationship of the local Church to the universal Church.

Gaudium et Spes sensed that there was a new situation in the world that demanded the proclamation of the Gospel in a new way, and yet the document had only the old ways of articulating this new situation - hence the dichotomies which exist between the 'two cities', the 'sacred' and the 'secular' and 'the mission of laity and the mission of clerics'. In many respects, Vatican II heralded what Harvey Cox has called the

'post-modern' world. His thesis that the resources for 'post-modern' theology, and therefore ecclesiology will come

not from the centre but from the edge...from those sectors of the modern social edifice that for various reasons - usually to do with class or colour or gender - have been consigned to its lower stories and excluded from the chance to help formulate its religious vision. (22)

If we return to Rahner's judgement about the creation of a world Church, (23) we can say that it will depend upon the ability of 'the centre' to acknowledge a Catholic pluralism among the diversity of local Churches which have begun to formulate a theology based upon their particular experience of being 'Church'. Perhaps catholicity will seek further definition, a definition which comes from the 'underside' of human history.

Since particular Churches are bound to mirror the universal Church...let them realise that they have been sent to those who are living in that territory...and so it is to be hoped that Episcopal Conferences will be able to pursue a programme of adaptation with one mind. [Ad Gentes 22]

The decade which followed Vatican II witnessed the beginning of a crucial debate on the relationship of the Church to the world, and the relationship of local Churches to the Universal Church. Gaudium et Spes proposed that the Church ought to be characterised by a profound engagement with the reality of the

world's, and not just Europe's, experience - a Church which enters into profound solidarity with the experiences of human society and which takes humanity seriously within its historical context. Human history has become the locus revelationis for the Church and consequently human history becomes the locus theologicus for the post-conciliar Church.

If the apostolic mission of any particular ecclesial community 'creates its own Church', then Vatican II's mandate to 'become Church' in particular, specific situations, far from Rome in ideological as well as geographical terms, will encourage, indeed will authorise developments which will offer alternative models of Church to the traditional form offered, and sometimes imposed by the traditional centre - Rome. The implications of this rediscovery or redefinition of Catholicism will be illustrated in two distinct ecclesial realities, Peru and Holland.

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### Chapter 3

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## Chapter 4.

### The case of Holland.

In the years which followed Vatican II, the prominence of Dutch Catholicism within the world Church was disproportionate to Holland's size and previous historic role. Holland emerged as the centre of liturgical, theological, pastoral, catechetical and structural change within world Catholicism, and thus offered itself as an example of a local ecclesial reality's creative reception of Vatican II. Holland also played, and continues to play, a symbolic role in the post-Vatican II Church, as an alternative to Rome. The Dutch experience became a rallying point for ultra progressivism or its counterpart in the decade which followed Vatican II. The conflicts which arose between Holland and Rome were frequent and intense and mirrored similar clashes which occurred wherever there were tensions between the traditional Church centre, Rome, and what was regarded as the periphery - other ecclesial contexts. What is interesting to note, in light of later developments, is that until the mid-1950s, Dutch Catholicism was to all accounts among the most conservative on the European continent. (1) Holland had the highest weekly Mass attendance; the lowest rate of defections to the ranks of the unchurched or lapsed; the strongest opposition to ecumenism; the most faithful adherence to traditional and approved methods of birth control and the highest numbers of

missionary vocations per capita of the Catholic population, representing only 1% of world Catholicism but providing 10% of all missionary personnel. (2) By the late 1950s, Dutch Catholicism, characterised by its unfailing loyalty to Rome, was still being held up as an example to the rest of the Roman Catholic community, 'there is so much for the Church to learn from the Catholic Netherlands'. (3)

The factors which contributed to the transformation of the Dutch Church from a model of pre-Vatican II traditionalism, to a symbol of post-Vatican II progressivism, can only be understood within the historical context out of which it grew. From the time of the Reformation, Dutch Catholicism experienced social isolation and separatism which outlawed them from public service. Within the Catholic community, any gap between clerics and laity disappeared as exclusion and oppression strengthened solidarity, and encouraged Dutch Catholics to look towards unity in order to survive as an identifiable group. (4)

In the nineteenth century, Dutch Catholicism escaped the crises caused by the age of revolutions which rocked the rest of Europe. Still excluded from government and university posts, this Catholic community welcomed the right-wing reactions of Pius IX in his denunciations of Modernism. (5) During this time, Church membership grew, and was accompanied by a growth in confidence in spite of no access to secondary or higher education. What emerged by the beginning of the

twentieth century, and became characteristic of Dutch Catholicism, was what Coleman called 'confessional particularism'. (6) Dutch Catholicism had begun to organise itself into defensive and apologetic communities whose fidelity to papal pronouncements was unfailing. This contributed to the increasing separatism of the Catholic community which ensured that every aspect of social life was catered for by an appropriate Catholic institution. By 1923, a Catholic University was inaugurated (Nijmegen), and by the end of the 1940s, Catholic separatism had been institutionalised.

This separatism was not solely attributable to Roman Catholicism - Dutch society had evolved in a way which recognised and institutionalised diverse social groupings in a structure called Verzuiling. This 'columnisation' (Verzuiling) or separate pillars within society, described the different tightly organised groups, based on different ideologies, each of which was necessary for the maintenance of a united but pluralistic society. In Roman Catholic terms, this meant separate Church-based organisations which related Dutch Catholics to every aspect of Dutch society. The phenomenon of specifically Roman Catholic organisations is not unusual, but what must be noted is that Holland's Catholic community had a far more sophisticated separatism because it existed within, and was promoted by the political structure of Verzuiling which was a successful way of dealing with the pluralism which existed in such a small country.

In effect, traditional Dutch society looked more like several friendly nations in consort than one homogeneous state. (7)

This way of accommodating diversity had advantages, perhaps the most important of which was the institutionalisation of pluriformity. While this led to the isolation of each group, it operated in a way which ensured that no one group or 'column' could govern alone, and consequently, underprivileged groups had a form of collective emancipation. This 'columnisation' resulted in a conscious, highly organised Catholicism, with its attendant confessional thrust, which was continually reinforced by the social structures and organisations which maintained separatism in order to accomodate and preserve pluralism. Dutch Catholciism has survived on a national level, rather than a diocesan level and had developed joint episcopal strategies which were unknown elsewhere in the Roman Catholic world. Dutch episcopal solidarity had withstood the Nazi occupation of Holland, and the actual size of the Dutch Roman Catholic community meant that there were realistic and effective ways of operating as a local Church.

Within this episcopal solidarity, which prepared this local Church for the favourable acceptance of the development of an ecclesia particularis envisaged in the documents of Vatican II, there still existed the individual autonomy of each bishop. Pastoral practices varied throughout the five dioceses which

constituted the Dutch Church - this local Church had always lived with diversity. By the 1950s, the bishops were well aware of the théologies nouveaux - Congar and de Lubac's works on the role of the laity. (8) The new theologies, already found acceptable by the Dutch Church, were among the dominant theological influences at work during Vatican II. Holland's self-consciousness as a particular ecclesial community has already been considered; in this same period it is important to note its growth and self-awareness as a critical ecclesial community. This period is also marked by an identifiable unrest among the Catholic élite, with their 'triumphal separatism'. (9) An example of this is the magazine Gemeenschap (Community), which questioned the Church's continuing isolation from the concerns of Dutch society within an expanding and developing urban reality. (This magazine was banned from seminaries and denounced by some priests, while others took it seriously as a challenge to place Christianity in the market place.) Before the call to the Council, the Dutch bishops had already co-ordinated pastoral activities on an inter-diocesan level, and had set up a National Pastoral Institute whose first report was entitled, Unrest in the Pastorate.

Effective pastoral strategies continued to develop, and the bishops had already sought the expert advice of theologians and sociologists before the Council began. By inaugurating a Pastoral Institute for the Netherlands (P.I.N.K.), which acted

as an information gatherer, the bishops created their own advisory resource, which showed their willingness to listen to others, as well as their conviction that any thinking about the Dutch Church, or any planning for its pastoral future had to be rooted in the actual historical economic and social realities of Holland. We must appreciate the importance of such innovations in pastoral practice in order to understand Holland's creative reception of the directions of Vatican II. The Dutch Church's autonomy and self-consciousness as an ecclesial reality would inevitably create tensions with Rome. Roma locuta est (Rome has spoken) might not be treated with the same deference where there is a strong awareness of the authority of a particular local Church, and where such autonomy seeks to express itself in ways which offer alternatives to the traditional ways of Rome.

It did not take Dutch Catholics long to become used to John XXIII's plans for Vatican II. In its preparation, experience and reflection on the Council, Holland was jerked into a new awareness of its particular ecclesial character among other expressions of local Churches.

#### Vatican II and Dutch Catholics.

One may even say that it was this Council - with almost revolutionary change - that changed the Church in Holland, both inwardly and outwardly. It seemed to make its bishops,

priests and laity suddenly articulate, and all at the same level. (10)

When Vatican II opened on 11th October 1962, the Dutch Church had already presented itself as the most informed and interested ecclesiastical province of the universal Church. This is borne out by the extensive lists of vota or wishes in writing for further discussion in Conciliar debate. While other local Churches wanted to discuss priestly dress and the condemnation of many things, including Rotary Clubs, the Dutch bishops emphasised the need for a new description of what the Church is - a description in biblical rather than juridical terms; a responsible revision of the phrase extra ecclesiam nulla salus (no salvation outside the Church); a plea for legitimate pluriformity within the Church; a public admission of guilt with regard to separated Christians and adequate circumscription of the local bishops' power. The Dutch wanted decentralisation; reform of the Roman Curia; care for laicised priests; liturgical reforms and the recognition that in an ecumenical Council other Church leaders should be represented and the time for condemnatory proclamations against them was over. These vota were for private consumption within the confines of the Council but at the end of 1960 the Dutch bishops wrote a joint Pastoral letter to the Dutch people. The significance of this letter, two years before the Council even began, is important because of what followed later.

This letter did not deal with the specific topics that should be covered by Vatican II but with the ways a Vatican Council might permeate through the life of the whole Church. The letter spoke of the Church in terms of the People of God which has a sense of faith which is fallible, and about this collective sense of faith and its relationship to ecclesiastical authority. The letter also described papal infallibility in relation to the faith of the whole Church and included ideas about the collegiality of bishops.

The letter was translated into many languages in the summer of 1962. The Italian translation was withdrawn from sale at the request of the Holy Office. (11) It appeared that traditional Roman theology had found the ideas expressed in this Dutch Pastoral letter to be at variance with the theology of the Lateran (Pontifical) University. The contents of this letter still caused ripples at the end of Vatican II and the theologian who was specifically thanked for his help by the Dutch bishops, Professor Schillebeeckx, was from that time held suspect by Rome.

At the Council, important initiatives were taken by the seven Dutch bishops. (There were over seventy other Dutchmen present representing missionary territories.) Cardinal Alfrink suggested the need for an advisory Council of bishops which represented the whole Church. This multi-national group would be more or less a permanent feature of a newly structured

hierarchy. (This idea later took shape in the Synods of bishops.) Another specifically Dutch contribution to Vatican II was the setting up of the 'Documentation Centre for the Council' which provided Council participants not only with lectures but with papers on the subjects under discussion and comments expressing various theological opinions and factual information.

As the Dutch Church was perceived as progressive there was a move to discredit the representatives. Cardinal Alfrink became a victim of a slander campaign in the Italian press. In defence he took an unprecedented step in calling a press conference to present the views of the Dutch Church.

What, in other countries is talked about privately, is printed with us. It would be a great mistake to think that, if elsewhere certain ideas and opinions are not allowed to surface, the problems do not appear there ... on no account should one say that problems do not exist because nobody has or can have the courage to express himself in public. (12)

What is clear is that the Dutch Church, in its pastoral practice as a local Church, had a much more open approach to ecclesial concerns than the more traditional elements of the Church universal with its historical centre in Rome. Perhaps the Dutch experience of isolation, of the necessity of dialogue with Protestants and athiests and its more democratic involvement of laity with hierarchy resulted in expectations of

Vatican II that were unreal.<sup>(13)</sup> Afterwards there was some disillusionment, but in the words of bishop Bekker, (14) 'the Council will never end'. Professor Schillebeeckx summed up the Dutch experience thus

The paradox of Vatican II seems to me that the principles of renewal expressed there will soon make the Council out of date ... this seems a reproach, but is in fact the highest praise that one can give to the Council: it has set the Church going, detached it from the age of Constantine in which the Church has lived for fifteen hundred years. (15)

By the end of Vatican II in 1965, the Dutch bishops had already constituted a collegial structure where they exercised joint responsibility for the Dutch Province. They were the only national group of bishops which spoke with one voice, and clearly about a national pastoral policy. Through D.O.C. (Department of Documentation) the Dutch hierarchy did not just ensure that the Church-at-home in Holland was kept informed about the happenings of the Council, as they happened, but it also served as a formative influence upon other participants at the Council.

There was to begin with an interplay of timing: the simultaneity of achieved Catholic economic emancipation in the Netherlands with a period of critical re-examination of Catholicism at international level ... finally, a high degree of episcopal autonomy from state or central Rome concern, coupled with a developed infrastructure of Church organisation, gave to the Dutch Church an uniquely open communication network favourable to structural reform. (16)

What makes the Dutch Church unique in post-Vatican II terms is the actions of its bishops. Cardinal Alfrink has already been mentioned in this work, yet it should be noted that throughout the Council he made many speeches supporting the actual practice of collegiality, the importance of laity and pluralism within the Church. On his return from the Council he said

Every Cardinal or bishop is a witness to the faith and the desires of his brother priests and the community of the faithful. (17)

In the Spring of 1962, Cardinal Alfrink addressed the group and expressed his sorrow at the fact that the Catholic laity were not consulted in preparation for the Council, and he promised that in future Councils the laity would be consulted.

Vatican II can usher in a genuine new period for all the Church - a phase in Church history, moreover, which all of us together must go about giving a definite shape once the Council is over. Many in the Church foster this hope that this phase in the history of the Church will be marked by a new and greater openness; by a truly joyful experiencing of what it means to have faith; by the falling away of small-minded fears in the cherishing of love towards God and our fellowman; by an authentic piety which finds its roots in scriptures and the liturgy ... by a proper understanding of what belongs to the essence of the Church and what is considered as mere historical accretion. (18)

The Dutch Church was more concerned about being Catholic than about being Roman. Its insight into a Catholicism which was not determined by Roman, perhaps non-Dutch concerns, led to

accusations of being anti-Roman, when in fact the Dutch experience of consultation and collaboration was offering an alternative to an underlying assumption that the unity of the Catholic Church could only be preserved by the visible uniformity of pastoral practice.

Dutch Catholicism and Catholicism centred upon Rome were beginning to embody different visions of the Church. Not all Dutch Catholics were happy with the way the Dutch Church was developing, but it is important to note that the bishops were united in their conviction that the Church was called locally to respond to the historical situation in which the Church was manifest.

One of the major obstacles which made the implementation of Vatican II difficult was the absence of adequate communication within the Church. The Council, aware of this problem suggested a remedy. In the Council's Decree on the Pastoral Office of bishops, Ecclesiae Sanctae [no.16] , there was a strong recommendation that each diocese should establish a Pastoral Council. The actual setting up of these Councils caused further problems since there was a basic assumption that bishops could move easily from an authoritarian mode of exercising their pastoral ministry to a more democratic way of exercising authority. A second problem was that such Pastoral Councils required effective local structures which would promote and encourage as wide a representation as possible of

the experience, diverse life-styles, education and opinion within any diocese.

As already stated in this work, Holland was already well organised at parish, diocesan and inter-diocesan levels. The history of the Dutch Roman Catholic community with the social structure which integrated the various Churches, Verzuiling , meant that the Dutch Church was ready to implement the directions and trends taken by Vatican II. In Holland, the central event in Roman Catholic terms which took place in the five years which followed the Council was the setting up of the Dutch Pastoral Council and the experiences which ensued from it. The Dutch Pastoral Council was first announced by bishop de Vet on March 16, 1966.

The achievement of acceptable decisions which since they will come out of the body of the Church means that there must be special care that the whole Church truly feels itself involved in the Council.(19)

The Dutch bishops who had more experience than any other group of bishops of working collegially together before Vatican II, announced the Dutch Pastoral Council in the most solemn way - so solemn was their announcement that it incurred the displeasure of Rome.

In the Church today, the course of our Pastoral Council can only be a progressive one ... we are a Church in movement and in that movement we desire to follow the

Lord - to follow means to go forward. It is very important that we take the community of faith very seriously as a community of all the faithful and guarantee the right to participation and voice to all. That is communication and for that all the new channels of communication have been set up. Our council is going to begin. It seems a risky adventure. (20)

The bishops went on to express their hopes that the Dutch community would be able to move out of 'our position of entrenchment, for we do not live on an island : we live in the universal community of the Church'. (21) The bishops, by the structures which embodied the Council, had ensured that open, frank and free discussion were possibilities. We have already seen that Holland had upset Rome by the solemnity of the opening of their Pastoral Council. Rome was unsure of the actual authority of their Pastoral Council. Cardinal Alfrink had called the Pastoral Council a 'mini-Council'. Holland's initiative was to become a test for the development towards acceptable pluriformity in a highly centralised Church, with its focus on Rome. 'We have chosen the name Council to stress the close connection with Vatican II', said bishop de Vet. (22) In announcing this the bishops were aware that new ideas and the rediscovery of older ideas which had been sacrificed for a unity expressed in uniformity could become the new wine which cannot be contained in the older wineskin of traditional structures, yet there was a determination to involve the whole community of believers in the renewal of the Church. The Dutch hierarchy already had its own 'think-tank' in existence

(P.I.N.K.) and this Institute published papers on all manner of things. These papers were read at every Sunday Eucharist : how much was actually understood by the faithful, the priests and even some of the bishops is a question which must be asked. What is clear and what was readily understood was that the whole Dutch Catholic community had set off on the road to renewal together.

The bishops extended the invitation not only to practising Catholics but to 'Jews, athiests, lapsed Catholics'. (23) Thousands of people became involved in discussion groups and correspondance, as well as the inclusion of the media. Never before had there been a consistent and deliberate appeal by any group of bishops to hear the concerns of the people. The bishops promised to take into account all that was expressed because they saw the actual discussions and involvement of the people as one of the ways in which the Church community continues to be reformed and renewed. In response to the bishops' announcement, Paul VI addressed a letter to them in which he described the Pastoral Council as une entreprise exigeante et délicate, quelque chose de neuf et d'unique.(24) In the opening session of the Pastoral Council, Cardinal Alfrink also used this theme.

Le Concile pastoral hollandais est quelque chose de nouveau. Il ne se tient pas d'après les prescriptions du droit canon. Celui-ci décrit au livre II, titre VII, comment Concile provincial doit être tenu. Le droit canon a été promulgué en 1917 et a donc fêté

son cinquantenaire. D'après ce Code seuls les évêques et les prélats prennent part au Concile; les prêtres ordinaires et les laïcs n'y ont aucune responsabilité. L'episcopat hollandais a voulu rompre consciemment avec cette habitude qui situe les laïcs et le bas clergé dans une position purement viv-a-vis du gouvernement de l'Eglise.(25)

In the Roman Catholic Church tradition, the idea of a provincial council as a follow-up to a general council was not new. What was entirely new was the shift from a hierarchical decision-making body to a collegial model which welcomed the opinions and concerns of the laity. The Dutch bishops, by their organisation and preparation for the Pastoral Council created new ecclesial structures whereby each member of this local Church had the opportunity to contribute to authoritative decisions which affected their lives, as well as their recognised duty to proclaim the faith in the specific Dutch context.

Notre délibération veut être un dialogue: réfléchir ensemble, parler ensemble sur les besoins de l'Eglise d'aujourd'hui ... le dialogue est une change du vues sur un base égalité ... tout dialogue présuppose une base de départ commune, acceptée et respectée par tous. (26)

The actual structure of the Pastoral Council tried to embody three fundamental principles:

1. Total representation of Church membership in any plenary session which took place.
2. The handling of reports from the various commissions

should be done in such a way that the membership should be able to follow the progress of discussions and therefore contribute to the development of the concept.

3. The structures and procedures of the plenary sessions should witness to the organic relationship between the bishops and the other membership of the Pastoral Council.

Embodied within this structure was the Dutch Church's rediscovery of the collegial nature of the Church which is recorded in the New Testament and in the early Church. The hierarchical structures which developed over the centuries within the Roman Catholic Church could not be put to effective use within this new structure of a Pastoral Council which was dependent on the participation of all the membership. There was another theological statement made by the actual structure of the Pastoral Council - authority in the Church was no longer being exercised by a hierarchical model, but the existence of the Pastoral Council witnessed to the reality that authority in its exercise within the Church was the role of the whole membership.

The new spirit of openness which characterised the bishops' approach also included an openness not only to Church membership but also to Dutch society at large. The media were invited - press conferences were held and there was open access to all the plenary sessions of the Pastoral Council. In this, the Dutch bishops had institutionalised a collegial form of exercising authority which assumed the inclusion not only of

the laity but of the society in which that local Church, Holland, was rooted. This conscious choice by the Dutch hierarchy to learn new and more effective ways of exercising authority, in dialogue, was summed up by Cardinal Alfrink.

I will raise two questions. Is this Pastoral Council a hearing wherein the faithful get a chance to speak out their insights together with experts, or where afterwards the bishops make the decisions? Every adult Christian has true responsibility for what it means to be the Church; has responsibility for renewal and conservation; for the vitality of the local community and for the solidarity between the local community and the world Church. (27)

The bishops tried to maintain the delicate balance between the authority of the community of believers and the service of authority which belongs to their office of episcopoi.

The bishops in their part have an irreducible responsibility within the community of believers and must let their own voice be heard. Not just as one voice among others, but as the voice of the 'one sent', as the one who presides. Bishops and faithful must learn to understand one another in this. It is something brand new. (28)

The Dutch Pastoral Council was not to be the vehicle for the public proclamation of Vatican II's documents and nothing more.

Non. Le Concile de Vatican trouve sa continuation dans l'Eglise locale. Toute le peuple de Dieu doit y prendre part et avoir la possibilité de s'y faire entendre. (29)

The goals of the Pastoral Council were summed up as follows:

1. Faire réfléchir L'Eglise des Pays-Bas d'une façon qui corresponde aux exigences et aux besoins de l'homme moderne sur toute la pratique religieuse, a savoir:
  - Le contenu de la Bonne Nouvelle;
  - Sa célébration et sa prédication;
  - Les structures de la communauté religieuse;
  - L'attitude du croyant et son action dans un monde changeant.
2. Rendre l'Eglise des Pays-Bas plus consciente:
  - De sa tâche spécifique et de sa responsabilité a l'intérieur de toute l'Eglise de Jésus-Christ;
  - De son service a l'égard de tous les hommes.
3. Chercher les moyens et les chemins permettant de mieux remplir cette mission:
  - Toute cette réflexion se fait dans une perspective oecuménique. Onze autres Eglises et communautés chrétiennes de même que des groupes s'inspirant d'une conception humaniste de la vie prennent part au Concile. Ils n'y sont pas des observateurs passifs, mais ils participent aux carrefours, aux commissions d'études et ils assistent aux assemblées plénières, bien que sans droit de vote. Et ceci nous conduit a l'organisation du Concile. (30)

Aux carrefours, the crossroads had been reached by the Dutch Church. The experience of Vatican II had brought the Dutch bishops to this point and they in turn had encouraged the people to follow. The bishops had asked the people to express their concerns at this time in the life of the Dutch Church - and they had done so.

The fifteen topics which occupied the agenda of the first session of the Dutch Pastoral Council are listed below.

1. Changes in the Church's life and thought, causes and results.
2. The meaning of a life of faith in a secularised world.
3. Content and practice of religious life for modern man.
4. The moral attitude of the Christian - conscience and responsibility.
5. The liturgy.
6. Putting the faith across to young people and to adults.
7. The practice of authority.
8. Sexuality, marriage and the family.
9. The meaning of monastic religious life.
10. Ecumenical questions.
11. Questions about Church practice.
12. Youth and education.
13. The Christian's responsibility for peace.
14. Church and missions.
15. Work for aid and development. (31)

The Pastoral Council had to take these topics seriously for it cannot be underestimated that these topics represented, perhaps for the first time in Dutch Roman Catholic history, what was dearest to the hearts of the Dutch Catholic laywoman and man. The bishops had not prescribed what should be discussed - the people had. There were some for whom this list represented the ecclesiastically domestic front of Dutch Catholicism, and therefore lacked enough attention to more significant world concerns. What must be kept in mind is the shaky juridical

basis on which the Pastoral Council stood. If recommendations were made to the hierarchy which were in fact in contravention of Church law, for example, and this did in fact happen, that celibacy should be detached from priesthood, would Holland be allowed to follow its own preferences ? Such was the uneasy ground which this Pastoral Council occupied.

There were six sessions of the Pastoral Council from 1966-1970 and the documentation which covers this period is full of a kind of apocalyptic rhetoric which dominates the speeches, sermons and events of the Council.

Just as the world in which we live, so, also the People of God are filled with immense anticipation and inflicted with fear. In a new world we look for a renewed Church. In our estimation we stand at the edge of something brand new - the new is not only yet an unknown horizon but also the abyss of the unknown. Is what is coming a labyrinth in which we will all get lost? (32)

Such rhetoric was not unusual. Bishop Nierman's letter which accompanied the announcement of the Council said

I feel in writing to you like Moses before the burning bush as I stand before a moment of history, an event that history before us has never seen and of which we do not know how it will turn out - but never before in history has an entire people gone into Council to discuss those matters which most deeply touch their lives. (33)

The literature which emerged from the time of the Pastoral Council is full of talk of 'adventure', 'risk', 'the Church of tomorrow', 'a new Exodus'. (34)

After four years of experience the Dutch bishops institutionalised the experimental Pastoral Council into a permanent structure.

The Pastoral Council has shown that in dialogue with all parts of the Church, the bishops do not need to be isolated as a college from the rest of the Church which sets itself against the bishops. I am happy to have the opportunity to make clear that we have consciously chosen to learn to understand our leadership function as the exercise of authority in dialogue. (35)

The documents drawn up for the permanent structure of a Pastoral Council stated that the goal of such a structure was 'to give form to the involvements of all Catholics in a mutually determined national pastoral policy'. (36) This proposed permanent structure would be policy-forming rather than a structure for dialogue, and together with the bishops, it would be responsible for pastoral policy. On August 13, 1972, the Dutch bishops issued a communiqué announcing the suspension of the first session of the Pastoral Council. It stated that the Roman Curia thought it inopportune as the statutes for such events were still being discussed at Curial level. There were many instances where the Dutch Pastoral Council did not match Rome's expectations. Rome expected all

membership of such Councils to be bishops' nominees rather than elected membership. Secondly, permanence was an irregularity according to the Roman Curia, and thirdly, Rome thought that a Council which comprised laity and priests was confusing.

All believers indeed have the right and duty to take an active part in the mission which Christ gave to His Church ... but they have neither the right nor duty to give advice to the hierarchy in their exercise of their pastoral task. (37)

The Dutch bishops disagreed with Rome. In a television interview Cardinal Alfrink stated when asked, 'You mean that Rome holds to a more authoritarian way of exercising authority?', replied, 'You could put it that way'.(38) Alfrink was summoned to Rome and on his return announced that the bishops would take part in a National Pastoral Council where they would be present as individuals and not as praesidium. The topics under discussion would be those proposed for the National Council, which had been forbidden by Rome. The meeting was characterised by the same openness and frankness that was part of the first Pastoral Council. Upon completion of the 1973 National Pastoral Council, the bishops announced a second Council, which was to be held in 1975. This structure, it would seem, became a permanent part of Dutch Catholic life.

Prior to Vatican II, the Dutch Church was already operating in ways which proposed an alternative to Roman practices. The

socio-cultural reasons for this, particularly Verzuiling, with its institutionalisation of pluriformity, created a self-conscious and autonomous Dutch Catholic community. Holland proposed a new model for the exercise of authority in the Church. Rome's exercise of authority was organised within a hierarchical framework which employed a juridical understanding of relationships : Christ transmitted power to the Twelve, who in turn transmitted power to their successors, the bishops. The duty of the laity was to be obedient to the authority invested in the bishops. In the Dutch experience, authority resided within the membership as a whole. The bishops had specific responsibilities, as ways of serving the community, but first there was equality ; secondly there was differentiation in terms of the services to be done.

The Pastoral Council, with its collegial rather than hierarchical structure, was concerned with enabling as many people as possible to participate in the event, and create the kind of Church which was appropriate to their particular experience. Rome's concern had been what constituted the authority of this Council - Holland had proposed an alternative understanding of authority.

Dutch Catholicism, as a critical community within the Church, had begun to question the presuppositions of Rome's authority over the whole Church - after all, Rome was also a local Church. Holland offered its ecclesial experience as an alternative to

Rome, and also offered alternative theological insights, which will be discussed later when we examine the work of Edward Schillebeeckx.

The creative reception of the documents of Vatican II in this local Church, reinforced Holland's position as an alternative to Rome.

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## Chapter 5.

### The case of Peru.

The Church in Latin America differs greatly from country to country and for this reason, every statement which is made about it needs qualification. It has been said that by and large, Latin America was unprepared for Vatican II,(1) yet at the same time it may be asserted that the outcome of the Council was not a surprise for these particular ecclesial communities.

In the years which followed the Council, Latin America began to play an increasingly important role in a world Church, and its postconciliar period began at different levels, and against different cultural backgrounds, in areas whose bishops had been active at Vatican II, but who nevertheless had played a marginal part. At the Council, the Latin American bishops were the largest group from any one continent, representing the largest numbers of Roman Catholics in the world: the case of Peru illustrates the migration of peoples discussed in the Introduction, and the consequent changes in the geography of the Church.

As a potentially important presence, in terms of conciliar discussion and direction, the bishops' contribution is

recorded as insignificant, with the possible exception of Dom Helder Cam  ra, Archbishop of R  cife.

The 'Church of silence' is what observers dubbed the Latin American Church at the Council. The relative lack of impact by the largest regional Church in the world was a poor harbinger of what was to take place three years later at Medell  n (2)

Since the Council, the experience of the Latin American Churches, as legitimate expressions of local Church, have presented an alternative model of ecclesial community from the traditional model offered, if not imposed, by the European Church. Latin America's initial response to the challenge of the Council took the form of the establishment of presbyteral and pastoral councils, thereby strengthening the legitimacy and necessity of Episcopal Conferences, which would in turn reinforce the unique identities of local Churches. (The local Church in Rome, the traditional centre, responded in what could be regarded as traditional ways, by creating special agencies for the reform of the Liturgy; the reform the Curia which had been a major stumbling block to aggiornamento, and the promotion of ecumenical initiatives.)

By reason of its history, audience and social responsibilities, Latin America was a different situation, and therefore a different ecclesial reality from that of Europe. In order to come to an understanding of the post-Vatican II

developments which took place in Peru, the pertinent aspects of the history of that country, within the broader history of the oppression and colonisation of Latin America must be recounted.

### The History of Catholicism in Latin America

The history of the Church in Latin America is the complex history of a vast continent, and European accounts of the Conquest and Christianisation of the New World abound. The accounts of the conquerors and oppressors have a different perspective from those conquered and the oppressed, confirmed by Gutiérrez's remark, '...the history of the Church in Latin America has been written by a white European, male hand...' (3) Analysis of these histories of colonisation reinforce Gutiérrez's remark - they have been written from a particular perspective, and the themes which dominate are the dominating concerns of the colonisers. An appreciation of the violent history of colonisation and the evangelisation which accompanied it, are of central importance to our study in order that we understand the subsequent evolution of Catholicism in Peru.

From the moment Columbus set foot in the new world, cross and sword have been indistinguishable. Priests and conquistadors divided the plunder in people and land long before military regimes installed their torture chambers...by the time of the Wars of Independence...the Church was the largest landowner.(4)

Historical accounts of the 1930s (5) speak of the smooth transition from paganism to Christianity and describe this era as, 'in all respects, a golden age for the Church, whose splendour now dimmed, can still be seen in the magnificent cathedrals of Mexico, Quito and Lima'. Contemporary histories dispute that the transition was accomplished without a great deal of struggle.(6) The priests who accompanied the conquistadores had all the enthusiasm and zeal of those who had been victorious over the Muslim and Jewish infidels in past battles, and thus Christianity came to Latin America as part of the Spanish mission to the New World for the glory of God and the glory of Spain.

From a European perspective, the history of Latin America, and therefore of Peru, began in the sixteenth century. In Spain the Roman Catholic Church had been re-energised by the popularity of the spiritualities of Theresa of Avila and John of the Cross, and religious Orders, notably the Jesuits, continued with energy and zeal when the inspirations of the Spanish mystics had begun to decline. Spanish interests were served in the conquest of foreign lands and in the conversion of the pagan to Catholicism. Latin America's destiny had already been decided by promulgation of the Holy See of Rome, which established the dual principles of conquest and Christianisation, and secured Spain's right to colonise and evangelise the conquered territories. The King of Spain, as secular head of the Church by papal authority, was assigned all

tithes collected in Latin America as a sacred trust for winning Indians to Christ, and the Papal Bull of 1508 gave him greater powers over the Latin American Church than he possessed in Spain.

By the end of the sixteenth century, the Roman Catholic Church was firmly established on Latin American soil. In Peru, the Incas were defeated at Cajamarcha (1532), and by 1609 five dioceses had been established. Spain brought with her a conquest culture learned in her own long struggle for nationhood, and consequently, the semi-feudal structures of Spanish society were imposed upon their new acquisition.

Those who view the Conquest in positive terms speak of the readiness of the Peruvian peoples for Christianity, exchanging their devotion to Viracochia, the creator god, for the creator God of Christianity.(7) The societal organisation of the Inca civilisation made the transference to the Spanish ecclesiastical organisation and hierarchy untroubled.(8) The Incas' religious practices could also be exchanged for their Christian counterparts. In Spain, after all, 'obedience to the great King of Spain and submission to the King of Heaven were demanded in one single act.' (9) Whether the Incas found the transition of their allegiance from their own rulers to the King of Spain and the Spanish God, or from their own priests and the rites of their own religion to the new priests and rituals demanded by Christianity depends upon whose history is

read. When the conquistadores arrived, there were fifteen million Indians; within fifty years of the Conquest, there were one and a half million Incas left. (10)

Peru represented the seemingly indissoluble marriage between altar and throne. The system for conquering territories consisted in subduing local peoples and establishing towns on the Spanish model, where Indians became the serfs allocated to a Spanish overlord. With the conquest came the imposition of not only Christianity, but also a particular world-view or perspective - that of Spain. The Church established and secured a class stratification and ownership of land which paralleled the Spanish system, and the hierarchy which was established had God at the apex, then the King, then Church and State leaders, (most of whom came directly from Spain,) and then their offspring who filled government positions.

...below them in turn were the Spanish urban masses, then the Amerindians, most of whom lived in the rural areas and at the very bottom of the social ladder, the mestizos and the blacks. (11)

In 1790, Peru, led by Tupac Amaru, rose up against Spanish colonialism, but was violently suppressed. The Church functioned in Peru as a dominating, inculturating influence, which also operated as a controlling branch of the State, and according to Gutierrez, 'the religious motivation justified as well as judged the colonial enterprise.' (12) The history of

the Church here is inextricably bound to the rise and fall of Spanish governments with their attendant loss and weakening of colonial power over Peru and also the Peruvian Church.

At the time of Peru's declaration of Independence in 1824, 'there was scarcely an estate of any size which did not belong in whole or in part to the clerics.' (13) Independence brought the struggle for control over the Church in the same ways in which Spain had exercised control over Church affairs. By the 1830s, along with other countries, Peru began to develop trade and communication links with non-Latin nations, and 'economic expansion moved from the sporadic state of colonialism to the regular systematic control of neo-colonialism'. (14)

The Church, identified as it was institutionally and ideologically with the Spanish crown, suffered a great deal of disorganisation and disruption, caused in part by the influence of European philosophy which was anti-clerical and highly critical of the Church's material wealth and power. The Vatican, which had hitherto condemned the revolutionary movements of the 1800s which put an end to the patronage systems, reacted initially with swift condemnation. (15) In some countries, the Church simply changed its allegiance to whoever was in power, while in others it attempted to reinforce its Roman ties. Finally, Rome (16) recognised Peru although conflicting loyalties to Spain caused initial resistance.

Catholicism had functioned as an ideological justification for colonialism.

By the beginning of the twentieth century Peru had become increasingly dependent on North America, and this situation was reinforced by the Monroe Doctrine (1895) and the United States war over Cuba. North American military interventions accompanied economic interventions. By 1904, the United States had the right to intervene in cases of wrongdoing or civil disorder in the nation-states of the western hemisphere. It is during this period that there were marked changes in the Church's political positions, for example the 'New Christendom' movement (17) which prompted different attitudes to the kinds of activities in which Catholics became involved at various levels of society, and which reinforced the dichotomy between the spiritual and the temporal planes.

#### The pre-Vatican II Church.

From the 1950s to the present, Peru's dependence on other nations persists, reinforced by a capitalist imperialism which exercises control through the work of multinational companies. The model of development prevailed, assuming that with proper financial aid, this country could be developed along the lines of first world counterparts. The idea of development has virtually lost all support today in the light of the major debts incurred by third world countries. The model failed as a

way of progress for under-developed countries, and the situation of the poor and the oppressed in Peru, along with other Latin American countries, worsened.

By the 1950s many Catholic élites had wanted change in the Church (especially in its liturgical and pastoral practices.) The dissatisfaction with the growing distance between traditional pastoral practices and the needs of the people was intensified by the rate of social and cultural change which was being experienced.

Social change was the watchword of the 1950s, as the passage from a rural society to an increasingly urban society and a deepening critical awareness in the social and political spheres were creating a new situation for the traditional faith of the people.(18)

Catholic Action, one of the most important lay movements, was a major factor in the life of the Peruvian Church. It emphasised a distinct and active role for lay people, and was this-worldly orientated. The purpose of this movement was to recruit lay people who would influence the secular milieu in which they worked. In small groups, they were to see and describe the situations in which they lived or worked, to judge the situation in the light of Christian principles of justice and charity, and then to act in ways which would correct or enhance the situation. For those who detect something of Marxist praxis in this process, it should be added that the methodology owes much to Thomas Aquinas' teaching on

Prudence. The movement's major goal was control of the national students movements in secular universities, thus procuring a dissatisfied elite which would begin to question the effectiveness of current pastoral practices. In 1953, there was an inter-American study week in Chimbote (Peru) for the students involved in Catholic Action. This meeting was important, as it foreshadowed the decisive changes which would take place in Latin America, and according to Helmut Vitalis (19), 'it was the turning point in Latin American Catholicism'. The delegates attempted to describe the socio-economic and political realities of their countries, and the role of Catholicism within these realities. This was something which was atypical for Latin American Catholicism. The constructive report was in fact the beginnings of a crisis for the movement itself, a crisis caused not by an opening to Marxism but by something much more fundamental - the underlying raison d'être of the movement.

Gustavo Gutiérrez describes the dilemma for the Peruvian Church, (20) in terms of the dichotomy which exists in a view of history which separates the sacred and the secular and has set itself apart from the world and from the service of the world. The unease which this movement experienced initiated an important shift in thinking in the inter-relationship between the sacred and the secular, and in Peru's perception of its own ecclesial mission. Christianity had entered Peru as cross and sword, Church and Crown, and this had continued for three

hundred years. Peru had been fertile soil for Christianity and had provided the first canonised saint of the New World. The Church had enjoyed state protection, even after the establishment of the Peruvian Republic (1829), and relationships with the State continued to be marked by mutual tolerance with co-operation in health and education projects. The State had always sought to control rather than dominate the Church. An example of this is the repeated attempt to set up a concordat with the Vatican, which has never materialised.

When the the Latin American Church was structurally weak at national level, because of ineffective communication, there was a significant change within the Peruvian Church. The new focus represented a profound break with the past. (21) The Church was challenged to maintain a high level of commitment to the popular sectors of Peruvian society. The challenge arose from the complexity of changes which were happening within what had been a developing, dependent country. This change in direction was supported by the the Latin American Episcopal Council (CELAM) which was formed in 1955.

The first extraordinary meeting took place at Rio de Janero - and is the first time in the history of the Church that the Bishops had met together on Latin American soil. Apart from this fact, the meeting itself was forgettable. What is remarkable, is its importance as one of the factors, in a predominantly conservative ecclesial reality, which contributed

to the creation of a common ecclesial consciousness, a sense of Latin America's oneness, even before it was cultivated by politicians and statesmen. The bishops second meeting was held at Medellín in 1968, and the third at Puebla, Mexico in 1979. These meetings are not forgettable. This growing common ecclesial consciousness supported and affirmed each Latin American local Church with its own particular character in its specific ecclesial context. We shall see this develop as we study the Peruvian documents (22) and the proceedings of the Medellín meeting.

An analysis of the official Pastoral Letters of the Peruvian hierarchy 1950-1970

The 1950s Church's attitude to society changed. The three documents which were produced before the bishops were summoned to Vatican II merit examination: Aspectos de la cuestión social en Peru (1958); La Cuestión Social en el Perú (1959); and La Propiedad (1961)

Ya en esos años, previos al Concilio Vaticano II, la Iglesia peruana manifiesta una profunda preocupación por los problemas sociales del país: desigual desarrollo regional, injusta distribución de los bienes, contrastes sociales, contingencias de la naturaleza que afectan a los más pobres.(23)

As early as 1958, a Peruvian Episcopal assembly, influenced perhaps by the general reformist sentiments of the time (24) criticized social inequalities and called for reforms. This

beginning of a distancing from the ruling oligarchy went hand in hand with a growing identification with the rural and urban poor. This illustrates the changes at official Church level. In Aspectos de la cuestión social en el Perú, the Church's growing preoccupation with social problems, especially those related to rural areas is seen.

La afluencia de riqueza se ha concentrado  
menudo en pocas manos, ya se trate de la  
agricultura, la industria y el comercio  
y se ha acentuado la contraposición entre  
los que tienen y los que sólo tienen su  
trabajo. (25)

The document later states that without a detailed analysis of la realidad (something which would later be employed by Liberation Theology) there can be no authentic response to the demands of the gospel. The reality of Peruvian society and culture, with its obvious and many inequalities, should be addressed by the Church. In 1959, the deliberations of the first Social Seminar were published, La Cuestión Social en el Perú, (26) entitled, Exigencias Sociales del Catolicismo en el Perú focussed on the plight of campesinos, agrarian workers, and called for the reform of the laws which regulated the ownership of rural areas. The campesinos, in areas of rural deprivation, were forced by economic realities to leave their areas, and head for the cities. Lima attracted, and still attracts, thousands of people from the countryside and the

sierras, who come in search of education for their children and also better job prospects. Such hopes are rarely fulfilled.

This document underlined the dignity of the human person and criticized the low levels of pay as insuficiente para atender las necesidades primarias de él y de su familia. [doc 8] The document speaks of the necessity of political and agrarian reform as a public responsibility, [doc 14], and the bishops suggest the setting up of co-operatives as concrete, practical steps which would ensure a more just way of life for the campesinos. In the final paragraph of this document, there is a reiteration of the special concern which ought to be shown for and on behalf of the poor.

Mención especialísima merecen los pavorosos problemas de la vivienda y del campesino que constituyen una acusación permanente para el actual orden de cosas que se jacta de ser cristiano. (27)

The cause of these terrible conditions which are characteristic of el actual orden de cosas is identified as the result of government policy and private ownership. The Peruvian Church has indeed come a long way from comfortable co-existence with government agencies and identification with the Catholic elite of Peruvian society. This document points to the beginnings of a critical analysis of the existing structures which continue to oppress those who live in rural areas. The Church in Peru was entering into the political

arena in uncharacteristic ways. The Church's past relationship with the State has changed because this ecclesial community is developing a particular and critical stance which places itself in solidarity with the poor of Peruvian society. (This will be articulated very forcefully for the Latin American Church in the Medellín Documents.

The Peruvian Church, for so long identified with the status quo and with the descendents of the Spanish overlord, is shifting its allegiance in ways which will prepare it for a creative reception of the directions proposed by Vatican II. Mater et Magistra (1961) Pope John XXIII's social encyclical, was a decisive factor in the development of the Peruvian bishops' new stance. This document built on Church teaching contained in two previous social encyclicals, (28) which advanced two principles: there is a practical morality which must govern economic affairs, and, that the interests of the individual or a society must be subordinate to the common good - any society should not be subjugated to the interests of its wealthier members. John XXIII went further and declared unjust, any society in which the 'dignity of workers is compromised, or their sense of responsibility is weakened or their freedom of action is weakened.' (29) He also stated that wage earners should share in the management, the ownership and the profits of their labours (30). The document is important because there is an acknowledgement of the exploitation of the Third world by wealthy industrialised nations, which are now

urged to help the less privileged nations - not just out of some sort of Christian charity but because of their shared responsibility for the situations which exist. Mater et Magistra was already pointing the way to what later would be identified as 'social sin', by the Latin American Churches.(31)

Such a stance, the movement of the Church towards, and identification with, the poor in society, had already been taken by the Peruvian hierarchy, and in their next episcopal statement, three months after the publication of Mater et Magistra, the Bishops turned their attention to La Propiedad (1961). This document,(32) strongly influenced by the encyclical, also integrated a document from the Brazilian Church, which stated that it was impossible to adopt programmes of reform which would improve the conditions of those who are campesinos, without some sort of collective sacrifices. [doc 52] The document finishes.

...los catolicos peruanos no nos interesa que se apruebe determinado proyecto de reforma agraria, debido a la iniciativa de éste o del anterior gobierno, a la propaganda de tal o cual partido o sector político, pues como cristianos sabemos que. [doc.63]

Here, Peruvian Catholics are challenged to participate in the transformation of the status quo, instead of just relying on whatever plans political parties may have for the future of a Peru in which the just demands of the poor have no place. The bishops' stance is remarkable when we consider that in the not

too distant past, the Church was one of the biggest property owners in Peru.

After the Council had finished there was another important factor which would confirm the Peruvian bishops in their growing identification with the poor. Many only remember Pope Paul VI for his untimely reiteration of Catholic teaching on the regulation of birth, Humanae Vitae, the repercussions of which shook the first world Catholic community, and hardly caused a stir in the southern hemisphere. Populorum Progressio (1967) illustrates the important contribution which he made to the development of the Church's concern for the poor and the underprivileged. In many Latin American countries, the encyclical was outlawed because it was regarded as subversive. This encyclical made up for the deficiencies of Vatican II whose concerns may have been primarily European. With Populorum Progressio's mandate resounding in their ears as an affirmation of the direction already taken, Peru participated in what has been described as the major event for the Catholic Church in Latin America - the General Conference of the Latin American episcopacy (CELAM II), which prepared the ground for the extraordinary meeting held in Medellín, Colombia in 1968. Enrique Dussel considers Medellín as the 'Vatican II of Latin America' (33) and Gustavo Gutiérrez points to the Medellín meeting as the birthdate of Latin American Liberation Theology. (34)

Medellín focussed attention on the situation of Latin America, particularly human injustice and oppression. Towards the end of 1966, a two year process of preparation for the Conference began. The bishops discussed the development and integration of Latin American Catholicism, and set a new direction for the forthcoming extraordinary conference at Medellin which would have pastoral as well as canonical representation. This was a crucial decision because it meant that the Church's response to the 'signs of the times' would be analysed by those who were delegates from local Churches. In other words, the analysis, in hierarchical terms would be from the bottom up, 'the people of God rather than the hierarchy of God.(35)

The influence of Gaudium et Spes also led to another structural change in the methodology the Conference would use - facts/reflections/recommendations. This change was symbolic of the willingness to view the Latin American reality from a different perspective, one which was no longer dogmatic or deductive - from above to below, but rather one that was exploratory and inductive - an ecclesiology from below. In essence, what Medellín did was to apply Vatican II to Latin America, and not the reverse - Medellín was an interpretation of Vatican II in the light of the Latin American situation - rather than a simple application.(36) Social and cultural changes which were disintegrative for the people, created a

subcultural situation of rootlessness and urban destitution.

(37)

During the Council, Latin Americans became increasingly aware of the injustices which existed on their continent and the need for urgent reform. This was the mind set in which Latin America received the Conciliar documents which were attentive to the world's needs and committed to renewal - to aggiornamento. Latin America displayed an atypical urgency in its implementation of the Council directives. As a vast continent, the majority (96%) of whose citizens were at least nominally Catholic, the need for ecclesial change accompanied the need for social change. According to Segundo Galilea (38) this convergence did not exist in other parts of the world, and this fact makes the Peruvian situation important in terms of post-conciliar theological developments arising from local Church realities.

The theme of Medellín was: The Church in the Transformation of Latin America in the Light of the Council, and this event was to be the starting point for the social transformation of the Catholic Church in Latin America. We shall see how the Medellín meeting plays an important and creative role in the reception of the Council directives, and also, as a consequence, the ways in which Peru established its authoritative identity as an expression of a local Church.

Medellín took the directive to respond to the 'signs of the times' [Gaudium et Spes no.4] and translated it pastorally, into terms which were applicable to that particular local Church situation. The determining focus was the Latin American reality. This perspective marks a dramatic change from the traditional ways of interpreting Council directives where local Churches showed their obedience by the adoption of particular papal legislation rather than by adaption or creative reception. Medellín became the vehicle for Latin America's assimilation of Vatican II.

Medellín - the creativity of a local Church.

Medellín formulated the specific mission of the Latin American Church at this critical moment in its history. The bases used were the historical situation and its interplay with Christian faith. Juan Luis Segundo describes this situation as a 'faith-in-crisis' situation. (39) This highlights what some regard as the basic difference between the European Church and the Latin American Church: the European community's struggle with the 'problem of atheism' and the possibility of belief [Gaudium et Spes no.20] and Latin America's struggle with the problem of how to express Christian faith in situations of injustice. Gutiérrez (40) remarks that the Lord's prayer has different connotations for those who hunger for bread because they are hungry, and those, well fed, who hunger for spiritual food. The process which underlined Medellín was based on a

Christian anthropology which was inductive rather than a deductive in its approach to theological reflection, and in this, the influence of Gaudium et Spes is apparent. Medellín takes for granted that the locus for its theological reflection is the reality of the situation and the historical processes which determine or influence it, as well as the values, ambiguities and sinfulness found therein.(41) These factors are recognised as the stuff of Christian experience and the substance for that universal call to holiness which was stressed in Lumen Gentium. [5] This was an effort to situate or incarnate the task of evangelisation in history. Medellín calls the Latin American Church to take its own experience seriously and to carry it into every level of pastoral practice - liturgy, catechesis, ministries, religious life - areas in which the theme of inculturation was already evident. [Ad Gentes 19-23]

The Council had made attempts to reconcile the sacred and the secular realms and this enabled Medellín to attempt to synthesise history and salvation. This synthesis, formulated in terms of faith and justice, human liberation and eschatological liberation, was one of the creative responses to the challenge of the Council - one which later developed into 'Liberation Theology'.

As Christians we believe that this historical stage of Latin America is intimately linked to the history of salvation. (42)

Medellín paid attention to the 'signs of the times', but also selects particular signs and critically analyses those which relate to those social realities which expose injustice, oppression and dehumanisation. Latin American had already been evangelised; its Catholic population of 96% underlined the existence of a predominantly 'Catholic culture' - yet it was a social reality where injustice was institutionalised, and had been so with the past co-operation of the Catholic Church. This institutionalised sin, or social sin is the sign which most attracts the attention of the bishops. The Church's function or mission in Latin America is to free human beings from the structural sin which inhibits authentic human growth and liberation. The pastoral action, which is identified as the means of accomplishing this, is translated into an option for the poor and the oppressed of Latin America.

As Latin American men we share the history of our people. In the light of the faith we profess as believers, we have undertaken to discover a plan of God in the 'signs of the times'. We interpret the aspirations and clamors of Latin America as signs that reveal the direction of the divine plan operating in the redeeming love of Christ. (43)

Concern for and commitment to the Christian liberation of the poor and the oppressed is a characteristic of Medellín. After the Conference it would become one of the most important ecclesial signs of the times - and not just for Latin America, but for the universal Church. Latin America, as a local Church applied the insights from Gaudium et Spes (and Populorum

Progressio), and responded to the negativity of the signs of the times positively, with a faith response which recognised that the task of evangelisation, or liberation, must be related to the various levels of oppression and lack of freedom which exist at personal, social and economic levels. Sin is no longer recognised as the prerogative and tendency of the individual, but is also identified as existing in the very infrastructure of society. At Medellín, the word liberation appears for the first time in an official document of the Church. While Populorum Progressio spoke in terms of 'integral development' (44) of the Latin American people, Medellín shifts the word to liberation - a word with a rich Scriptural basis and which carries none of the connotations of 'integral development' as an unsuccessful form of social or economic strategy.

The later theological development of the theme of liberation resulted in the 'Theology of Liberation', which will be studied later. The development of this is an important example of a local Church's construction of its own theology as a consequence of its assimilation and creative response to Vatican II. The bishops recognised that Latin America's gospel response to the signs of the times must be characterised by Christian service or praxis which enables and contributes to the liberation of the poor. The world which is spoken of in Gaudium et Spes, for this local Church, is the world of the poor and the marginalised.

Medellín is characterised by its authoritative translation of conciliar directives into pastoral practices which are rooted in the service of the poor. Latin America's authority is rooted in its existence as a local expression of the universal Church. Vatican II emphasised the unique personality of local Churches, and its ecclesiology emphasised this very important element of Catholicism - that each Church is a microcosm of the universal Church and that the variety of local Churches yield a pluralism of cultures, spiritualities, expressions and celebrations of faith and of theologies. Each local Church enriches the universal Church and is enriched by it and other particular ecclesial communities.

Medellín represents a unique moment in the history of the individuality and specificity of Latin America as a local Church, by stating that the localness of any particular ecclesial community is rooted in its cultural and historical specificity. Medellín gave official recognition to the local characteristics of the Latin American Church, and also to its specific pastoral practices, and in doing so, expressed its uniqueness. Former dependence on European theology, ecclesiology, pastoral practice and spirituality was coming to an end. Paul VI summed this up in his address to the Bolivian bishops on the subject of Medellín.

In this transformation...we become aware of the unique vocation of Latin America: its vocation of combining a new and original synthesis - the ancient and the modern, the

spiritual and the temporal, what others  
give us and what is natively our own.(45)

The originality of this local Church went beyond some of the concerns or questions mentioned in the Council. Latin America reflects a popular Catholicism that is unprecedented in the rest of the Church. Basic communities, as a typical expression of Latin American Christianity, are unique in terms of the rest of Catholicism. The Council's teaching on pluralism [Lumen Gentium 13] is taken up by Medellín, as this local Church embraces the cultural diversity which is Latin America, and states that evangelisation must take into account the needs and circumstances of the people in their particular situations, and also take into account the expressions of 'popular' religion.

It is also necessary to consider the demands of a pluralistic society in formulating a Latin American pastoral plan...Catechetical teaching must be adapted to a diversity of languages and mentalities and to a variety of human conditions and cultures. It is impossible, in view of all this, to impose fixed and universal patterns. (46)

The specific identity of a local Church can only develop in collaboration with the universal Church, and Medellín highlighted the increasing necessity for real and continuing dialogue among different expressions of the universal Church. As a local and unique Church, Latin America incarnated the acceptance of a legitimate pluralism within the universal Church and rediscovered a more traditional interpretation of Catholicity.

Medellin was not without its shortcomings - Galilea (47) criticizes the 'excessive optimism' of Medellin's interpretation of liberation because it was only discussed in Latin American terms, and not in a wider world context. Perhaps such criticism is well founded, but there is a sense in which the rediscovery of local ecclesial identity may require initial self-interest. He also states that Medellin did not ease the crisis of priestly vocations and suggests that this illustrates an area of weakness in the reception of the Counciliar directions. Again, this reflects a view of the Church which centres an ecclesial community around the priest - such a model fails to recognise the new and emerging expressions of Church as basic communities which function without a priest. At Medellin, the Latin American Church was focussed upon its own reality and its particular and specific mission, but these reflections were done within the context of the directions taken by Vatican II, and therefore within the reality of the universal Church.

#### After Medellin - the response of the Peruvian Church

Los obispos del Peru, reunidos en la XXXVI Asamblea Episcopal hemos querido colocar como motivo, centro y fin de nuestras reflexiones al hombre peruano. Porque sus gozos y esperanzas, sus angustias y tristezas son tambien nuestras, nos hacemos eco de todos sus esfuerzos de liberacion. (48)

#### The structure of the Document 'Conclusiones de la XXXVI

Asamblea General Del Episcopa Peruano', January 1969 (49)

(This document is not available in English.)

The introduction of this document states that 'Peruvian man' is the object of the Church's pastoral concern. Using the words which come from the opening chapter of Gaudium et Spes, they identify themselves with the 'joys and the hopes the griefs and the anxieties of the men of this age, especially the poor'. The bishops recognise that Peru's social problems are most urgent [1.2.1.]; that there is need for continual conversion and a return to evangelical poverty [1.2.2.]; that the role of the laity, as the Pueblo de Dios must be taken seriously [1.2.3.] and the necessity of education through which a more fraternal society can be constructed [1.3.]

The realities of Peruvian society are then listed. Injustice is denounced [2.2.] and it is stated clearly that this injustice is rooted in a world situation of del imperialismo internacional which concentrates power over the many in the hands of the few, and which is reinforced by the complicity of the Peruvian oligarchy which maintains the colonial feudalism introduced by Spain centuries before. [2.2.2.] Most Peruvians exist in situations of gross injustice, while the minority live in luxury. The bishops state that extremes of poverty and riches are greater than anywhere else in the world. [2.2.3] The reality is described as un endeudamiento progresivo [2.2.3.3] which mortgages the

national riches. Unemployment, unjust distribution of property, of land and of water owned by the private sector - all contribute to the spiral of injustice and oppression.

[2.2.3.- 2.2.6.]

The bishops then turn their attention to the 'rigid and vertical social structures' which make social mobility almost impossible, and which marginalise large sectors of the population. [2.2.4] There is a detailed analysis of the factors which allow this situation to continue. The bishops also indentify the political sectors which contribute to this marginalisation.[2.2.6] Then, they propose the motivación doctrinal which encourages them and challenges them to work for the Christian vision of the creation of a new humanity. Social reforms are intended to promote.

La elevacion de la manera se ser hombres.  
Esta proceso de humanizacion exige del  
Pueblo de Dios anunciar la "liberacion de  
los oprimados".[ 2.3.]

The liberation of del hombre peruano implies that there must be a change from less to more human conditions [2.3.1.1.]; that Peruvians become the authors and active agents of their own destiny - un orden nuevo en él que los hombres no sean objetos sino agentes de su propia historia. This statement is crucial to an understanding of what later emerged as Liberation Theology'. [2.3.1.2.] The Peruvian bishops state that an

authentic expression of the Peruvian Church is that its face should be the face of the poor. [2.3.2.]

The bishops recognise the failures of the Peruvian Church to respond to the majority of their people. With words reminiscent of Gaudium et Spes [19] admission of guilt for the rise in atheism, the bishops own the Church's responsibility for the exploitation of the majority who are poor, and they commit themselves to the denunciation of all that does not promote peace, that continues to oppress the rights of the rural population and of all that keeps the majority of people on the margins of the economic structures in Peru. [2.4.1.] They state that they will do their utmost to support those groups which organise themselves to claim their own rights. [ 2.4.2.] . There is a challenge to all Catholic Institutes of education, including seminaries, schools and colleges - that they provide a critical education - sano sentido crítico de la situación social y se fomente la vocación de servicio. [2.4.5.] This healthy critical sense is the foundation of what later became known as 'conscientization' - a raised level of awareness, from the perspective of the poor, which seeks to identify the underlying causes of injustice and oppression.

The bishops denounce the abuses and the excessive inequality which exist and state that they will take concrete actions which show their solidarity with the poor. Present pastoral policies will be evaluated, and the bishops will recruit the

services of those more expert than themselves to engage in an informed social analysis of the situation.

The next section of the document, states that an authentic sign of the Church is the inestimable value attributed to the poor person. This comes from the conviction, now stated in doctrinal terms, that the poor have a special value in the eyes of God. This shows that the Peruvian Church has begun to interpret Scripture from its own perspective - the reality of the poor. [3.1] From this, certain pastoral directions follow. All Church properties, because they are a counter-witness to people, must be put at the service of the poor in order that the gospel may be lived out more authentically. The economic affairs of parishes and religious and diocesan affairs should no longer be conducted in secrecy, but with an openness which involves the competence of the laity in their management. Catholic schools should be distinctive in their education for liberation [3.2.6.]:

La educacion esta llamada a dar respuesta al reto del presente y del futuro...solo asi sera capaz de liberar a nuestras hombres de las servidumbres culturales...(50)

Religious communities are challenged to 'insert' themselves into the reality of the poor [3.2.10], and for some, this led to the reordering of their resources in terms of membership as well as properties. Historically, religious Orders had

identified with the rich through their provision of exclusive educational establishments.

The underlying dynamic which permeates this document is the recognition that what is required is a conversion from an individualistic mentality which governs private and social life and spirituality, to a communal mentality which has a growing social sensitivity and concern for the common good, especially the poor. 'To make society more human is to contribute to the salvific mission of the Church' (Hacer más humana nuestra sociedad es contribuir a la misión salvífica de la Iglesia.

[4.1.] Liberation can only be achieved when there is justice and peace for all - and therefore the Peruvian Church recognises its particular mission to awaken all to this sense of responsibility and solidarity of Christians for their fellow Peruvians. [4.1.2.]

For thus each nation develops the ability to express Christ's messsaage in its own way...with the help of the Holy Spirit it is the task of the entire People of God to hear, distinguish and interpret the many voices of our age...  
[Gaudium et Spes 44].

In the shadow of Vatican II, the Peruvian Church emphasises the importance of the rediscovery of the salvific importance of human action which is situated in concrete historical realities. In this, the Peruvian Church has taken a particular stance within Peruvian society - it has identified with the

poor and the oppressed; it has admitted its communal guilt for its complicity with unjust structures which promoted the status quo of institutionalised sin. It has articulated the meaning of the mission of the Church in Peruvian terms - to contribute to the liberation of the individual in ways which promote the dignity and equality of all. In a relatively short time, this local Church has established its own specific post-Vatican II identity and at the same time, has offered an insight into the Gospel message, and the mission of the universal Church which contributes to the 'building up of the whole body' (1 Cor 12). Peru has come of age, and is no longer dependent on the European Church as a model of mission or of ministry: it offers an alternative.

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### Chapter 5

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Chapter 6.

Constructing local theologies - Holland.

Tired of the old descriptions of the world,  
The latest freed man rose at six and sat  
On the edge of his bed. He said,  
                    'I suppose there is  
A doctrine to this landscape...'

(Wallace Stevens, 'The Latest Freed Man')

The development of Catholic theology, as a corollary of ecclesiology, may be described as the search for a doctrine appropriate to the landscape. Catholic theology in the post-conciliar period is dependent upon the Council's fresh perception of the landscape of contemporary Catholic experience and identity. In the two local Churches which we have considered, the priority given to the 'landscape of lived experience' has altered consequent theological reflections. As Chapter one shows, Vatican II was not the primary agent of theological development in the Church.(1) The importance of Vatican II's contribution to the development of theology is in the new location it proposed for theological reflection.

Gaudium et Spes, considered in chapter three, stated that the Church ought to be characterised by its profound engagement with the reality of the world's experience: no longer should the Church, within an institutional Christendom, set itself

apart from the world. The community called Church should enter into solidarity with the experience of the human community - humanity must be taken seriously. This new location for the Church's identity and activity suggests a new location for theology. If human history becomes the locus revelationis for the Church, then human history also becomes the locus theologicus for post-conciliar theology: 'man as subject is the event of God's self-communication'.(2) History and society thus become necessary ingredients of any speech about God, any theology. The mystery of Christ which 'subsists' in the Church,(3) is to be found within the humanum, within the complex of human experience and history. The context, therefore, within which theology is constructed, provides the agenda for theology's task.

The years which immediately followed Vatican II are characterised by theologies which seek to interpret and disseminate the work of the Council, but by the 1970s, the point of reference for theological reflection is no longer the event of the Council, but, 'the situation in the world.'(4) The post-Vatican II Church demands a different theological agenda in which anthropology, history and the impact of the 'sociocultural' become central concerns. The historicity and contextuality of all theological understandings become constitutive of all theological reflection. This changed landscape dispels the assumption which had previously existed, that the theology of the western Church (Rome), was in some way

'supraregional' in its western form, and therefore accessible to all. What had been offered as 'the great Christian tradition'(5) was in fact a series of local theologies.

Roman Catholic theology was the theology of a particular local Church, which traditionally was the focus of unity for the universal Church. Other local Churches adapted themselves to what had been received from Rome, and 'often what has been called the Christianisation of a people was in fact its westernisation - depriving them of their past'.(6)

Rahner's comment on the new ecclesial situation,(7) created by the shift in populations to the southern hemisphere, (cf Introduction) underlines the necessity of a changed outlook which recognises and responds to the existence of the multiplicity of new pastoral and theological patterns and problems. Traditional understandings of catholicity, with their emphasis on uniformity in orthodoxy and orthopraxy,(8) are consequently called into question. Catholicism can no longer be defined in geographical or statistical terms or as a sociological category: catholicity is realised when each local or particular Church 'renders visible within time, space, place and culture the whole mystery of Christ, but not the totality of the history of the mystery of Christ.'(9)

This attribute of universality which  
adorns the People of God is that gift from the  
Lord whereby the Catholic Church tends efficaciously  
and constantly to recapitulate the whole

of humanity under Christ the head in the unity of His Spirit. In virtue of this catholicity each individual part brings its particular gifts to the other parts and to the whole Church, so that they are enriched.(L.G.13)

Vatican II's vision of catholicity presented the Church as a diversified unity made up of distinct local and regional Churches, each having its own proper characteristics and gifts to offer to the whole. Such diversified unity presupposes the reconciliation of the contrasting values of diverse peoples, and cultures and theologies.(10)

The Roman Catholic Church, with its traditional values of order and consistency is now faced with the question of the relationship of particular theological developments to the broader community of the Church. A recognition of the authenticity of the diversity of social and cultural contexts within which theology is 'born', will mean patterns of theological reflection which are not necessarily co-extensive with one another. The Church had come to terms with the development of doctrine down through the ages : the post-Vatican II Church has prescribed for itself a range of formulations of particular faith-experiences, which somehow have to be held together in creative tension.

#### A local theology: Holland.

Schillebeeckx, from Holland, is in many ways the

representative post-Vatican II European theologian, whose work offers a microcosm of the theological initiatives prompted by Vatican II. He attempts to rebuild theology from foundations of contemporary praxis, and is devoted to fostering the prophetic character of local 'critical' communities within the Church and society, by directing their attention towards the possibility of 'political love and holiness' (11) His theology is multi-disciplinary; involved in secular reality and present ecclesial praxis. From 1965, the orientation of his work changes - his emphasis on experience becomes the way into the interpretandum of theology. There are marked differences in his pre-Vatican II and his post-Vatican II writings: the Christology of his Christ the Sacrament (1958) has the hypostatic union as his starting point, while later works on Christology (12) establish connections with exegesis and trace the development of Christological interpretations, not in order to reconstruct them, but in order that the analagous complex of experience in the twentieth century might be stimulated. He interprets New Testament writings in order to gain a more exact understanding of the ways in which these communities gave new expression to faith or the traditional message of the gospel on the basis of their particular experiences. In this way, he raises questions for contemporary Christians.

What are the historical circumstances  
in which we must pick up the threads of  
apostolic belief? Where must our Christian  
crucial solidarity find its focal point today,

taking into account present-day experiences and demands?(13)

For Schillebeeckx, the task of theology is not to update the received body of truth, the deposit of faith, but to articulate present experiences as they stand in a creative and critical relationship to the tradition. He seeks for mutually critical correlations between contemporary experience and the faith formulations which arose out of the community's experience in the past. The attention of theology, both in its contemporary expression and in the inherited formulations of the past, lies in the character of the experiences from which they derive. 'The practice of the community is the sphere in which theology is born.'(14) Contemporary experience and understanding become authoritative because they arise from the continuing experience of discipleship, of praxis, and they become the perspective through which the tradition is interpreted and appropriated. The theological task is the formulation of theological understanding (theory), which interacts with the expression and experience of Christian life in the contemporary context, (praxis). He thus describes theology as, 'the self-consciousness of Christian praxis whose point of departure is the contemporary praxis of the Church'(15) and he shifts the emphasis away from past experience to present ecclesial experience or praxis. This is the object of the theologian's reflection and the perspective in which the past is retrieved.

Schillebeeckx has appropriated a neo-Marxist analysis of the relationship between theory and praxis and applied it to theology. His interpretation of critical theory has convinced him that all human communication in history, even the proclamation and interpretation of the Gospel, can be distorted in the interest of maintaining unjust social structures within the Church and in society. As a corrective mechanism authentic theology will be judged by its commitment to 'liberative and emancipatory praxis'.(16)

He has deliberately targeted his theology towards the needs of his particular community of faith, making a conscious decision to identify himself with the critical communities in Dutch Catholicism. His writings are directed towards fostering communities of politically committed Christians whose 'critical remembering' of Jesus is a prophetic and critical force in history in two distinct ways: in relation to the Church's fidelity to the Gospel and the primacy of the local community within the Church's structure; and with regard to society's treatment of the poor within its economic systems.

A theologian knows that what he says will not be welcome to everyone. However, convinced as he is by the liberating power of truth (including historical truth), he does not have the right to impose censorship in advance on his own insights.(17)

Schillebeeckx's work, Ministry, is illustrative of the post-Conciliar developments in his work and the consequent tensions

created between Holland and the traditional centre, Rome. In this work he attempts a historical, theological and ecclesiological diagnosis of what is a pressing problem for Holland, and also a concern for the universal Church - the shortage of priests. He conducts an examination of the variety of forms of ministerial order in the earlier history of the Christian community in order to find there 'critical correlations' between what was practised then and what might be practised now: if the history of ministerial service exhibits a fluidity of patterns appropriate to the needs of the community then it may be possible, he argues, to envisage a similar creativity and flexibility appropriate to our contemporary needs. He makes it clear that his examination of the first ten centuries of Christianity, is not because they have a normative priority over the next ten centuries, but because loyalty to the New Testament and the Christian tradition are of crucial importance for a 'critical remembering' of past practice. This 'critical remembering' will be juxtaposed with the present experience of the Dutch ecclesial community.

If we are to evaluate the possible theological significance of present-day new and alternative forms of ministry which often deviate from the established order of the Church...we must steep ourselves in the facts of the history of the Church.(18)

New Testament sources are re-examined in their presentation of Christian ministry in order to bring to the critical awareness

of the Church that a diversity of ministerial patterns is part of the earliest Christian experience; the later calcification of ministry should not blind our contemporary communities from rediscovering New Testament precedents which may stimulate the adoption of flexible, adaptive forms of ministry today. 'The fact that there were local leaders in the communities even during the lifetime of the apostles, albeit ultimately under the oversight of the apostles, is historically undeniable'; (19) just as it cannot be denied that there was a form of church order at the end of the first century which grew out of the building up of the apostolic community through preaching and leadership, rather than around the celebration of the eucharist. He emphasises that ministry was a service within the community and not a status. There is nothing new in any of this: what is a new or 'alternative' vision of ministry is where he brings the past into dialectic with the present, 'the specific legitimate contemporary forms of the apostolicity of the community, and therefore of ministry, can be discovered only in a mutually critical correlation between what New Testament Churches did and what the Christian communities do now.' (20)

In the first millennium, he finds that the minister is one who has been called by a particular community to be its pastor - this is the sense of ordinatio. He also underlines the community's insistence on its right to a leader and comments on many modern situations in which communities are denied the

right to celebrate the eucharist because no priest is present...'a body of priestly manpower crammed full of education in one place or another'.(21) In the third century, the priestly ecclesial community could choose the one who would preside at the eucharist as circumstances required. There is a great change in the twelfth century, where 'privatisation' creeps in. Men are ordained as priests...and then appointed to the community, and the eucharist can be celebrated 'only by a priest who has been validly and legitimately ordained'.(22) Ministry takes on a feudal and legalised form, and the Council of Trent 'took over the medieval deviation of the conception and practice of ministry, and strengthened it'.(23)

Schillebeeckx concludes that what has been regarded as Church dogma on ministry is in fact not Christian dogma but the teaching of a western, Latin Church - therefore present practice cannot be an unchangeable datum. The ancient Church could not envisage a local Church without the celebration of the eucharist - nor can Vatican II. Church order, while it creates and sustains unity, cannot be an end in itself or some form of fixed ideology. According to Schillebeeckx, 'new and urgently necessary possibilities can be seen only through the medium of what must provisionally be called illegality'.(24) For Schillebeeckx, things have always been this way - the 'grass roots' of Christian experience have developed ministerial practices which have not been identical with official practice imposed from above. Ministerial innovations,

like other innovations in the Church, may begin without official approval, but if they serve genuine needs, in the course of time recognition is given. It is the right of the Christian community to have the eucharist and it is the right of the Christian community to have leaders. The official Church accepts these apostolic affirmations, but at the same time imposes decisions which have been made at a prior stage of history, such as, for example, the requirement that priests be male celibates. A community's response to changed circumstances can be blocked therefore by previous practices which are now no longer relevant to a particular community. This is the dilemma, but the author states that it was the practice of critical communities which stimulated his study of ministry, for, 'the actual practice of Christian communities, legally or illegally, is the interpretandum - what must be justified in theory, and must perhaps be criticised'.(25)

This alternative view of ministry, which questions celibacy, the exclusion of women from the priesthood and the practice of ordination becomes typical of the Dutch Church's 'loyal dissent' from the traditional practices of Rome. His theology has come from below, from the needs of a particular ecclesial community, and also from the community's obligation to be critical not only of Church structures imposed from above, but also from its 'critical Christian solidarity with the work of social restructuring'.(26)

By virtue of his task as a theologian, in critical service of the Church, he has the sometime painful duty of showing the Church authorities whether their approach takes into account all the features of what is actually a very complex set of problems.(27)

Schillebeeckx's orthodoxy was investigated by the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith. He was supported by the Dutch bishops and defended by K.Rahner, but he has since been regarded as suspect. 'It did not really concern me. It was an act against Dutch Catholicism.'(28) Certainly, this is part of the story. However, there are reasons to think that the Vatican authorities were correct in diagnosing a significant divergence between Schillebeeckx's views on ministry and priesthood and standard Catholic teaching. The Sacred Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith in its letter on 15th September, 1986, said that his book on ministry remains 'out of harmony with the teaching of the Church'. It argues that he understands apostolicity in a way which suggests that 'apostolic succession through sacramental ordination represents a non-essential element for the exercise of ministry'.(29)

The developments in Dutch Catholicism are of great concern to the traditional centre of Rome. The involvement and encouragement of Catholic laity at every level; the continual critical questioning of Rome in matters of Church practice; the laicisation of priests who wish to marry; the demand for some form of institutional guarantee for pluriformity and freedom

for academic theology - these are all symptomatic of a local Church which wanted to author its own life from within its own resources. Rome has responded by appointing conservative Dutch bishops whenever a vacancy arises, a strategy which continues to polarise this local Church. The developments in Holland are perhaps paradigmatic of the difficulties which arise whenever an active local Church begins to take responsibility for its own life in ways which raise for the Vatican the spectre of Gallicanism or Protestantism.

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## Chapter 7.

### Constructing local theologies - Peru.

The most significant particular development within Catholicism is the emergence of Liberation Theology in Latin America which stands out as the most dramatic expression of the paradigm shift in post-Vatican II theology. It offers a way of doing theology which originates and develops in response to the destructive forces and experiences which characterise the lives of the majority of humankind: oppression, injustice, hunger and persecution. Such factors, which are identified as the result of unjust social structures, become central concerns in the articulation of Christian responsibility in the modern world.

Liberation Theology is essentially a contextual theology which makes no attempts to formulate a theology for the universal Church. Gaudium et Spes recognised the need for a new humanism in which human beings are defined primarily by their joint responsibility for history. At Medellín, the Latin American bishops denounced the 'institutionalised violence' of Latin American society and demanded 'urgent and profoundly renovating transformations' in the social structures of their continent. Each episcopal conference was called upon to

present the Church as a catalyst in the temporal realm in an authentic attitude of service...to encourage the efforts of people

to create and develop their own grass-roots organisations for the redress and consolidation of their rights and the service of justice.(1)

Liberation Theology, in its developed form, emerged directly in the response of the Latin American bishops' interpretation of Vatican II and of Gaudium et Spes in particular. This local theology presents an understanding of Christian truth from the determinative experience, or perspective, of the poor, and thus represents the most sustained attempt by post-conciliar Catholicism to interpret Christian truth in solidarity with the wretched of the earth. It is the most dramatic attempt to locate the mystery of Christ within the humanum, and affirms that only solidarity with the experience of humanity's poverty, oppression and injustice provides the locus theologicus required by the gospel imperative to 'preach the good news to the poor'.(2) The conflictual character of the modern world, acknowledged in Gaudium et Spes (G.S.44), becomes part of theology's critique of itself as the Church continually re-evaluates itself in relation to the world.

Gustavo Gutiérrez is acknowledged as the 'father of liberation theology'. As we have seen, Medellín was the first episcopal occasion when the word liberation was used in official documentation, and for Gutiérrez, this was where a coherent and systematic Liberation Theology was born. In 1971 his Teología de la liberación was published. Of Amerindian ancestry, Gutiérrez had experienced discrimination, and was a political

activist in his days as a medical student. After his decision to become a priest, he was greatly influenced by the writings of Bartolomé de las Casas, a 16th Century Spanish conquistador who worked for and on behalf of the indigenous people of Peru. Gutiérrez was theologically educated in Europe, in the pontifical universities of Louvain and Rome, as well as in the University of Lyons. He returned to Peru to undertake a teaching post in Catholic University, while he ministered to the people of Rimac, a poor area of Lima.

A Theology of Liberation is his answer to the question, 'What is the proper role of theology and of the theologian in the attempt to be faithful to the Gospel and to the poor of Peru?' He notes the classical tasks of theology - wisdom and understanding.(3) In these models, the primary task of theology was to comprehend the nature of reality and to provide a reasoned interpretation of the Revelation entrusted to the Church. The function of this theology was to strengthen the faith of believers and to make faith intelligible to non-believers. For Gutiérrez, the problem which faces the Church in Peru is not the problem of God and belief in God, rather it is the problem of the non-person, the oppressed, the disenfranchised and how Christianity responds to them in their situation. The starting point for this theology is the experience of the poor, rather than a set of doctrinal formulations. Because of this, he has proposed, and often repeated, that theology in developed nations is fundamentally

different from liberation theology.(4) Theology does not produce faith but becomes the 'second act', the 'critical reflection on praxis'.

Theology is reflection, a critical attitude.  
Theology follows; it is the second step...it rises only at sundown. (5)

For Gutiérrez, theology does not provide pastoral action but reflects upon it, interpreting the underpinnings of a particular set of historical factors, 'not from an armchair', but by 'sinking roots where the pulse of history is beating at the moment and illuminating the Word.'(6) He analyses the causes of poverty and oppression and calls into question the concept of 'development' as a solution to the problem(7), and replaces it with liberation - a much more radical concept since it presupposes that Latin Americans must become responsible for their own destinies.

Gutiérrez has delineated three overlapping spheres or levels to which the symbol 'liberation' refers : liberation is a response to the problem of dependence; it also points to a general theory of human history, the core of which is a process of humanisation; and thirdly it is used as an explicit hermeneutical principle for interpreting the meaning of Christian salvation. In Peru, theology's task is the liberation of the oppressed in all three meanings of liberation, and consequently, the institutional Church must

admit its complicity in maintaining an unjust status quo, since in this new way of doing theology, there can be no neutrality.

A large part of the Church in one way or another is linked to those who wield economic and political power in today's world. This applies to its position in the opulent and in the oppressive countries as well as in the poor countries, as in Latin America, where it is tied to exploiting classes.(8)

Church involvement in politics is nothing new: what is new is that the Peruvian Church has joined the poor and oppressed in their struggle against domination. Just as European theology should not have been exported to Latin America, this particular theology should not be exported to Europe, since in essence it is a theology from the grass roots, from the communities of the poor, from the underside of human history.

For Gutiérrez, salvation and liberation are inextricably bound. One of the primary images for God in Liberation theology is Saviour and the salvation which God communicates is closely linked with liberation.

A spirituality of liberation will centre on a conversion to the neighbour, the exploited social class, the despised race the dominated country...to be converted is to commit oneself to the liberation of the poor and oppressed, and to commit oneself lucidly, realistically and concretely. (9)

Gutiérrez has been charged with reducing Christian faith to politics, and in a later writings he addresses this issue.

Yes, in the case of those who wish to neutralise Christ's liberation by restricting it to a purely spiritual plane that has nothing to do with the concrete world of human beings; no, in the case of those who believe that Christ's salvation is so total and radical that nothing escapes it.(10)

The most basic and fundamental experience underlying Liberation Theology is that of poverty, 'the irruption or breaking in of the poor within the historical processes of Latin America'.(11) Gutiérrez has remarked that it is only the rich who have difficulty defining what poverty means: in this Theology, poverty means destitution, a lack of the basic necessities of human existence. This Theology also recognises the causal relationship between wealth and poverty, and therefore the human responsibility for its existence. For Liberation Theology, the experience of poverty is a religious experience: material poverty is an evil, and is therefore against the will of God and secondly, Christians have a moral imperative to help change structures and situations which maintain such institutionalised injustice. Such actions, praxis, are seen as constitutive of the demands of the Gospel.

The experience of a new historical awareness is a presupposition of Liberation Theology, 'analysis of reality is a precondition if we are to change it'.(12) Connected with

this historical consciousness is the realisation that human beings are responsible for creating their own destinies. Society and culture are human constructs and therefore their patterns can be changed by intervention in the status quo, as well as by collective planning and initiative. This underlines yet another characteristic of Liberation Theology - the importance of this world, of human history as the place for the continuing revelation of God. Thus Liberation Theology is contextual and related. Every theology is a contextual theology, but this Theology is directly linked to its understanding of a specific historical situation: 'it will be an understanding of the faith from a point of departure in real, effective solidarity with the exploited classes, oppressed ethnic groups, and despised cultures of Latin America'.(13) The critical takes priority over the dogmatic, where the possibilities inherent in the concrete situation for developing new self-understandings take priority over inherited versions of Christian experience.

Liberation Theology is an urgent address to the rest of the Church: urgent because of the historical situation from which it arises, and also urgent because it displays a certain impatience with other theologies which do not share the same underlying experiences. It operates out of a broader context for theological thinking than has been traditional for Roman Catholicism. (14) The world, human history and human experience constitute the horizon for this Theology, and

consequently, the adoption of these perspectives presuppose the 'uncentering' of the Church.(15) The official Church, with its headquarters in Rome, is no longer looked upon as the sole provider of data and theological criteria. Here Gutiérrez has placed himself at odds with the official Church, since throughout his writings he makes explicit references to Marx and other neo-Marxist social analysts.

Contemporary theology does find itself in direct and fruitful confrontation with Marxism, and it is to a large extent due to Marxism's influence that theological thought searching for its own sources, has begun to reflect on the meaning of the transformation of the world and the action of man in human history.(16)

The challenge of Marxism is welcomed by Liberation Theology because its understanding of history presents a serious rival to traditional Christian understandings. Social analysis is brought to bear on real situations in order to discern what Christian praxis is demanded. This is a strength as well as a weakness of this Theology, since there are questions to be asked about the precise role of social analysis in the procedures of Liberation Theology: does it depend, as some of its critics have maintained, upon the adoption of a Marxist perspective on reality, or is its use of Marxist approaches simply instrumental and not foundational?

The Sacred Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith (17) issued a response in the form of an 'Instruction on Certain

Aspects of the Theology of Liberation' (August 6th, 1984). The first part of this document was sympathetic to the the values which underlie Liberation Theology, where there is a firm commitment to the service of the poor: 'the scandal of the shocking inequalities between rich and poor is no longer tolerated'. The document then has fundamental criticisms of the application of Marxist concepts to Christian values, since Marxism is an atheistic ideology and therefore can have nothing to contribute to Christianity.

Let us recall that atheism and the denial of human rights are at the core of Marxist theory...and to attempt to integrate into theology an analysis whose criterion of interpretation depends on this atheistic conception is to involve oneself in serious contradictions.(18)

The anxiety felt by the Vatican Congregation arises when the notion of 'class struggle' - one of the tenets of the Marxist analysis of history - becomes linked with the Judaeo-Christian theme of God's preferential option for the poor, the anawim. Gutierrez's statement blends together the two perspectives in a new summons to committed social action in the name of Jesus the Liberator.

An option for the poor means a new awareness of class confrontation. It means taking sides with the dispossessed. It means entering into the world of the exploited social class, with its values, its cultural categories.(19)

However, in its second response - often ignored by those who do not allow that the Sacred Congregation can change its mind - a more positive and sympathetic interpretation was put upon the conformity of the perspective of Liberation Theology with Catholic teaching. While recognising that 'errors' have been made, the 'Instruction on Christian Freedom and Liberation' (March 22nd, 1986) gave approval to the thrust of the liberationist perspective. In Paul Lakeland's opinion

Taken overall, the positive contribution (of the 1986 Instruction) is that it is the most extended treatment of the theological theme of liberation yet presented in Vatican teaching. The Gospel is seen to be about liberation, and the importance of liberation on the temporal level is treated seriously...'(20)

This second 'Instruction' makes a special point of highlighting the centrality of particular contexts in the development of a theology appropriate to the Church's concern for liberation. It is an acknowledgement by the Vatican of what has been one of our main themes in this study: that the post-Vatican II Church is characterised by the potentiality which arises from local involvement.

Similarly, a theological reflection developed from a particular experience can constitute a very positive contribution, inasmuch as it makes possible a highlighting of aspects of the word of God, the richness of which had not yet been fully appreciated.(21)

Liberation Theology, rooted in a particular ecclesial situation, is an alternative approach to theology in which the demands of committed discipleship in a particular social situation is the matrix within which theological reflection is conducted. In its 'uncentering' of the Church, and in its self-consciousness as a local expression of the universal Church, Peru, with the rest of Latin America stands in creative tension in relationship to Rome.

In these cases of Holland and Peru, we have seen two quite different responses to the normative decrees of the Second Vatican Council, and two lines of theological development which have arisen. In both cases, there have been cautious and admonitory responses from the Vatican, but significantly, a more positive evaluation of the validity of Liberation Theology is emerging from Rome. The centre shows itself able to adjust and learn, and that is a hopeful sign.

There is no doubt that because of the increasing importance of the Third World in the Catholic Church, the procedures used by Liberation Theology will be of greater importance than those which derive from the Dutch, quintessentially European and bourgeois, experience. The revivifying power of the Gospel in the creation of an authentic Christian witness on behalf of the oppressed is more keenly felt in the slums of Lima than in the university setting of Nijmegen. Schillebeeckx's clientele are, for the most part, educated, autonomous, self-sufficient

inhabitants of the European Community. Gutiérrez speaks on behalf of those who, until now, have had no voice. This is not to disparage Schillebeeckx and Holland, but it is simply to say that his European theology is conducted not from the perspective of an oppressed majority, but from the perspective of an educated Christian minority within a secular Europe. The questions raised by Holland may be an instance of 'educated dissent' soon to be repeated in the experience of the American Church: they are not unimportant.

In both cases, the initiatives of local Churches in response to the Council, and the articulation given to their experiences by theologians, has prompted what might positively be seen as 'creative tension' between Rome and the local Church. The question still remains whether, and in what form, Rome can respond positively to local developments, and thus enable the Church to be enriched by the insights which arise from particular ecclesial contexts. But what of the future ?

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## Chapter 8.

### Conclusion: Contemporary Catholic Futures?

The question with which we concluded the preceding chapter 'how can the centre respond to developments from the periphery and encourage authentic ecclesial developments?' - is of immense importance for the future of the Catholic Church. It will require a desire on the part of papal authorities to foster the development of local communities in ways appropriate to their context, and at the same time to relate these developments to the changing shape of Catholicism. In our study of the lines of development at the periphery, we also need to consider the options facing Rome, and how the reception of the inspiration of the Vatican II can be facilitated, and not resisted with ill grace by Church authorities reluctant to let go of power. Rome, too, must develop in response to the changes initiated at Vatican II. But will it?

During the papacy of John Paul II, there have been signs of increasing tension between Rome and the developments which have been taking place in various local Churches. These controversies have attracted considerable publicity in the media, but their newsworthiness is secondary to their significance as symptoms of the creative tension which was to be expected in the wake of Vatican II. We shall highlight the instances of quasi-adversarial conflict as they have arisen in

three areas: between Rome and theologians, between Rome and priests and religious, and between Rome and bishops.

It is significant that in the controversy which followed the publication of Humanae Vitae in 1968, the Vatican issued no censure or excommunication. Yet in the papacy of John Paul II (elected in 1978), there have been several significant disciplinary actions against theologians: withdrawal of the right to be called a Catholic theologian (Hans K  ng); declaration that someone is no longer eligible or suitable to teach Catholic theology (Charles Curran); the imposition of a period of silence in which teaching or publication is forbidden (Leonardo Boff and Jacques Pohier); the demand that a theologian clarify his views in future publications (Edward Schillebeeckx). The action in each case has not been precipitate - a long period of consideration was spent before action was taken against these theologians - but an atmosphere of distrust and fear now pervades the work of investigative and challenging theology in the Church.

Several religious congregations, such as the Sisters of Notre Dame de Namur, have had great difficulty in gaining approval for their Constitutions (rule of life), because, in the opinion of Vatican officials, they have not reflected a hierarchical model of the exercise of authority. They have been under pressure to present authority and obedience as flowing from above from the papacy downwards; they, on the

other hand, have wanted to regard authority proceeding from below, from the communal discernment of communities rooted in particular social realities.

Disciplinary action has also been taken against priests and religious who have taken an active part in political affairs: the Jesuit Fernando Cardenal was dismissed from the Society of Jesus because he continued to act as Nicaraguan minister of education. The new Code of Canon Law, promulgated by John Paul II, extends the prohibition against priests being involved in politics to men and women religious, even though they are laity, not clerics.

In 1983, the Vatican conducted 'an apostolic visitation' of the Archdiocese of Seattle whose bishop, Raymond Hunthausen, came under suspicion of doctrinal and liturgical irregularities. The fact that Seattle is the location of Boeing Inc., a firm heavily involved in the construction of military aircraft, and that Hunthausen supported unilateral disarmament, refused to pay part of his income tax and denounced a nearby nuclear submarine base, was said to be of no significance. As a result of this intervention, Hunthausen was deprived of his authority over five areas of diocesan life: the operations of the marriage tribunal, seminary formation and education of the clergy, the laicisation of priests and the pastoral care of homosexuals - these were made the responsibility of his newly appointed auxiliary. This is the

clearest instance in recent years of interference by the papacy in the internal affairs of a diocese. That it was a direct action, bypassing the Conference of American bishops, is an indication of the reluctance on the part of Vatican authorities to permit even a quasi-autonomy to local bishops, and to conferences of national bishops, in certain sensitive pastoral and theological areas.

On even the simplest understanding of collegiality, the first level of recourse, if action was being considered, should have been the episcopal conference. One may ask if it was not a violation of the ecclesiological spirit of Vatican II for the Vatican to intervene without respecting the capacity of the American bishops to address the problem.

It is no accident that, in another part of the world, the Indonesian hierarchy in their report to the 1985 Synod of bishops asked that if the local Church has esteem for the universal Church, does the universal Church sufficiently esteem the local Church? The Dutch bishops, in their report, pointed out that at times, universality is presented as essentially valid, and particularity 'as a deviation, as a concession to local conditions and not as an enrichment'.(1)

The Catholic Church is experiencing the difficulties of adjusting its practice in the light of the newly established principles of collegial episcopal government. If Vatican II

itself was the supreme instance of collegial deliberation, with all the bishops in the presence of the Pope, there are, however, important questions to be asked about the status of national or local episcopal conferences within this framework. What is the theological status of the conferences of bishops? Do they have teaching authority? How do they relate to papal authority?

We have examined two instances in Peru and Holland of national conferences in which expression was given, in very different contexts, to the thrust of Vatican II's teachings. This was in line with the Council's reminder in the document, Christus Dominus, of the ancient tradition of synodal government at regional level.

This most sacred Council considers it supremely opportune everywhere that bishops belonging to the same nation or region form an association and meet together at fixed times. Thus, then the insights of prudence and experience have been shared and viewed exchanged, there will emerge a holy union of energies in the service of the common good of the churches.(2)

In the immediate wake of the Council, two theologians strongly affirmed the theological foundation behind these bishops' conferences. Jerome Hamer said that the episcopal conference is 'an appropriate expression of the solidarity of the body of bishops, which is a reality of divine right in the Church of Christ'.(3) Joseph Ratzinger argued that such

episcopal conferences offer today 'the best means of concrete plurality in unity' and that they are 'one of the best forms of collegiality that is here partially realized but with a view to the totality'.(4) It is symptomatic of the sea-change since the election of John Paul II that both theologians, since their appointment to important positions in Vatican congregations, have opposed bestowing theological status on such conferences. Joseph, now Cardinal Ratzinger, holds that 'episcopal conferences have no theological basis; they do not belong to the structure of the Church, as willed by Christ, that cannot be eliminated; they have only a practical, concrete function'. (5) The International Theological Commission, chaired by Cardinal Ratzinger, concluded that 'such terms as "college", "collegiality", and "collegial" can have no more than an analogical and theologically improper sense'(6) when used in reference to episcopal conferences. It is difficult to avoid the impression that resistance on the part of Rome to granting a significant status to episcopal conferences signals an unwillingness to promote the status of the local Church within a diversified Catholicism.

Is there any way forward? Is a monarchical papacy, in relationship to the rest of the Church, so deeply embedded in the neurological responses of Catholicism that it is practically impossible to establish a different set of responses to the Church's pressing needs after Vatican II? One way forward may lie in the adoption, within ecclesiology, of a

principle which originally belongs within social philosophy. Several writers have argued that 'the principle of subsidiarity' should be regulative, not only of the functioning of social structures, but also of the ecclesial structure of the Catholic Church. The question of the relationship between the Roman centre of unity and the diversity of local Churches can be addressed by applying the principle of subsidiarity to how there can be local autonomy which co-exists with papal authority. The principle was enunciated, initially, as part of the Church's social teaching. In Quadragesimo Anno (1931), Pius XI called it a 'fundamental principle of social philosophy'.

One should not withdraw from individuals and commit to the community what they can accomplish by their own enterprise and industry. So too it is an injustice and at the same time a grave evil and a disturbance of right order, to transfer to the larger and higher collectivity functions which can be performed and provided for by lesser and subordinate bodies.(7)

In Jack Mahoney's view, subsidiarity is to be distinguished from delegation which is 'the granting of power by a higher authority to a lower in terms of a carefully prescribed function and limited sphere of activity'.

Subsidiarity, by contrast, is almost entirely different in principle from delegation. It is not a trickle-down theory of power, but an acknowledgement of particular stratified competences at each level of society. It does not impart power; it recognises it wherever it already exists. It is an honest acknowledgement of the

inherent tension in any society between  
particularity and universality.(8)

Mahoney argues that the principle of subsidiarity aims to achieve 'a social balance between lesser and greater bodies within a society, but with a built-in preference for the identity and integrity of the lesser so far as this is possible'(9) This is precisely the value at stake in the development of an ecclesiology which promotes the status of the local Church in its particular context. One might also note that this principle, which originates in social philosophy and which exhibits a particular value in ecclesiology, is a striking instance of the value of 'non-theological knowledge' for theology, which Rahner argued is essential for the pursuance of the vision of Gaudium et Spes. The special value of this principle in ecclesiology is that it permits a recognition of the ecclesial and collegial reality of particular local Churches. It also envisages an appropriate self-limitation on the part of centralised Church government which will permit decisions to be made at the level of the local Church, without that right being subsumed within the umbrella of papal jurisdiction. It is not as though Rome delegates powers to local Churches for the sake of efficiency; rather, the local Church has its own share in the priestly, prophetic and royal work of Christ which enables it to act by its own authority. The ecclesiology envisaged in this model is in keeping with the thrust of Vatican II's vision of a

communion of Churches, united but not absorbed by their relationship to Rome.

At the practical level of Church life, the principle of subsidiarity respects different functions, charisms, and responsibilities. By affirming that problems should, when possible, be resolved at the local level, it encourages individual and small-group participation. The central authority of the Church should acknowledge the competence of the local Church and of episcopal conferences and only rarely intervene in their activities. Subsidiarity is a mandate for legitimate diversity in opposition to uniformity and is a call for decentralisation.  
(10)

If local Churches can exercise their own decision-making, without this being seen as a threat to the authority of the papacy, then the Catholic Church may finally be taking significant steps to deal with the perspectives offered on the Church's identity by the Protestant reformers. The tragedy of the Reformation was that the tension between the particular and the universal, the local Church and the universal Church, was dissolved in favour of autonomous congregations and national Churches. This tension is part of the dynamic of Catholicism, and in my opinion, the Reformation was a failure, on the part of the various parties involved and caught up in a complex historical dynamism, to maintain the internal differentiation of the Church's identity. Vatican II marks the recognition by the Catholic Church that insights expressed by the Reformers properly belong within the trajectory of Catholic identity: prophecy, diversity, contextuality, the participation by all

the laity in the prophetic, priestly and royal work of Christ, the priority of Scripture within the faith-expressions of the Church - all these are factors which gained prominence in the European Reformation, and which are being presented by Vatican II to the Catholic Church as positive aspects of its identity.

Through a well-measured application of the principle of subsidiarity, it should be possible in the modern age to incorporate within an internally differentiated Catholicism the features of local autonomy and inculturated development which mark an authentically involved Christian community.

The developments we have studied in Peru and Holland are expressions of a diversity which, far from threatening Catholicism, exhibits its richness and internal vitality. The differences between them, however, are important. From Peru has come the dynamism of Liberation Theology which has replaced neo-Scholasticism as the most pervasive theological approach in world-wide Catholicism. This has been formulated, consciously, as the empowering of the poor as agents of theological reflection. Liberation Theology attempts to give voice to the hopes and aspirations of the disinherited, and to place their needs in the forefront of human and Christian concern. It is quintessentially a theology from below, a development within orthodox Catholic faith which revivifies the task of theology, at the same time as it revivifies the local community. It is significant that Leonardo Boff entitles his book on

ecclesiology, Ecclesiogenesis, (11) because the perspective of Liberation Theology signals the process of 'becoming Church' through committed praxis. It marks a rediscovery of the roots of ecclesial identity in which the evangelical values of the Kingdom modulate the marks of the Church: oneness, holiness, catholicity and apostolicity are reformulated in the light of the experience of committed discipleship in the modern world.

The reservations initially expressed by Rome about the trajectory of Liberation Theology bear the signs of resistance to prophecy: never unexpected, but, in the long run, liable to be dissolved by the power of its charismatic challenge to return to the roots of Gospel faith. One cannot, however, bestow the same favourable judgment on the disputes between Rome and Holland: Dutch society has been, since the 17th Century, the exemplar of bourgeois civilisation in Europe. Are the conflicts of Dutch Catholicism with Rome prompted as much by bourgeois liberalism as by theological factors? One must be wary of assuming that there can ever be purely theological disputes: the argument we have presented is that theology always has a social context, and this is certainly true of the difficulties which Dutch Catholics have experienced in their dealings with Rome. The history of Holland - one of progressive detachment from the imperial claims of other nations - is surely being re-enacted in Dutch Catholicism's resistance to papal interference in its affairs.

However, this comment should not detract from the importance of the challenge posed by Dutch Catholicism to the future development of local Churches within Catholicism. Within the context of Dutch culture, developments have taken place which align Catholics with a critical modernity in their outlook: can this be permitted as a cultural expression compatible with Catholicism without the danger of the Dutch Church becoming schismatic? One should always be wary of crying 'schism' in situations in which there has been a simultaneous paradigm shift in cultural and religious terms. Europe is entering a post-Christian age, and Catholicism is re-thinking the contemporary meaning of Catholic identity. It could be that Holland is experiencing changes in social and religious attitudes which will eventually become typical of European experience. The change may be happening there quicker, and with greater clarity, than elsewhere, but it will become the experience of all in time. An overhasty response of condemnation on the part of the Vatican may inhibit the changes, but it cannot stop them altogether.

One must also recognise that both developments differ because they are different confrontations with atheism and godlessness: Peruvian Liberation Theology confronts the atheism implicit in unjust social structures, and seeks to challenge it by establishing a society in which human growth and dignity are sacramental signs of the Kingdom of God. Holland, on the other hand, is situated within the European crisis of atheistic

belief: here, the epistemological horizons of atheism take precedence over the social horizons highlighted in Latin America. This distinction between them contributes towards their respective merits as possible patterns of Christian growth in the contemporary world. The Latin American response will be more significant because, quite simply, the dominant experience of humanity today is hunger, not sophisticated doubt. The insights of Dutch Catholicism may not have the same exemplary and inspirational power, because Holland is already a wealthy country in the European community: it is not clear how easily the attitudes of bourgeois Dutch Catholics can stimulate the experience of Christians in the Third World. Latin American Liberation Theology is proving to be a valuable re-visioning of the task of contemporary Christianity because it is rooted in the experience of injustice and hope. But both experiences, Peru and Holland, offer alternative visions of contemporary Catholic futures in which the local Church can be valued as an enrichment of the identity of the Church, and as a necessary context for the successful evangelisation of the world.

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