

John Schumacher, "The 'Third World' and the Self-understanding
of the Twentieth-century Church" pp 102 ff

p 103 'As we have come to realize there are many kinds of imperial-
ism^s and dependency -- not only political but economic, cultural,
and religious. The political emancipation which has been so
rapid since 1945, has only served to heighten the consciousness of
other forms of dependency, and to intensify the the search for
means to eliminate them. Not least is this true in the life of
the national & churches as they seek , not independence from the
universal Church, but a & realization by themselves and a recognition
by others of their own unique character within the universal
Church as well as full integration within their own national
~~XXXXXX~~ cultures.'

'The principal elements in this new self-understanding due ~~prim~~
primarily to them would seem to be the following: (1) a realization
of the essential pluralism amid unity which belongs to the
universal Church; (2) a new attitude towards the values of
non-Christian religions and consequently a new concept of the
relation of the Church to them; (3) a broader understanding of the
role of the Ch8rch as a witness to the word of God and its demands
on men; (4) a fuller concetp of the mission of the Church as
embracing not only the ministry /104/ of word and sacrament but
active involvement in economic and all human development.'

p 105 'The conscious recognition by the Church of a legitimate and ~~HY~~
even necessary pluralism in its life has manifested itself most
obviously and most readily in the adaptation of the liturgy since
Vatican II. [vernacular for Latin, recognition of diverse
expressions of worship, national episcopal conferences, greater
room for initiative on their part] But the area in which the
need for pluralism has been most felt has been that of theology
itself. Not only those cultures with ancient and well-developed
philosophical and religious traditions & of their own demand this
pluralism, but other peoples whose way s of thought are less obvi-
ously distinct to the superficial Western observe, feel strongly
the need for an indigenization of theology among themselves.
Though the task has scarcely begun in most cases, the reality
of its need (if the Gospel is to be truly made relevant to all
men) has become ever more evident.'

p 106 'Intimately related to the encounter of a Western Church with the great non-Christian cultures of the non-Western world, has been the Church's changing attitude towards other religions and its relation to them. The encounter did not, of course, occur for the first time in the twentieth century; Christianity had met Islam in the Middle Ages but the result had been the Crusades; the missionary expansion of the sixteenth century in turn had seen only the hideous work of the devil in the religions it met. It is true that Ricci and his successors had learned to value the ethical system of Confucianism in the Jesuit mission to seventeenth-century China, and Roberto de Nobili had even perceived some of the religious values of Hinduism. But even apart from the rejection of their views by the European Church, their fundamental attitude was rather one of openness to what might be found compatible with Christianity than a seeking of positive values in the religion of peoples they were striving to convert. Their understanding of the Church itself was scarcely altered.'

The twentieth century Church, however, has not merely made an effort to understand the religion inspired cultures with which it lives in contact so as to be able to present its message in their culture-forms. Rather it also looks at them to find true religious values which perhaps have been obscured in the Western Christian presentation or formulation of God's word to man. It even finds in them in some fashion authentic vehicles of God's saving grace in which men truly find him (cf footnote 4).'

p 107 'It is precisely the deprivation of economic development and, as a consequence, of access to other forms of national and human development which constitutes the Third World as such.'

'It is no longer a question primarily of individual rights but of the rights of nations.'

'The Church must actively involve itself in temporal realities, not to dominate, or to control, but to promote effectively and assist in its servant role the attainment of a human society in which human culture and development are available to all men.'

p 107 '... it can be noted that this is not the first time that the /108/ Church has played an active role in the human and even the economic development of nations, as both the history of medieval Europe and the history of "the missions" bear witness. The difference perhaps lies in the view of the work of development not merely as a means to attract men to the Gospel, nor even as a kind of pre-evangelization, to establish the necessary human conditions in which the word can be preached. Rather this contribution to human development is increasingly recognized as an integral part of the mission of the Church, so that even if there is no possibility of actually preaching the word or administering the sacraments, the Church, by its contribution to human development, is fulfilling its mission of working for the realization of God's kingdom.'

p 108 'The writing of Church history has increasingly detached itself from the older models in which popes and emperors, councils and heresies, and the vicissitudes of ecclesiastical politics and diplomacy occupied the center of the stage. The shift in emphasis from political and diplomatic history to social, cultural, and economic history, has been paralleled in Church historiography by a shift of interest to the life of the People of God, their faith and their spirituality, their forms of piety and even their superstitions -- it is these which the ecclesiastical historian seeks to understand and to depict.'

p 109 '... though no Church historian could conceive ending the history of the German Church, for example, with the work of St Boniface, whole Christian peoples numerically larger by far than the German Church, disappear from consideration of the Church historian with the substantial completion of evangelization in the seventeenth century, when their life as churches had scarcely begun... these missions are considered more as manifestations of the Christian church which evangelized them than as new incarnations of the Church in cultures having their own contribution to make to the fullness of the People of God.'

p 110 'For just as the churches of the third world for the most part have scarcely begun the indigenization of their theology instead of accepting the problematics and formulations of the West, so too they have for the most part done relatively little to write the history of the unfolding of God's grace among themselves. In the urgent preoccupation with what seemed to be more necessary and more practical matters, they have failed to lay the foundations for their own particular self-understanding, which alone can be the basis for their perception of their own unique insertion into the history of salvation.'

Pierre Delooz, "How the Church sees itself Today" ** pp. 112 ff.

p 112 'To ask a sociologist (ie Delooz) to deal with this question reflects the current desire to analyze as scientifically as possible the way in which the Church sees itself. This desire for a scientific approach is revealing; it shows that the need for scientific objectivity and the attitude of relativization on which it is based are most relevant to the whole question of the Church's self-conception.'

p 113 '.. what positive demands have helped produce these different elements of crisis in the contemporary Church.'

His captions:

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|---|-----|
| 1. From Ideology to Values | 113 |
| 2. From Certainth to Seeking | 114 |
| 3. From Observance of the Law to Creativity | 116 |
| 4. From Mere Membership to responsibility in the Church | 117 |
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p 113 '.. the changes in the world force us to ask radical questions about the ideas and doctrines we hold... They cannot answer our questions, and cannot even reach the level at which our questioning is taking place.... .. the Church's ideology (its doctrinal or theological systems) has become increasingly inadequate because it cannot adapt to the changes in the life of the Church.

p 113 'On the other hand, Christians are also becoming increasingly ~~xxxxxxx~~ aware, on the positive side, of the values by which they live. There is a growing gulf between the Church's doctrinal and theological systems, which seek to justify these values, and the living experience of the values which they feel to be important in their lives.'

p 114 'If we openly ~~xx~~ recognize that the Church's theological systems are to some extent discredited nowadays, or that they arouse indifference or even contempt, this does ~~nx~~ not mean that we are unaware of what is expected from theology. It is clear that the Christian experience of living values in new conditions of life goes together with a desire for a new theology which will be open to all these signs of change. On the other hand, it is probably too early for any chance of real success in this sphere.'

p 114 '.. also made the Church think more of abandoning its traditional attitude of absolute certainty and becoming a seeking Church.'

p 115 'This urgent desire for authenticity is visble everywhere in the Church and threatens to over~~en~~throw all its traditional and ~~th~~ hitherto apparently certain and "unchanging" truths.

'Nothing is exempt from this search for authenticity: liturgy, biblical exegesis, speculative theology, ecumenical activity, contacts with non-believers, canon law, and monastic and religious life. Everywhere in the Church, the desire for truthfulness and the need to distinguish what is essential from what is of secondary importance are making themselves felt. No doubt, there is ~~u~~ great resistance to this quest for truth, but, to take one example, the simple annulment of a defensive law of the Church - the Index - shows that this movement is to some extent officially recognized. The Church's (change of) attitude towards man's freedom in the course of a century is als indisputable. In Mirari vos Gregory XVI say this as a "frenzy resulting from a diseased indifferentism"; and it was in fact a weapon turned against the Church at that time. Ye the Second Vatican Council was led to proclaim the legality of freedom of conscience.'

p 115 'The laidity of science is so widely recognized in the Church today that a bishop could, for example, say at the Second Vatican Council that if there was any conflict between science and faith, it would have to be solved by a process of free scientific research.'

p 116 'The Church is aware that... its t ~~additional~~ models cannot embody the values of freedom and ^{of} conscience that have come so much to the fore in recent x years.'

p 117 'All this has, of course, led to less unixformity in the Church, to a greater freedom for the individual to act on his own initiative, to more decentralization, and to an increase in tension and even in conflict; yet all this is the inevitable ~~consequence~~ consequence of a more dynamic expression of creative freedom. Views can be expressed and those of others can be contradicted in a free atmosphere of mutua. respect. The possibility of faixlure is freely acceptedx. These are signs of creativity and they makeoossible for ordinary believers to x see the positive aspect of events which might be otherwise difficult to underkstatt. There are, after all, many otherwise inepllicable happenings in the Church. Bishops adopt apparently contradictory attitudes in public. Many priests leave the prxiesthood, and this is officially accepted. There are seemingly spontaneous changes in the litury. Aspects of faith and morals which have hitherto been inviolable are now openly discussed and disputed. We many say that as a necessary condition of growth, the Church accepts contradiction, conflict, and even ~~unfixking~~ failure in suffering but at the same time in hope.'

p 117 'The Church 9s learning (though not without some difficulty) to acc3pt creativity as a positive value, because interpekrsonal relationships -- a loymalty to individual persons rather than to the institutions of the Church -- are increasingly recognized to be of /118/ paramount importance. Purely legal - or sentimental -- sentimental membership of the Church as an institution could -- and still -- have its place, but it is rapidly giving way to the current demand for authenticity in a community in which individuals fully accept eahc other and each other's differences.'

118 The new idea of marriage and family life in which the wife and children play a responsible ~~part~~ and personal part is becoming more and more of a reality. The ecumenical movement as a responsible human community is making rapid progress at all levels everywhere. Many of the large religious communities are disbanding and smaller less strict groups are forming in the conviction that co-responsibility can flourish much better in them. A similar phenomenon is taking place in the Church as a whole, in order to achieve the aim of co-responsibility -- an increasing decentralization and deregionalization at every level. The bishops are meeting more and more in regional conferences, and Christian laymen in small local groups. I think, too, that the increasing concern of Christians for world peace on the one hand and the growing concern of the official Church ~~not~~ to sacrifice living people to abstract principles on the other ~~are~~ are also signs that the ideal of co-responsibility is being realized.'

V From Social Integration to Social Opposition

118 'In the past it (the Church) acted as an agent of social integration, serving to perpetuate the established order and, in extreme cases, to suppress the claims of the people. Now, however, the Church tends more and more to denounce the establishment and to champion the cause of the poor and the oppressed.'

119 'Contemporary society is marked by often violent opposition between different social groups.... The Church, as part of human society, has at last become aware of this situation and is questioning the whole system that has brought it about.'

VI From Religion to Faith

119 '... every Christian has become aware of the difference between his vocation as a man and as a Christian. The Church is no longer seen as the solution to every human problem -- it cannot avert the threat of nuclear war, reduce the distance between the rich and the poor nations, abolish ~~the~~ the oppression exercised by bureaucracy, or overcome human alienation. But every Christian knows that he has to accept the challenge presented by these problems and do what he can to make the world more human. The Church is now firmly on man's side, at one with all who are fighting for humanity. But it is also more clearly conscious of its mission. In the last resort, this is not so much to ~~give~~

fight for humanity, which is the vocation of all men, Christian~~x~~ and non-Christian, but rather to proclaim the message of Jesus Christ, the message ~~of~~ that God loves man as he loves himself.

'This then is the Church's special task -- to reveal God's love for man. This love gives meaning and direction to his life and vocation. The Church has to show him how to be faithful, in his creativity and responsibility, to the demands of his conscience and ~~the~~ claims of freedom in the human community.'

120 'The emphasis to day is not on religion but on faith as our ~~religie~~ response to the love God sh ws for man in Jesus Christ. The Church is allowing "religion" to slip into the ~~background~~. It is, in other words, becomg^d"secularize" in order to deepen faith and to stress man's human vocation, as distinct, but not separate from his Christian vocation, ~~so~~ so that, though this ~~KNHXKXK KN~~ vocation as man, he may be able to express a Christian vocation ~~that~~ that will give~~x~~ meaning and direction to life.'