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THE CHRISTIAN COMMUNITY AND THE NEW HUMANITY
IN THE UNIVERSITY

by
Dr. M. Richard Shaull

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CONCLUSIONES

En la Encíclica "Ecclesiam Suam" Pablo VI nos invita a reflexionar sobre el significado de la toma de conciencia que la Iglesia hace de Sí misma.

"El primer fruto de la toma de conciencia más profunda de la Iglesia en relación consigo misma, es el descubrimiento renovado de su relación vital con Cristo, cosa bien conocida pero fundamental, indispensable y nunca suficientemente comprendida, meditada y en-carecida".

Partiendo de esta conciencia intentamos profundizar el misterio de la historia como revelación de Dios y las exigencias históricas de la Encarnación para una acción pastoral de la Iglesia latinoamericana en el medio universitario.

1.- REVELACION DE DIOS EN EL TIEMPO

La Teología no puede ignorar la historia y fundamentalmente la Historia de Salvación con lo que Cristo nos reveló de lo que Dios siempre ha sido y será para el hombre.

Si hoy se acusa al cristianismo su falta de compromiso con el tiempo histórico se debe, entre otras razones, a una fundamental: pensamos en la Historia de Salvación como algo diferente a la historia del mundo, o haciendo dos historias una "profana" y otra "sagrada".

A) Por el contrario la revelación de Dios como conjunto de palabras que Dios dirige al hombre y de gestos o acciones por medio de los cuales entra en relación con él, tiene verdaderamente una historia.

Esta historia presenta una doble polaridad:

a) Hay como una historicidad divina, es decir la revelación o palabra que Dios dirige al hombre, no es un elemento constitutivo de la esencia de este hombre a quien Dios habla.

La libertad y gratitud del acto de Dios se continúa en el tiempo histórico; en este sentido la revelación es un diálogo histórico con una marca permanente de novedad. Nunca será pura emergencia del tiempo humano ni de los valores humanos desarrollados a través de su historia.

b) Por otro lado la revelación posee una historicidad humana. Hay una verdadera Historia de Salvación.

Dios no ha dicho todo de una sola vez. Hay manifestaciones progresivas y por eso parciales de su Palabra.

La acción de Dios en el mundo es así variada y múltiple. La unidad está dada por la acción libre, de una persona espiritual y

y libre que se manifiesta sobre aspectos sucesivos. Esta unidad se opera a su vez en el ámbito de la conciencia humana por medio de la Palabra revelada que da sentido y significado último para el hombre por el cual éste llega a conocer que tal o cual medio histórico es salvífico o no.

La experiencia histórica del llamado de Dios logra en el hombre un conocimiento mayor de lo que es Dios mismo. No será un Dios entre otros dioses. No será el Dios de un pueblo particular sino el Señor de la Historia Universal englobando a todos los pueblos.

Dios no es espectador pasivo del desenvolvimiento inmanente de la realidad que El creó de una vez para siempre.

El plan salvífico de Dios permanece como "secreto escondido" en El. Su realidad objetiva total se manifestará en los últimos tiempos.

En este sentido podemos hablar de la Historia como Misterio.

B) El mundo no es pues algo terminado sino un proceso permanente, de desarrollo histórico fruto de la obra humana, que bajo la acción de la gracia, lo lleva hacia su plenitud.

La perspectiva bíblica es esencialmente antropológica: el hombre es "imagen de Dios" que debe "dominar, construir el mundo". La historia es esencialmente comunicación, encuentro de personas. La Historia no es sólo proyectos temporales. Sólo tiene sentido como comunicación de las conciencias, como intersubjetividad. La salvación es por eso esencialmente universal, no individual sino personal, es una convocación.

2.- CRISTO EN LA HISTORIA

Pero la experiencia más radical que hace el hombre en la historia se realiza en el llamado que Dios hace a su Hijo para entrar en comunicación con el hombre. Novedad que hoy nos ha sido revelada. (2 Tim. 1,10).

Dios se autodefine como amor, en el sentido que revela absolutamente la definitiva autocomunicación de Dios con el hombre.

Revelándose a Sí mismo, reveló a la conciencia humana lo que nosotros somos esencialmente como hombres haciéndolo manifestó el sentido de la historia humana. A partir de este hecho el hombre quedará definitivamente unido a un misterio incomprensible.

El hombre es así revelación de Dios, del Dios amor, o sea del Dios "fuera de sí mismo" y la historia humana como reveladora de ese fuera de sí mismo divino como comunicación progresiva hasta la posesión total de la vida de Dios.

La Encarnación del Verbo no es pues una intromisión de Dios en la historia. "Vino a los suyos" dice literalmente San Juan, para "revelar el propósito de reunir todas las cosas en Cristo, en la dispensación del cumplimiento de los tiempos, así en los que están en los cielos, como en los que están en la tierra". (Ef. 1,9).

Esta historicización de Dios en Jesucristo lleva a un proceso de "secularización" tal que la permanencia de lo humano estará garantizada para siempre por la permanencia de lo divino encarnado.

Nada queda pues fuera de Dios. La historia toda es Crística en su médula. Sólo queda excluido aquello que intrínsecamente repugne a la vocación misma del hombre.

"Pacem in Terris" reconoce la vocación básica de la humanidad hacia la unidad realizada en justicia y amor.

No hay una sola realidad "natural" que no esté implicada en Cristo. La historia es lineal (escatológica), pero a saltos o etapas que implican discontinuidad y continuidad.

En cada tiempo hay que adquirir un nuevo tipo de experiencia de lo divino.

3.- EL HOMBRE DE HOY Y EL PLURALISMO

El hombre de hoy experimenta una conciencia de cambio como superación creadora de su propia existencia.

Sabe, al menos prácticamente, que sus gestos son decisiones, son elementos de una totalidad dinámica y significativa.

Su imagen del mundo pasa de cósmica, como en la antigüedad, a ser Antropocéntrica. El proceso histórico de este cambio de imagen aparece como una "secularización" del Universo.

El trabajo humano asquiere una original significación. El mundo es objeto de transformación humana y la historia es finalmente un proceso de humanización del Universo a través de la acción humana. La visión marxista aparece aquí como una interpretación de esta exigencia y en Latinoamérica son muchos los que no ven otro método de hacerla eficaz.

Como actitud moral la conciencia moderna se caracteriza por una exigente honradez en el sentido de "repensar" la realidad total poniendo en crisis todo.

No se trata de una pérdida del sentido de la obligación moral sino de colocarla en otra perspectiva más subjetiva o interior a la conciencia.

El peligro de esta autonomía es que llega muchas veces a suprimir la misma autoridad interna o externa. Dentro de los cristianos la revisión crítica surgida por el contacto con la realidad provoca, en algunos casos, un alejamiento de toda realidad de vida sacramental y una desconfianza de toda autoridad.

4.- LA IGLESIA PUEBLO DE DIOS Y EL MUNDO

"Todos los hombres son admitidos a esta unidad católica del Pueblo de Dios que prefiguraban y promueven en paz y a ella pertenecen de varios modos tanto los fieles católicos, como los otros cristianos, e incluso todos los hombres en general llamados a la salvación por la Gracia de Dios" (Lumen Gentium, No. 13).

Dios llamó a la Humanidad toda para construir su Pueblo. Llamamiento que es una convocación, es decir, no individual sino personal y comunitaria (por eso se habla de Pueblo).

a, En el Antiguo Testamento, una de las etapas de la historia de este Pueblo, se manifiestan dos actitudes:

- ideología judaizante (mesianismo terrestre) que cristalizaba su misión profética con el pueblo judío perdiendo el significado de levadura.

- línea profética que recordará constantemente con conciencia

crítica o juicio sobre la historia, la fidelidad de su misión con respecto a todos los pueblos de la tierra.

Cristo en la plenitud de los tiempos se inserta en la línea profética, superando el mesianismo, la sinagoga, el ghetto, fundando su Ecclesia, "comunidad abierta".

b) La noción de Pueblo de Dios estará fundamentalmente ligada a la de salvación.

Al Pueblo de Dios pertenecerían, en cuanto a lo esencial, todos aquellos que entran en comunión con Dios a través de un comportamiento de amor hacia los demás, en un auténtico trabajo de construcción de un universo humano, en una comunión con los otros.

La vida cotidiana de los hombres como forma de relación con Dios y como incorporación al Pueblo de Dios, tiene valor ontológicamente religioso.

Aquí está la médula del Cristianismo.

"El Reino de Dios se opera en medio de los hombres" (Lc. 17, 21).

La Evangelización como comunicación de la Buena Nueva será ese suscitar en medio mismo de los hombres la conciencia de la realidad significada por la presencia de Cristo en el Mundo: la dimensión trascendente, la interpretación de su sentido, de su existencia total como hombre.

5.- LA IGLESIA EN EL MUNDO

La Iglesia y la humanidad están en estrecha relación histórica y en cierta manera se "construyen mutuamente".

La Iglesia no está realizada mientras el mundo no lo está. (Cf. L. Gentium, No. 48).

La misión de la Iglesia es manifestar la realización del Plan de Dios ante los hombres.

"La Iglesia es en Cristo como un Sacramento o señal de la íntima unión con Dios y de la Unidad de todo el género humano. (L. Gentium, prólogo). La Iglesia-institución es pues fundamentalmente el "sacramento del Pueblo de Dios".

La Iglesia no es pues estática en su presencia en el mundo. El Reino de Dios se construye gracias al juego dialéctico que esta presencia permite entre la Iglesia y la historia humana.

En la medida en que el Pueblo de Dios madura, se hace Iglesia, se hace cada vez más real, profético y sacerdotal.

6.- PRESENCIA DEL PUEBLO DE DIOS EN LATINOAMERICA

Qué significado tiene para el hombre común latinoamericano la renovación de la Iglesia? Parece que poco o casi nada.

América Latina es un continente en transición con perspectivas agudas de crisis por: aumento rápido de población; influencias extranjeras; aumento relativo del subdesarrollo; crisis políticas; cambios revolucionarios; violencia; tecnificación; descristianización; etc.

Frente a los hombres con aspiraciones por un cambio en su modo de ser hay dos ópticas pastorales que históricamente se explican

por la situación global de la Iglesia Universal:

a) Optica integrista: queriendo salvar lo esencial de la Iglesia, busca la preservación de las formas institucionales ("Quieta non movere"): predominio de lo apologetico; desconfianza por lo nuevo; resistencia al diálogo universal.

b) Optica dinámica: busca reformular lo tradicional e incorporar valores nuevos creando formas propias para cada pueblo.

Busca que la autoridad en lo religioso sea ante todo una función de servicio. Tiene conciencia de que en términos de misión, el cristianismo debe dar el significado último (trascendente) a los proyectos.

7.- LOS CRISTIANOS EN LO TEMPORAL

Teniendo presente aquellas dos ópticas pastorales, en la actuación de los cristianos se ha podido caracterizar formas de compromisos correspondientes.

a) Actitud conservadora. Teológicamente es "triumfalista". Sociológicamente se traduce en la búsqueda del modo de instaurar una forma de cristiandad en Latinoamérica.

Mientras en lo religioso se ha recurrido a la sacramentalización de la vida social, en lo político y económico se busca, en cierta manera, la adquisición de poder.

La mayor parte de los cristianos en la América Latina se sitúa en una línea de religiosidad alienante, ritualista, que separa lo sagrado de lo profano. No es independiente en sus actuaciones sino que estimula el clericalismo al someter todos sus actos a una consulta previa con el sacerdote.

El método para interpretar la realidad es exclusivamente moralizante. Defienden el "status quo" capitalista o neo-capitalista, sin ninguna preocupación por una transformación social profunda. Frente al comunismo son "anti", totalmente negativos.

b) Actitud renovadora. Sociológicamente no busca una sociedad "decorativamente cristiana". Procura más bien hacerla más auténticamente cristiana. El cristiano está presente en la vida social como "ciudadano servidor del mundo".

Lo importante es que estén comprometidos en la búsqueda de nuevos proyectos culturales, políticos, sociales junto con otros grupos. Pero también aquí comienzan a marcarse diferencias importantes, fruto de un análisis de la situación de la Iglesia ante la actual evolución de la América Latina, y de la consiguiente profundización en la Fe. Diferencias de orden teológico centradas en la cuestión de las formas de la presencia en el mundo y traen como consecuencia opciones pastorales distintas.

Puede decirse que actualmente se da en América Latina la "coexistencia" de tres líneas pastorales:

1) Pastoral tradicional: que responde a la actitud que definimos como conservadora. Tiene una visión de instrumentalización de lo temporal a lo espiritual. Lo temporal aparece muchas veces como

algo pecaminoso y lo sobrenatural como una huída o un refugio.

2) Pastoral de Nueva Cristiandad: Se inicia en la América Latina con la generación del año 1930 y es fruto del grupo europeo llamado "Cristianos Sociales".

Estos grupos surgen como un esfuerzo de repensar el tomismo a partir de las indicaciones de León XIII en vista a lo social.

Así aparece la temática de un humanismo que hace distinción de lo espiritual y lo temporal, y que valoriza lo temporal.

Sin embargo hoy se considera que esa generación exageró la distinción hasta casi una separación entre temporal y espiritual.

Fue un artificio provocado por la perspectiva clásica en Teología, según la cual hay que ir hacia lo temporal para sacralizarlo porque de suyo está fuera de lo sagrado.

Por eso sienten la necesidad de que los cristianos se reúnan en tanto que cristianos en todos los campos de alguna manera, e incluso se da denominación cristiana a partidos políticos, Sindicatos, Universidades, gremios universitarios, etc. Esta línea pastoral tiene una presencia muy activa actualmente en América Latina y ejerce un gran poder de atracción. En el fondo, sin quererlo, es una generación de ghetto.

El problema más grave de esta actitud es que tiende a reducir el Cristianismo a una ideología. Han creído poder elaborar una ideología cristiana a partir de la Doctrina Social de la Iglesia, sin darse cuenta que esa doctrina trasciende cualquier proyecto histórico concreto.

3) Pastoral de diálogo (o de lo humano): Nuestra generación está haciendo un esfuerzo de búsqueda procurando una visión diferente. Considera que la cuestión capital es la del diálogo entre la Iglesia y la historia humana en la que se halla presente ya la Gracia de Dios y de la que ella forma parte de cierta manera.

Partiendo del principio de que no hay dos historias: una profana y otra sagrada, sino que Dios está en todo, en el corazón de todos los hombres, en las cosas, en la materia, y sin desconocer la ambivalencia de la historia humana atravesada por el pecado y por eso mismo ambigua y opaca a toda su dimensión trascendente, no separan como los anteriores lo temporal de lo espiritual sino que ven marchar la historia cada vez más hacia la unidad definitiva entre ambas polaridades. En consecuencia la presencia del cristiano debe hacer que ambas dimensiones se aproximen más y más, acelerando así el Reino de Dios en medio de los hombres.

Esta tercera línea pastoral busca ser profundamente cristiana antes que demócrata, socialista o cualquier otra cosa. Esta pastoral de diálogo tiene cada vez más vigencia en grupos universitarios conscientes del sentido misionero y comunitario de la Iglesia como de la "pobreza" que debe presidir su presencia en el mundo.

Pero si bien se concreta en varios casos en tomas de posición de algunos movimientos e inspira sus métodos de formación, no hay que olvidar que se trata en gran parte de una búsqueda al compás de la vida y de la reflexión de la Iglesia toda.

No hay que olvidar tampoco que hay realidades diferentes y etapas en la reflexión en los distintos movimientos apostólicos universitarios en América Latina y que si descamos vivamente un diálogo

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LAS ARMAS CON QUE COMBATIMOS NO SON CARNALES

Yvan Labelle, P.M.E.
Sociólogo
Montreal, Canada

Estoy convencido de la derrota de David en la América Latina por la sencilla razón de que está luchando, o mejor dicho, está tratando de luchar con las mismas armas que Goliat (1).

David es la Iglesia, esa comunidad de fe, de liturgia y de amor que se inició hace dos mil años en Palestina alrededor de Jesús, carpintero de Nazaret y más tarde maestro de Israel, que vino a ser también el Verbo de Dios hecho hombre. Sus compañeros más íntimos, seleccionados entre pescadores y otros hombres sencillos del pueblo judío, con Pedro a la cabeza, ampliaron esa comunidad; sus sucesores continuaron la obra hasta hoy día. Esta Iglesia Jesús la quiso frágil desde que la fundó. Nunca pensó en asegurarla contra la maldad de los hombres si bien anunció que existiría hasta el fin del mundo. Nunca dio consejos a sus discípulos en cómo organizarse y administrarse, por lo menos nada de tan grande importancia que los Evangelistas se preocuparan de relatarlo. Hay casi olor a blasfemia en imaginar en su último discurso palabras como éstas: "En verdad, en verdad os digo, asegurad vuestras iglesias con una buena administración, no invirtáis vuestro dinero en acciones inseguras; pensad que un día quizás sea urgente organizar unos sindicatos o unos partidos políticos para defender lo que se va a llamar democracia y oponerse a una herejía llamada comunismo. A este último error hay que oponer las mismas armas que él usara, los hijos de la luz tienen que ser tan fuertes como los hijos de las tinieblas." Jesús quería una iglesia visible tan débil humanamente que permitió que desde el principio se echaran por encima de sus discípulos una serie de persecuciones. Nada muy sano para lanzar bien una nueva organización! Parece que los primeros militantes cristianos entendieron bien la lección. San Pablo dice: "Porque, aunque vivimos en carne, no militamos según la carne. Pues las armas con que combatimos no son carnales sino que son poderosas en Dios para derrocar fortalezas, destruyendo razonamientos." (II Cor. 10:3-4)

El Goliat de aquellos tiempos era la sociedad civil de Palestina y del Mediterráneo tal como la había forjado la Historia: con el poderío o el imperialismo romano, con las divisiones políticas entre Judíos, con la Sinagoga, con los problemas sociales, económicos y políticos vigentes. Hoy día Goliat es el mundo contemporáneo con su problemática propia, con algunos gobiernos que quieren utilizar a la Iglesia para darse buena conciencia o para darse buena apariencia delante de sus pueblos, con otros gobiernos que la rechazan porque la ven a veces como una quinta columna. Goliat es el mundo actual de grandes poderes económicos y políticos. Para completar la escena se pueden muy bien ver a varias sociedades temporales en el papel de Saúl que quiere que David vaya a la lucha con las armas humanas apropiadas.

Fronte a este Goliat, David acepta presentarse como Saúl desearía que se presentara. Viste a David con sus armas, con su espada. Y David, a quien Dios hizo frágil para que resaltara Su fortaleza, se está atreviendo a ir a la batalla así vestido. Al contrario del David de la Biblia quien, por lo menos, se dio cuenta a tiempo de que no podía caminar con esta armadura. Y fue al encuentro de Goliat con sus propias armas, sin porporción humana con las de Goliat.

He visto a David en América Latina en armas de Saúl: esos sindicatos, esos partidos políticos, esas grandes redes de radio, ese apoyo a regímenes seguros, esas grandes instituciones educativas, esas embajadas...

Las armas de la Iglesia que Dios le ha dado en sus principios quedarán siempre; Su propia Palabra en la Revelación, Su gracia en los Sacramentos y Su

amor en los corazones de quienes tienen fe y vida en El. Con estas armas puede presentarse en cualquier batalla con las palabras de David: "Tú vienes contra mí con espada, lanza y escudo; pero yo salgo contra tí en el nombre del Señor de los ejércitos, del Dios de las legiones de Israel." (I Sam. 17:45)

Anunciando ya la actitud de Jesús desarmado frente a los que venían a prenderlo y que se opuso al uso de la espada: "Vuelve la espada a la vaina; porque todos los que se sirvieron de la espada a espada morirán." (Mat. 26:52)

He visto a David algunas veces en América Latina con la sola honda de la Palabra de Dios vivida y anunciada: esas pequeñas comunidades de laicos en Bogotá, Santiago y Panamá, unos párrocos olvidados en Lima, Guatemala, Chile y Cuba.

He vuelto a examinar la actitud de Jesús frente a la sociedad temporal. Casi no ha dicho nada: a Dios hay que dar lo que es de Dios y al César lo que es del César; buscó hasta en la boca de un pez el dinero para pagar el Impuesto; afirmó a Poncio Pilato que toda autoridad se originaba en Dios...y se encontraba en su tierra ocupada por las fuerzas romanas. Frente a la posibilidad de un poder temporal para El, huyó, y regañó al pobre discípulo que con esfuerzo llegó a sacar la espada para defenderlo.

Un nuevo colonialismo y un nuevo clericalismo.

Me pregunto seriamente hasta qué punto no se están imponiendo en la América Latina de hoy un nuevo colonialismo y un nuevo clericalismo.

Un nuevo colonialismo en la imposición o en el uso de modelos sociales extranjeros que no sólo no pegan a la situación local, sino que son teológicamente atrasados y que engañan a la gente encarrilándola en un falso camino. Me parece sumamente raro que el gran número de libros sobre América Latina en circulación en el extranjero no son de latinoamericanos sino de extranjeros. Es que en el extranjero quizás no queremos tanto oír hablar a los latinoamericanos sino de los latinoamericanos (2). Algunos se construyen buena reputación con eso y es mucho más exótico... No hemos salido mucho de la situación o del estado de ánimo de la corte española del siglo XVI: en la corte habló Colón a su regreso, pero no se sabe nada de lo que dijeron los indios traídos con él. Se sigue el mismo modelo en muchas cortes del mundo de hoy.

Un nuevo clericalismo amenaza también a Latindamérica. Es una vuelta atrás a los tiempos coloniales. En vez de evangelizar al pueblo y dejar a los seglares su papel en la construcción de la sociedad, los clérigos se están metiendo on su lugar y dejan la tarea esencial de su sacerdocio. América Latina no necesita sacerdotes si los que tiene se dedicaran (y se prepararan) a su tarea en vez de enseñar matemáticas o planear encuestas sociales. Un pastor de almas bien preparado para hacer Iglesia, puede multiplicar en pocos años los seglares entregados a su fe que saldrán a comprometerse con dinamismo en las tareas de la sociedad. ¿Por qué hay crisis en muchas comunidades religiosas y en el clero de muchos países? En gran parte, porque se le pide a muchos sacerdotes y religiosas tareas que on lo profundo de su ser no han querido. Muchos quieren vivir su paternidad espiritual en tareas pastorales y se les pide enseñar física o hacer servicio social. Otros quieren hacer política y sienten que fueron consagrados para otro fin. El mensaje evangélico no llegará al mundo técnico de hoy y de mañana teniendo más sacerdotes técnicos, sino más técnicos auténticos cristianos.

Es un escándalo e inconcebible que en una ciudad de América Latina haya 700 sacerdotes y apenas 100 dedicados de lleno a la labor pastoral esencial. No habrá vocaciones sacerdotales hasta que se vea que el sacerdote tiene un papel trascendental en el mundo que ni el sociólogo, ni el economista, ni el político, ni el profesor pueden cumplir. Los seglares en gran número desean oír la Palabra de Dios y abrirse al Misterio Pascual, pero están hartos de sacerdotes que saben y hacen de todo menos lo que se espera de ellos.

Lo que necesita la Iglesia latinoamericana de hoy son unos pocos sacerdotes más que sepan lo que es Iglesia, lo que es hacer Iglesia, que sepan lo fundamental del Evangelio y cómo analizar una situación cambiante. Con esto no hay problema para el futuro porque, y eso referente a los seculares, habrá pronto los hombres más dinámicos y capaces en sus técnicas para resolver los problemas pendientes. ¿Y el peligro comunista? No tenemos nada que temer del comunismo. La Iglesia, comunidad del Pueblo de Dios, ha conocido todos los tipos de totalitarismo y de regímenes políticos; ha empezado en el exilio y la persecución, es su clima normal. Lo que hay que temer es su uso político por cualquier régimen que sea, su mal enfoque de su misión, su "humanización". Y si es para su purificación, que no puede o no quiere hacer Ella misma, ojalá venga el comunismo. Y es mi convicción de que si seguimos luchando con las armas que estamos usando, muy pronto lo tendremos por encima.

Las verdaderas alternativas

"La única alternativa" (3) al comunismo no es la democracia cristiana. Esto es un engaño y un mito que se está creando. La única alternativa a cualquier totalitarismo de cualquier color es un pueblo despierto, consciente y capacitado para superarse. Y el Evangelio no tiene nada que ver con esto. El Evangelio es la única alternativa a una vida sin apertura más allá de la capacidad natural del hombre (y que se puede encontrar y de hecho se encuentra en cualquier régimen). El Evangelio abre la visión sobre el Hijo del Hombre que nos dio la prueba de que hay un más allá de las capacidades naturales de la humanidad. Hay un Hombre transfigurado, vencedor de la muerte y al cual nos asemejaremos un día si nos entregamos hoy a El en la fe.

Es evidente que una fe de esta categoría no puede dar sino un dinamismo tremendo a cualquier hombre en el desenvolvimiento de su tarea profesional. Pero no tiene que salir de su profesión, no tiene que llevar en la frente una etiqueta. Su propio dinamismo, su amor y su entrega a todos los hombres -sus hermanos de destino- clamará a los cielos y se pedirá, tarde o temprano, a él la razón de su irradiación. Y si este comportamiento no es sólo individual sino común a todos los cristianos, entonces el testigo coge más fuerza y aquel se ve como inherente al mensaje evangélico.

Es un gran error oponer en un mismo nivel de pensamiento humano Cristianismo, Comunismo y Capitalismo. Tenemos tres realidades muy diferentes: una revelación sobrenatural, una filosofía humana y una doctrina económica. Podemos decir que hoy día las dos últimas se dan al nivel de las ideologías. Oponer a éstas la Revelación es reducirla a ella también al nivel de la ideología, lo que es intolerable, aunque para muchos es lo que es.

La humanidad no se divide en Oriente y Occidente, en países comunistas y países democráticos. El mundo se divide entre los que creen en el hombre, su libertad de determinación propia y su capacidad de superación y los que no creen en esto. Sería paradójico que los cristianos se identificaran con los últimos. Y muchos ya están en ese camino, porque no quieren aventurarse, arriesgarse como Dios lo hizo dejando al hombre a su propio juicio. No respetan ni tienen fe en la persona humana ni en su libertad. Quieren establecer el Reino de Dios no sólo visiblemente, sino en cierto sentido "a la cañona".

La tentación más grande del católico latinoamericano (de la Iglesia latinoamericana o de cualquier otra) hoy día, es la de recurrir a la espada, como el discípulo en el jardín de Getsemaní, es la de posesionar a la masa por el exterior en vez de ser levadura que se pierde y desaparece en la masa; es la de revestirse con las armas de Saúl en vez de usar la honda de la Palabra de Dios vivida.

El sueño de una "cristiandad" vuelve a cada época en formas diferentes. No hemos entendido todavía que "Su Reino no es de este mundo", que no corresponde a ninguna estructura temporal por santa que sea.

La levadura levanta la masa por dentro. No creando su propia masa, ni organizando su propia estructura en la masa, sino desapareciendo en ella misma, perdiendo su propia identidad en la masa.

Ya no tenemos fe.

Ya no sabemos lo que es Iglesia.

Ya vamos a caer porque queremos luchas "en armas".

- (1) La idea de usar este pasaje del primer libro de Samuel me vino al leer el libro de Jacques Loew, Comme s'il voyait l'invisible, Paris, Cerf, 1964, quien lo usa en la misma manera.
- (2) Y si hay algunos, se encuentran casi todos en la misma línea bien definida.
- (3) Visto en un cartel en Panamá y oído en Chile.

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THE CHRISTIAN COMMUNITY AND THE NEW HUMANITY IN THE UNIVERSITY

Participation in the International Study Fellowship on the University Ministry during the semester just ended has been a very sobering experience. In our study of the issues facing the modern university, and the present situation of Christian students, teachers and pastors in it, we may have succeeded in defining some of our problems more sharply; we did not get very far when we attempted to find a solution for them. This is not meant as a criticism of the participants but rather as an indication of where we are at the present time. I confess that my own thinking became more clear after the seminar had ended and its members had scattered to the four corners of the earth. As the issue is a very live one in the Federation and as other leadership training programs are being contemplated, I would like to express a few thoughts about the nature and task of the Christian community in the university today as they have taken form in my own mind, in and through these discussions. I hasten to add that neither my colleagues on the faculty nor the members of the Study Fellowship should be held responsible for the views here expressed.

In his presentation of the Federation document on "The Christian Community in the Academic World", Valdo Galland asks:

"Are the present changes in the academic world mainly the consequence of a much more comprehensive change which affects the whole of humanity? How can we understand what is happening in the world? Should our point of reference be the situation of the whole Christian community in the world?"

My answer would be decidedly affirmative. Much of our groping at the present time is due to the fact that we have not yet perceived how radical is the change which has taken place in the modern world, and especially in modern man's understanding of himself and of reality. Consequently, we are unable to see the dimensions of the challenge which this fact presents to us as Christians or the radical nature of the changes now called for in our work in the university. Recognizing that all parts of the world today are by no means contemporaneous, and that the problems in each area now tend to have their own distinctive character, I think that, nonetheless, we can indicate several elements in the present revolution which affect or will affect most of us:

1. The process of secularization has swept away our two-storied, metaphysical conception of reality. With it has gone the assumption of the existence of an eternal rational order which man could know and from which truth, values and an ideal order of society could be deduced. Secular man focuses his attention on life in this world, within the historical process, with all of its rich possibilities and incredible threats. Secularization has also meant the loss of a total world view in which all knowledge might be integrated and all areas of life and society related to each other in any comprehensive way. So much attention has been given to all this recently in Federation circles that there is no need to say more about it.

2. This modern man, living fully within history and concerned solely about what happens to him there, is gradually discovering that the nature of his life within history is undergoing a radical transformation. In a little book entitled, The End of Modern Times, the Roman Catholic writer, Romano Guardini, presents an interesting thesis. He contends that after modern man cut himself loose from the

theological worldview of the Middle Ages, he still had a relatively stable and secure existence. Nature was conceived of as Mother Nature, a cosmic order congenial to man, in which he felt at home. In his subjective existence, he lived in a realm defined by the concept of personality, a sphere in which he could feel secure and develop on his own initiative. In his cultural life modern man might have no place for God yet he found himself in areas which possessed a certain religious character of their own, and a degree of stability, which provided him with a sense of security in his creative efforts.

Guardini concludes that this "modern" world has now largely disappeared. Nature is no longer our Mother but has become a strange and dangerous reality. It has lost much of its "substantial" character, is finite rather than divine. It is no longer a place of security and refuge but a terrifying responsibility. Man now has power over nature to do with it what he will, to build a new world or destroy himself. The sphere of subjectivity, defined by personality, has given way to the more austere reality of the person. Man finds his "self" completely exposed and threatened at the same time that he has before him almost limitless possibilities to make of himself what he chooses. In the realm of culture, similar changes are taking place. Secular man within the historical process has no home. His position is that of someone destined to live in a work shop or on a battlefield where, in a situation of total insecurity and precariousness, he has no choice but to use the almost unlimited power he now possesses to humanize life or to destroy it.

3. Modern technology, with its own built-in dynamic, has created a world which is not only changing constantly, but in which the pace of change seems to be ever accelerating. Thus "post-modern" man, with no refuge and no solid ground under his feet, confronts the challenge to act responsibly in his use of power on a battleground where the terrain is always changing. All problems are complex, but the exact nature of this complexity varies from day to day, and can be perceived only in the most intimate contact with the evolving situation. In order to act responsibly it is necessary to understand, but in such a dynamic world, this is a question of finding patterns of meaning and of relationship between fragments of reality which are also evolving from day to day. Understanding thus depends upon the use of categories of thought which are open, capable of dealing with dynamic realities, and are themselves constantly being transformed.

As Christians, at least, there is no reason to regret what has happened to us. No matter how violent the changes which are demanded in our thought and action, we can see that, as never before in human history, man possesses an extraordinary freedom to shape his life, community and society. Moreover, this responsibility in freedom is given to him in such a way that the refusal to accept it can only lead to his destruction. To the degree that man is conscious of his situation, one question becomes supreme: What does it mean to think, live and act in such a way as to make and keep human life human, and thus struggle against the forces of dehumanization in life and society? When this question is posed, the sensitive "post-modern" man becomes extremely impatient with or simply ignores those who are wasting their time and energy trying to preserve a world which no longer exists, or are victims of ways of thinking which keep them from seeing what is really happening, and of institutions which alienate them from the struggle. Faced by the urgency of the challenge before him, he is interested only in discovering ways of thinking which will make it possible to deal creatively with the situation and finding the resources of courage indispensable for living on such a frontier.

Much has been written in recent years about the changes taking place in the university, quite often lamenting these developments to the degree that they have made the more classical type of university inoperative. The above analysis would

suggest that we should rather see the university confronting a new opportunity to redefine its objectives and re-structure its life so that it can become a decisive instrument of humanization, and a stimulus to the renewal of other institutions in the type of world in which we are destined to live. What this may mean concretely can be seen by a rapid look at several points which have received much attention in recent discussions:

1. The breakdown of a total world view and the change from a metaphysical to a functional way of thinking have created a situation of confusion, of growing isolation in each discipline, and a tendency toward nihilism. But this has also meant the shattering of old absolutes, a willingness to recognize the limitations of knowledge in almost all areas, and an openness to elements of truth which do not fit into a rigid synthesis or a dogmatic system. It has brought a new freedom to discover patterns of meaning and relationships between diverse elements of knowledge in a particular discipline and between disciplines, as well as in the total search for truth which the university as such represents. Moreover, in this context, the tension between the concept of the university as dedicated primarily to the search for truth and the university as a place where knowledge useful for a specific profession is imparted, may be seen as something creative which can lead to a redefinition of each of these objectives, and of the nature of the university itself.

2. The tremendous increase in the number of students, the changing patterns and new demands in teaching and research, the necessity of relating the university more closely to society, and in some places, the pressures brought by students for university reform: all these may be seen primarily as a threat to the stability and service of a traditional institution. Or, we may discover here a challenge to give up once for all the idea that any institutional structure out of the past can become normative or serve today if its form becomes rigid. A new understanding of the nature of institutions may emerge, in which they will be able to fulfill their objectives only to the degree that they are sufficiently open and flexible to adjust to the needs of a dynamic society. If this happens, the university can contribute to the reshaping of other institutions in society as they try to meet the demands of a new day.

3. The vast increase in enrollment, the decline in the percentage of boarding students and the greater flexibility of the whole programs of university life and education implies the end of stable communities in which the student can feel secure. It results in a sense of lostness and a deep insecurity for many students. But it makes possible an amazing new freedom of human relationships, and a new type of community which can be more adapted to the pressures of life in an industrial society, which comes into existence in freedom where it is desired or needed, which brings people together in a new relationship in the pursuit of a specific common objective.

4. We have been reminded again and again that the new situation in the university has contributed to the collapse of all moral, spiritual and intellectual values among students, and made it almost impossible for the university to do anything significant to meet the problem. What we do not hear very often, is that precisely this university is now a place where the search for new possibilities of meaning and fulfillment in life, in inter-relationship and in responsibility, is wide open and can be pursued in a way which may be significant for the larger society.

At each of these points, and others as well, Christians in the university now have before them new and concrete opportunities of participation in the struggle for humanization. They confront a situation in which the Gospel can have new relevance and penetrate more deeply into the life of people and communities.

This can happen only if the Christian community is free to meet the challenge. It is not possible if its theology and its understanding of truth are set in the terms of an antiquated metaphysics or paternalistic affirmations of "the truth"; if its understanding of institutional life and of the role and nature of institutions in society leads it to work primarily toward preserving what is already outmoded; if the Student Christian group hangs on to a pattern of life which functioned in the stable residential university with its small number of students, but which now offers primarily a place of refuge, in a religious program, for those who do not have the courage to face the challenges of the human situation; if its concern for the welfare of the student focuses primarily on authority and values which are no longer accepted. Where this mentality dominates, all our efforts at strengthening our work, increasing our staff and attracting students, will eventually prove quite ineffective, and create a Christian ghetto more and more alienated from the decisive struggle for man in our time.

Christ and the Renewal of Human Life

We need not be caught in this position if our minds are open to the dynamic realities of biblical faith and if we are free to perceive the work of the Spirit in the world and the church today. This new Situation in the university and elsewhere may be the consequence of the Lordship of Jesus Christ, the result of his "relentless pressure on man and history", in the words of Professor Paul Lehmann. Thus as the issues of humanization are raised where modern man is most threatened the way is open for a new apprehension of and participation in what God is doing for man in the world.

Biblical faith, contrary to most of the ancient religions, does not set us within an eternal metaphysical order, but rather focusses our attention on man's life within history. There, in the midst of the common experiences of daily life in family, community and nation, God meets and calls his people. There those who hear and respond find themselves in a dynamic historical process, at the heart of which is a divine purpose for and realization of human deliverance. The doctrine of the Trinity describes the nature of this divine action within history. Because of the way the relationship between Christ the Redeemer, God the Creator and the Holy Spirit is here defined in relation to the historical life of man, the "structure and destiny of the world and of human life in the world are at once full of movement and meaning." 2

In this context, we are no longer bound to a conception of ultimate reality as an eternal rational order of being in which we can find security. What is ultimate is a messianic purpose in which we can trust, which has taken concrete form in Jesus of Nazareth. In Him, God has become man and reveals that His work in the midst of history is to make and to keep human life human, to create a new humanity in the midst of the old. Here we discover that in our life within history we are on the move "from a fully human life once fully lived to the fulfillment of all human life in a fulfilled human community." 3

We therefore find that we are free to live fully within the historical process, with all its precariousness and complexity, and there discern new possibilities of humanization. Concretely, this means growth toward maturity in interrelatedness in our modern world, the discovery of meaning and purpose in our common daily activities, growth in the apprehension of truth as fragments of our knowledge are related to each other, the discovery of unexpected possibilities of human fulfillment where all human possibilities seem to be exhausted, and the appearance of new forms of community and institutional life where the old forms have lost their creative power.

This is what happens in the Christian community, i.e., the church. It is not a religious institution, but that community which takes shape on any frontier of humanization in such a way that it becomes the sign and first-fruits of the new humanity which is coming into existence through God's activity. As Bonhoeffer put it in his Ethics,

"The Church is nothing but a section of humanity in which Christ has really taken form. ... The Church is the man in Christ, incarnate, sentenced and awakened to the new life. In the first instance, therefore, she has essentially nothing whatever to do with the so-called religious functions of man, but with the whole man in his existence in the world with all its implications. What matters in the Church is not religion but the form of Christ, and its taking form amidst a band of men."⁴

When those who are responsive to the work of Christ relate to each other in this concreteness of the human struggle, they are surprised by the discovery that this relationship points toward and is already in some sense the fulfillment of what God is doing to make and to keep human life human. Christ himself is present and takes form in community. This occurs, according to Professor Lehmann,

"both through the celebration and remembrance of that one oblation of himself once offered once for all and whenever and wherever the patterns and structures of Society, the motives, values, and hopes of men are dislodged from their de-humanizing operations and displaced by patterns and structures, by motives, values, and hopes which make room for what is truly human to become real again."⁵

As this happens in the Christian community, our eyes are opened so that we can see the possibilities of humanization all around us, and move into the heart of each struggle with an attitude of trust. Speaking of the great figures of the Old and New Testament, Ronald Gregor Smith says; "They launched all the force of their convictions in the direction of that hidden yet most real world, that structure of grace which penetrates the whole of history, and so disclosed and drew out the meaning which lies in the simplest happening."⁶ For us today, the experience of this same reality sets us free to live by trust wherever the battle for the future of man is being fought.

If we want to move beyond the impasse to which we have come in much of our work in the university, I believe that we should follow the direction indicated above and accept the challenge to "an experimental life in a new historic adventure" (Kreissig). This means launching out in a direction quite different from that we are following in the traditional "religious" program of our Student Christian Movements or our church-related work of one type or another. To work primarily at salvaging this program will only increase our frustrations and delay the renewal demanded of us. We are called rather to concern ourselves with the task of giving form to the Christian community on the frontiers of humanization in the university. For this to occur more frequently, several things seem to me to be of decisive importance:

1. The Christian community takes shapes in the center of the human struggle among those who are fully involved in it at some particular point. It can be the sign and first-fruits of the new humanity only as it exists in concreteness on a specific frontier of humanization in our complex society.

In the Princeton Study Fellowship, we attempted to start at this point by directing our attention to the struggle for national selfhood and economic development in the nations of Asia, African and Latin America. In this context we then tried to examine the efforts being made to determine the nature and role of the university. In both instances, the focus was on what was happening to man and the meaning of responsible participation in his struggle for a more human existence within these structures.

It soon became evident that quite a number of our student movements have not conceived of their task in such terms. In fact, it would seem that there is often something in our understanding of Christian faith and life which gets in the way of this. Our Pietistic heritage has transformed the Gospel into a religious experience, restricted to one limited area of individual life, which draws our attention away from the decisive human issues. Our understanding of the Christian life is influenced, quite unconsciously perhaps, by the bourgeois attitude of detachment and of individual well-being. As a result, Christians in the university may work hard at their studies, take their customary responsibilities seriously, support their families and vote in national elections. They live in the world but they are not necessarily sensitive to the fact that right around them the struggle for the future of man is being fought out; they often do not realize where this struggle is focussed and may not feel called to responsible involvement in it. In the relatively stable society of a past era, this detachment was not so serious. Today, however, Christians who live this way are responsible for the de-humanization around them and eventually become de-humanized themselves. If we are not convinced of this, it might be wise to talk with those responsible for the administration of the university, with men working on the frontiers of knowledge in their particular disciplines, with students who can no longer ignore the challenge confronting them. We might be surprised to see the contrast between the nature of their concern and those reflected in the program of the local Christian group; we might also be shocked to discover the attitude which many of those so involved take toward Christianity.

The point I want to make is this: We can have authentic Christian community in the university only as it takes shape in the midst of and around such involvement. The sooner we recognize this and concentrate on it, the better for all concerned. If our present programs of Bible study and religious services, study groups and recreational activities, are carried on in detachment and contribute to our alienation, they can be an instrument of disobedience to our calling.

We must find the courage to move out into the midst of the struggle for truth in any particular discipline and in the dialogue between disciplines, into those groups working at diverse aspects of student government or concerned about problems of the university, to those who are doing something to express their concern for people in the university and in the society at large. There, among believers and unbelievers, who have an authentic concern for humanization inspired by Jesus Christ, we may find ways by which new forms of Christian community can take shape.

It is this discovery, I believe, which has been the major factor in the developments which have been taking place in the Brazilian SCM in the last few years. As early as 1953, the leaders of the SCM decided to give up plans for student centers and a church centered program, and concentrate on the formation of

small nuclei of Christian students in the various professional schools of the universities scattered throughout the larger cities. This was done, but nothing very significant happened. A number of students did become more aware of the problems of the university and more concerned about them, but by and large these new groups also became small Christian ghettos carrying on a religious program in relative detachment from the central issues in the university. Several years ago, the acceleration of the revolutionary process in the nation changed all this. The social revolution became the point at which the issues of humanization and de-humanization were raised sharply and visibly in the nation and in the university. A good number of SCM members found themselves involved in diverse aspects of this struggle and, in this context, began to raise questions about the meaning of Christian faith and the reality of Christian community. The SCM found itself called upon to step into this situation and try to deal with it. From there, it began a redefinition of the nature and task of the Christian community in the university which is having far-reaching consequences for its life and which is certainly opening up possibilities which had not been seen before.

2. In the midst of such involvement, the crisis we have faced in our biblical and theological studies since Strasbourg may be seen in a different perspective, and we may discover new ways of meeting it. No mere affirmation of the great realities of the faith as they have come down to us through the tradition will suffice today. We have no choice but to share the anguish which Bonhoeffer knew in his last months when he discovered that we must ask the question "Who is Christ for us today?" and recognize that in our attempt to answer it, we may face great uncertainty and doubt as well as the inadequacy of many of our traditional theological formulations. If what we have said thus far is correct, then must we not conclude that the answer to the question "Who is Christ today?" must be found by answering the question, "who is man today?" When this becomes the central question, our present theological crisis is exposed and a new road opens before us.

Our present critical situation is exposed because we see how far we have moved in a wrong direction. In the midst of developments in the western world of the Nineteenth century, Marx and the Marxists perceived the crucial issue and developed and dynamic movement dedicated to the full humanization of man by the power of man alone. To the degree that we were influenced by Pietism, we fled from a secular world coming of age into the isolated, limited sphere of personal religious experience. Now we have gone so far along this road that, when the question of humanization is raised so sharply, we have no way of relating our faith to it. In a world in which the metaphysical understanding of reality has lost its hold over modern man and became incomprehensible to him, we have realized that this means the end of natural theology and apologetics; we have not understood that it also implies a radical reworking of the whole theological tradition. As a result, we have recovered the richness and depth of the great realities of Christian faith. Our only problem is that they mean nothing, in these terms, for modern man. Hence the agony we live through when we try to witness to our faith in the university. The best we can hope for is to "bring God in" at some point. But as our "God" is quite unrelated to this situation, the "Gospel" about him is not really good news for us or for those about us. The other alternative we have is to engage in the human struggle but see no clear relevance of our faith to it. Thus we tend to analyze each problem in the same terms as those around us, and then exhort those with whom we work to follow certain principles which we consider to be Christian.

In the depths of this abyss, however, a gleam of light may be seen. As we become aware of our weakness in the struggle for humanization, we may understand anew what the Gospel is for us. As we analyze the major issues and attempt to deal with them alongside the Marxists, the humanists, and others, we may discover

that our faith raises questions, indicates perspectives and opens possibilities that are present in the situation because of what God is doing there to make and to keep human life human. Moreover, it may just happen that in and through our encounter with the Thou of our neighbour, our growing experience of the realities of grace, reconciliation and trust in the midst of the human struggle, and in our sharing of Christ's suffering as "the man for others", our eyes may be opened to God as "the Beyond in the midst of our life".⁷

It is the task of theological and biblical study in our student movements to aid us at this point. As Professor Otto Piper has stated in a recent article in Theology Today⁸

"What is demanded of Protestant theology is not that it should abandon belief in a supramundane God and a heavenly world for which man is destined, but rather than by adopting a new methodology it should show for what reason and in what respect the life which we live and the world which surrounds us have ultimate significance."

"We have to learn again what it means that God has appointed the man Jesus, his Son, as the Lord of all things. In everything that comes to our notice in this world we are to find traces of his dominion and his redemptive work. ... On this basis alone can we point out the relevancy of the Gospel to modern man. No longer believing in the cogency of rational arguments modern man looks around for facts or experiences that might render his life meaningful....Biblical realism will enable us to discern Christ in his capacity of transforming the structure of this world and our life and strengthening us in the power of his Spirit."

Exactly what this will involve is by no means clear as yet. It is a matter of redefining our religious language and giving new meaning to old terms, yet it is more than that. What seems to me to be much more important is that, from a position of Concrete involvement, we carry on a running conversation between that situation and the tradition of theology which will lead us to speak of the realities of the faith in quite secular terms. The crucial question, of course, is that of the perspective within which this running conversation is to be carried on, as defined by our understanding of the nature of the Christian faith and of revelation. Tillich defines this in terms of correlation, Bonhoeffer and Lehmann speak contextually. These and perhaps other perspectives will be tested in the midst of this effort. What is important at this moment is that we engage, here as elsewhere, in "an experimental life in a new adventure". In this adventure, we run the risk of betraying important and essential elements in the tradition. But it is only by running this risk that we can hope to preserve the central realities of the tradition in a secular world.

3. The form of the Christian community in the university is that form of life in interrelationship which is a sign and foretaste of the possibilities of humanization which exist THERE. Given the character of our modern world, this must happen in the concreteness of involvement in the fragmented spheres and communities of the university. From there we may move to wider expressions of reconciliation. Given the nature of the Christian faith, this community can take shape only as its members participate in the being of Jesus as the man for others. From this it is evident that our problem is not one of discovering a new program for the SCM or a pattern for changing structures of our university work. It is rather, in the first instances, a question of being free to allow the process of humanization which is

a reality in Christ to take concrete shape at any point in the university where the struggle for man is real. For this to happen more frequently, several issues will demand our consideration.

a. We may have to abandon the whole idea of carrying on a program of religious activities in the university. In many places we have arrived at the point where such a program absorbs so much of the students' time that it hinders their involvement in the struggle for a new humanity, it provides them with little insight into the shape of the new humanity in the world, and tends to attract those who are not interested in participating in the being of Jesus as the man for others. We would like to hope that, through this religious program, we will be able to lead these students to deeper involvement. There is little evidence, I believe, that this is an effective way to do it, except in those instances where the SCM or the student pastor is more concerned about contributing to the development of these communities of humanization than about maintaining the traditional program. If we recognize the importance of this, each of us must deal realistically with the practical question of how this can be done, given our present commitments to church, foundation, student movement, etc. But we have arrived at a point where this question is so serious that we can act responsibly only if we are willing to live fully the tension between what is expected of us and what we see ourselves called to do, and run the risks which obedience demands.

b. The time may be coming when we should conceive of the Christian community in the university more as a community of those "called to serve" than as a "fellowship of believers." In the context in which we are speaking here, the distinction between believer and unbeliever has lost most of its meaning. If we take seriously what we profess about the Lordship of Christ over the world and the presence of grace and of the Spirit in the center of life and of history, what is called for is a community which points to these realities and makes them visible in human relationships. This community comes into existence as those who are willing to share the sufferings of Jesus Christ as the man for others - be they "believers" or "unbelievers" - do so in interrelatedness at some concrete point in the university. We talk about the SCM as an open community. This is one way by which it can be so authentically.

c. The opportunities for the formation of such communities are as great as is the diversity of communities in the university and the dimensions of the struggle for humanization there. Specifically, this means participation in student government and concern for problems of the university, participation in social and political action in society, the encouragement of dialogue about the issues which arise in the search for truth within a particular field, between various disciplines, in student-faculty relations. Or it may mean the formation of ad hoc groups at any point of need or crisis in the lives of people in the university - a coffee shop, a tutorial program for students who are failing in their courses, or any informal, spontaneous attempt to express concern for students who are lost in the insecurity of university life in the non-residential universities of today.

In any of these areas the community is not brought together for a program of religious or social activities, but in order to give expression to its responsibility to be for others within the orders of university life. In this task, its life as a Christian community will have two foci - those acts in which what God is doing to make and to keep human life human is perceived and appropriated - Sacrament, liturgy, biblical and theological study as a running conversation with the concrete situation - and the type of interrelatedness in responsibility in which the possibilities which this divine action opens for life in the world take visible form. At both of these points we must be free for constant experimentation. The first calls for the development of new forms of

worship and liturgy, of Bible study and theological reflections, which will be relevant and meaningful in a secular world; the second means that our traditional programs of togetherness must be replaced by types of free and relatively unstructured relationships which nevertheless express the fact of total disponibilitate, which is the shape of community in the society in which we live today.

d. "The Church is nothing but a section of humanity in which Christ has really taken form."⁹ In most instances today a section of humanity cannot be defined geographically. It is rather a question of the precarious human relationships and responsibilities which develop where people are brought together for a specific purpose. Thus, wherever a community of men share the being of Jesus as man for others in the struggle for humanization, there the Church exists. It is there that man, in the totality of his existence as a human being, is addressed by God; it is there that he discovers himself living in a total relationship with others and called to a total responsibility for others. As long as our modern world continues to be so dynamic and so fragmented, that long will we have to accept the fact that the basic unit of the Christian community will be constituted by small numbers of people who come together.

At the same time, these communities are "the realization in a specific place of the one church of God."¹⁰ Each such group is an authentic Christian community only to the degree that it lives this unity with the wider membership of the Body of Christ, and can thus be a sign of God's work of reconciliation in a broken and divided world. As Peter Kreissig has reminded us, it is the task of the Christian community in the university "to produce models of corporate life which are in themselves witnesses to the Christian claim that the fragmentation of modern life can be overcome." What we tend to forget at times is that any expression of this corporate life of the Church which does not have its base in the full involvement of nuclei of Christians in this fragmented world, can have no significance for modern man. It is only as the Christian community bears within itself the burden of isolation of men in each area and all the obstacles to reconciliation in the concrete situation, that it fulfills its calling.

This would seem to indicate that the Christian community in the university has here a double task. It is first of all that of discovering how those who are involved at one specific point participate in a community relationship with other Christians in very different situations. This is not easy, for such involvement imposes heavy responsibilities and gives little or no time for religious or social activities. Perhaps the emphasis should be on a few central acts: the celebration of Holy Communion; occasional services of intercession for the university and all in it; discussions of major issues affecting the life of the entire community, in which each person might be reminded of the limitations of his own perspective and the possibilities of reconciliation; or occasional short courses of study which would contribute to the same end. We may conclude that one of the principal roles of the student pastor or student worker will be defined by this development. It is he who has a certain freedom to move about from one such group to another, to identify with each in its concerns, while at the same time maintaining a certain distance and representing a broader perspective. It is he who will be able to raise, in each group, the questions which the wider community must raise, provide a living bond between them, and suggest when and how it can be given more direct expression.

The second problem is that of the relationship of these communities to the empirical church. To the degree that they become the shape of the New Humanity in the university, to that degree they may sense more acutely the profound crisis in our present church life and the irrelevance of our present denominationalism. I personally believe that our obedience in the university today requires us to move

ahead toward the formation of the type of Christian community here proposed, even if this leads to great tension, perhaps open conflict in some cases, with the church organization. What we must be equally concerned about is the maintenance of all possible contacts with it in this period of transition. As we are faithful to our calling in the university and live in full solidarity with the church in its present struggle for renewal, we can face the problems that will arise and trust in the Lordship of Him who renews the church when and as He wills.

Richard Shaull



Footnotes

1. I am greatly indebted to Professor Lehmann for his careful and suggestive study of the nature of the divine activity in the world, in his Ethics in a Christian Context, Part I; especially his development of the theme of humanization, which we have here applied specifically to the life of the Christian community in the university.
2. Lehmann, op. cit., p. 107.
3. Lehmann, Ideology and Incarnation (Geneva, John Knox Lecture), p. 26.
4. p. 21
5. Ideology and Incarnation, p. 27
6. The New Man, p. 29
7. This phrase, as well as other thoughts and phrases in the paragraph immediately preceding, are from Bonhoeffer's "Letters to a Friend", beginning with the letter dated April 30, 1944; Letters and Papers from Prison.
8. January, 1964, pp. 477, 485-86.
9. Bonhoeffer, Ethics, p. 21
10. Bonhoeffer, The Communion of Saints, p. 153.

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