

## Latin America Affairs Conference

Last September 19 I received a letter from Margaret Flory, Secretary for Student World Relations of our Presbyterian Board of Ecumenical Missions and Relations. She asked about the possibilities of organizing a major event focusing on Latin America on our campus. Margaret was writing in behalf of the Latin American task force of the University Christian Movement.

After some preliminary conversations with Jondrow I contacted Father Joe Brown, of St. Paul Catholic Center, inasmuch as UCM urged us to work with Catholics from the very beginning. Eventually Father Brown and I met with Prof. Mulvihill, of the Spanish and Portuguese Department, and together we compiled a list of faculty in all fields interested or involved in Latin American studies. We also centered on the problem of Population Explosion and Its Effects on Latin America as the main topic for the conference.

We agreed that such a conference should meet certain minimum standards:

1. The quality of the lecturers and participants should meet the same academic standards of the best departments in the university. The lectures will be open to the public, but small group discussions will be limited to faculty and graduate students.
2. We will urge the lecturers to present material that can be published in a monograph, not only to try to establish a high tradition on such events, but also to make available the benefits of the conference to our boards, to COEMAR, to UCM, and to any faculty, graduate students and departments who may be interested in the topic.
3. We should try to enlist the co-sponsorship of the initiating groups, the Ibero-American Program at the University, and the new Latin American Association on the campus.

I met with Professors David Chaplin of the Sociology Department, William Glade, Commerce-Economics, and Thomas Skidmore of History. They indicated a strong interest in the conference, made some recommendations about lecturers whom they felt should be invited, and agreed to come to a lunch meeting with Father Brown, Jondrow, Paul Maltingly (also of St. Paul's), and myself.

At this meeting we elaborated further on the topic and speakers, and tentatively set the date for May 3-4. It was recommended that we look at the main topic from the perspectives of employment-unemployment, labor force and population; food problems, public policy and population, and Religious attitudes and Implications. The faculty suggested the possibility of inviting Professor J. Mayone Stycos, chairman of the Sociology Department at Cornell University and the authority on Latin American demography, Ivan Illich of the Centro Intercultural de Documentacion of Cuernavaca, Mexico, Prof. Richard Shaul of Princeton Theological Seminary, and several members of our own faculty, including William Denevan of Geography, Charles Anderson of Political Science, David Chaplin and Maurice Zeitlin of Sociology.

I have had a response from Professor Stycos. His honorarium will be \$500.00 plus expenses, and he is willing to present original material suitable for publication if we are willing to find the means to publish it. I have shared this information with Margaret Flory and she has been very encouraging regarding publication of the material.

I feel that there are several significant points regarding our philosophy and style of ministry at the University we should look at in relation to this conference:

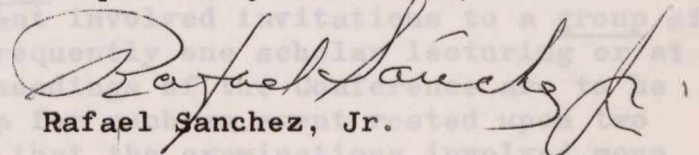
1. This is a very valid way of involving faculty and graduate students in an event which seriously attempts to examine a social problem on its own grounds, with the backing and within the climate of the church. This is the most powerful way we know of confronting our graduate students with the meaning of mission in relation to academic and professional life.
2. The opportunity of sharing between church and secular scholars can be of great benefit to the church, and if our hopes are realized, of some benefit to secular scholars who may see the church in a different light, as a side benefit of this conference.
3. The cooperation between Catholics and Presbyterians alongside the Latin American Association and the Ibero-American Studies Program is bound to establish highly desirable relations.
4. The opportunity of bringing together faculty who, while all specialists in Latin American affairs, yet belong to different departments and have never had an opportunity to convene under such auspices is a beneficial contribution the church can make and should make more often.

At the time of the last Verhulst lectures, it was agreed by the Executive Committee that we should do two things in planning for the next series:

1. Try to find a new format other than the previously established one.
2. Try to zero in on issues already alive at the University.

Given the nature of this event, and the benefits to university, community and church, I request that our Executive Committee authorize the use of the accumulated funds of the Verhulst lecture investment to be used to defray lecture expenses for this conference at the discretion of the minister-director.

Respectfully submitted,

  
Rafael Sanchez, Jr.