

1. What should the role of the Church be in a changing society like Latin America?

I think that the first task of the Church is to be there, to be present in the actual change with all of its resources ~~and~~ both individual and corporate. Since the task of the Church is to further the humanizing of the world according to the command of Christ, in places of rapid social change the Church must recognize change as a positive value in promoting God's kingdom on earth. At present many difficulties arise from the fact that the structures of the Church itself are static, arising from a view of world order coming to us from antiquity. I think that if the church is to be successful in discerning and promoting the human element in social change, it must accept the need and validity of change within its own institutions. Then it will become more of an asset than a liability to the progress of secular society.

2. What are the most visible differences between a North American Catholic and a Latin American Catholic?

The most significant differences arise from their respective social and ~~poli~~ cultural backgrounds. The North American Catholic, I feel, has more respect for community and the need for law and organization. His religion will therefore have the tendency of becoming legalistic. From my knowledge of Latin Americans, I feel that they have more respect for the needs of the individual. While they may view "being religious" more in terms of personal concern and kindness, I feel they distrust the effectiveness of organized action.

3. What are the attitudes of North American Catholics towards Latin minorities living in the U.S.?

Catholics in the U.S. <sup>have</sup> ~~share~~ the same attitudes towards ~~the/same/~~ Latin Americans in the U.S. as do other North Americans. While Latins do not suffer the same prejudice as do the American Negroes, they are

discriminated against in many ways. By reason of lack of education and the lack of opportunity to live with Latin Americans, North Americans often look upon their Latin countrymen with suspicion or fear. Even worse, many try to ignore them altogether. I feel that the task of the Church in the U.S. is to promote the integration of all minorities into the life of the the larger society in order to participate more fully in its benefits and responsibilities. It has a long way to go.

5. What are the main reasons that motivated you to propose the idea of organizing a priests' union in the United States?

The first reason is the lack of professional freedom. More and more administrative demands (building, organizing, fund-raising, etc.) remove the priest from his priestly role as ~~sc~~ a scholar and a man of meditation, a moral leader and a promoter of ethical social values. In the U.S. the formation of unions has been successful in solving similar problems for other professional groups such as teachers and social workers.

Secondly, I feel that an independent association of priests will be an effective instrument of promoting Church reform and the changes called for by the Vatican Council. It will provide the priests with a forum in which to discuss the new emerging roles of the priest in society, and a means of promoting their rights and responsibilities.

I feel that unions were one of the most significant factors in aiding the U.S. in its periods of rapid social change. ~~it/is/still~~ As the major sociological innovation of our century, ~~I/believe/that/if~~ unions will play an important role within the Church itself.

6. What was the reaction of the hierarchy to your proposal?

As expected. Management has always resisted the introduction of unions into an institution. Since the situation within the Church is similar to that of industry ~~4~~ 50 years ago, I did not expect overwhelming

support from either the hierarchy or the priests. As yet, no one has come up with any serious theological objection to the priests' union. All of the objections thus far have been the same as those used by management: unions are divisive, they destroy the unity of the institution, problems can be solved in other ways, etc. The fact is that there is already great disunity between priests and bishop. The union ~~will/give/the~~ will provide an opportunity to resolve conflicts in a manner that has proven to be fair and effective.

~~Since/the/hierarchy///The/hierarchy//~~ Neither the hierarchy or any one else has come up with another solution to the many problems that face priests today. Cardinal MacIntyre's solution was to suspend me from the priesthood at the end of February. At present I am working at Synanon, a house of rehabilitation for drug addicts in Santa Monica, California. ~~I/in/can~~ I have appealed my case to Rome and am continuing to speak and write on the priests' union.

7. What was the reaction of the American Public?

I can only judge by the editorials in newspapers and the correspondence I have received. Except for Commonweal and the National Catholic Reporter, which are not dominated by the hierarchy, the Catholic press condemned the idea. I received a surprising amount of support from the other unions, especially the American Federation of Teachers and the Teamsters. Non-Catholics are highly favorable and many see the need for non-Catholic clergymen as well. The Catholic laity are split half-and-half.

8. What are the demands of the clergy?

The first goal of the union is collective bargaining - the means by which priests can arrive at a written agreement with the bishop on the terms of service, which include wages, personnel policy, professional standards, tenure policy and other matters ~~with~~ <sup>in</sup> which priests have the right and responsibility to exercise their influence.

Other demands, of course, will depend upon the particular needs of the different dioceses.

10. What is the economic situation of priests in the U.S.

In general, it can be said that priests in the U.S. share in the economic affluence of the country. But their income is not distributed equitably. In many places some priests receive three or four times as much money as others of the same status. Priests are still dependent upon the voluntary offerings of the faithful. Because of this, they tend to gravitate towards parishes that are wealthier. Since the priest is a public servant, his income should be standardized by paying him a just salary and forbidding the reception of gifts from the laity. This, I believe, will free him to do the best possible work for all people of whatever economic status.

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