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Christians and Socialism: The Christians for Socialism Movement in Latin America

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One statement of his that has grave theoretical implications is his application of the element of causal determinism to population increase relative to changes in the political and administrative fields, which is really saying that with population increase one can predict that changes will take place in the political and administrative structure of a society (pp. 30, 128). The question is whether it is population increase, population density, or some other factors that is really the factor to consider when changes of this type occur, for there are countless ethnographic examples where population increase does not trigger political or administrative changes, e.g., the Nuer.

All in all, the book is important if only to show how necessary it is, if Philippine anthropology is to develop, that more concern be given to the use of theoretical models respective to each discipline, and the understanding of these conceptual frames. The author is to be congratulated for his contribution as being vehicular in this aspect.

Jesus T. Peralta

CHRISTIANS AND SOCIALISM: THE CHRISTIANS FOR SOCIALISM MOVEMENT IN LATIN AMERICA. Translated by John Drury. Edited by John Eagleson. Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 1975. x, 246 pages. Cloth \$7.95/Paper \$4.95.

Christians and Socialism documents the development of the Christians for Socialism movement in Latin America, especially in Chile. The movement is no longer active in Chile because of the military coup which overthrew the Allende government. However, it is active in other parts of Latin America, and in Western Europe and the United States. This book traces the movement's beginnings, the exchanges between the movement and the Chilean hierarchy, includes several national papers delivered at the Convention in 1972, includes the response of the Chilean hierarchy, and ends with a statement by Rev. Gonzalo Arroyo, S.J., the initiator of the Christians for Socialism movement, made after the military coup of 1973.

In analyzing these documents and the development of the Christians for Socialism movement, one comes to a deeper understanding of the problems the Church faces in her struggle against injustice and oppression. Becoming increasingly aware of the oppressive structure of liberal capitalism and of the Marxist state, one becomes increasingly aware of the urgency of the Church to respond to these situations. A reading of this book will heighten awareness of the difficulties the Church faces as different groups within her respond to the challenges of injustice and oppression.

In analyzing the statements of those involved in the Christians for Socialism movement, one is attracted by their obvious commitment and dedication. Many are priests living and working among the poor, very aware of the

injustice and oppression the poor suffer. They have come to a growing conviction that only a radical solution will resolve the oppressive situation. They opted to support the then governing Marxist Popular Unity coalition of Salvador Allende.

Very impressive also is the response of the Chilean hierarchy, especially of Raul Cardinal Silva Henriquez, the Archbishop of Santiago. His response to the movement shows a critical questioning of their suppositions as well as a sympathy for their concerns. The document of the Chilean hierarchy: "Christian Faith and Political Activity," is remarkable for its coming to grips with the questions and problems raised by the Christians for Socialism movement.

By implying that the socialist option is the only truly Christian option, the Christians for Socialism movement is imposing its ideology on all Christians. They have no right to do this. Christians can be socialists, but they need not be. There are many options open for Christians, not only one. The Chilean bishops state that each one must make his own political option, assuming responsibility before God for his freely made decision. However, in criticizing the Christians for Socialism movement for imposing its ideology on all Christians, the Church would do well to examine herself critically to see what ideologies are implicit in her own positions. The Church should ask herself whether such implicit ideologies are keeping her from truly preaching the Word of God.

Another important question raised by the movement is: what is the role of the priest in such a movement? The Chilean hierarchy eventually prohibited priests and religious from taking part in the movement, saying that in no case should a priest give this option the moral backing that stems from his character as a priest. They did say, however, that there was no restriction for laymen to participate. There certainly is the need for a concrete program if one is to effect any solution. This should be left to the laymen. The priest should stand free to encourage, to criticize. The priest must stand as a symbol of unity in the Christian community. No one political option has all the answers. God is active in the world. There must be a unity possible in the Christian community that goes beyond political options. This unity must be fostered by liturgy, by activity, by dialogue. The priest by fostering this unity and encouraging the laity to move on their options will be providing a great service in the struggle for justice. Does this sound too utopian? Is it possible for Christians from the Left, the Center, and the Right to come together to seek solutions to the problems affecting their people? There are many difficulties, but the accomplishment of this will be a true sign of the Kingdom.

Church documents, especially recent papal encyclicals, have been as critical of liberal capitalism as they have been of Marxist communism. Many Christians however are not as aware of the abuses of liberal capitalism as they are of the abuses of Marxist communism. There is the need to be critical of

the abuses of both systems. Recently some Christians have looked into the possibility of using a Marxist analysis of the sociopolitical and economic situation as a tool in the struggle for justice. The question of Christians cooperating with Marxists is certainly a very important issue facing the Church throughout the world today. Many Christians dedicated to the struggle for justice are becoming frustrated with reformist efforts and moving toward a more radical stance. The Christians for Socialism movement is an example. However, critical questions must be answered. Does such a movement become more of a political movement using the name Christian to sanction its activities, or is it a genuinely Christian movement acting out its religious motivation in a concrete ideological program? Can one be both a Marxist and a Christian, or do they mutually exclude each other? Does the Christian's use of instrumental Marxism gradually lead one to accept its ideology, or may a Christian by using a Marxist analysis engage more effectively in the struggle for justice? Must one entering this process eventually be faced with the choice of becoming a Marxist and renouncing one's Christianity, or is one led to a more committed life as a Christian? These are the critical questions the Christians for Socialism movement raised. These are the questions being raised throughout the world by those involved in the struggle.

These are questions that the Church must face as she engages in the struggle for justice. To face these questions and challenges effectively, the Church herself must be liberated from the ideological presuppositions that keep her from truly engaging in the struggle for justice. The Church herself must be purified from the injustices and oppression within her if she is to effectively struggle against the injustices and oppression in society. The Church herself must share the life of the poor, realize their struggles and concerns, and make them her own.

The Church in the Philippines is already engaged in such a struggle. The Church in the Philippines would do well to reflect on the experience of the Church in Chile as she responded to the challenge of the Christians for Socialism movement.

Pasquale T. Giordano

IGLESIA NI CRISTO: A STUDY IN INDEPENDENT CHURCH DYNAMICS. By Arthur Leonard Tuggy. Quezon City: Conservative Baptist Publishing, Inc., 1976. 272 pages. ₱17.00.

One significant work about the *Iglesia ni Cristo* which came off the press recently is the book of Dr. Tuggy. Originally published as a doctoral dissertation, the work claims to have its "primary focus" on the Iglesia's "present doctrine, organization, life, ministry, and methods of propagation" (p. viii). It is made up of 10 chapters. The first four deal with various historical considerations from the turn of the century to the present while the succeeding