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PRINCIPLES AND METHODS INVOLVED IN THE ESTABLISHMENT
OF THE INDIGENOUS CHURCH IN LATIN AMERICA

By

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION	viii
A. The Statement of the Problem.	viii
B. Definition of Terms and Delimitation of the Problem	ix
1. Expanded Definition of Term 'Indigenous Church'	ix
a. Self-supporting Church.	x
b. Self-propagating Church	xi
c. Self-governing Church	xi
2. Delimitation of the Problem	xii
C. Method of Procedure	xii
D. Sources	xiv

CHAPTER	PAGE
I. AN HISTORICAL STATEMENT OF THE PRINCIPLE OF THE INDIGENOUS CHURCH IN MISSIONS	2
A. Introduction.	2
B. The Indigenous Principle in the New Testament	2
1. Jesus and the Apostles	3
a. Training of the Twelve.	3
b. Evangelization of the Masses.	3
2. Summary of Paul's Practice	4
a. Relationship of Paul to his Converts.	5
b. Essential Principles in Method of Paul.	6
C. Rise of the Indigenous Church Movement.	8
1. Need for a New Policy.	9
a. William Carey's Evaluation of a Native Ministry.	9
b. "The Nevius Plan"	9
1) John L. Nevius' Letter to Home Mission Board.	9
2) Results in Korea	11
c. S.J.W. Clark's Investigation into Missionary Methods.	12
1) Resultant Book "The Indigenous Church".	12
2) Suggested Steps for Establishing an Indigenous Church	13
3) His Estimation of the Place of the Foreign Missionary	16
2. Fundamental Reason for Indigenous Basis.	16
a. Ultimate Purpose of the Gospel.	17
b. Highest Good of Convert	18
3. Advantages and Disadvantages of the Indigenous Church.	18
4. Conclusion	21

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Oct, 1949

II. THE INDIGENOUS CHURCH IN CURRENT MISSION PRACTICE . .	23
A. Introduction	23
B. Survey of Indigenous Principles and Methods in Operation	24
1. Peru	24
a. Methods in Evangelism.	24
b. Growth and Organization of Movement.	27
c. Theory and Practice Compared	28
1) Evangelism According to Theory.	28
2) Organization According to Theory.	29
3) Self-support in Theory and Practice.	30
4) The Resultant Church in Theory and Practice.	30
2. Mexico.	32
a. Social Environment	32
b. The Economic Position of the Mexican Church	35
c. Methods used to Gain Financial Independence	36
1) Tithe	36
2) Penny-a-Day	36
3) Cooperatives.	36
4) Lord's Acre	37
5) Other Methods	37
d. Resources of the Mexican Church.	38
e. Conclusions.	39
1) Subsidy Withdrawal.	39
2) Self-support Measures	39
3) Message Adapted	39
4) Spiritual Solidarity.	40
3. Cuba	40
a. Economic Conditions.	40
b. Cuban Society.	41
c. The Evangelical Church in Cuba	42
d. Obstacles to Growth of the Independent Church	43
1) Economic Dependence	44
2) Economic Inequality	44
3) Tradition and Practice of the Roman Catholic Church	45
4) Loss of Youth	46
5) Divided Church.	47
6) Spiritualism	47
7) Poverty of People	47
e. Constructive Measures.	47
1) Creation Motive in Local Church	48
2) Church Experimentation.	48
3) Lord's Acre	49
4) Christian Social Center	49
5) Other Methods	49
f. Summary.	50

4. New Jamaica	51
a. Its Economy.	52
b. The Evangelical Church	52
c. Obstacles to Progress.	53
1) Lost Time	53
2) Land Unused	53
3) Non-Existent Family Life.	54
4) Illiteracy.	55
5) Multiplicity of Churches.	55
6) Irresponsible Sects	56
d. Resources.	56
1) Fertile Land.	57
2) Utilization of Time	57
3) Education	57
4) Sympathetic Government.	58
5) Racial Solidarity	58
6) Location of Churches.	59
7) Visual Education.	59
8) Spiritual Traits.	60
e. The Future Jamaican Church	60
5. Puerto Rico	61
a. The Evangelical Church in Puerto Rico.	61
b. Obstacles to the Church.	62
1) A Foreign Church.	62
2) Poverty.	62
3) Loss of Youth.	63
4) Rural Church Training	64
c. Methods to Church Independence	64
6. Brazil.	65
a. Country and People	65
b. Economic Setting	66
c. Church and Rural Areas	66
d. Growth of the Church	67
1) Strong Foundation	67
2) A Man's Church	67
3) Emotionalism	68
4) Social Phenomenon	69
5) Parent Training	70
6) Open Air Evangelism	70
e. Church Problems	71
1) Roman Catholic Church Opposition.	71
2) Spiritism	72
f. Looking to the Future.	72
1) Migrations and Church	73
2) Emotionalism.	73
C. Qualifications of the Missionary in Putting Indigenous Principles into Operation.	74
1. Character Traits of the Missionary.	74
2. Recognition of the True Nature of His Commission	76

3. Ability to Organize the Converts.	77
4. Intelligent Faith in the Holy Spirit.	78
5. Summary of Qualifications of a Missionary	79
D. Summary.	80
III. THE CULTURAL AND RELIGIOUS SITUATION IN LATIN AMERICA INTO WHICH THE INDIGENOUS CHURCH PRINCIPLES MUST FIT	
A. Introduction	83
B. Character and Soul of the Latin American People.	84
1. Individualism	84
2. Predominance of Passion	86
3. Artistic Temperament	88
4. Peculiar Sense of Justice	88
5. Catholicity	89
6. Summary	89
C. The Philosophy of Spanish Christianity	90
1. The Latin American's Conception of Christ	91
a. The Andean Christ in Bethlehem	91
b. The Spanish Christ from North Africa	91
c. The Ethical Impact of the Spanish Christ	92
d. The Creole Christ.	94
e. Summary.	96
2. Roman Catholicism and the Indigenous Church Movement.	98
a. The Attitude of the Catholic Church.	99
b. The Influence of the Catholic Church	101
D. Summary.	104
IV. GENERAL SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION.	
A. Restatement of the Problem	108
B. General Summary	110
C. Conclusion	112
BIBLIOGRAPHY	115

INTRODUCTION

INTRODUCTION

A. The Statement of the Problem

The indigenous church has been the ideal ever since Mr. Sidney J. W. Clark made his investigations into modern missionary methods. In the last part of the nineteenth century, Mr. Clark retired from business and devoted approximately twenty years of his life to propounding and developing this revolutionary attitude in the missionary policy. The training of a native ministry with the object of creating a national church has been practiced in practically every mission field of the world with moderately successful results. On the whole Latin America has not responded to the indigenous movement commensurate with its opportunities, and in comparison with the manner in which other areas have reacted. "The strengthening and developing of the indigenous church and its leadership has become the outstanding problem of Latin America."¹ This problem then requires inquiry into the history of the expansion of the church for any light toward its solution and also investigation into contemporary mission-field experience in an endeavor to find out why the indigenous

¹ McLeish, Alexander, Religion in Central America, Foreward.

church, in the main, has not lived up to its potentialities in Latin America. Is it the basic attitudes of the missionaries themselves, or do the social and cultural conditions of the natives hinder advance? Is it the emotional, unstable character of their Hispanic background or the pressure of Roman Catholicism that enters into this problem, or some combination of these and other factors?

B. Definition of Terms and Delimitation of Problem

"What is really meant...is that to be indigenous, Christianity shall be so rooted among a people, that they shall feel it to be their own, and not something alien."¹ This term, which has come into vogue in the last thirty years, is adequate in the sense that it means something which is brought from another country and so assimilated by the inward nature of the native that it becomes an integral part of him; but, it is inadequate in the sense that it does not portray the full orb of a true indigenous Christian Church.

1. Expanded Definition of Term "Indigenous Church"

An expanded definition of the term "indigenous

¹ Latourette, Kenneth S., "Indigenous Christianity in the Light of History," International Review of Missions, 1940, p. 429.

church" seems necessary in order that there may be at the very outset a clear understanding of the keyword of this thesis. Webster, in his Collegiate Dictionary, defines "indigenous" as "that which is native produced." The word as applied to the church connotes a reaction from the foreignness of the message and the work. This term in its common usage with reference to the Christian missionary enterprise presents the idea of self-support, self-propagation, and self-government in the local church group. Much emphasis has been laid upon the conception of self-support as fundamental to a true indigenous church, but to make a native church financially secure is not enough. Two or three wealthy members could take the whole burden of finances for the church, but this obscures and hinders the fundamental objective which is to make the church dependent upon God alone. Reliance upon a mission-paid pastor is fatal to the true genius of indigenous Christianity. The very core of the gospel is that of sacrificial giving and when converts are denied or deny themselves of "the grace of giving," they are deprived of an essential means of growth. Not only does the native Christian appreciate his faith when he contributes to the support of his own church, but he has a kindred spirit with his God who has made his salvation possible. Sacrificial giving on the part of those who can give generates a spiritual dynamic. A self-

supporting church, in this sense, is basic to a self-governing church, for the group that is financing its own operations desires to govern their own church. An indigenous church with regard to its self-propagation has been defined as "a church which possesses as inherent in itself everything which is essential to the existence of a church, and is able to multiply itself without any necessary reference to any external authority."¹

An indigenous church is not produced by superimposing upon a group of native converts a set of Christian rules and traditions which have been worked out in a foreign society, but rather it is imparting Christ and His eternal principles and letting the native work out these fundamentals in his own economic environment.

The term "indigenous" should "express the conception of a Christian Church which sustains its own life, rather than merely that pays its own expenses...; whose mode of being and expression arises from its own nature and environment...; and whose development corresponds to the response of its people's soul to the impact of divine grace."²

¹ Allen, Roland, Education in the Native Church, p. 10.

² Ritchie, John, Indigenous Church Principles in Theory and Practice, p. 26.

2. Delimitation of the Problem

The phase of the indigenous church that will be treated will consist of methods to be used in establishing and sustaining an indigenous church in that section of the world known as Latin America. The attempt will be made to formulate principles on the basis of historic indigenous Christianity which will enable the native church in Latin America to develop into a strong, virile organism. There are means to be used in developing a vitally-pulsating national church. These means include the establishment of Bible institutes and seminaries, literature for lay Christians, Bible Conferences, Evangelistic Campaigns and periodic retreats. These aspects of the problem will not be treated.

C. Procedure

The questions raised in the initial statement of this problem of this study will be used in an endeavor to analyze the problem and as a fundamental center from which to work to the circumference. The attempt will be made in the first chapter to show the pure theory of the indigenous church and what its tenets are; then, these principles will be observed as they have been put into practice as recorded in the history of the church from the life and teaching of

Christ to the present day. This will include the modern revival in indigenous principles which occurred after Mr. Sidney's survey; a survey which revealed that eighty percent of the world's population lived in rural villages and eighty percent of the foreign missionaries lived and worked in the cities. More than anything else, this fact revealed the need of a revamped program. This chapter will deal with the basic Christian reason for the indigenous church principle and will close with the advantages and disadvantages of an indigenous church.

This idea in missions which emphasizes the importance of the redeemed individual native as against the dispensability of the foreign missionary will be seen in the second chapter in operation in several Latin American countries.

The third chapter will deal with the cultural and religious situation into which this principle must fit. A study will be made of the people themselves, of the Iberian soul with all of its Latin-African characteristics, of the Spanish culture brought over from the Old World, of the Catholic religion as contrasted with North American Catholicism, and finally of Latin American Catholicism's attitude toward the Evangelical Church.

The last chapter will include a restatement of the problem in view of the foregoing data; a general summary of

the themes of the thesis and a conclusion which it is hoped will possibly be, in a pragmatic way, of some small help in the establishment of an effective, victorious native church in Latin America.

D. Sources

The sources for this study are books dealing with methods of mission work, reports from fields in which the indigenous church principle is in operation, and contemporary writings in periodicals which deal with this subject. Many books were consulted, but it was found that two authors were more pertinent than the others. Mr. John Ritchie, the Secretary of the Upper Andes Agency of the American Bible Society, has written a book that was published in November 1946. The title of this book is Indigenous Church Principles in Theory and Practice, and because of its comprehensiveness and recent date it will be widely used. Mr. J. Merle Davis, the Director of the Research Department of the International Council, has written a series of books on the condition of the National Churches in several Latin American countries. The contents and conclusions in these books were based on surveys made in 1941-1944 and are, therefore, authoritative and up to date. It is because both of these men are authorities and have written comprehensive and recent books that

emphasis will be placed on their works.

Other sources were interviews with authorities on the social and spiritual conditions in Latin America such as W. Stanley Rycroft, Chairman of the Committee for Christian Cooperation in Latin America, and R. Kenneth Strachan, Co-director of the Latin America Mission. From these sources information was received which has come out of the experiences of men who have been and are studying this problem.

CHAPTER I

AN HISTORICAL STATEMENT

OF THE

PRINCIPLE OF THE INDIGENOUS CHURCH IN MISSIONS

CHAPTER I

AN HISTORICAL STATEMENT

OF THE

PRINCIPLES OF THE INDIGENOUS CHURCH IN MISSIONS

A. Introduction

To gain a sympathetic understanding and a balanced insight of any movement, it is necessary to know something of its historical background. This chapter will commence with the New Testament period and briefly sketch the history of the indigenous principle up to the present. From this chronological survey an intelligent foundation will be laid to correctly evaluate our present national churches in Latin America.

B. The Indigenous Principle in the New Testament

The New Testament contains abundant evidence of two principle human factors in the founding and developing of Christian churches--the one who endeavors to win men to Christ and the resulting community of believers, the local church.¹ The indigenous principle of training workers to go forth with the gospel may be said to begin with our Lord Himself when He was here on earth. He chose twelve apostles "that they might be with Him, and that He might send them

¹ Ritchie, op. cit., p. 5.

forth to preach and to have authority to cast out demons" (Mark 3:14,15). One of the dominant themes throughout the Book of Matthew is that of the disciplining of the Apostles in order that they might perpetuate the Good News.

1. Jesus and the Apostles

Dr. Alexander B. Bruce, one of the greatest New Testament scholars of his day, wrote a classic on the personnel of the Apostles and on the teaching which they received. He entitled it "The Training of the Twelve." In this monumental work, Dr. Bruce begins with the calling of the twelve and their subsequent lessons from the Master Teacher on prayer, holiness, evangelism, humility, and self-sacrifice. Dr. Bruce pointed out that Jesus was conducting a two-fold ministry: one was directed to the masses in an attempt to captivate their minds with the importance of the spiritual; and the other consisted "in the careful, exact training of men already in earnest, in the principles and truths of the divine kingdom."¹ The ministry to the twelve was less noticeable and more intensive, yet it was the far more important of the two, "for it was destined to bring forth fruit that should

¹ Bruce, Alexander B., The Training of the Twelve, p. 107.

remain--to tell not merely on the present time, but on the whole history of the world."¹ The Kingdom of heaven would have been in a sad plight if Christ had given Himself entirely to the evangelism of the masses and had neglected to train thoroughly the twelve. The effectiveness of the Apostles in evangelizing and establishing local churches as recorded in the Book of the Acts shows how well Christ schooled His students for their work.

2. Summary of Paul's Practice

It is generally conceded that the Apostle Paul was the most zealous evangelist and the greatest church-builder of Christendom. The question of how he did it can be best answered by looking into his activities and observing his methods. Henry Madras has summed up the salient features in Paul's methods:

Paul had no preconceived plan of campaign; he went where the Spirit led; he sought for open doors; he chose the centers most suitable for the gathering of converts and the propagation of the faith; he aimed definitely at converting men and women to faith in Christ. He planted churches which rapidly became self-supporting and self-governing....St. Paul was content to lay simple and strong foundations.²

¹ Bruce, loc. cit.

² Allen, Roland, St. Paul's Missionary Methods, Introduction, pp. VII-VIII.

Paul planted the seeds of the gospel in the provinces of Galatia, Macedonia, Achaia, and Asia in about ten years. He organized churches, stayed with them for varying durations of time to instruct them, and leaving the area spoke of his work as being done. He had faith in the Holy Ghost to perpetuate the work of the gospel, and he had faith in the Holy Ghost to work in the lives of the new converts and "lead and guide them into all truth" (John 16:13). Paul seemed to treat finances as something that the converts should handle and settle for themselves after he had instructed them in general principles. He did not seek financial help for himself, although some of the churches sent him gifts for which he expressed sincere thanks as in the letter to the Philippians. He worked with his hands as a tentmaker, and thus was free from giving the impression that preaching was only a profession with him. He did not even supervise the spending of funds in the local church but rather was content to give them principles based on his reasoned judgment and the inspiration of the Holy Ghost and then let them work out their own arrangements.

The relationship that Paul had to the instruction of his converts was noteworthy and is of value in analyzing his success. He was not merely a missionary contented only with converting souls, but he went to plant churches in which the gospel might be established and go out through the country-

side. He was interested in building light houses on lonely peninsular points that would radiate light in the darkness to shipwrecked souls. This is the genius of indigenous Christianity--evangelism and church planting.

He realized the importance of training his converts. His instruction consisted of four main trends. First he taught the basic doctrines of God the Father as creator; Jesus Christ the Son as Redeemer; and the Holy Spirit as the indwelling Comforter, using the Old Testament Scriptures as his foundation. Then he taught teachers or those who were particularly responsive and could carry on after he left. His instruction included ample opportunity for the layman to express what he had read in the Scriptures. Lastly, Paul taught them the two sacraments: baptism and the Lord's Supper. On this unbelievably slight and apparently weak foundation, Paul left his newly-founded churches. And yet, "it was precisely the simplicity and brevity of the teaching which constituted its strength."¹ Paul believed that the Holy Spirit gifted everyone whom He had baptized into Christ and that to be left to themselves after some intensive teaching would be a means of drawing forth the converts' God-given talents. This truth was

¹ Ibid., p. 122.

illustrated to Dr. Donald Grey Barnhouse of Philadelphia recently on his trip to the mission fields of Africa. He reported that he had seen natives who had been cannibals before their conversion to Christ now preaching and teaching the Word of God with power.¹ In this apostolic situation, Dr. Barnhouse was conscious that the Holy Spirit had endowed these men with His gifts.

Paul the Apostle was willing to retire from his converts to give place for dependence upon Christ. He rejoiced when his converts could proceed by themselves. In his letters to the churches Paul warned of dangers and heresies and factions, but he did not construct an organization to prevent their succumbing to them: he was interested in letting the converts develop themselves by solving their own problems.

Alex R. Hay has given what he believes to be the essential principles of Paul's Methods: 1) The Holy Spirit must be given His rightful place. 2) The Missionary should be an evangelist rather than a pastor, not making rapid journeys, but staying long enough to get a church organized and established. This included thorough and careful instruction in the fundamentals. 3) When a church was

¹ Radio address on the Word of Life Hour, November, 1946.

organized it was given full power to establish other churches independent from Paul. 4) He took advantage of their "first love" and put the converts to work immediately. Theirs was the responsibility to evangelize the surrounding areas. 5) Although Paul left the churches, he did not abandon them but kept in contact with them by letters and personal visits. 6) The training that he gave to the converts was almost wholly practical with strong emphasis upon evangelism.¹

The history of the Church down through the ages reveals the development of the indigenous principle. However, this is not an historical survey, and for that reason only the turning points in its historical development will be considered.

The next most significant period in missions which will be treated is that known as "modern missions" which was inaugurated by William Carey.

C. The Rise of the Indigenous Church Movement

The great missionary, William Carey, wrote almost one hundred and thirty years ago:

¹ Hay, Alex Rottray, Practicing New Testament Methods in South America, pp. 5-7.

I conceive that the work of preparing as large a body as possible of Christian natives of India for the work of Christian pastors and itinerants is of immense importance. India will never be turned from the grossness of her idolatry to serve the true and living God unless the grace of God rests abundantly on converted natives to qualify them for mission work. In my judgment, therefore, it is on native evangelists that the weight of the great work must ultimately rest.¹

These statements reveal that this pioneer has grasped the truth of the need for an indigenous ministry and he concentrated his best efforts upon the education and training of native Indian teachers. The late Bishop Mylne said that "Subsequent missions have proved to be successful, or the opposite, in a proportion fairly exact to their adoption of Carey's methods."²

1. The Need for a New Policy

In 1862 John L. Nevius wrote a letter from Tung-chow, China to the executive committee of the Presbyterian Board of Foreign Missions. In that letter at that early date, he revealed what he had been thinking about for several years. He started off by writing that there was a need for a new policy and suggested the importance of establishing in China a theological school for the training of natives for the ministry. He then enumerated the difficulties that a foreigner has, first of all, in acquiring the language,

¹ Ranson, C., "An Imperative Indigenous Need," World Dominion, September-October, 1946, p. 285.

² Ibid., p. 287.

and of his comparative ignorance of native ideas, customs and thought patterns. The native knows these things intuitively and is able to quickly and effectively cope with situations that arise. Also there are no unconscious barriers that have to be broken down. In spite of the unsurmountable obstacles in the form of the lack of textbooks, the imperfection of theological language, and even accurate translations of the Scriptures, Dr. Nevius advocated the "early establishment of an institution having for its special object the training of a native ministry, and to the importance of some missionaries giving themselves up specially to it."¹ He contended that if a few men would give themselves to training native candidates for the ministry there would be a saving of time, labor and expense. He closed his letter to the Board by urging the immediate establishment of a theological school for it "is a measure eminently practical and desirable, and one which in the course of time will be productive of incalculable good for the cause of missions."²

In 1890 a group of young missionaries in Korea heard of the "Nevius plan" or "Nevius methods" which were formulated. They can be summarized in the following manner:

¹ Nevius, Helen C., The Life of John Livingstone Nevius, p. 235.

² Ibid., p. 238.

1) There is to be personal evangelism on the part of the missionary with wide itineration. 2) The Scriptures are to be central in every department of the work. 3) Every believer is to become a teacher. 4) Every church is to be under its own chosen, unpaid leader at first. 5) All church equipment is to be provided by the congregation. 6) Strict Biblical discipline is to be administered. 7) Cooperation with other Christian work is to be encouraged. 8) The local church is to be as helpful as possible in the economic problems of the people.¹

And they invited the senior Presbyterian minister to come to Korea and explain his methods and help them establish the Christian Church. He responded to the call and the results were more amazing in Korea than they had ever been in China. From that time forth the "Nevius method" became identified with the Korean Church. There were many imperfections in the principles laid down by Dr. Nevius such as withholding the right to administer the sacraments unless the administrator was a paid, ordained man and the reticence to entrust full authority to the converts. Nevertheless, it was a step in the right direction and the foundation upon which our present-day indigenous church principle is built.

¹ Davis, J. Merle, New Buildings on Old Foundations, p. 22.

The modern indigenous church movement owes its impetus to the investigations of Sidney James Wells Clark, who retired from a prosperous business to study missionary methods. After travelling in the oriental sections of the world for several years, during which time he interviewed and discussed with foreign and native workers the problem of the indigenous church, Mr. Clark in the year 1913 wrote a booklet containing his conclusions entitled, "The Country Church and Indigenous Christianity." After revising the title to "The Indigenous Church," the World Dominion Press gave it world-wide circulation. His thesis in this booklet was the attempt to solve the problem of how to reach the masses of people who lived in thousands of villages. He learned from his surveys that eighty percent of the world's population lived in villages. The only way to evangelize the multitudes, he wrote, was to establish churches "which, from the first day on which they are planted, may be made self-supporting, self-governing, and self-propagating."¹ Mr. Clark pointed out that the evangelization of the world was a hopeless task with the methods which were then employed. He proposed a method consisting of six points that would illustrate his principle of missionary work.

¹ Clark, S. J. W., The Indigenous Church, p. 12.

The aim of all missionary work must be to plant a tree (the church) which, in due season, will produce every kind of fruit, medical and educational, indeed all the fruits needed for the enlightened uplift, and blessing of the people.¹

He suggested that the missionaries, doctors, and teachers combine in a coordinated effort to make an impact on a society. 1) A group of villages would be marked out for evangelization. First the educationist with two or three native workers would visit these villages and teach receptive and intelligent people how to read. A simplified phonetic script would be used and the natives would be able to read in a short time. Those who learned would be instructed to teach their friends and an ever-widening circle of literates would appear. 2) Then a colporteur would be sent with suitable literature to be placed into the hands of those who could read. He would encourage the readers to read to their families and friends and leave reading material for the future. He would make it his business as he travels from village to village to get the names of people who are sick to give to the doctor and nurses back at the station. 3) The doctor would follow taking the villages in the same order as the teacher and colporteur and would visit the sick on his list. If any were hospital cases, he would send them back to headquarters. Those who would be sent to the hospital

¹ Ibid., p. 35.

would be given medical treatment, taught how to read, and given simple instructions in the rudiments of the Gospel.

4) The native would now be receptive and ready for the visit of a clerical missionary and a native preacher. These men would preach to the people and tell them that these other men had come in order that they might comprehend the gospel. 5) A lady missionary with two or three native women would teach the interested women and would thus get an entrance into the home and family. Likely children would be noticed and sent back to the mission school to be educated. For a single scholar could come back to his village and be a continual witness. 6) The last step in this proposal of Mr. Clark's for establishing an indigenous church is to visit the villages in order and make a concentrated and intensive evangelistic effort. The invitation would be given to accept Jesus Christ personally and openly and those who would respond would be formed into groups which would be the basis of an apostolic church. After further instruction the newly formed churches would be left to dependence upon God and their own resources for further growth and the missionary team would leave to work another section in a similar manner. This last statement seems to sum up Mr. Clark's revolutionary principle, that is; that a newly formed Christian group should be left to God and their own resources for only in this way can they

develop into independent churches. He believed that "dependence is natural to the child, but it is not to the church, for the latter is often more virile in its infancy, whilst the former is always feeblest then."¹ He maintained that the key factor to the development of the indigenous church was the unpaid (by the mission) native pastor and the training of the lay worker. In his estimation, the missionary was a transitory factor who should work with the idea in mind that he would have no successor and, therefore, must build up a strong native leadership. Actually this has not been the case for missionary has followed missionary and have thought themselves indispensable to the mission enterprise. That they are not indispensable has been proved by World War II. In the Philippine Islands missionaries were killed, deported, and imprisoned, and yet the native Christians carried on and the Church of Christ grew stronger and greatly multiplied.

From "occupied China" came news of the almost unendurable strain under which native Christians have been called to go. Fellowship was cut off, books and outside stimulation were lacking, and yet in spite of this isolation

¹ Clark, S. J. W., Nevius Method in Korea, p. 9.

"'wherever there was a well-trained leadership' the church not only survived, but continued to grow."¹

The Japanese Christian Church, after years of strain and persecution, has survived and now has an unprecedented opportunity to extend the Christian message.

Yet the stress of war has revealed, according to reports from Indonesia, the West Indies, Latin America and the Islands of the Sea that the most crucial need is that of a practical theological education and "the equipment of a competent and spiritually-minded ministry."²

Mr. Clark had a world view of missions. He would rather do an extensive work on a large scale than an intensive work on a small scale.³

2. Fundamental Reason for Indigenous Basis

Some missions have had placed before them the task of evangelizing a great area which included several hundred villages. For carrying out this ministry they have had only the most meager equipment and personnel. They have been forced by their limitations and the scope of their work to search for other methods than those conventionally

¹ Ranson, C. W., "An Imperative Indigenous Need," World Dominion, September, 1946, p. 287.

² Loc. cit.

³ Cf. Clark, op. cit., p. 15.

used. Invariably they have gone to the Scriptures for a solution and have observed the tactics of the Galilean Master and the methods of the great apostle and have seen how they trained a group to train others. And they have put these methods into successful operation. The fundamental Christian reason for the use of indigenous principles, however, is not to adjust limited resources to the task of geographically extending the Christian Church. That puts the emphasis merely upon the devising of a financial means to reach the world with the gospel. The missionary program must be native-centered "and in the last analysis, the viewpoint from which missionary principles should be judged is the final purpose of the gospel and the highest welfare of the converts."¹ The purpose of the gospel is to make followers of Jesus Christ; converts who not only have been delivered from the "wrath to come," but who are delivered from the power of sin and Satan in this life. Those whose souls are saved by God's grace are to exhibit saved lives. Saved lives are produced by living in fellowship with and dependence upon God. Quality Christian characters are not developed by pampering them and shielding them from opposition; nor are they produced by begetting in them a spirit of dependence upon the missionary and his finances. Virile

¹ Ritchie, op. cit., p. 27.

native Christian testimonies are established when circumstances cause them to flee to God for refuge and in prayer and faith depend upon Him for strength. When deliverance comes, and it most surely does, their faith is strengthened, their spiritual roots go deeper, and their soul is enriched. These occasions of trial furnish opportunity for the exercise of the Spirit's gifts in the natives' lives and this is basic to growth in the spiritual life. The practice of religion without the mediation of a priest is the pure germ of Protestantism and is an wholesome introduction to that form of worship which the newly-formed churches will be following.¹

With these deeper aims, methods become different. The fulfillment of the plan of redemption in this life is more important than the shallow evangelism of the masses by the foreign missionary, and the highest good of the native Christian is vastly more desirable than the building of a great missionary society supported by foreign wealth.

3. The Advantages and Disadvantages of the Indigenous Church

In this general introduction to the subject of the indigenous church, it might be well to list the advantages and disadvantages of this principle. The next section of

¹ Ibid.

the thesis will deal with a survey of the indigenous principle in operation.

The advantages of the indigenous church are:

1) It has been shown how this principle works to the fulfillment of the purpose of the gospel and to the highest good of the native Christian.

2) It produces a national church which firmly entrenches Christianity in the life of the country.

3) Its independence of outside help breeds a dynamic living faith.

4) More work can be accomplished with less finances and personnel. It seems to be the only possible way of evangelizing the world.

5) A native church is much more effective in dealing with emergencies and irregularities arising within its own group, than is an outsider.

6) Native preachers, because of their acquaintance with tradition, social culture, and the manner in which the native mind works, are more effective evangelists.

7) Its influence permeates community life and is instrumental in uplifting social life.

8) The indigenous church is ideally designed for rural communities.

9) In conducting periodical Bible classes, it has the advantage of giving the courses on the cultural level of the

group without taking the students out of their environment or withdrawing them from their gainful occupations.

The disadvantages of the indigenous church can be seen by observing the work that has been done among the Quechua Indians in Peru by Mr. John Ritchie. A brief history of this work will be given in another chapter of this thesis, but its shortcomings will be listed here in an attempt to give a balanced point of view on this subject. The Peruvian Church is still struggling amidst its hostile environment in an attempt to sustain its own life. It does not, as yet, have the resources to take on the additional financial burden of supporting men in training for Christian service.¹

1) The shortage of trained workers and the lack of education in available men is due to the extreme poverty of the rural groups.

2) Native-paid pastors cannot live on what their congregations can offer them and they must do other work. This reduces their ministry.

3) The local church does not have the means to erect and sustain training institutes to supply its own pastors and teachers. This endangers the future life of the Church.

4) If the missionary withdraws from the infant church too quickly, there is the possibility of ensuing discouragement which might lead to the dissolving of the group.

5) It is against the inherent principle of indigenousness to appeal for funds to an outside source even though the emergency is acute.

The fundamental principle of the pure indigenous

¹ Ritchie, John, The Gospel in the High Andes, p. 16.

church is sound, but there seems to be a need of a flexibility in it that could include some modification.

Between the extreme alternatives of being endowed and being left alone like orphans there are degrees of help that can be given to infant churches which do not undermine their vitality but rather use and direct it for the glory of God.¹

D. Conclusion

The indigenous principle is rooted in the New Testament as seen in Jesus' training of the apostles and Paul's methods in missionary work.

John Nevius' plan marks an epoch in modern missions. He practiced this idea in Korea very successfully and in the middle of the nineteenth century crystallized his method into what came to be known as the "Nevius Plan."

After investigation, Sidney J. W. Clark analyzed and criticized the "Nevius Plan" and carried the germ idea much further in its development. His ideas are found in his booklet, The Indigenous Church, published in 1913.

John Ritchie, having seen the unadulterated indigenous plan in operation, agreed with its fundamental principle, but claimed that it needed to be modified. His book, The Indigenous Church in Theory and Practice, sets forth the most recent evaluation of the indigenous principle. It was published in November 1946.

¹ Ritchie, op. cit., p. 54.

CHAPTER II

THE INDIGENOUS CHURCH IN CURRENT MISSION PRACTICE

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THE INDIGENOUS CHURCH IN CURRENT MISSION PRACTICE

A. Introduction

Mr. John Ritchie, the missionary to Peru in 1906, applied the principles of the indigenous church to meet the need on the field and not in an attempt to follow any previously planned methods. "The principles set forth in The Indigenous Church were put into practice in central Peru without any knowledge of their having been propounded."¹ For it was several years later that he discovered that the World Dominion Press had formulated and published a series of booklets on indigenous church principles.

This chapter, which deals with indigenous church principles in Latin American countries, will commence with a survey of the methods used by Mr. Ritchie in planting the native church in Peru. Then Mexico, Cuba, New Jamaica, Puerto Rico, and Brazil will be observed with a view to evaluating the strength of the national church, obstacles to its growth, and suggested methods for making the national churches self-supporting, self-governing, and self-propagating.

¹ Ibid., p. 31.

B. Survey of the Indigenous Principle and Methods in Operation

There is a wide chasm between the theoretical principle and the practical outworking of that principle. The conclusions drawn from this survey in Latin American countries will serve to show the actual utility of such principles and will provide a substantial basis upon which suggestions for further improvement can be made.

1. Peru

a. Methods in Evangelism

When John Ritchie left England in 1906, he realized the immensity of the task before him and the meager equipment that would be his to accomplish this assignment. He did not limit himself to thinking in terms of an individual and local congregation but rather in terms of a nation-wide church.

After a period of language study, he accompanied a Bible Society colporteur on a trip to southern Peru. They visited each house in the village and offered Bibles and portions of the Bible for sale. Many had not even heard of the Bible and scores of others were illiterate. The buyer of the book who could read many times would sit down and begin to read aloud, and the illiterates would gather around and listen in silence. The missionary observed

that many of the walls of the houses were papered with old newspapers and when a company of muleteers came through and had to stop for food, the one who could read would go to the wall and read the news and editorials to his comrades. The thought came to Mr. Ritchie that here was something that could be used as a method in evangelizing the country--the printed page.

Printing equipment was secured and the first copy of "El Herald" was mailed to individuals in the republic who were known to be literate. Soon letters began to come in asking for books, Bibles, and spiritual guidance. Contacts were followed up by personal visitation and, when that was not possible, by personal letters and tracts. Mr. Ritchie with his ten men workers made it a practice to visit only those places where there was a local interest. In this way no time was wasted with those who were unconcerned and antagonistic.

He was the guest of the person with whom he had had correspondence and who had invited him to that vicinity.

It was not uncommon for most of the villagers to quit practically all work for the period of his visit, and everyone stayed around, except when they scattered to their homes for meals and sleep, when they gathered to hear the message, he usually began by speaking of the lost sheep, and the Good Shepherd, a theme which came home to them. After his discourse, he stayed among them and awaited the inevitable questions.¹

¹ Ibid., p. 36.

Sometimes hours were spent in answering from the Bible their many questions. Besides bringing the gospel to bear in their lives, this built up in them a desire to own the Book that answered all their inquiries. He would then develop the great redemptive themes. Those who responded in acceptance of Christ were banded together in a group for inspiration and fellowship. These groups were the nuclei for future churches.

This team of missionaries was interested in ministering to the whole man and usually spent several days instructing in Christian conduct, health and hygiene, arts and crafts, better methods in farming and in administering basic medical aid.¹

At the end of an initial visit, invariably the people asked for a teacher who could further instruct them. They were told that no one was available and they did not need any one. Encouragement was given for them to meet daily, read a portion of Scripture and have prayer. On Sunday it was suggested that some one read from a tract or a sermon and have a regular weekly service. Several of the most interested individuals were formed into a committee to keep in contact with the missionaries and in this way pamphlets, periodicals, and books were mailed and occasion-

¹ Cf. ibid., p. 37.

ally a native helper was sent.¹ Young men were encouraged to work and earn money and attend Bible classes and become native evangelists and teachers. Several churches were formed from these apostolic situations.

b. Growth and Organization of the Movement

The movement grew and indigenous groups were formed all over the region of central Peru. "Over one period of three years a new group was organized every month without interruption."² There arose a need for the organization of the members of these congregations. When a sufficient number of baptized believers so desired, they were instructed to elect elders, and this constituted a church. The elders were elected annually so as to give others an opportunity for leadership and they had the Scriptural right to celebrate the Lord's Supper, conduct baptisms, funerals, and marriages. The church manual that was put into their hands further instructed them in church procedure. All financial matters and arrangements for meeting places were left entirely in the hands of the local group.

These infant Peruvian Churches needed the strength that comes from fellowship and union and a Synod was formed.

¹ Ibid., p. 39.

² Cf. Mr. Ritchie's pamphlet "The Gospel in the High Andes." This pamphlet was written to make known the present needs of the Peruvian Evangelical Church.

This Synod of Peru met yearly to discuss problems of the churches, instruct in the deeper spiritual Christian life, hold evangelistic meetings, and examine candidates for baptisms.

c. Theory and Practice Compared

The Evangelical Church of Peru is a good test tube to observe the practical application of the indigenous church principles. Mr. Ritchie resigned in 1929 from the British Mission which had first sent him out in 1911.¹

1) Evangelism According to the Theory

The Board in London officially adopted the indigenous principles and instructed their missionaries that mission-paid natives must do evangelistic work only.² This meant that these native pastors and teachers were no longer to visit the young churches but pioneer in unevangelized areas. Because, in many cases, there had been no previous local interest, and because they failed to organize results and revisit the converts, they did not have the success of those who went in response to invitation.

This extreme view of the indigenous church which suddenly withdrew mission-paid native preachers and teachers had a devastating effect upon the congregations which had

¹ Cf. ibid., p. 51.

² Loc. cit.

existed for several years. They felt they had been abandoned and became discouraged; they dwindled in attendance and interest, and in some cases broke up and the witness ceased, and the voluntary village evangelism stopped.

There appears to be a need for an intelligent adjustment of this "pure" indigenous principle on the basis of the foregoing observations. "The true aim is not that the village church be bereft of help, but that the mission-paid worker should not become absorbed in the pastoral duties of one congregation."¹ Infant churches as infant children need a help and protection and guidance which they cannot furnish themselves because of their inexperience.

2) Organization According to Theory

The British Mission which took over the work in Peru depreciated organization as being so much "ecclesiastical machinery." This view of a loose organization led to a spiritual degeneracy in the local church.² There is need in the Peruvian Evangelical Movement for the conception of a church not only as a heavenly organism furnished with life from Christ, its Head, but that of an earthly organization compactly joined together and smoothly working together for the propagation of the Gospel.

¹ Ibid., p. 54. This is a modification of S.J.W. Clark's principle as seen in his book The Indigenous Church. He states that the congregation should be left to God and their own leaders without any foreign aid.

² Ibid., p. 58.

3) Self-support in Theory and Practice

The theory is that there is no financial help from the outside and there are no institutions created which the native church can not take over and administer itself.

Self-support in a Christian Church means the taking care of the expense of the meeting-house, and supporting all of its regular functions.

The Peruvian Indigenous Church has not advanced much beyond the conception of a place to meet. "Wherever it has been possible to carry on without any local expense, God is not worshipped with an offering."¹ Few native Christians tithe and the giving is very meager. A proposal has been made to educate them in giving through Bible studies on tithing. Other suggestions for financial resources within the power of the local church will be discussed in relation to other countries in a later part of this thesis.

4) The Resultant Church in Theory and Practice

To follow up the village churches that have been left to themselves to work out their own organization, government and spiritual program is very profitable. This will show the intrinsic value of the "pure" indigenous church principle. The Peruvian Evangelical Church appears to suffer from an over-simplification or an inadequate conception of a

¹ Ibid., p. 60.

Christian Church. The New Testament conception of a church is that of a group banded together for fellowship in Christ's name, for the worship of God, for witness to Him, and for unselfish service to mankind. The national church faces the acid test and falls short in its portrayal of a New Testament Church.

Observation reveals that their evangelistic fervor, once so radiant and contagious is now spasmodic and lethargic. The local leaders are men of little education who know and preach one or two truths coupled with their own spiritual experience. Very seldom does their Christianity reach out into the practical issues of community life. This survey of the Peruvian Evangelical Church shows that to bring a native to Christ and do nothing further for him does not make an effective Christian.¹ As evidenced by experience, the Holy Spirit uses the Word of God to sanctify the soul.² A redeemed soul without a redeemed life of useful service portrays a low view of the gospel. "The restricted conception of the Gospel which sees no more than the forgiveness of sins and the new birth is inadequate to lead souls on to the life of service."³

¹ Matthew 28:19,20, "Go ye therefore, and teach all nations,...teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you." The Great Commission states the need for instruction in the Scriptures.

² John 17:17.

³ Ibid., p. 66.

It is necessary to supplement the first principles of edification and Christian growth. This can only be brought about through trained men who can stimulate congregations to deeper faith and more zealous works. The implications of the Commission are to teach, preach, heal, and build into the local community life Christian standards and ethics. The indigenous principle in Peru has been good as far as it has gone but it needs to go farther. A trained foreign worker is needed in every area, not to oversee and dominate, but to encourage, inspire and counsel. That seems to be the answer.

2. Mexico

a. The Social Environment

"The economic position of the evangelical churches of Mexico, as with every aspect of the life of the people, cannot be clearly understood apart from the Agrarian Movement."¹ This struggle of over one hundred and thirty years of the people for their land is the focal point of the modern history of Mexico.

Mr. J. Merle Davis, the Director of the Research Department of the International Missionary Council, made the

¹ Simpson, Eyler, The Ejido, Mexico's Way Out, p. 75.

following statement:

The tragic conflict between Church and State with the repudiation of religion, the struggle between capital and labor, the rise of Marxism, the sweeping character of educational and social reform...all stem from the same source--the determination of the people to wrest back from the masters for whom they had toiled during three and one-half centuries the heritage of their forefathers and the right to possess its fruits.¹

Mexico is predominantly an agricultural country, yet with immense sources of mineral wealth undeveloped.² This distinct rural nature of the people has a very definite influence on the evangelical movement in Mexico. Most of the people are continually in debt, and for an economically-depressed people to support an evangelical church of their own is almost an impossibility.

The economic environment is surcharged with a volatile instability because of the continual conflict between church and state.

The strife between Church and State in Mexico is part of a general conflict between the village and the nation, between the conqueror and the conquered, between the Spaniard and the Indian...between a culture that looked to ideals from abroad and culture steeped in ideals that were indigenous....The strife has been one of plural cultures against a universal formula...the little Mexican Village never belonged to the Church, never belonged to the State, never belonged to Europe or the Capital, Mexico City, though it supported and tolerated their institutions.³

¹ Davis, J. Merle, The Economic Basis of the Evangelical Church in Mexico, p. 11.

² Rembao, Alberto, Outlook in Mexico, p. 11.

³ Tannenbaum, Frank, Peace by Revolution, p. 24.

The Roman Catholic Church dominates every area of life for the Mexican. By 1850 that Church owned one-half of all the land and much of the rest was mortgaged to it. It acted as banker, money-lender, and administrator of justice over its property-dwellers and became the veritable life of the community.¹

The conquered Indians encountered but a slight dislocation of their habits and beliefs as the Roman Catholic Church freely offered salvation to all who would pay the price for baptism and communion. The Church gave Christian names to their gods and found a place within their ecclesiastical hierarchy for their witchcraft, superstitions and charms.

The activity that has taken the central place in the social life of the Mexican is the fiesta. They take up about one-third of all the days of the year.² This religious festivity has a powerful psychology behind it: it rallies people to the Church with all its dramatic pageantry; it provides a major social event for a downtrodden, depressed people; it furnishes an outlet of expression for a frustrated society; its carnivals, dances, fireworks, liquor-drinking, and music provide a way for the peon to escape

¹ Rembao, cf. p. 13. He makes the distinction between Roman Catholicism and pagan Catholicism. In the latter the Indians worship the idol behind the cross.

² Redfield, Robert, Tepoztlan, A Mexican Village, p. 91.

the drudgery of his daily task and forget, for a time, his trouble. These fiestas have to be taken into consideration when the native Christian Church is evaluated in its environment.

The little evangelical community is automatically excluded from participation in these religious gala days, and its poverty, small size and weak social position make it extremely difficult to substitute anything in their place.¹

b. The Economic Position of the Mexican Church

Three of the five presbyteries of the Mexican Presbyterian Church, all of the larger evangelical church bodies, and the majority of the smaller groups are subsidized by the American Missionary Societies which founded them. This means, that in the true sense of the word, about twenty percent of the churches in Mexico are indigenous. And this has a definite relationship to the economic position of the people. The Evangelical Church is made up of the humblest people. This includes day laborers, farmers and farm hands, while few professional men, merchants, and teachers are represented. In the city churches the number of professional people is higher. The same survey which showed that fully seventy-five percent of church members were related to agriculture also revealed that the economic status, the standard of health, and the ratio of literacy of the evangelical was higher than that of the non-evangelical. This is proof of the ethical outworking of the inward spiritually

¹ Davis, op. cit., p. 27.

redemptive message.

c. Methods used to Gain Financial Independence

Various Mexican Churches have used different means in an attempt to make themselves self-supporting. These methods, briefly treated, will be suggestive of others which would help remedy this situation.

1) The Tithe

Although this has been accepted as a principle in many churches, a small minority of the evangelical Christians actually tithe. There are practical difficulties in rural churches such as the estimation of the tenth in produce, but in urban localities cash is the easiest basis upon which to work. Rev. R. C. Morrow of Zitacuaro has promoted tithing among his churches and says:

I am most enthusiastic about tithing. A conscientious practice of it in the churches will solve all financial problems....A few of our people who have come to practise it are among the most dependable of the members.¹

2) The Penny-a-Day Plan

The idea is to get each church member to contribute a penny a day for the expenses of the church. This project is scaled low enough for the average peasant and in some churches where it is practiced it appears to be succeeding.

3) Cooperatives

Experimentation in this method has met with almost

¹ Ibid., p. 60.

universal failure although church leaders believe that it is the only hope of the future church. The reasons for its failure are many: there is the lack of technical skill in the fundamental principles of handling funds; there is a lack of confidence among the members;¹ and added to this is the extreme individualism of the Mexican.

4) The Lord's Acre Principle

This is well suited to a farming people who have a dearth of cash and a wealth of time. The idea is to set aside a plot of land and cultivate it and everything that is sold from that land is given to the church. This can be done either on the individual's own land, or on property belonging to the church. Surprisingly little has been done with this, and only sporadic attempts have been made.

5) Other Methods

There are other methods that have been used with varying success which include labor donations, reconsecration services, every-member canvass and business enterprises. The latter includes buying grain at low harvest rates and selling it later when prices have risen, and the buying and retailing of small articles such as soap, novelties and hardware items.

¹ Ibid., p. 61.

d. Resources of the Mexican Church

The progress of the Evangelical Church in Mexico shows that the way of life that Christ taught and from which Christianity has universally risen is adaptable to the conditions and resources of every type of human society. No social or economic group is so humble or primitive that it is incapable of organizing its life upon the Christian institution of the Church and of maintaining the Church.¹

One of the economic resources from which the native Mexican could support his own church is found in the way he spends his money. The average Indian peon devotes at least fifty percent of his income to liquor, social and church fiestas, witch doctors' fees, gambling and immoral living.² This money could be utilized for his spiritual and social betterment. The Mexican who joins the Evangelical Church is relieved of these church taxes and other fees for vice and, consequently, this helps account for the prosperity of the evangelical over the non-evangelical.

The question is then asked, Why does he not turn his "redeemed money" into the church? Two reasons seem to be outstanding: first, in his recoil from the Roman Catholic Church the evangelist has stressed the principle that "salvation is free and may be had without money and without price." He has carried this over into his giving and therefore he has not felt any financial obligation to the gospel.

¹ Ibid., p. 88.

² 1938 Annual Report of the Department of Public Health, Mexico City, Mexico.

The second reason is the subsidizing policy of so many missions. This cuts right to the root of the indigenous principle and causes the native to trust in foreign monetary aid.

e. Conclusions

This brief study of the economic basis of the Church in Mexico leads to certain inescapable conclusions which will be summarized for the practical aspect.

1) There is a need for the withdrawal of the mission subsidy. The native pastors and local congregations must be made to see that self-support is essential to their own spiritual life. The finances from the mission, instead of being used to sustain the local church, should be used for the extension of the gospel to untouched regions. Besides evangelism, there are other purposes for which mission money needs to be used. It could be used for Bible Institutes for training Christian lay workers, theological schools, Christian literature, social welfare and home visitation.

2) The practical self-support measures which have been mentioned need to be accepted and applied. This included training men to be rural pastors, who will help their churches discover their resources within.

3) Mexican evangelists, pastors, and teachers must be alert in adapting the Christian message and program to the cultural background of the people. The gospel must be geared

to touch effectively the minority of intellectuals and the majority, over eight million Indians, of primitive people.

4) The independent churches are in need of recognizing and achieving a practical solidarity. This will give them a united front against the sinister forces of Catholicism and paganism. As an organization it will be a source of encouragement to the weaker churches and also a source of instruction based on the experience of others. While there are local churches alone, each functioning as a separate unit without regard for other evangelical bodies, the outlook is not too hopeful. A fellowship, even though it be not organic, carries out two basic principles of God's universe--the principles of the development and growth of human society and the principle of spiritual solidarity and unity taught by the Lord Jesus Christ.

3. Cuba

The Cuban Church is one of the great missionary achievements of our generation. Cuba is among the few mission fields in which the first missionaries and church leaders are still actively directing the work of the church.¹

a. Economic Conditions of the Pearl of the Antilles

Its sugar cane lands are among the richest and apparently most inexhaustible in the world. It is definitely

¹ Davis, J. Merle, The Cuban Church in a Sugar Economy, p. 7.

a one-crop country. Sugar is king, not only as a source of livelihood, but as the arbiter of the social, economic and cultural pattern of the island. Molasses rates second as a source of Cuban wealth.¹ Economically Cuba is a virtual ward of the United States and the founders of the Evangelical Church have had to cope with these fundamental relationships in planting the indigenous church. Corporations have more interest in profit than the welfare of Cubans; and natives employed in these large plants have moved off their lands and have no property security and stability.

The sugar industry has taken control of the development of the country largely out of the hands of the people and the government of Cuba, and has, to a certain extent, reduced them to the positions of pawns upon the chessboard of international finance and politics.²

Because more than half of the Evangelicals belong to the sugar industry, it is important that the effects of this industry upon Cuban life be known.

b. Cuban Society

The native Cuban is a unique and strangely-marked type. His personality, outlook and manner of living are distinctively different from the Spaniards and other Latin American people. Their cultural inheritance is one of the most important factors which Christianity must deal with in approaching the people. The Cuban people today are a self-

¹ A pamphlet Cuba by the co-ordinator of Inter-American Affairs, Washington, D. C., 1944.

² Davis, op. cit., p. 33.

conscious, independent nation, not yet two generations old; they are the children of the colonial system.¹

The basic institution of the nation is the family, with the father as its head. Earnings of each member of the family are pooled and the family also is the economic unit. It is strange that in a society characterized by such a strong family emphasis that the double moral standard and concubinage should be so widely practiced.

Unusual artistic gifts are inherent in every Cuban. Because of his strong emotional nature, prostitution and alcoholism are common among the upper classes. A Cuban educator has said this about his own people: he is a restless, talkative fellow with a peculiar sense of humor; he is a realist and lives in the present; in his character he "combines a strong individualism, love of freedom, vanity, and a dramatic sense which enable him to take the limelight and the center of attention but equally handicaps him for cooperative action."²

c. The Evangelical Church in Cuba

Out of the three hundred and fifty churches connected with the eight principle mission boards, only four are fully organized and self-supporting congregations. This startling fact was a result of the 1941 Evangelical Church

¹ Cf. Pamphlet on Cuba, op. cit.

² Ibid., p. 41.

survey conducted by the International Missionary Council. The general policy of the missions in Cuba is to hold the land title and supply from fifty to ninety percent of the local church budget.

On the basis of a questionnaire sent to two hundred Evangelical ministers, the disadvantages and advantages of full self-support were discussed and the results tabulated. Some of the disadvantages were:

- 1) The power of the church over the pastor increases and curtails his initiative.
- 2) The Church feels greater right to demand pastor's time.
- 3) The Pastor's support is dependent upon economic conditions.
- 4) The Pastor's authority is more often challenged.
- 5) No money for outreaching missionary projects.
- 6) It is too great a responsibility upon a poverty-stricken congregation.

The advantages of self-support were listed as follows:

- 1) A congregation supporting its own pastor would take more interest in him and in their church knowing that the whole life of the church depends on them.
- 2) The church member will feel more responsible

about the quality of the pastor's work.

3) The pastor is relieved from worrying about his economic needs.

4) The pastor then will devote more time to the congregation supporting him.

5) The members will have the right to elect their own pastor.

6) Missions are released for extension work.

7) The participation of the congregation in the management and organization of the church will be increased.¹

d. Obstacles to Growth of the Independent Church

1) Economic Dependence

The economic dependence of Cuba upon the United States has not been conducive to fostering a spirit of national self-reliance. American wealth has sent missionaries, built costly churches and trained natives in its own seminaries. Christianity in Cuba is not an indigenous movement but a transplanted church which is the result of years of Anglo-Saxon tradition. The church which has arisen in Cuba is too costly to be sustained by the economic power of its membership.

2) The Economic Inequality

Economic inequality has drained the church of its motivation and vitality. Because of the interchange of

¹ Only two of the thirty pastors who replied to this question could see no advantages in self-support.

American tourists, Cubans are aware of their own poverty and the native pastors compare their position with American pastors and become dissatisfied. The American Church is essentially a middle-class institution whereas the Cuban social order has no middle class and draws its Christian converts from the lower classes. Here is the crux of the economic problem of the missionary church--not only in Cuba but in other lands.

How can a relatively expensive institution, a product of an alien, high-grade economy and living standards, be indigenized and financed in countries of lower economic standards where the bulk of church members are drawn from classes of lowest economic levels?¹

3) Tradition and Practice of Roman Catholic Church

The tradition and practice of the Roman Catholic Church is another major difficulty in establishing the independent church. The Roman Catholic Church is supported by revenues from its own property and from fees for marriages, baptisms and burials. Every service of the Catholic Church has its price. The experience then of having people support the church is a phenomenon to the Cubans. They have been reared to look upon the Roman Catholic Church as the dispenser and administrator of charity through orphanages and alms-giving instead of the object of charity. Converts to the Protestant's gospel have rejoiced in the free services

¹ Ibid., p. 79 and 80.

of the church and the idea of a "free salvation" has permeated the area of finances and they feel no obligation to help support the church and the pastor.

4) Loss of Youth

The loss of evangelical youth is a menace to the future of the Evangelical Movement in Cuba. Young people wishing university training have no place to acquire it in a Christian atmosphere. The University of Havana or schools in the United States where immoral and liberal influences abound, attract them. Scores of the finest potential church leaders are lost because of shattered faith, infidelity, and broken moral lives.¹

Most of the local churches have no recreational facilities nor planned program of activities for youth. They exclude social programs from the church building and yet do not seem to sense the problem. The young people look elsewhere for a social event and in time intermarry with Roman Catholics and non-religious youth and they are lost to the church. The prestige of a marriage in a Catholic Church with all its pomp and ceremony is sometimes too strong for young people to resist.

5) A Divided Church

Another serious obstacle to the growth of the Evangelical Church is that of a divided church. Several

¹ Ibid., p. 83. An experienced district superintendant said that his church lost twenty of its finest young men in this manner. They were all at one time earnest church workers but now have lost all interest.

young, struggling churches of different denominations may be in the same community, and yet, because of their minor differences they will remain isolated from each other.

6) Spiritism

It is a little-known fact that spiritualism has spread through much of Latin America and is a real problem in Cuba. It offers a channel of expression for an emotional people which is not found in churches founded by American mission boards. "A church which has been shaped by the Puritan and Calvinistic theology and ways of life represents concepts and religious values widely contrasted to the behavior and discipline of the Cuban people."¹

7) Poverty

Poverty is bound to the economic structure of the island with its one-crop production and the church must function within this economic framework. The average church member is poor and this is obviously a formidable obstacle to the growth of the indigenous church.

e. Constructive Measures

The survey and visitation work made by Mr. Merle Davis in Cuba lead to two main theses being formed.

The first is the necessity of organizing and using all possible resources in and about the Cuban Church for its stabilization and growth as a truly Cuban institution. The second is the potentialities of the rural districts of Cuba as a major field of activity of the Evangelical Church.²

¹ Ibid., p. 87.

² Ibid., p. 103.

After forty years the Cuban Church is still financially dependent upon American missions and this presents the problem. Some constructive measures are suggested that might supply a remedy for this ill.

1) Creation Motive in Local Church

The organized church should be born of the desire of the group of believers who want to build their own church and have their own pastor. This is not creating an artificial situation, but meeting the need of an inherent spiritual longing. This is building much more slowly than erecting structures with foreign funds, but in the long range it is building much more permanently.

2) Church Experimentation

Experimenting in different church situations would be helpful. This might mean a church farm demonstration center as a means for strengthening the agricultural basis of the Christian society. An experienced pastor has bought a farm in a typical community and hopes to redeem the people and build a prosperous Christian community. He is planning an agricultural demonstration center for developing improved methods; a small school for training young farmers; a lecture center where farming experts can meet with the people; a conference center for Bible training for youth; and the cooperative use of improved equipment and machinery. This scheme will be church-centered and church-inspired but

open to all who are interested.

3) Lord's Acre

The principle of the Lord's Acre, which has been used to rehabilitate bankrupt churches all over the world could be used successfully in Cuba.

4) Christian Social Center

A Christian Social Center in Mantanzas has been used in reaching underprivileged Negroes in that city. It occupies an eight-room house which is adapted for the use of classes, recreation, and church functions. It has a scout troop, outdoor basketball courts, sewing and dressmaking classes, and social clubs for all ages.

A church clinic, run on the same basis as the social center, would make a contribution to the solution of this problem. A house in another city has been converted into such a clinic. A leading Evangelical physician is in charge of this free clinic and it is one of the few Evangelical projects in Cuba that is supported by public donation. "The strong position of the church in the esteem of this conservative city is undoubtedly due in large part to the notable public health service it is rendering."¹

5) Other Methods

Still other suggested methods are tithing, cooperatives, education in stewardship, and handicraft and cottage

¹ Ibid., p. 126.

industries.

f. Summary

The Evangelical Church has experienced an unusual growth and is strongly established in many cities and towns. This has taken place in one generation. Many churches are partially self-supporting, but only one percent of the four hundred and forty churches of the seven leading denominations are financially independent of the mission societies.

The educational work of the Evangelical Church in its schools is of very high quality and has made an impression upon national life. Although the church members of Cuban Protestant Church live in poverty, yet they have within themselves resources that are as yet not recognized.

As yet the church has not adjusted its program to the economic and social conditions of the people. "It is an urbanized institution seeking to expand in a rural environment."¹ It needs to be trained for rural expansion.

Not only are the economic problems the major obstacles to the economic progress of the nation, they are the major obstacles to progress of the church. Until the lower classes which make up the Body of Christ in Cuba are helped to a new economic footing, there is danger that the church will remain in a dependent position. A portion of the money now used in education could be spent in economic and social

¹ Ibid., p. 133.

rehabilitation that would lay a solid foundation for the Evangelical Church in future generations.

A thousand years ago, the Benedictine and Cistercian monks carried the church of Christ far into the forests... of Central Europe. With them went skilled lay brothers who supplemented the preaching and spiritual ministrations of the friars by practical rehabilitation of the people. Around their monasteries and churches they cleared the forests; tilled the land; introduced grains, vegetables, fish and stock; and worked on their looms, kilns, and smithies. They taught the people not only handicraft, trades and agriculture, but the practice of music, painting, and the fine arts. Their schools became the pioneers of higher learning in Europe. These monasteries became symbols of progress, discipline, and faith in a dark, undisciplined age, and from them sprang a thousand years of Christian civilization.¹

With such a concept of their task, the Evangelical Church in Cuba can make its churches not only centers of spiritual power, but fountains which pour out economic and social redemption over the island.

4. New Jamaica

This island in the Caribbean area is unique in many respects. It has been evangelized for more than a century and the Christian philosophy of life has penetrated into almost every area of life. Some of its churches are over two centuries old.

Ninety-five percent of the population are Negro,² who are descendants of the African slaves brought over between 1799 and 1807.³ Race relations are most congenial. There

¹ Ibid., pp. 140 and 141.

² Cf. The Hand Book of Jamaica, 1939.

³ Johnston, Harry, The Negro in the New World, 1910.

does not seem to be any color line drawn between the blacks and the whites.

Jamaica has one of the highest recorded rates of illegitimacy in the world--over seventy-one percent.

Her most serious problems are not in the economic realm, basically, but rather in the social, cultural, and spiritual realms.

The sinister entail of slavery--as seen in illegitimacy, lack of responsibility, inertia, superstition, illiteracy, and the absence of family life, which are the chief enemies which stand in the path of Jamaica's progress--thwarts every effort toward economic rehabilitation.¹

a. Its Economy²

Ninety percent of the people are "hewers of wood and drawers of water" and are closely related to the land. In place of the one-crop system in the other islands of the Antilles where sugar is king, the main crop is bananas with sugar, pimento, coffee, coconuts, and citrus fruits rounding out the main list of exports. Strangely enough, this agricultural country imports great quantities of meat, milk and butter.

b. The Evangelical Church

The Anglican Church established mission churches in 1662, and today the Church of England is the largest and most influential of denominations; 266,478 members are listed

¹ Davis, J. Merle, The Church in New Jamaica, Preface, p. 8.

² Cf. Economic Survey of the Colonial Empire, 1936.

as its adherents. Since 1870 the Anglican Church has been supported entirely by the local congregation. The pastors, both European and Jamaican, are paid the same salaries, and on the whole are well educated and live in comfortable circumstances.

The Moravian, Presbyterian, Methodist and Baptist denominations are carrying on a constructive, almost wholly, self-supporting work.

c. Obstacles to Progress

1) Lost Time

Probably one of the most serious economic obstacles to the progress of the church is the immense amount of lost time occasioned by seasonal employment and the native Jamaican's working habits. The usual working week is about four and one-half days per week. The rest of the week is spent in loafing and spending the week's wages. In the main, they are spasmodic, unreliable laborers.

2) Unused Land

A second serious obstacle to the progress of the Jamaican people is their non-productive relationship to the land. They do not utilize the accessible ground to grow staple products. Because Jamaica raises only bananas and sugar, principally, it is necessary to import nearly all of the manufactured articles and staple foods that are needed.¹

¹ Handbook of Jamaica for 1939, pp. 186-191.

3) Non-Existent Family Life

The family institution is practically non-existent in Jamaica. Even the most cursory observation detects the weakness of the home. Promiscuity and desertion have broken down this basic unit of society and the growing generation has no moral or social incentive for one. One room huts in which there is no daily schedule of meals, and whose lack of lamps make reading impossible and sends the youth to roam about in the darkness are not conditions that foster a home-centered society. "A major reason for the slow progress of the Church in overcoming the many outstanding social evils in the island is that the home, which is the cornerstone of Christian civilization, is lacking."¹

With such conditions prevailing, it is easy to understand why the ratio of illegitimacy is so high--seventy-one and six tenths percent. It is the major problem which has baffled Church and State alike. Officers of the Salvation Army estimate that ninety percent of the babies of the lower classes are born outside of wedlock.²

This is a serious problem to the community also, because fatherless and helpless families are poured into poor houses, reformatories, and hospitals.³ Besides being

¹ Davis, op. cit., p. 31.

² Ibid., p. 32.

³ Cf. Government Report upon "The Prevalency of Concubinage and the High Rate of Illegitimacy in Jamaica."

morally impure, the basic devastation of promiscuity is the repudiation of responsibility. To avoid natural and legal responsibilities, Jamaican men drift about the island, having temporary relationships with women whom they abandon, avoiding court summons and refusing to establish a home. "From every point of view these men constitute a loss and a menace to society."¹

4) Illiteracy

Another retarding handicap is the high rate of illiteracy which is decreasing yearly. Every second person can neither read nor write. Next to the inadequate school facilities, the problem of non-attendance looms large as an obstacle. Many of the children have to travel long distances and in rainy weather the muddy roads are impassable. Then the children are called upon to assist in the cultivation and transportation of the crops for sale at the markets.

5) Multiplicity of Churches

"The multiplicity of church denominations and the overlapping of their work is a basic obstacle to the growth of the Christian Movement in Jamaica."² Jamaica is over-churched. Almost every hill and valley is provided with churches and chapels. In one community of three-thousand, five hundred there are nineteen denominations and twenty church buildings. The total seating capacity of these

¹ Davis, op. cit., p. 36.

² Ibid., p. 39.

church buildings would accommodate far more than the whole population of that city. A small fraction of the church groups could meet the spiritual needs of that community, instead of having the many churches each with a handful of people.

6) Irresponsible Sects

Still other problems that confront the Church of Christ are emotional and irresponsible sects,¹ the African psychic heritage² which issues in witchcraft and devil-worship, and the sad fact that the churches cannot hold on to the youth.

d. Resources

It is common assumption that people living on an extremely low economic level do not have, and cannot be expected to have, the resources essential for supporting the true Church, but "the way of redemption which God has provided is essentially not too costly nor too heavy a burden to be carried by any of His children..."³ This principle is seen in the comparative success of the indigenous church in Jamaica among a people who are living on a subsistence economy. For more than one-half of the churches are actually

¹ Pocomania is a type of emotional religious expression derived from the African Myal cult.

² Cf. Williams, Joseph, Psychic Phenomena of Jamaica

³ Ibid., p. 51.

self-supporting, and some of them have been financially independent for over one hundred years. Some suggested means are given to raise the economic level and further strengthen the church.

1) Fertile Land

First among the natural resources which Jamaica possesses is a fertile land which can grow several crops in a single year. The Jamaican has a natural aptitude for farming and with some simple and practical instruction could secure a maximum return from the land. The government owns great tracts of unused land and is now carrying on the program of dividing these settlements into homestead sites for small farmers. This is a forward step in improving the economic stability of the people.

2) Utilization of Time

The unused time, almost one-half of the nation's potential earning power, could be turned into the production of home industries. This holds possibilities in improvement in diet, health, and home life. This leisure time could be utilized in teaching the natives how to read and write and thus increase prosperity.¹

3) Education

In the realm of education, the church has one of her most powerful instruments for progress and influence.

¹ Cf. Browne, J. Orde, Labour Conditions in the West Indies.

The five hundred church schools, staffed by church teachers, on the island are capable of molding thought and opinion in the coming generations. The children are given a sound academic training along with thorough religious instruction.

4) Sympathetic Government

The Christian message has also invaded the world of politics and the church in Jamaica works under a government "which reflects the Christian point of view and the high ethical and humanitarian principles"¹ of the gospel of Christ. Many government officials are men of Christian faith and character and lead public opinion in harmony with the church.

5) Racial Solidarity

Another unique resource of the Evangelical Church is the racial solidarity which exists. There is no legal or social distinction that would keep the colored man down. John Levo points out in his sketch of the church in the West Indies that:

There is a growing sense of race solidarity. Modern scientific inventions, the wireless, journalism, travel, education, have contracted the world to such dimensions that a West Indian knows what happens to his brother in Africa or America the day after the event....They envisage their race as bearing a universal yoke fastened on it by the white man....²

¹ Ibid., pp. 56 and 57.

² Levo, John, The Romantic Isles, pp. 79 and 80.

6) Location of Churches

Most of the church buildings and schoolhouses are well located and are great assets in view of the trends developing in Jamaica. The spacious grounds could well be used for playgrounds and athletic fields for organized sports. The school rooms could be used for adult education and social functions. Additional space could be remodeled for use as a center for youth recreation, a library, and community gatherings.

7) Visual Education

The average peasant's world is a visual world of imagination, sensations, and emotion. The approach to such a world is not logic or a moral appeal but the door is the eye which leads to the imagination. Herein lies the power of visual education with the motion picture, drama, and human interest stories as its instrument. This education must be kept within the range of the Jamaican's experience and be a means of leading the Jamaican into new ways of living by providing an incentive. Several organizations¹ have put out films which have had a most beneficial effect. Some of the subjects which have been and should be developed are:

Soil Erosion	Venereal Diseases
Use of Idle Land	Youth Activities
Crop Rotation	Co-operatives
Mosquito Control	Child Labor
Prevention of Malaria	Savings and Thrift
Health of Children	Gospel Films
Training for Motherhood	Industrial Films

¹ Banter Educational Cinema Experiment, and the Carnegie Corporation of New York.

8) Spiritual Traits¹

The richest of all resources seems to lie in the spiritual traits of the Jamaican. John Levo describes their spiritual endowment as follows:

One notices an immense vigor of reality in their faith. For practical purposes they are in the position of early Christians. The great revelation of God incarnate...is not much more than a hundred years away from them. As a Christian race they are not old enough to need intellectual verifications; that Jesus is there with them is an enthralling fact, intensely and emotionally perceived.

The barrier between the seen and unseen world is to them transparent. They are possessed of a sort of democratic mysticism, which makes earth and heaven interpenetrate and become one country.²

The fact that well over one-half of her churches are self-supporting shows that in the lowest economic levels of society this can be accomplished.

e. The Future Jamaican Church

The main task of the church in Jamaica is to share in the economic and social reconstruction of society, for only in that way can indigenous Christianity thrive and penetrate the whole life of the Jamaican. This can be done by a careful study of the nature of social and economic forces, the relation of these forces to the people, and their relation to the program of the church.

¹ Cf. Hammond, S. A., *Education in the Windward and Leeward Islands*, 1939.

² Levo, *op. cit.*, pp. 59-65.

As far as possible, the church should cooperate with the government for the uplift and strengthening of the people. There is a need for the readjustment of the church program to meet the changing needs on the island. Finally a plan and policy needs to be determined by which churches of Jamaica can help to solve these common problems.

5. Puerto Rico¹

This mountainous island in the Greater Antilles is only one hundred miles long and thirty-five miles wide. It has an area of over three thousand square miles and a population of 1,850,000. The birth-rate in this "problem child of the Caribbean" is thirty-nine and four tenths per thousand, and the death rate, twenty and three tenths per thousand, which gives a national increase of twenty per thousand.²

a. The Evangelical Church in Puerto Rico

Thirty-six percent of all the Evangelical Churches in this mountainous island are self-supporting and a healthy interdenominational spirit of cooperation prevails. Instead of having several different denominations in one community, the mission boards have met and assigned areas to different churches, and in this way the work is more evenly distributed.

¹ Cf. U. S. Tariff Commission, The Foreign Trade of Latin America.

² Cf. Hill and Descartes, An Economic Background for Agricultural Research in Puerto Rico, p. 13.

In this thesis which dwells on the importance of the indigenous church, it is well to keep the whole truth in its proper balance.

Financial independence is not the only test, nor, indeed the chief test, of the vitality of a church of Christ. Scores of Puerto Rican Churches, at present helped from abroad, are a living proof of the possibility of a deep religious experience and Christian witness.¹

b. Obstacles

1) A Foreign Church

With the overthrow of Spanish control, the life of the Puerto Rican underwent a great change. Everything was reorganized on the pattern of that of the United States. It was just at this change that the Evangelical Church entered. The church was accepted as part of the transformation as a foreign institution subsidized by American funds.

One of the most stubborn obstacles in the path of church independence and growth is the identification of the Evangelical Church in the minds of Puerto Ricans with the power and wealth which attended the establishment of United States' institutions in the island.²

It is the dilemma, again, of a foreign-born church developed under different conditions, bringing high standards of living to a low economic situation.

2) Poverty

Many consider economic poverty to be the church's greatest problem. A survey revealed that one unemployed

¹ Davis, J. Merle, The Church in Puerto Rico's Dilemma, p. 23.

² Ibid., pp. 57-58.

family was actually being supported by their one hen. The family exchanged the daily egg at the country store for enough rice to keep them alive for that day.¹ This has led pastors and missionaries in Puerto Rico to assume that the church is too poor to support its own pastor and the church members have come to rely upon the mission boards for supplying their needs.

On the other hand is the problem of the unsuccessful withdrawing, by some mission boards, of the subsidies to the churches. A sudden cutting off of finances without any preparation is fatal. It has proved disastrous, for either the pastor's salary has been cut or the evangelist's work reduced, and in time the outreach of the church is reduced. Withdrawal is safe only after systematic instruction in Christian stewardship is given and the reorganization of church finance and new methods for giving have been introduced.

3) Loss of Youth

This loss of youth is a problem common in other lands. One basic difficulty is the church's own negative attitude to young people's activities. It gives the appearance of frowning upon nearly everything that youth enjoys. The acuteness of this problem is seen from the statement of a youth leader in one of the churches. He said that we

¹ Ibid., p. 59. The result of a survey made by the members of the Sociological Department of the University of Puerto Rico.

find it difficult to hold boys and young men in the Sunday Schools and churches. Sunday basketball, baseball, and dancing are too strong an attraction and keep young people out of the church. We have tried to introduce ping pong and checkers, but they are not interested. The church forbids Sunday recreation, excursions, and dances, but young people ignore church. No serious effort has been made to substitute recreation to take place of these others.

We need positive activities to attract them and counterbalance the negative attitude of the church toward nearly all forms of popular recreation. A community center, carefully organized and planned and skillfully directed would do much to hold young people within church.¹

4) Rural Church Training

The seminary graduate is not fitted to handle a rural parish. How can a man schooled in homiletics, church history, and systematic theology serve a community where half of the people cannot read, one-third are unemployed, four-fifths are in debt, and the rest are squatters. Such a situation calls for specialized training.

c. Methods to Church Independence

Church independence is a matter of three things: education, discipline, and inner growth.

It calls for conviction, determination, and patience. It requires organization; cooperation and experimentation. Above all, it is based upon the surrender of oneself and all one's possessions to divine control.

¹ Ibid., p. 69.

Here is the key of self-support of a church, and without this spiritual experience, economic and sociological surveys, and indigenous methods will not succeed.¹

The methods to be used have been explained before in this thesis and need only be mentioned. They are: utilizing the land, directing leisure time, training in church finance, forming committees to study the problems, and the making of the church the center of recreational, social, and community life.

6. Brazil

a. Country and People

Its 3,275,000 square miles present a variety of climates, physical features, cultures, and industries. The cosmopolitan nature of the population is unique for in Brazil is found a new species of man. The typical Brazilian in blood, psychology, and outlook is a fusion of Portuguese, Negro, and Indian. This racial fusion is not only marked by an absence of race prejudice and discrimination, but it has endowed the native with a rich personality, an individuality, and nationalism all his own. Merle Davis has given a very able picture of the Brazilian's nature in his book How the Church Grows in Brazil.

The Brazilian is naturally religious, strongly emotional, and led by his appetites. He is quickly

¹ Ibid., p. 69.

aroused and can be lion-like in physical courage and fearless in religious witness. He tends to be superstitious and easily attracted to the occult and to spiritism. The Brazilian is an optimist and an opportunist. The nation is mobile and elastic, with its eyes upon the future.¹

b. Economic Setting²

Brazil is one of the largest countries of undeveloped resources in the world. Her forests possess the greatest reserves of iron ore in the world, and her rivers with their mighty potential power await to be harnessed for industry. Brazil leads the world in the production and export of coffee with cotton and cocoa next in order. Industry has not even begun to tap its vast natural resources.

c. The Church and Rural Areas

The nation ranks with India and China, in being one of the three outstanding rural nations in the world. The Church can point with pride to powerful, effective, indigenous churches in the cities and urban areas, but it has not solved the problem of the rural church. The sparsely settled areas of the hinterland are virtually untouched.

"The rigors of itinerating, the isolation and social and cultural hardships for his family, and his craving for professional stimulus all stand in the way of (the trained Evangelical Pastor) accepting a rural charge."³ Great

¹ Davis, J. Merle, How the Church Grows in Brazil, p. 18.

² Cf. International Yearbook of Agriculture, 1936.

³ Davis, op. cit. p. 68.

distances, the difficulty of travel, and the poverty of the people present the cause of Christ in an apparently insoluble predicament. The secular professions--medicine, law, higher education--meet this problem by neglecting the rural area and concentrating in urban centers. But the church cannot evade the responsibility in this way. With an adjusted program, the church can penetrate and meet the needs of rural life.

d. Growth of the Church

"The Evangelical Church in Brazil is probably growing faster than in any other country in the world."¹ There are several reasons for this.

1) Strong Foundations

The foundations of the churches laid two generations ago by the missionaries were very solid. As the population colonized and migrated to different sections, they spread the gospel with them. This might be illustrated in the hill-country farmer who carries the gospel along with his produce to market to give to his buyers.

2) A Man's Church

The Evangelical Church in Brazil is a 'man's church.' The activities are carried on mostly by men whereas in other lands the women play a more predominant part. The brains, time, and leadership of men are heavily drawn upon to assist the pastor to carry out his work. Men are drawn to the

¹ Ibid., p. 72.

Christian message because Brazil is a man's world, with conditions not unlike our "Wild West" days. The power of the cattle king is enormous and the plight of the peon is terrible. They live in a world of injustice and disillusionment and are hungry for decency and kindness. The women find refuge in the Roman Catholic Church with its sympathetic Virgin and confessions, but the men hold in contempt the corrupt priesthood and long for spiritual realism. The call of a man's Christ as a Saviour from personal sins and the promise of supplying the dynamic moral power comes with great force. An American missionary was visiting a Pentecostal congregation in which a thousand Brazilians

..battered by the storms of the economic, social, and moral order, joined in the refrain of the gospel hymn, "From Sinking Sands He Lifted Me, From shades of night to plains of light, O Praise His name, He lifted me." Over and over the congregation sang this refrain. They paid tribute to the Divine Love which had saved them from the reality of the quicksands with which they were all familiar.¹

Then the missionary realized why the church was growing so rapidly.

3) Emotionalism

Another reason for the expansion of the church is the emotionalism of the people. The typical Brazilian has a warmth of feeling which is a national trait. This emotionalism in religion is characterized by a

¹ Ibid., p. 81.

...complete absorption in the service; a desire to participate in the service; a losing of the self-consciousness in the hearty response to song, prayer and exhortation; a natural behavior in the church; and a reverence and evidenced emotion when stirred.¹

They have a way of personalizing the truth whether it is found in sermon or song and responding heartily. The churches which are recognizing the emotional inheritance of this people and giving a full opportunity for expression are the fastest growing churches in the nation.

4) Social Phenomenon

Church growth is a social phenomenon, for the low, underprivileged class are entering a world of relationships and fellowship which they never knew existed. The church has become a center around which they can organize their otherwise drab, monotonous lives. Is it any wonder that now that they have something to live for that they go all out for Christ and His Church? The glow of their salvation is seen in the contagious way in which they witness to others of what has happened to them. The pastors are given a series of intensive Bible courses which are simple and practical with a strong emphasis on personal evangelism.

5) Parent Training

The church emphasizes the training of parents in the essentials of health. The greatest problem of the nation is that of its health.

¹ Ibid., p. 82.

6) Open-Air Evangelism

Another reason for the unusual growth of the church is their use of open-air evangelism as a method of getting the message out. These meetings attract many non-evangelicals who would be forbidden to enter a Protestant Church. They are attracted and stay and listen to the gospel.

The cultured, highly-trained Brazilian rarely attends an Evangelical Church. The pastors have not the mental caliber to reach them. The problem of adapting the Evangelical message to the intelligentsia was met by Dr. Miguel Rizzo in a unique way. Dr. Rizzo is the pastor of the Trinity Presbyterian Church of São Paulo with a membership of 1,350. By carrying evangelical Christianity to the public by unconventional methods, he has been able to bring the cardinal truths of Christianity to thousands who would never enter a Protestant Church. Dr. Rizzo said:

I noticed that many people never attended any church; church going was too dry and uninteresting. I studied the mentality of such people...and found that they crave reality in religion. We have reality in Christianity and my message is positive Christianity. I never attack; I construct. I speak in theatres, not churches. The meetings are announced as an "Institute of Religious Culture," not as a series of evangelistic meetings. There are ten lectures, two a week, and attendance is by means of tickets. I enroll an inner group of those who will attend whole course; and give each member of the group five tickets to each lecture to give their friends. In a recent series, eight hundred were enrolled as regular members of the institute.

I usually start with the Sermon on the Mount and from that develop a central line of Christian teaching. I lead up to communion with God as a Spirit and as a reality in men's lives. People see bad persons transformed, and they can understand that. I try to get people in touch first with Christ rather than with a church.¹

Dr. Rizzo preaches on themes that would attract the cultured mind such as psychology, nationalism, and sociology and relates these themes to the reality of the Christian life.²

e. Church Problems

Brazil has most of the problems that are common to other Latin American countries. Several of the distinctive ones will be mentioned.

1) Roman Catholic Opposition

Rarely is this opposition open; it is usually underground and indirect, nevertheless powerful. It endeavors to poison public opinion and to create an atmosphere of tension and antagonism.

Although freedom of worship and ownership of property is guaranteed by the government,³ the Roman Catholic Church does all it can to block the appointments of Protestants to government positions.⁴

¹ Ibid., p. 100.

² Cf. Braga and Grubb, The Republic of Brazil.

³ Article 72, paragraph 3, of the Constitution of the Republic of Brazil, 1891, reads: "All individuals and religious confessions may perform publicly and freely their worship, associating themselves together and acquiring property in accordance with the provisions of common right."

⁴ Davis, op. cit. p. 142.

Local Parish Priests exert a pressure against the Evangelical Movement by condemning Protestantism as heretical and warning people of excommunication if they enter a Protestant Church or are friendly with Evangelicals. The further into the interior the Protestant goes, the more open and severe becomes the opposition. This is because the interior churches are isolated and unattached and they have no civil influence.

2) Spiritism

The other great distinctive problem is the growing influence of spiritism. The Esoteric Circle of Communion of Thought numbers fifty-five thousand in Sao Paulo alone. It is estimated that spiritualist societies have ten million people in their membership. The racial background of the African Negro, with his voo-dooism and animistic worship prepares him for spiritualism. His emotional nature also makes him fertile ground for the mystery of the spirit world.

Many members of pastorless rural churches because of their lack of training are exchanging "the barren program of leaderless Evangelical groups for the more vital and exciting activities of a spiritualist society."¹

f. Looking to the Future

The chief problem of the Brazilian Evangelical

¹ Ibid., p. 144.

Church is not the question of self-support, but rather the harmonious adjustment of the church to its environment. The suggestions that are made are only to remedy the distinctive problems in the Brazilian Church.

1) Migrations and the Church¹

This phenomenon is not only inherent in the psychology of the people but the inevitable result of the development of the resources. The church should be fully aware of the movements and their tendencies and with this information map out a parallel advance into the territories which the government is opening.

2) Emotionalism

The program of the Evangelical Church should include a channel for the expression of the Brazilian natural emotion. European and American people are comparatively unemotional people and their music, ritual and order of service are not adapted to such a people. The Pentecostal Church has utilized this powerful trait in service for Christ. "Instead of repressing and ignoring emotionalism, it has recognized it and harnessed it to the program of the church... in music, in witness, in prayer, in evangelism, and in giving."² Doubtless, there have been extremes and excesses, but on the whole it has been very beneficial.

¹ Cf. Maurette, M., Some Social Aspects of the Economic Position of Brazil.

² Davis, Loc. cit., p. 155.

Brazil presents a great challenge to sincere, intelligent followers of Christ. The opportunity is great and only great measures taken by great Christians can suffice to meet this challenge.

C. Qualifications of the Missionary in Putting Indigenous Principles in Operation

1. Character Traits of the Missionary

It is absolutely essential that the missionary be grounded in the indigenous principle and schooled in the application of it. He is to be a planter of churches and not a pastor of a local flock. Further than this, he must have the character and spirituality to instill effectively this idea within the hearts of the native Christians. His own basic philosophy of life and motives which actuate him determine the success of the indigenous plan. Gifts and graces which the missionary should exhibit are:

...a mind in harmony with the mind of the Master, a clear vision of the missionary calling, a deliberate renunciation of every base method for its fulfillment, a will to ensure the autonomous life of the native church, and a reasonable faith in the Holy Spirit.¹

The missionary should portray Christian humility and tolerance even as his Lord and Saviour did while here on earth. Christ took the form of a servant and so must the

¹ Ritchie, op. cit., p. 88.

one become who has gone forth with the gospel. The attitude should be, not as the "boss," but rather as a co-laborer with the native. This can be accomplished by seeking to get the native's point of view and thus, understanding him. The missionary should endeavor to get the national to think for himself and as he offers his own judgments and ideas, even though they may be inferior, every effort should be made to utilize them. The great tendency is to give orders and get the tasks accomplished quicker, but that does not develop the native to be able to do it for himself.

There is a need for tolerance in the missionary's character. A tolerance that will realize that the native may do things differently but just as effectively. It is a sobering thought that "The native worker and pastor tend to reflect the stature of the missionary with whom they work."¹

This humility and tolerance should carry over into the missionary's economic life. He should be willing to step down from a level of economic superiority and live like his native brethren. This means he will gladly forego the convenience of living in a foreign-made and styled house in order to live in quarters that are comparable to that of the natives. It is more likely that the nationals would more readily visit him under the latter living conditions.

¹ Davis, J. Merle, New Buildings on Old Foundations, p. 212.

The missionary would be silently preaching that a fairly high economic level is not essential to spiritual vitality and growth.

2. Recognition of the True Nature of His Commission

The full and complete mission of the missionary is not merely to save souls from hell and start them on the way to heaven; that is only a partial implication of the Great Commission. The Christian program includes bringing men to a saving knowledge of Christ and gathering the converts into a Christian Church and training them to lead others to Christ. The only way to perpetuate the gospel is to plant churches which will be rallying centers to which the converts can come to gain spiritual vitality and renewal; otherwise, the "new born babes" with just a knowledge of their salvation and nothing else will relapse, maybe to revert to paganism. He "should never forget that the basic purpose of the mission is to found and develop the indigenous church."¹

A true conception of this calling will lead missionaries in their preparation for it. It will mean a more thorough and more-widely-varied educational experience for he will be called upon to face and solve all types of problems. This will include a knowledge of the native language,

¹ Loc. cit.

anthropology, translation work, Christian Education material, building, medicine, and local and national law.

Instead of evangelizing one particular area and settling down and becoming involved in the entanglements of the pastorate, the man inflamed with the indigenous idea will not regard any one place as permanent but will work out from that place as a base of operation for such a time as the surrounding area may require. No local group will absorb all of his time and interest, but he will multiply himself by evangelizing and planting churches and stimulating interest in many places. The pastoral duties will be delegated to the church, and the missionary will seek to lay deep foundations for the Christian Church by training native leaders in the Word and in the organization and administration of the church. He will attempt to draw the native out and force him to use his own resources.

The missionary's task is to plant and establish churches.

It is desirable that he recognize the true nature of his calling, that he accept it, and that he take the wider view without which he may not only fail, but also be a hindrance to his fellow-workers.¹

3. The Ability to Organize the Converts

The missionary should realize that because the church is an organism it must be an organization in order

¹ Ritchie, op. cit., p. 95.

to be operative. Ecclesiastical machinery does not inevitably quench the Spirit and lead to a formalistic ritual and dead religion, but rather it forms a body through which the life can flow. Every group of people with a common objective must organize in order to function and get the highest results from their unity.

It has been observed that the main reason why John Wesley's work has survived as contrasted to George Whitefield's is because Wesley organized to conserve results and insure permanence. One was not any the less Spirit-filled than the other. So the missionary should have some definite convictions about the necessity of organizing his converts so they can benefit by the fellowship of others and work effectively for the Kingdom of God.

He should be prepared in a practical way to aid the new churches. "The new missionary should go to the field prepared to lead discussion groups and mission boards upon principles and practices of church management, finance and self-support."¹

4. An Intelligent Faith in the Holy Spirit

One of the distinguishing characteristics of the indigenous church principle is the reliance of the workers upon the Spirit and the confidence that He can work in the

¹ Davis, op. cit., p. 213.

lives of new converts.

Since this is so, it is absolutely essential that the missionary have an intelligent, reasonable, and genuine faith in the Holy Spirit. This faith cannot be a vague idea received by "tradition from the forefathers"; neither can it be the fanatical, unwholesome mysticism which attributes every act to the "leading of the Spirit." But it should be a Biblical, sane leadership which makes real the tremendous need and creates the desire to meet that need. The missionary who is yielded to the Spirit, and who uses every available resource at hand while moving forward, will find that he is being led of God to do a constructive work.

5. Summary of Qualifications of a Missionary

The essential qualities for the particular work of applying the indigenous church principles are as follows:

- a. Humility to be a servant to foreigners for Christ's sake.
- b. A clear conviction that he is called to plant churches.
- c. The realization that he is required to organize these elements into a living organism able to carry its own functions with divine aid.
- d. Faith that the Spirit will not fail him nor his converts in guidance, sustaining grace, and divine wisdom to meet all emergencies.¹

¹ Ritchie, op. cit., p. 106.

D. Summary

The indigenous church theory is workable as seen in the national churches of the Latin American countries mentioned. It was more successful in some sections than in others. This is due to the land fertility, economic level of the people and the history of the people which has left its mark.

Probably the greatest obstacle to the progress of the church is the poverty of the people. There are many causes for this, but the result is the assumption by the nationals, and the missionaries themselves, that they cannot financially support a church of their own.

One of the church's biggest problems is the adaptation of Christianity to the rural environment of the people. It needs to be indigenous, not the transplanting of an American or European Christian Church. H. C. Kraemer has this to say about the superimposition of northern and western Christianity upon the people: It is necessary to use the native customs, habits, and traditions in instilling the Christian message. These indigenous forms, while not always the best, are invariably the most serviceable to the Christian life. These are their natural vehicles of life-expression. Communities and social groups express themselves best in forms congenial to their temperaments and traditions rather than through

imposed alien forms.¹

It is an encouraging thing to note that all of these countries have the resources within themselves to lift the social and economical level of the people and thus enable the church to be a native, self-supporting institution.

¹ Cf. Kraemer, H. C., Christian Message for Non-Christian World, pp. 421 and 422.

CHAPTER III

THE CULTURAL AND RELIGIOUS SITUATION

IN LATIN AMERICA

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A. Introduction

The missionary himself, in the final analysis, is the strategic factor in the success or failure of the indigenous church. He must be of the highest character and as well trained as possible. Not only does he need to know something of the historical and social background of the people to whom he is going, but he must be acquainted with their sociological functions in order to minister effectively.

Having a knowledge of what the typical Latin personality is like, what its likes and dislikes are, and what it responds to, will lead him to adapt his message so that it may enter within and bear fruit. The Latin American soul will be seen to be one which is charged with the potentialities of greatness. Yet residing within the personality are the seeds of indifference and sensuality that will lead him to ruin.

It must be realized that there is a vast difference between the two types of Romanism in North and South America. In the northern continent Catholicism is at its best in

doctrine and social service because of the great influence of Protestantism and because its source is the land of Luther. South American Catholicism is rooted in the Iberian Peninsula whose high Pyrenees Mountains acted as a wall to keep back the influence of the Reformation. Then it had been busy driving out the Moors for several hundred years and North African Christianity had taken over many of the characteristics of the religion of Islam and had fused this combination into a fanatical Catholic Spain.

The philosophy of this Spanish Christianity must be seen in its union with the Latin personality. Only then can the Evangelical missionary begin to wedge in the message of the Cross.

B. Character and Soul of the Latin American People

The predominant strain in the Latin American race today is Spanish; and it must be remembered that the Spaniards came from the stock of the Moors of North Africa. "The Spaniard has been called an eternal African,"¹ and the stamp of Africa has been imprinted on the rolling pampas and the mountainous cordilleras of Spanish America.

1. Individualism

Perhaps the outstanding characteristic of the Latin

¹ Mackay, John, The Other Spanish Christ, p. 4.

American is his intense individuality. He feels that he is the born equal of any man. Carlos Bunge, distinguished Argentine sociologist says that this individualism is really a form of Spanish arrogance which feels it must do everything independent of others. He goes on to say that "laziness, melancholy, and arrogance...are so intimately related that they form a compact, homogeneous whole."¹

This trait is revealed in art in the way their masterpieces are filled, not with quiet pastoral scenes, but with dynamic and virile men and women in action. It gives a sense of insecurity and causes great extremes in his emotional set up. In turn, this innate self-centeredness feels that it must fasten itself onto some interest that will act as a channel for expression and this desire is usually directed toward the Church or the State.

He does not crave material possessions to hoard, but rather to spend lavishly and so that he will not have to work for his living. "The ideal of every Spaniard is to become pensioned after a few years work, and, if possible, before he has worked."²

This characteristic is seen in the spirit of their intense nationalism. The Argentine schoolboy recites the following in his list of duties to his nation:

¹ Bunge, Carlos, Nuestra America, p. 200.

² Mackay, op. cit., p. 10.

In the veins of no human being does there flow more generous blood than in our own; in the annals of the world, the origin of no nationality is more resplendent with a more brilliant aureole than that which encircles the brow of the Argentine Republic. I am proud of my origin, my race, of my country.¹

There are several things that this innate self-interest renders it difficult for the Latin American to do. First of all, he greatly lacks in social instinct, not in the sense of being friendly and socially-minded, but when the "warm spontaneous glow of sociability passes into the cold and rigid limitations imposed by union in a common enterprise,"² he rebels for he dislikes to be bound to another by obligation. Then it makes it difficult for him to cooperate in politics, business or athletics.

Then, it shows itself in the desire to have power over others. There is a "bureaucratic cannibalism" that will go to any lengths to secure a government position.

Lastly, this individualism leads to an exaggerated sense of dignity and horror which has the tendency never to acknowledge a mistake. Once a position has been stated it must be adhered to. This makes cooperation difficult between nations and between groups within one nation.

2. Predominance of Passion

Another characteristic trait of the Iberian soul is

¹ Warshaw, Jacob, The New Latin America, p. 180.

² Mackay, op. cit., p. 8.

the predominance of feeling over reason and will. History reveals that almost every conquest of that race has not resulted as the outcome of a calm reasoning process but has been "the volcanic impulse produced by the sudden explosion of a dominant sentiment."¹ This is exemplified in their literature in the fictitious Don Quixote, whose greatness consisted in his reckless loyalties to ideas which momentarily possessed him.

A people in whom this trait is to be found would tend to give a personalized expression to their ideals. This helps to account for the Latin American's love for the Virgin. To him she is the epitome of youthfulness and purity. Dr. John Mackay has made a penetrating statement concerning the Virgin and the Latin's conception of sin.

The passionate idealization of the Virgin...was possible for the Spanish people, in the last analysis, because of their essentially unethical view of sin. It is his inherent lack of a sense of sin which opened the way for the creation of a female sinless figure to whom the Spanish religious consciousness later returned for personal security here and hereafter.²

When this passion for doing and expressing is not wedded to a noble theme, the Iberian becomes a man of base appetites. He lives for the sensual satisfactions of the present and has no intelligent regard for the future.

¹ Ibid., p. 12.

² Ibid., p. 14.

3. Artistic Temperament

This people, generally speaking, possesses a keen artistic sense which is seen in their love for beauty and demand for symmetry. The architecture of the buildings, the well-kept public parks and the adorned plazas bespeak this trait. "As for the arts, music takes first place in the affections of the people."¹ The plainsman with his guitar, and the Mexican peasant make "out of poverty, poetry; out of suffering, song."²

4. Peculiar Sense of Justice

Some of the greatest jurists of all time have been Spaniards, and this is no coincidence. The native Latin has a high sense of abstract justice over and above a feeling of tender sympathy. It is true that justice must prevail, but after justice is established, the door is opened wide to clemency. For the concrete sense of man renders the personality superior to practical justice. Mercy can be shown because of friendship and this leads naturally into one of the glories, or curses, of the Latin American soul--that of personal mindedness. Personal relationships are much more important than business relationships. Making friendship a business always greatly pleases him.

¹ Hulbert, Winifred, Latin American Backgrounds, p. 154.

² Brenner, Anita, Idols Behind Altars, p. 176.

5. Catholicity

Another distinctive quality of the South American seems, at a superficial perusal, to be a contradiction of a trait already mentioned. It is that of Catholicity or a desire to have unity in the universe. "He absorbs the universe, individualizing it, remaking it after his own image, imposing upon it his conception of abstract, undiversified unity."¹

History bears out the reality of this truth. Father Vitoria was the founder of International Law.² Simon Bolivar advocated a Federation of American Nations. Brazil today, in a large sense, is free from the curse of race hatred and for the past decades has been amalgamating its many nationalities into a cosmic race and the outcome has been very satisfactory.

6. Summary

The life of the average North American is filled with ceaseless activity and a sense of civic duty. Success is evaluated according to material prosperity.

The Hispana-American is a man of leisure, is idealistic, theoretical, innately courteous and altruistic.

The Anglo-Saxon is practical...the Latin is theoretical...he likes to discuss, with the Latin American, kindness, consideration for the other person, is an important quality...the Latin American always has time for friends. They are the most important element in

¹ Mackay, op. cit., p. 19.

² Loc. cit.

his life. He is never too busy to attend to them.¹

In the final evaluation, it must be remembered that the Latin American's character is such a fusion of nationalities and is so complex that it defies any real analysis.² The above conclusions have their value only as generalizations.

It can readily be seen how these native traits of the South American Iberian must be taken into consideration in adapting the Christian message to them and instilling the indigenous ideal. Their emotions must be channeled in the purposes of the Gospel. Great care should be taken in instructing them correctly and clearly. There is a need for an appeal to their heroic qualities. Preaching must emphasize the true nature of sin--not a sentimental emotion alone, but the violating of God's holiness. Latin Americans have the potentialities of becoming truly great Christians.

C. The Philosophy of Spanish Christianity

It is a well known fact that Roman Catholicism has exerted a tremendous influence on the Latin American peoples. Therefore, an attempt to interpret Catholicism as a religious system with reference to its naturalization in South America will be most helpful.

¹ Inman, S. G., Latin America, Its Place in World Life, p. 16.

² Cf. Rycroft, W. Stanley, On This Foundation, p. 41.

1. The Latin American's Conception of Christ

When the purifying fires of the Reformation swept over Europe, they never had a real opportunity to work in Spain. The Inquisition was quick and thorough in its work in that unhappy land and promptly quenched the fires of reform. The Iberian Peninsula was, therefore, virtually unaffected in its religious life, and it was Spain who poured forth conquistadores, explorers, and priests into the southern portion of the western hemisphere. This is a partial explanation of the spiritual and moral inferiority of Latin American Romanism to North American Romanism.

a. The Andean Christ in Bethlehem

Jesus Christ is visualized as a copper-colored king who, when he came from North Africa with the Virgin Mother, was soon outshone by the Virgin. Ricardo Rojas describes the South American Trinity from an image which belonged to a colonial chapel:

The Jehovah of the ages is a Christ; the dove of the spirit is a Christ; the Christ who fuses them into a single figure is a Creole of the Spanish type, and the Virgin whom the Three Divine Persons crown with simultaneous symmetrical gesture is a pretty Peruvian Chola with swarthy face, high cheek-bones and loose black hair.¹

b. The Spanish Christ from North Africa in Cuzco

Above the door of a colonial church are the words, "Come unto Mary all ye that labor and are heavy laden and she

¹ Rojas, Ricardo, The Invisible Christ, pp. 117-118.

will give you rest." The Christ who came to the New World was born in North Africa, for the Christ of Bethlehem and Calvary "went to prison in Spain, while another who took His name embarked with the Spanish Crusaders for the New World."¹ The living and life-changing Christ is a stranger to Latin Americans.

A sense of tragedy and a passion for immortality are the very warp and woof of Spanish religion. These two things have profoundly influenced the Spanish conception of Christ. Christ is viewed as a tragic victim and art depicts Him as a bruised, bloody and tortured image. Not only is He the dying Saviour; He is the recumbent Christ.

This Spanish Christ who has never lived, black as the mantle of the earth, lies horizontal and stretched out like a plain, without soul and without hope, with closed eyes facing heaven...²

The details of Christ's earthly life are of little importance, nor are they known. "Christ is known in Latin America as either the helpless babe in arms or the dead man on the cross."³ He is a purely supernatural being whose humanity has little ethical bearing on ours. The Spanish Christ is the revived Docetic Christ of the ancient Gnostics.

c. The Ethical Impact of the Spanish Christ

The Spanish religious passion is not so much for forgiveness and regeneration as it is for immortality. Its

¹ Mackay, op. cit., p. 95.

² Ibid., p. 97.

³ Rycroft, op. cit., p. 60.

great fear is death, not sin. The motivation that drove Ponce de Leon over raging seas and through steaming jungles was his quest for the fountain of perpetual youth which would keep one from the dark valley of death. To doubt a happy life beyond the grave is to commit a mortal sin. God's benevolence and mercy makes this possible regardless of the deeds of the individual. Romanism in Latin America then is an ecclesiastical system whose emphasis is on outward conformity; it does not have any relation to life itself.¹ What is lacking, says Rojas, is the "interiorization of Christianity as a necessity of conscience" as in the case of Augustine.² Unamuno, the great Spanish scholar, and Bunge affirm that Spanish Romanism has never succeeded in awakening a consciousness of sin. Bunge says that "Spanish Catholicism was not really Christian-- it was an anti-Christian Catholicism."³

The faith that would be produced from such a religious conception would be utterly lacking in any rational content. Blind faith in the authority and infallibility of the Church is the only assurance of a happy immortality. To think for one's self has been considered the sin against the Holy Ghost."⁴

¹ Ibid., p. 59.

² Ibid., p. 62.

³ Bunge, op. cit., p. 93.

⁴ Mackay, op. cit., p. 100.

The ritual is looked upon as possessing magical powers. The Lord's Supper is interpreted as a magic formula and all who partake of the elements shall live forever. Christ is seen as the dispenser of immortal life through the sacraments, but not as the Lord of life to whose influence and love the mind and soul submit here and now.

South American Romanism has passed from aesthetics to religion hurdling ethics and its responsibilities. The pageantry at any religious center during holy week is colorful and dramatically presented with pious men and women groaning and wailing all of Good Friday. But when pealing bells denote the resurrection of Christ from the dead, the populace rises with him...to attend the first bull-fight of the season!¹

A Christ known in life as an infant and in death as a corpse, over whose helpless childhood the Virgin Mother presides....a Virgin Mother, who by not tasting death, became the Queen of Life, that is the Christ and that is the Virgin who came to America! He came as Lord of Death and of the life that is to be; she came as Sovereign Lady of the life that now is.²

d. The Creole Christ

The Spanish Christ has been so "South-americanized" that He has lost His humanity. "It is the picture of a Christ who was born and lived but never died."³ The New Testament

¹ Cf. ibid., p. 102.

² Loc. cit.

³ Ibid., p. 110.

portrays a living Christ who worked, healed, preached and comforted aching hearts. It is because Latin Americans are ignorant of the New Testament that they are unacquainted with God's Christ. Christ has lost prestige as a helper in the daily affairs of life and has been neglected in place of the Virgin. The saints, also, are considered more approachable than He and the "ordinary worshipper is a practical polytheist whose pantheon is presided over by Our Lady."¹

Ricardo Rojas, who has already been quoted, describes a popular conception of Christ today. "Christ," he says, "has been made to appear as an archetype of beggars, a kind of human pariah, a footstool for everybody's feet, a compendium of miseries and a paradigm of indignities."² This dehumanized Christ is brought back to life as a fetish. Myths and relics have been produced which are supposed to embody and impart virtue.

A modern fetish is the attempt to convert Christ into the Sacred Heart and worship it. The name of Jesus became a fetish also. The poet, Dario, in his autobiography recalls his grandmother instructing him on Holy Cross day to repeat the name "Jesus" a thousand times in order to scare off Satan. This was ended with:

¹ Ibid., p. 113.

² Rojas, op. cit.

Satan avaunt!
 For me you cannot daunt,
 Because on Holy Cross day,
 I "Jesus" a thousand times did say!¹

f. Summary

The message needed for South America is one in which the reality of sin is emphasized. For the confessional makes forgiveness easy, the granting of indulgences dulls the sense of sin, and the doctrine of a double sense of sin justifies deceit. The living Christ needs to be seen as the only mediator with salvation personally made operative by faith in Christ.

The inevitable accompaniment of Evangelical Christianity is that which has been termed the "peace of God." It is of value to determine to what degree Roman Catholicism has brought this peace to Central and South America. Representative men, citizens of their country, have spoken forcibly on this subject. The late Julian Teran, one-time President of the University of Argentina has made this succinct statement:

Latin America was never converted to Christianity at the Conquest and that even today the masses are not Christian, if by Christian we mean the creation of a moral foundation in a people rather than an emphasis on external ritual....²

¹ Dario, Ruben, The Life of Ruben Dario, pp. 27-28.

² Rycroft, op. cit., p. 61.

Dr. Francisco Calderon, one of the most famous South American writers, says that Latin American Catholicism is simply a social formula and an elegant rite impotent to create morality.¹ Alberto Cabero, eminent Chilean sociologist, in referring to this issue confessed that the highest peace which South American Catholicism can offer is that of an isolated monastery or complete retirement from the world and its problems.² Then, lastly, the heads of two Argentine universities have offered their criticism of Latin Catholicism, and that is, that it is lacking in the two constructive features of genuine Christianity. "It has lacked inward spiritual experience and it has lacked outward ethical expression."³

The President of Princeton Theological Seminary and a former missionary to South America, Dr. John Mackay, sums up the Southamericanization of the Spanish Christ by saying:

A Christ came to South America who has put in agreement with life, who has told them to accept it as it is, and things as they are, and truth as it appears to be. But the other?--He who makes men dissatisfied with life as it is, and things as they are, and tells them that, through him, life shall be transformed, the world overcome, and His followers put in agreement with reality, God, and truth? He wanted to come but His way was barred.⁴

¹ Cf. Mackay, op. cit., p. 118.

² Cf. Ibid., p. 119.

³ Ibid., p. 122.

⁴ Ibid., p. 124.

2. Roman Catholicism and the Indigenous Church Movement

Each has reacted to the other. That is, Catholicism has been affected by the growth of Evangelical Christianity in Latin America and Protestantism has been influenced by the Roman message.

Father Considine, of the Order of the Maryknoll Fathers, recently made a tour through all of the Latin American countries in an attempt to survey and evaluate the spiritual needs of that section of the world. He has published a very significant book entitled Call For Forty Thousand in which he has divulged his conclusions. He made the startling statement to his own church congregation that "Protestantism is increasing everywhere in Latin America,"¹ and that Catholicism must renew its drive to capture that continent. He went on to say that to meet this Protestant problem (the growth of Protestantism) they must send and train down there 40,000 priests and nuns as soon as possible. Already 11,000 men and women have been sent out by that order.

"By way of contrast the Protestant Church in a short space of time has developed an indigenous ministry in a number of countries with qualities of leadership."² Because of the opposition that the Catholic Church has given, the

¹ Latin American News Letter of the Committee on Cooperation in Latin America, February 1947, p. 1.

² Ibid., p. 3.

sincerity of many Evangelical believers has been tried and it has acted as the winnowing fan which drives off the chaff and leaves the wheat.

a. The Attitude of the Catholic Church

The imposing unity and the ecumenical nature of the Roman Catholic Church does not take kindly to a religious system which does not exhibit the same essential unity and inner cohesion.

The very nature of the indigenous church throws it open to the cunning tactics of the Romanists. After the Evangelical missionary, under God, brings a congregation into being and instructs them in the rudiments of the faith and church organization, he leaves them to God and to their own resources. Then the local parish priest suddenly becomes "interested" and visits the "abandoned" group. He sympathizes with them, preaches to them, and offers to act as their pastor if they will join his communion. Ever so gradually the authority of the church and the hierarchy supplants the authority of the Scriptures and the Holy Spirit in the individual soul, and the Catholic Church is further enlarged. This has happened on numerous occasions.

John Ritchie, pioneer missionary to Peru, recounts the procedure in the attitude of the Catholics toward the indigenous churches in that country. As soon as the Evangelical Church is formed, persecution begins. The

leaders are denounced as political agitators and jailed. The Protestants are denied their share of water for irrigation. In some parts, the land is owned by the community and is divided among the families year by year. In many instances the land is withheld from the Evangelicals by saying that they are no longer members of the community because they no longer take part in the drunken fiestas. Unscrupulous pressure is put on the Protestants to make them recant.¹

The Roman Catholic Church in Latin America is absolutely intolerant of Evangelical Christianity. It uses every means and tactic, legal and illegal, to oppose the truth. Many times the opposition is indirect, but it permeates the atmosphere with its disapproval and antagonism. It threatens its communicants with eternal damnation if they even listen to the Protestants. They do all that is within their power to block the appointment or election of Protestants to government positions, boycott Evangelical business projects, and the acceptance of student candidates and their academic awards are in jeopardy because of Evangelical connections.²

The violence of opposition to Evangelical Christianity grows as the coastal centers of population are left for the interior of the countries. Open opposition with priests hiring rowdies to break up street meetings and hurling stones themselves are common.³

¹ Ritchie, op. cit., p. 42.

² Cf. Davis, How the Church Grows in Brazil, p. 142.

³ Loc. cit.

b. The Influence of the Catholic Church

The Roman hierarchy has launched an insidious movement to convince government circles and the general public, especially church members, both Protestant and Catholic, that the greatest single obstacle to inter-American comity is the missionary movement of Evangelical Christianity in the Latin world.¹ Dr. George Howard, a citizen in Argentina and world traveler and religious leader, wanted to find out the truth of such a statement and he interviewed and corresponded with senators, judges, professors, students, authors and others. Many of these were Roman Catholics as well as Protestants and Dr. Howard discovered some significant trends of opinion and thought. What they said in effect was this:

So far from the indigenous Protestant Churches of Latin America being a hindrance to inter-American comity, their work has contributed to literacy, to the building of moral character, to patriotic loyalty, to cultural progress and to community welfare.²

Furthermore, many Protestant missionaries, men and women, have received high honors from governments for their cultural, civic and spiritual achievements.

Present-day Latin American Catholicism is utterly unequipped to deal with the cultural and spiritual situations of that land. The record of that Church, as North American Catholics well know, is referred to as one of the major

¹ Howard, George, Religious Liberty in Latin America, Foreward by Dr. John Mackay, p. viii.

² Loc. cit.

"spiritual derelictions in the history of Christianity."¹

The tactics of South American Catholicism which have been predominant for four centuries are emerging in North American life. Dr. John Mackay has called this characteristic "clericalism," or the organized political power of the hierarchy of the Roman Catholic Church to use religion for the worldly ends of the Church. Its political pressures and international schemes are becoming perfectly plain. This sinister emergence is the source of the lie that Protestant missions in Latin America are antagonistic to the Good Neighbor Policy.²

The Catholics of North America have asked the government to refuse permission to new Protestant missionaries to go to Latin America or allow veteran missionaries on furlough to return. "Roman Catholic emissaries to South America move freely, while passports for Protestant missionaries are hard to get."³ When this factor is related to the indigenous movement, it is seen as choking Evangelical Christianity at its source; for foreign missionaries are essential in bringing the transforming message and in instructing and organizing the converts so the work will be perpetuated.

¹ Ibid., p. VI.

² Cf. Ibid., p. XIV.

³ Ibid., p. 3.

The Bible is a closed book in Latin America because of the influence of Catholicism. This is fatal to the Evangelical church for that is their source of authority and spiritual sustenance. People are forbidden to read the Scriptures because it is said to be a dangerous book without a qualified interpreter. Yet within the Roman Church there are reform movements to return to the fundamentals. One of these men, Father Herberto Rohden, took a year to travel in Brazil and came back appalled at the great ignorance of the Scriptures. He said:

Protestants accuse us of prohibiting the reading of the Bible...we do not prohibit the reading of the Bible... but this lack of care in instructing the Catholic people in the supreme beauties of divine revelation is practically equivalent to a prohibition--it is "prohibitive ignorance."¹

Father Rohden also stated that out of a hundred Catholic laymen in Brazil, about an average of five knew the Scriptures, and out of a hundred Protestant laymen, about an average of five did not know the Scriptures. This sentence speaks for itself.²

There are many thinking people in Latin America who are Roman Catholics and not only severely criticize the Church, but look with favor on Evangelical workers who come to their country with a helpful, constructive message and

¹ Rycroft, op. cit., p. 116.

² Loc. cit.

humble Christian attitude. They welcome those who have a vision and are willing to live among them as servants rather than lords.

Such indications as these are signs of a hungry-hearted people and are encouragements to the outside world to "send the light."

D. Summary

It has been shown that above the Rio Grande the "blood of Northern Europe prevails and commercialism drives the wheels of society and every thought and act is weighed on the scales of practical rendition."¹ But below that river the softer tones of Spanish prevail, and the blood of Portugal and Spain blended with that of the Incas and the Aztecs has colored the society with a peculiar sedateness and reserve whose chief interest is in enjoying life.

Probably the outstanding trait of the Latin is his individualism with all of its fiery aggressiveness, impetuosity, graciousness, and love for abstract justice. There is a need to appeal to this character trait in adapting and presenting the Gospel and the indigenous church principle.

Latin Catholicism must be interpreted as seen in its history and its naturalization in South America. It can be understood in no other way.

¹ Townsend, Elvira, Latin American Courtesy, Foreward vii.

Although great emphasis is given to the death of the Lord Jesus Christ, Latin Romanism has very little effect upon the ethical life of the people. The gap between doctrine and deed has not been bridged; it should be added that the doctrine does not contain the inherent power to transform life. The words of South Americans on this subject are weighty because they are attempting to be objectively subjective. Representative men from all walks of life, both Protestant and Catholic, declare that Latin Catholicism is impotent to create and sustain morality.

The most influential religion in South America has a definite relationship to the Evangelical Movement. Its intolerant attitude which has led to opposition and antagonism has done much to hinder the progress of the gospel. Both direct and indirect methods have been and are used to coerce "heretics" to enter again the only place of salvation--the Catholic Church. Governments are influenced to legislate against any religion that contradicts the "true apostolic church" and in the interior where isolated towns are out of touch with the urban centers, the opposition is violent and physically dangerous.

Probably their most effective method to undermine Evangelical Christianity is seen in their international scheme of propaganda to convince the world that the presence of Protestant missionaries is the greatest single barrier to

inter-American comity. Interviews and correspondence with governmental heads, literary scholars, students and even Roman Catholics themselves have revealed this to be a false, superficial teaching.

The masses of the people in this "Land of the Closed Bible" are spiritually hungry and when the opportunity has been afforded them to receive the Scriptures and accept the Saviour, many have responded.

CHAPTER IV

GENERAL SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

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A. Restatement of the Problem

The aim of every missionary enterprise is to produce in the area of the world in which it is working, a strong national church which will be indigenous in the full orbed meaning of the word, that is, self-supporting, self-governing, and self-propagating. Although much progress has taken place in Latin America during the last two centuries, it is apparent and imperative that there be an improvement. Approximately seventy-five percent of the churches are dependent upon foreign funds. Latin America's Evangelical Church has not been as effective as it could be because of four outstanding reasons, taken individually and in combination. The majority of the missionaries who have gone to Latin America have not been imbued with this indigenous principle, and, consequently, the churches which they have formed and pastored themselves have not had the vision. The technique of the missionary affects the character and development of the new local church in its ability to grow and extend the gospel. Then the poverty of the masses has resulted in the low morality of the people with the breakdown of the basic unit in society--the family. This leads the low class which is living on a subsistence

level to assume that they could never support their own church. Thirdly, the fundamental character of the Spanish Latin with his lethargic, nonchalant attitude enters into this problem of the partial success of the national church.

It costs the pagan to become a Christian on every mission field on the globe, but persecution is most bitter in Latin America, and ironically enough this opposition comes from a distorted and degenerated form of Christianity which claims to be the only religion.

The Christian Church in Latin America can be made more effective first of all by educating the missionary candidate in the indigenous principle and instructing him in the character qualifications for such a ministry. Then in cooperation with the native pastor and the local church, the economic needs of the congregation should be surveyed with a view to raising the economic level and, in turn, help the church to be financially independent. The practical methods suggested need to be put into operation.

In the last place, it is necessary to attempt to analyze the Latin personality, correlate Spanish Catholicism to it, and in the light of these facts adapt the gospel to their needs. It seems likely that if the foregoing measures were put into practice that it would result in a greater strength in the local church and so in the national church.

B. General Summary

The genius of Christianity has always included two phases which are really two sides of the same truth: evangelism and church planting. By evangelism is meant the preaching of the gospel and the winning of natives to Christ; and by church planting is meant the instruction of the converts in the rudimentary essentials of the Christian faith and the nature of church organization and administration.

The guiding principles for the planting of indigenous churches are four-fold:

1. The methods of initial evangelism should be such as to induce those whose hearts have been touched to take the initiative in inviting the missionary to come and teach them. This response indicates a confidence in and a sympathetic attitude for the message of the Cross.
2. The groups of converts should be left to the ministries and guidance of the Holy Spirit through local, unpaid leaders and with frequent visits from the native preacher whom they help support. The missionary should keep in contact with the local groups and always be available for counsel and help.
3. The missionary should make provision for the training of native pastors and lay workers and thus further ground the native church in the things of the Lord.

4. Nothing should be instituted on the field by the mission that the native church cannot capably maintain and conduct.

Because the Evangelical Church is inextricably bound in the economic framework of the society, it should do its part, cooperating with the government as far as possible, in the social reconstruction program. For anything which lifts the economic level of the people affects their financial prosperity and eventually affects the Church in its goal for financial independence. Teaching native Brazilians how to raise a finer quality cotton, has a direct bearing on the local church's missionary outreach.

Practically all of the problems are common to each country: the poverty and illiteracy of the people, the unused leisure time, the low moral conditions, the loss of youth in the church, and the influence of the Roman Catholic Church. But the ever-widening ray of hope is that each church has within itself resources to be independent of any aid from the outside. The suggested measures for self-support, however, must be applied and practiced.

It must be remembered that the Latin American personality is a fusion of many nationalities; Ignatius Loyola and Don Quixote exemplify the scope of qualities, and the gospel must be adapted to appeal to his heroic, patriotic and spiritual nature.

Latin Catholicism cannot be accurately evaluated by comparing it with North American Catholicism which abounds in good works. It must be seen as the avaricious institution that it is, unpurified by the fires of the Reformation, and relentless in its desire for political power. Spiritually, it has done nothing but "whitewash" the pagan animistic religions of the Indians, who worship their old gods but now under a new name and symbol--Christianity and the Cross. Latin Romanism is essentially pagan and the greatest single obstacle to the progress of the Evangelical Church.

C. Conclusion

This thesis by no means adequately covers the field of the principles and methods to be used in establishing the indigenous church. Two other subjects that are closely allied to the development of this theme are: the training of the native pastor and lay worker in the Bible institutes and seminaries, with special emphasis upon rural training; and the problem of secular education for the children of the Christians who do not want their children to be contaminated by the Catholic influence or spoiled by materialistic philosophies. This latter would include the effectiveness of mission schools as evangelistic agencies and the acquiring of properly-trained and spiritually-qualified instructors.

These related subjects reveal the possibilities of this field and a study of them would be of value in equipping missionaries to be more effective in their efforts to capture Latin America for Christ.

However, this study has shown that the national church in Latin America is growing and that it has the possibilities of becoming indigenous in the full sense of the word.

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