

**THE CENTER FOR INTERCULTURAL FORMATION, CUERNAVACA,  
MEXICO, ITS REPORTS (1962-1967) AND ILLICH'S CRITICAL  
UNDERSTANDING OF MISSION IN LATIN AMERICA<sup>1</sup>**

POR

ROSA BRUNO-JOFRÉ

*Queen's University (Canada)*

JON IGELMO ZALDÍVAR

*Queen's University (Canada) y Universidad de Deusto (Spain)*

ABSTRACT

This paper examines the Reports of the Center for Intercultural Formation<sup>2</sup> (CIF), which were produced in Cuernavaca, Mexico, between 1962-1967 by the Centro de Investigaciones Culturales (Center for Cultural Research) (CIC), and supported since 1963 by the Centro Intercultural de Documentación (Center for Intercultural Documentation) (CIDOC) (an offshoot of CIC). The network is placed within the historical conjuncture of the early 1960s and the alignment of the Vatican with the Alliance for Progress and its anti-communist developmentalist community projects. The core of the paper centers in the 'illocutionary force' (Quentin Skinner) behind Illich's responses to John XXIII's call to congregations and lay Catholics for a renewed mission in Latin America. It addresses Illich's resignification of the understanding of mission and missionary rooted in the Gospel, the notion of incarnation in the culture rather than missionaries being agents of their culture, and missionary "poverty" as a

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<sup>1</sup> This paper was done with the help of a SEED Grant from the Faculty of Education, Queen's University, as part of the project "Cuernavaca, Mexico, and critical strands in Catholic thinking: missions, politics, and visions of social change." The work of Jon Igelmo is funded with a post-doctoral fellowship from the Basque Country: Programa Posdoctoral de Perfeccionamiento de Personal Investigador Doctor del Gobierno Vasco.

<sup>2</sup> We use the original names of the Centers and provide an English translation when the name is in Spanish.

virtue of the community worker. Illich's radicalization of his critical discourse led to a confrontation with the Vatican in 1967 and 1968 after he published "The Seamy Side of Charity" and "The Vanishing Clergyman" in the last year, 1967, of the CIF Report. The conflict with the Vatican signaled Illich's turn to educational, health and other issues moving away from a critique of the institutionalized Catholic Church.

#### KEY WORDS

Center for Intercultural Formation; Centro de Investigaciones Culturales; Centro Intercultural de Documentación; missionary formation; Vatican II; Alliance for Progress; missionary; community worker.

### EL CENTRO INTERCULTURAL DE FORMACIÓN, CUERNAVACA, MÉXICO, SUS INFORMES (1962-1967) Y LA VISIÓN CRÍTICA DE ILLICH SOBRE LA MISIÓN EN AMÉRICA LATINA

#### RESUMEN

Este artículo examina los Reports del Center of Intercultural Formation (CIF) que fueron elaborados en Cuernavaca, México, entre 1962 y 1967 por el Centro de Investigaciones Culturales (CIC), y producidos desde 1963 por el Centro Intercultural de Documentación constituido dentro del CIC. Esta red de centros es situada dentro de la coyuntura histórica del principio de los años sesenta y de la convergencia entre el Vaticano y la Alianza para el Progreso y sus proyectos comunitarios desarrollistas. El artículo se centra en la "fuerza ilocucionaria" (Quentin Skinner) que se puede ubicar detrás las respuestas de Illich al llamado de Juan XXIII a las congregaciones y al personal católico laico para renovar las misiones en América Latina. Se discute la resignificación de la visión de misión planteada por Illich y su concepto de misionero enraizado en el Evangelio, su noción de encarnación en la cultura en contraposición con la visión del misionero como sujeto de su propia cultura, y la "pobreza" del misionero como una virtud del trabajador comunitario. La radicalización de Illich en su discurso crítico evidente en la publicación de los textos "The Seamy Side of Charity" and "The Vanishing Clergyman", publicados en el último año (1967) de los CIF Reports, le llevó a un enfrentamiento con el Vaticano en 1967 y 1968. Este conflicto marca el giro de Illich hacia temáticas vinculadas con la educación, la salud y otros asuntos alejados de la crítica a la Iglesia católica institucionalizada.

## PALABRAS CLAVE

Center of Intercultural Formation; Centro de Investigaciones Culturales; Centro Intercultural de Documentación; formación de misioneros; Vaticano Segundo; Alianza para el Progreso; misionero; trabajador comunitario.

Recibido/Received	29-11-2013
Aceptado/Accepted	13-03-2014

The early 1960s signal a historical conjuncture in the history of the Catholic Church in Latin America. On August 17<sup>th</sup>, 1961, in Punta del Este, Uruguay, the Alliance for Progress' program was launched aiming at the modernization of Latin America as a response to the Cuban Revolution of 1959. The same day, pope John XXIII issued a call to religious congregations and lay Catholics for a renewed mission in Latin America. There was a preoccupation with reaching the Latin American poor and preventing political radicalization. Community work and literacy campaigns took a central place. In 1962, the Vatican II Council started its deliberations with a view to the *aggiornamento* of the Church doctrines and practices generating a paradigmatic shift that had been in the making outside the Vatican.<sup>3</sup> The Vatican II Council redefined the Church's relationship with the world and made explicit a commitment to social justice as an imperative of the Gospel. The doctrinal changes generated resistances and opposing political positions within the Church.<sup>4</sup>

The preoccupation with Latin America had regional and global roots. After World War II, Latin America, under the aegis of North American capital, underwent an accelerated development of capitalism, urbanization and industrialization that deepened social contradictions. The Cuban Revolution was a grass-roots victory in Latin America.<sup>5</sup> The Catholic Church had a concern with communism and with the expansion of Protestantism.

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<sup>3</sup> Mettepenningen, J. 2010. *Nouvelle Théologie/New Theology, Inheritor of Modernism, Precursor of Vatican II* London and New York: T & T Clark International; O'Malley, J. W. 2008. *What Happened at Vatican II* Cambridge, Massachusetts: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press.

<sup>4</sup> Baum, G. 2011 "Vatican Council II: A Turning Point in the Church's History", in Routhier Gilles, Michael Attridge, and Catherine E. Clifford (ed.), *Vatican II: Expériences canadiennes*: 360-377. Ottawa: Presses de l'Université d'Ottawa = University of Ottawa Press.

<sup>5</sup> Löwy, M. and Pompan, C. 1993. "Marxism and Christianity in Latin America". In *Latin American Perspectives* 20 (4): 32.

Msgr. Ivan Dom Illich took a practical approach to the implementation of John XXIII's call. He formed missionaries with a view of their role alternative to the official position of the Church and a critical understanding of Latin American reality. A few years later, in the preface to the re-publication of *Celebration of Awareness*, which included his 1967 article "The Seamy Side of Charity", critical of the Church's official position on Latin America, Illich recalled his opposition to the Pope's project.<sup>6</sup> He went on to say that with the help of two friends, he founded in 1961 a center in Cuernavaca, Mexico, as a formative ground for prospective Catholic missionaries and lay Catholics.<sup>7</sup> The Center attracted students and professors as well as a large number of non-Catholics involved in community development. Illich's journey from 1961, when he initiated the Center, to 1967, the year of his confrontation with the Vatican, shows a process of radicalization of his critique of the Church's pastoral work, its bureaucracy and the Vatican's political stand in relation to the Alliance for Progress and its various development programs.

We first situate historically the call from John XXIII within the context of the positioning of both the Vatican and the North American Church in relation to the political scenario in Latin America, while considering Catholic regional responses and new fields of meanings.<sup>8</sup> We then focus on Ivan Illich's understanding of mission and the role of the missionary as community worker, as expounded in the literature for prospective missionaries and somewhat articulated in the program of formation delivered in the classes in Cuernavaca. The main sources are the Reports from the Center for Intercultural Formation, formally known as *CIF Reports: Cultures, the Church, the Americas*, published between 1962 and 1967; the pamphlets published to call the attention of prospective missionaries to the Center in Cuernavaca; and the *CIDOC Dossiers, Fuentes para el Estudio de las Ideologías en el Cambio Social de América Latina*.<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> Casaroli, A. 1961. "Appeal of the Pontifical Commission to North American Superiors". Appendix in G. M. Costello. 1979. *Mission to Latin America: The successes and failures of a twentieth-century crusade: 273-281*. Maryknoll, N.Y: Orbis Books.

<sup>7</sup> Illich, I. 1971. Introduction to Chapter 5: "The Seamy Side of Charity", in Illich I. 1971. *Celebration of Awareness: 40*. New York: Doubleday and Company.

<sup>8</sup> Bourdieu, P. 1991. *Language and Symbolic Power: the economy of linguistic exchange*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

<sup>9</sup> The complete collection of the *CIF Reports: Cultures, The Church, The Americas* was compiled in six volumes and published by the Intercultural Centre for Documentation (CIDOC) in 1969 and 1970 under the series CIDOC Cuadernos nos. 36, 37, 38, 39, 40 y 41. The pamphlets related to the Centers of Cuernavaca and Petropolis, were found in folder 370.196C397d, Daniel Cossío Villegas Library, El Colegio de México (Mexico DF). The *CIDOC*

The Center for Intercultural Formation (CIF), with office at Fordham University in New York and whose executive director was Ivan Illich, financed the *Reports* as well as books and pamphlets produced by the CIC.<sup>10</sup> The latter was located in Cuernavaca, Mexico, in the Hotel Chulavista, and served as a residence for missionaries attending the preparatory seminars before going to the field.<sup>11</sup> The CIC counterpart in Petrópolis, Brazil, was the Centro de Formação Intercultural (Center of Intercultural Formation) (CENFI) serving missionaries going to Brazil. In 1963, CIDOC was born as a program within CIC with the goal of trying to document and systematize the information arriving at the Center.<sup>12</sup>

*The CIF Reports* for the years 1962-1967 analyzed here display currents of thought and visions coming from Latin America that did not have an expression in the official lines of the Church. The contributors to the formative materials –and after 1964, the authors of selected articles from Catholic, Protestant, and secular political magazines– show the presence of a “revolutionary generation” with many shades that had links

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*Dossiers, Fuentes para el Estudio de las Ideologías en el Cambio Social de América Latina* are publications made by the CIDOC of Cuernavaca.

<sup>10</sup> CIF was a civil association established in New York in 1960 and recognized in the state of New York. The president was Rev. Father Vincent O’Keefe, S.J., President of Fordham University and assistant to Father Arrupe, S.J. Msgr. Ivan D. Illich was diocesan priest in the state of New York, authorized by Cardinal Francis Spellman to serve as professor at Fordham University from 1961-65 and a new contract from 1965 to 1971. The president of Fordham liberated Illich to be able to take care of the general direction of CIF in Latin America (“Historia del C.I.F. 1960-1965”: 4. Cuernavaca, Mexico; manuscript. Daniel Cosío Villegas Library, El Colegio de México, Inventario 2007, folder 370.196 C 397d).

<sup>11</sup> The CIC located in Cuernavaca is a non profit Mexican civil educational association that delivered courses and organized all the necessary research. CIC offered courses with three major aspects: language, intercultural communication, and spiritual formation. It tried also to meet the needs for information on Latin America. First, CIC published a monthly bulletin, *Decision*, mainly for religious congregations; next, because of the need to address the needs of a wider public, CIC produced the *CIF Reports*. The latter was published in English with materials translated from Spanish, German, or French (“Requests for Funds, Center for Intercultural Documentation”: 1-2, Cuernavaca, México, manuscript. Biblioteca Daniel Cosío Villegas, El Colegio de México, Inventario 2007, folder 370.196 C 397d).

<sup>12</sup> In 1966 the network of institutions actually run by Illich are moved to Rancho Tetela, in the outskirts of Cuernavaca. At this point CIDOC fully under Illich’s direction, remains the only Centre functioning and did not offer residence any more, just seminaries and workshops, but provides services of documentation.

to the political transformation of Latin America. For example, we find the following recognizable leaders: Archbishop of Olinda and Recife, Dom Hélder Câmara; Brazilian Catholic lawyer and political activist Francisco Julião; Colombian priest and guerrillero Father Camilo Torres Restrepo, who was also a member of the advisory board of CIF; Bishop of Cuernavaca and member of the Academia Mexicana de Historia, Sergio Méndez Arceo; and of course, the recurrent presence of Ivan Illich, intellectual founder of this enterprise. Emerging meanings and fields in the formative materials for missionaries also make sense within the intellectual context of the time including the strong presence of Freudian psychology and Marxism in Latin America.<sup>13</sup> The theological changes that were taking place outside the walls of the Vatican<sup>14</sup> framed the desire to go back to the sources, in this case, the Gospel.

In the examination of Illich's statements about missions in Latin America and the role of the missionary as a community worker we try to understand in what sense he is talking of "poverty" as a central virtue to cultivate in the missionary. What was his point? Why did he come up with this notion? Relying on Quentin Skinner's methodological insights we situate Illich and the Reports in relation to the politics of the Church at the time, the developments in Latin America, and Illich's own critique of the religious as well as political and social institutions and the notion of mission.<sup>15</sup>

#### THE VATICAN, THE NORTH-AMERICAN CHURCH, AND THE CHURCH IN LATIN AMERICA: 1950S AND EARLY 1960S

In order to understand the *CIF Reports*, we need to go back to 1955 and the creation of the Episcopal Latin American Conference (CELAM), an outcome of the first Conference of the Latin American Episcopate that took place during the International Eucharistic Congress in Rio de Janeiro in 1955. This was an unprecedented meeting and was convoked by the Holy See, presided over by a cardinal on behalf of the Pope and the Vatican revised the conclusions, before they were published. Four main points were addressed at the first Conference of the Latin American Episcopate: lack of priests, religious instruction, social problems, and aboriginal issues. The decision was to create CELAM, integrated by

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<sup>13</sup> Latorre Cabal, H. 1969. *La Revolución de la Iglesia Latinoamericana*: chapter IV. Mexico: Joaquín Mortiz.

<sup>14</sup> Hugo Parra, C. 2012. *Standing with Unfamiliar Company on Uncommon Ground: The Catholic Church and the Chicago Parliaments of Religions*: 127. PhD thesis, Ontario Institute of Education, University of Toronto, 2012.

<sup>15</sup> Skinner, Q. 1969. "Meaning and understanding in the history of ideas". In *History and Theory*, 8 (1): 3-53; Tully, J. (ed.). 1988. *Meaning and context: Quentin skinner and his critics*. Cambridge: Polity Press.

representatives from national Episcopal conferences with the mandate to study problems of interest to the Church in Latin America; to coordinate activities; to promote and support Catholic works (communitarian), and to prepare the Episcopal Latin American conferences when called by the Holy See.<sup>16</sup>

This centralized approach to Latin America tried to channel the official line of the Church. On the other side, there were projects that originated in Latin America as part of movements of social action sponsored by Catholic clergy. Such was the case of the radio schools (Escuelas Radiofónicas) of Msgr. José Joaquín Salcedo in Sutatenza (Colombia) starting in 1947, or the initiatives in popular education of the Northeast Church in Brazil in the 1950s such as the Natal Movement and the movement for Grass-roots Education (MEB).<sup>17</sup> The MEB was described by Marina Bandeira in an article reproduced in the *CIF Reports* “as a supporter of necessary change, of the total participation of workers in things that concern them; it is not just a new campaign against illiteracy; we fight the conditions producing it.”<sup>18</sup> The Brazilian bishops who were the best organized, held their own regional Episcopal conferences in the 1950s.<sup>19</sup> In 1962, as we read in the CIF Report, the General Assembly of Brazilian bishops produced a document entitled, “Emergency Plan” or “Plan of Urgency”, which contained pastoral directives as well as directives in relation to the socio-economic elements of the MEB, the agrarian leagues oriented towards rural unions, and eventual collaboration with the Alliance for Progress, among other issues.<sup>20</sup>

Furthermore, Michael Löwy, when explaining the process of convergence of Christianity and Marxism by “selected affinity”, argued that the Brazilian Christian left of the early 1960s - in the form of Juventude

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<sup>16</sup> Houtart, F. 1986. “L’Histoire du CELAM ou l’oubli des origines”, *Archives de sciences sociales des religions*, 31<sup>e</sup> Année, 62 (1) (July-Sept): 93-105.

<sup>17</sup> See also Dawson, A. 2002. “A Very Brazilian Experiment: The Base Education Movement 1961-67”. In *History of Education*, 31 (2): 185-194

<sup>18</sup> Bandeira, M. 1964. “Movimento de Educação de Base, [a report given to the Catholic Inter-American Cooperation Program (CICOP), Chicago, February 23, 1964]”. Compiled in CIDOC. 1970. *CIF Reports, vol. 3, April-December 1964: 1/12*. CIDOC Cuaderno no 38, Cuernavaca: Centro Intercultural de Documentación.

<sup>19</sup> Mainwaring, S. 1986. *The Catholic Church and Politics in Brazil, 1916-1985*: 94. Stanford, Calif: Stanford University Press.

<sup>20</sup> General Assembly of Brazilian Bishops, 1963 “Brazilian Bishops’ Emergency Plan [Reproduced from Perspectives de Catholicité XXIIe. Année, 1963, no 4]”. Compiled in CIDOC, 1970. *CIF Reports, vol.3, April-December 1964: 1/10*. CIDOC Cuaderno no. 38, Cuernavaca: Centro Intercultural de Documentación 1970.

Universitária Cristã (Christian Academic Youth / JUC), Juventude Estudantil Cristã (Christian Student Youth /JEC), and Ação Popular (Popular Action /AP) - “was the first manifestation in Latin America of the articulation between Christian faith and Marxist politics as a movement with a broad social base, in academia and even among the clergy.”<sup>21</sup> This process, Löwy went on to say, began long before Vatican II, the comunidades eclesiales de base (ecclesiastic base communities –CEBs), liberation theology, or the 1964 military coup.<sup>22</sup>

The framework for the Alliance for Progress was officially launched on August 17<sup>th</sup>, 1961, in Punta del Este, Uruguay, for a period of ten years,<sup>23</sup> as an expression of the modernizing vision that the Kennedy administration put forward to transform Latin America within a decade. It was conceived as a means to contain the communist threat to the region following the Cuban revolution in 1959.<sup>24</sup> On the same day, at the University of Notre Dame, Msgr. Agostino Casaroli read the document entitled “Appeal of the Pontifical Commission to North American Superiors” calling congregations and religious provinces to send over ten years, 10% of their membership as of 1961 on missions to Latin America.<sup>25</sup> While the Alliance for Progress envisioned a ten-year plan having the Peace Corps as a strategic resource to reach Latin America, the papal volunteers had already been created in 1960 with the same purpose. On May 15, 1961, a few months before the August call, Pope John XXIII had issued the encyclical *Mater et Magistra* in which he addressed the social question in light of the Christian (Catholic) doctrine. The document was infused with the idea of progress; the differentiation between developed and underdeveloped countries, and those on the way to development (Harry Truman’s concepts);<sup>26</sup> references to inequality among individuals and nations; and the need for an adequate agrarian policy based on redistribution of land.<sup>27</sup>

<sup>21</sup> Löwy, M and Pompan, C. 1993: 32.

<sup>22</sup> *Ibidem*, 33.

<sup>23</sup> Inter-American Economic and Social Council. 1961. “The Charter of Punta Del Este: Alliance for Progress: Official Documents”. Appendix in Taffet, J. F. 2007. *Foreign aid as foreign policy: The alliance for progress in Latin America*: 205-223. New York: Routledge.

<sup>24</sup> Berger, M. T. 2002. “‘Toward Our Common American Destiny’: Hemispheric History and Pan American Politics in the twentieth century”. In *Journal of Iberian and Latin American Research*, 8 (1): 57-88; Taffet, J. F. 2007. *Foreign Aid as Foreign Policy: The Alliance for Progress in Latin America*. New York: Routledge; McCammon, M. E. 1994. *Kennedy and Latin America*. Lanham, New York, London: University Press of America.

<sup>25</sup> Casaroli, A., *Ídem*.

<sup>26</sup> Sach, W. 1992. *The Development Dictionary: A Guide to Knowledge as Power*. New York: Zed Books.

<sup>27</sup> Comblin, J. 1978. “La Iglesia latinoamericana desde el Vaticano II” Documentación Política No 7, Contacto X, año 15, 1 (February). Agence Latino-



There is a similar pattern of language of reform in both *Mater et Magistra* and the Charter of the Alliance which is not surprising given the involvement of sectors of the Church including bishops in development projects. An interesting example was the creation of SUDENE, in 1956, as a result of the alliance between the bishops of Northeastern Brazil and president Juscelino Kubitschek, an example of collaboration between Church and state through a democratic government. The Church exhorted the governments and the Catholic population to cooperate in developmentalist projects.<sup>28</sup>

The Holy See attempted to build the Catholic Inter-American Cooperation Program on its own terms. John XXIII gave responsibility to Archbishop Antonio Samoré, who had orchestrated the 1955 Eucharistic Congress in Rio from which CELAM developed, to be in charge of Latin American issues. He played a role in the organization of the First Inter-American Conference (November 2-4, 1959) convoked by the Holy See, at the School of Linguistics, Georgetown University, and presided over by Cardinal Richard Cushing of Boston. There 18 bishops came together, six each from Canada, the United States and Latin America. They tried to formulate a response to the question posed by Samoré "What was the U.S. church prepared to do for its brothers and sisters in the south? The official objective was '... [to] build a Pan-American collaboration'."<sup>29</sup> Rather than an appeal for a specific project, the goal was to mobilize and coordinate efforts from Canada and the U.S.A. to strengthen the Church in Latin America.<sup>30</sup> The Holy See at the time had confidence in the ability of the Church in the United States and Canada to respond to the main Cold War-related crisis that it had identified in Latin America: the advance of communism. The spread of Protestantism was also an issue. Education in the form of community work, including literacy, had a central place. The North-American Church (Canadian and American) was seen as having the material and personnel resources to achieve those goals. This was a

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Américaine d'Information (ALAI), Centre de Documentation d'Amérique Latine-SUCO: 119-124.

<sup>28</sup> The original proposal for the Alliance came from Juscelino Kubitschek de Oliveira, who proposed an action plan called Operation Pan-America (OPA), aiming at promoting regional development and to protect democratic governments in order to stop Communist subversion. It provided a starting point for what became the Act of Bogota of September of 1960 and the Charter of the Alliance for Progress, a year later (Martin, E. M. 1994. *Kennedy and Latin America*: 10 Lanham, Md.: University Press of America).

<sup>29</sup> Antonio Samoré quoted in Garneau, J.F. 2001. "The First Inter-American Episcopal Conference, November 2-4, 1959: Canada and the United States Called to the Rescue of Latin America". In *The Catholic Historical Review*, 87 (4): 662.

<sup>30</sup> *Ibidem.*, 664.

Pan-American approach to Latin America that identified social problems from a centralized top down perspective. Missionary work appears to have been rooted in specific political projects with strong anti-communist tones and the language of the Cold War. Cardinal Cushing wrote about the relevance of promoting the social doctrine of the Church and healthy and beneficial social reforms as part of the effort to counter the communist threat.<sup>31</sup>

However, statements from Church leaders at the meeting reveal differing approaches to change in Latin America within the hierarchy of the Church itself. Thus, Dom Hélder Câmara, archbishop of Rio de Janeiro, mentioned that “the egotism of many rich people, their blindness, is a more serious and urgent problem than communism itself.”<sup>32</sup> Câmara, who would help Ivan Illich to organize the center in Petrópolis, said that: “... the task ahead of us is not to mobilize alms. Our first object is to lead public opinion to understand that raising the under-developed world is a much more serious and urgent problem than the East-West conflict itself.” This would be the best way to defeat communism.<sup>33</sup>

On his part, Cardinal Richard Cushing of Boston thought of communism as the greatest enemy confronting the Church in Latin America. Câmara and Bishop Manuel Larraín of Chile were Church leaders advocating a new vision for Latin America, different from the one the Holy See was trying to consolidate. Câmara in response to Cushing asserted the need for “consciousness” by the one-third, who were capable of helping and thus obliged to assist, of the “misery and hunger” of two-thirds of humanity, in order to re-establish human dignity. This misery was in his view more serious than communist danger itself. Cushing replied by offering 25,000 copies of F.B.I. Director J. Edgar Hoover’s book, *Masters of Deceit*,<sup>34</sup> and his own book *Questions and Answers on Communism*, which he reported had been “checked by the F.B.I.”, as well as films on the mysteries of the rosary produced by Father Patrick J. Peyton; interestingly Cushing cautioned that the depiction of Jews in some scenes of the films was problematic.<sup>35</sup>

Maryknoll Father John Considine, who had called attention to the shortage of priests in Latin America as related to the success of communism and Protestantism, was chosen to head the new Latin

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<sup>31</sup> Cushing, Crdl. R. 1961 *Questions et Réponses sur le Communisme*: 49. Sherbrooke, Montréal, Paris: Apostolat de la Presse.

<sup>32</sup> Barber, W. F. 1964. “Can the Alliance for Progress Succeed?”. In *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, 351, 1: 89.

<sup>33</sup> Câmara, H. quoted in Garneau, J. F. *Ibidem*: 680.

<sup>34</sup> Hoover, E. 1958. *Master of Deceit: The Story of Communism in America and How to Fight it*. New York: Henry Hol and Company.

<sup>35</sup> Garneau, J. F. *Ibidem*: 681.

Obviously, the Vatican's approach was not assumed by every Catholic, and not even by all of the Latin American hierarchy. The *CIF Reports* starting in April 1962 as a formative tool for missionaries, reveal not only visions of change that contested the official line of the Church, but also contain nested configurations of meanings -spaces defined by specific histories, logic, and language<sup>36</sup> that emerged in various places in Latin America, in particular in Brazil and Chile. Of particular interest here is Illich's own vision of the North-South relation and the way he construed the understanding of mission and the missionary and her insertion in the communities where she would work.

### RE-SIGNIFYING MISSION AND THE ROLE OF THE MISSIONER<sup>37</sup>

The *CIF Reports: Cultures, the Church, the Americas*, published by the Center of Intercultural Formation between 1962 and 1967, eventually became a response to John XXIII's call and its ties to the Alliance for Progress. Msgr. Ivan D. Illich's critical view of the involvement of the Church as an institution in the American political project is rooted in his theological understanding of the role of the Church's apostles as announcers of the Gospel as in the Pauline epistles. Illich resignifies the understanding of mission and missionary.

There was lack of consensus about the North American Catholic mission to Latin America as already evident at the First Inter-American Episcopal Conference held at Georgetown University, in November 1959, mentioned previously. Considine, head of the Latin American Bureau, and Illich represented two different visions of the objectives of the missions in Latin America. While Considine would support the missionary enterprise, Illich saw it as an imperialist imposition and offered a critical view of the role of the missionary. We will not analyze the tensions between Considine and Illich here, but we need to mention that Considine's name appears as a member of the Board of Trustees of CIF, although he did not contribute any articles.

Illich's notion of the missionary is related to a vision that questioned forms of domination, exportation of ways of life, and the U.S.A. political

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<sup>36</sup> Pierre Bourdieu, *Ídem*.

<sup>37</sup> In the sources analyzed here, Illich does not elaborate on the mystical dimension of his notion of missionary, but he is asking prospective missionaries to go through a process of conversion. There is a mystical element in the notion of incarnation and the encounter of Jesus with the poor. This is quite explicit later on in the liberation theology.

agenda, while going back to the sources, the Gospel. John Considine's understanding of mission is embodied in the plan of John XXIII (inspired by Considine) and the *CIF Reports* elaborate a response to that plan in various dimensions. Even before the publication of the first volume of the Reports, the relation between Considine and Illich had already been soured.<sup>38</sup>

Initially, the Reports were intended to become a formative space for future English-speaking missionaries following Illich's concept of the missionary. Thus, the first two volumes contained the curriculum units for the courses, elaborated by the editor (Peter Brison) and taught in English; it was a double program in the social sciences and Latin American reality.<sup>39</sup> At the same time the participants took Spanish with native instructors in small groups, with emphasis on fluency, pronunciation, drills and grammar, conversation, and reading.<sup>40</sup> Language was regarded as a mode of behavior and as an expression of the culture of the people in whose life the missionary or lay community worker wished to participate.<sup>41</sup>

CIF and the network of Centers tried to give their students opportunities for spiritual growth and move them to interpret their invitation to Latin America as an opening of a new dimension of Christian maturity, an occasion for reviewing their life, and reaching a deeper personal understanding of their Christian self-fulfillment "through participation by

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<sup>38</sup> Costello, G. M. 1979. *Mission to Latin America: The Successes and Failures of a Twentieth Century Crusade*: 108. New York: Orbis Books.

<sup>39</sup> Included a general introduction to Latin America including a critical understanding of the role of the missionary; geography; politics in Latin America; planning; American Indians and Protestantism; Catholic education and social classes; pluralism and Christianity; sociology of Catholicism in Latin America; revolutions in Latin America and social issues; Catholicism, communism, and revolution in Latin America; Cuba; urban misery; the university in Latin America; a critical view of Alliance for Progress; racism in the Americas; property theories (private ownership and the common good); revolutionary reforms in Latin America, a Christian vision; the international apostolate; Church-state relations; Latin American emerging outcasts and the universities; Vatican II and Latin America. The participants are given a chance to know the family life of people from various levels of society (See CIDOC. 1969. *CIF Reports v. 1 April 1962-March 1963*. CIDOC Cuaderno no. 36, Cuernavaca: Centro Intercultural de Documentación; CIDOC. 1969 *CIF Reports v. 2 April 1963-March 1964*. CIDOC Cuaderno no. 37, Cuernavaca: Centro Intercultural de Documentación, 1969).

<sup>40</sup> "First Semester Report, Language Department, Sept 3, 1961", Cuernavaca, Mexico, manuscript. Daniel Cosío Villegas Library, El Colegio de México, Inventario 2007, folder 370.196 C 397d.

<sup>41</sup> "The Center of Intercultural formation", Cuernavaca, Mexico, manuscript. Daniel Cosío Villegas Library, El Colegio de México, Inventario 2007, folder 370.196 C 397d.

THE CENTER FOR INTERCULTURAL FORMATION, 469  
CUERNAVACA, MEXICO, ITS REPORTS (1962-1967) AND ILLICH'S  
CRITICAL UNDERSTANDING OF MISSION IN LATIN AMERICA  
vocation in a new Church tradition."<sup>42</sup> While the first two volumes  
introduced an alternative view of the mission of the Church and the notion  
of missionary while paying attention to the emerging social and political  
configurations in Latin America, from the third volume onwards, the  
*Reports* progressed toward a strong critique of the Catholic Church as an  
institution and of its collaboration with the U.S.A. political agenda.<sup>43</sup> The  
last *Report* in January 1967 closed with two powerful articles, "The Seamy  
Side of Charity" and "The Vanishing Clergyman".<sup>44</sup>

As Illich explained, formation had been one part of an increasingly  
expanded program which emphasized research and documentation. The  
network of reporters throughout Latin America had grown. The goal took a  
different shape and the readers would get articles and documents  
published in Latin America and other places without mediation.<sup>45</sup>

One of the explanatory pamphlets that tried to attract missionaries  
to the formation centers in Cuernavaca and Anápolis (later on in  
Petrópolis) described the program as "[a] curriculum of special courses  
given to the 'missioner-to-be' who thus can become a potent instrument  
for the achievement of a deeply realized catholicity in imitation of the  
Word – who by becoming son of a carpenter in Galilee became MAN."<sup>46</sup>

The CIF pamphlet promoting its services contains a quotation from  
Pope John XXIII, placed under the picture of *Nuestra Señora de  
Guadalupe*, "We want to share with Us our anxieties and hopes and give  
consideration to the pressing needs of Latin America... We hasten to  
prepare a suitable plan of action... We must pool the holy energies of the  
Church...to guide them with ever increasing efficiency towards the vast  
horizons opening in those lands. We must send personnel...tomorrow it

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<sup>42</sup> Ídem.

<sup>43</sup> The Reports were monthly publications. They had 412 group  
subscriptions; 657 of the individual readers lived in the U.S.A., 146 in Latin  
America; 119 in Europe; 61 in Canada and, 8 in Asia as per February 1964.  
(Illich, D. I. 1964. "A Note from the Publisher". In CIDOC, 1969. *CIF Reports v.  
2, April 1963-March 1964*: 10/3. Cuaderno no. 37, Cuernavaca: Centro  
Intercultural de Documentación).

<sup>44</sup> Members of the team who started in the early sixties with Illich are  
Valentine Borremans; Peter V. Brison (editor of the Reports), Rev. Segundo  
Galilea; Elisabeth M. Hollants; Brother George Martin; Feodora Stancioff; Rev.  
John Vogel; V. Rev. W. Michael Wagner. ("The Center of Intercultural  
Formation" Ídem.)

<sup>45</sup> Illich, D. I., op. cit. 10/4.

<sup>46</sup> "Training for Apostolic Service in Latin America, Center of Intercultural  
Formation, Fordham, New York, Cuernavaca, Mexico, Anapolis, Brazil".  
Cuernavaca, Mexico, manuscript. Daniel Cosío Villegas Library, El Colegio de  
México, Inventario 2007, folder 370.196 C 397d.

could be too late...<sup>47</sup> The aims of the sections signed by Illich in the 1961 pamphlet introduces the prospective participants to a language of love, a loving God: “love urges us to become like those we love.” The missionaries are thought of as witnesses to the gift of Christ, and as such they “seek to become like the people they are sent to adopt, yet do not cease to be sons of their native country”. Then Illich moves to the notion of adaptation, defined as “the external testimony of his [sic] gratuitous love –even more than a means of heightened apostolic efficiency.” Love is at the core of the apostolate, and this should be the intentionality; it is the illocutionary force behind Illich’s discourse and can be encapsulated in the notion of “poverty” of the missionary. His early experience as a young priest between 1951 and 1955 in New York’s Washington Heights, a conservative Irish neighborhood receiving an influx of Puerto Ricans, shaped his understanding of experiencing poverty that he expected from the missionary.<sup>48</sup> This work required him to learn Spanish. When learning a foreign language, he wrote, an adult can go through an experience of “poverty”, weakness, and dependence on the good will of another. It is not a matter of sounds only, but also of learning the meaning of silence, silences are part of the missionary’s processes of divesting herself from values and assumptions to meet the other. If s/he does not realize the importance of silence in learning a language, “he [sic] is away from home but has never landed anywhere; that he [sic] left his home and never reached another.”<sup>49</sup>

In another text, he states:

The Incarnation is the infinite prototype of missionary activity, the communication of the Gospel to those who are “other”, through Him who entered a world by nature not His own. Just as the Word, without ceasing to be what He is, became man, Jew, Roman subject, member of a culture at a given moment in history, so any

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<sup>47</sup> “Pope John XXIII, Feast of the Annunciation”. In Pamphlet “Center of Intercultural Formation (CIF), Fordham University, Summer-Fall, 1961, Cuernavaca, Mexico; Anápolis, Brazil”. Cuernavaca, Mexico, manuscript. Daniel Cosío Villegas Library, El Colegio de México, Inventario 2007, folder 370.196 C 397d.

<sup>48</sup> Gray, F.dP. 1970. *Divine disobedience: Profiles in catholic radicalism*: 241-246. New York: Knopf. Illich was exposed to the feelings of the Irish people in relation to the Puerto Ricans, who were seen as “invading” their place; it is possible, as one of the blind reviewers suggested, that Illich could have built a parallel interpretation in relation to the potential large numbers of missionaries going to Latin America. Illich was aware that the Latin American people could see the missionaries as outsiders intruding in their world.

<sup>49</sup> Illich, I. 1971. “The Eloquence of Silence”. In Illich, I. 1971. *Celebration of Awareness. A Call For Institutional Revolution*: 36. Garden City, N.Y: Doubleday.

missionary, without ever ceasing to be what he is, enters and becomes part of a “foreign” culture as it is at the present moment in a given place.”<sup>50</sup>

The point here is that missionaries should incarnate themselves in the culture rather than becoming agents of their own culture; this is the missionary “poverty” Illich talks about, which relates to a relativization of human convictions in front of the “absolute meaning of the Revelation”.<sup>51</sup>

Two elements are mentioned as necessary conditions for the missionaries to make a total gift of themselves: fluency in Spanish, in order “to communicate fully within an Hispano-American frame of mind” and secondly, “an acquaintance with the socio-economic realities of their new surroundings”.<sup>52</sup> Perhaps, the most revealing statement is:

Mature men and women, humbly and courageously start again as children to find their way in a new cultural universe. They know that they are on their way to becoming part of an old Catholic world which needs them.<sup>53</sup>

This implies a return to the Gospel. Years after, Cayley following his conversation with Illich wrote that the revelation in the New Testament is, according to Illich, a summons beyond cultural and religious containment. Cayley went on to say:

What the Samaritan does is to step fearlessly outside what his culture has sanctified in order to create a new relationship and, potentially, a new community. He does not seek God within a sacred circle but finds him lying by the road in a ditch. His possibilities cannot be predicted or circumscribed. He lives, in the apostle Paul's words, ‘not under the law, but under grace’.<sup>54</sup>

The following line complements the thought: “They [the missionaries] come to a deeper realization of the value of the hidden life

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<sup>50</sup> “The Center of Intercultural Formation, CIF, 1962-1963. Cuernavaca, Mexico; Petrópolis, Brazil; Fordham University, N.Y.C.”. Cuernavaca, Mexico, manuscript. Daniel Cosío Villegas Library, El Colegio de México, Inventario 2007, folder 370.196 C 397d.

<sup>51</sup> Ídem, 21.

<sup>52</sup> “Center of Intercultural Formation, 1961 Cuernavaca, Mexico; Petrópolis, Brazil; Fordham University, N.Y.C”. Cuernavaca, Mexico, manuscript. Daniel Cosío Villegas Library, El Colegio de México, Inventario 2007, folder 370.196 C 397d.

<sup>53</sup> Ídem.

<sup>54</sup> Illich, I. and Cayley, D. 2005. *The rivers north of the future: The testament of Ivan Illich*: 31-32. Toronto, Ont: House of Anansi Press.

of the Lord and grow in that special spiritual “poverty” on which the universality of the Church is founded...”<sup>55</sup> The Catholicity of the Church is built through difference rather than on exportation of ways of experiencing faith, hence the notion of incarnation. This is in reference to the “traditional Catholic life” which could be interpreted as a Church without the pitfalls of institutionalization, including the institutionalization of hospitality and charity.

In 1992, when David Cayley asked Illich why he established the CIDOC (here, Cayley may be referring to CIC, since CIDOC was an offshoot of CIC and CIDOC is better known), Illich goes back to his reaction to John Considine’s plans adopted by John XXIII commanding Bishops and superiors to send one-tenth of their personnel to South America to save it from communism. He said that he wanted to look at what the volunteers in development were doing in a completely different light. He said,

I asked myself – not about the average bureaucratic little puppet which most of these missionaries and papal volunteers and Peace Corps people were, people who were just seeking experience, avoiding the draft, or looking for adventure – I asked, What happens when the serious, the good ones, the responsible ones, are sent to Peru, come to a village, and try to live like the people? ...

Therefore, the volunteer becomes a demonstration model for high levels of service consumption when you send him [sic] to Latin America. I wanted to point out the damage, the damage done by volunteerism, the damage to the person who went there through the establishment of a sense of superiority, a savior complex, and the damage to the image in the U.S. of what poor countries are. Through volunteers this image came to be dependent not only on journalists but on people who claimed that they could report with much better knowledge of local situations – in the light of these people needing us!.<sup>56</sup>

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<sup>55</sup> Courses were offered in both Cuernavaca and Anápolis and later Petrópolis. The program at Cuernavaca included conversational Spanish, a socio-economic analysis of cultural change and development; introduction to the history and civilization of Latin America; adjustment to life in rapidly developing countries; study teams; role of the church in technological and socio-cultural change, this latter taught by Ivan D. Illich (“Training for Apostolic Service in Latin America, Center of Intercultural Formation, Fordham, New York, Cuernavaca, Mexico, Anápolis, Brazil”. Ídem).

<sup>56</sup> Illich, I. and Cayley, D. *Ibidem*: 93-94.



Cayley concluded: "So the purpose of CIDOC was subversive, explicitly subversive, from the very beginning."

At the core of the early approach taken by CIF was the profile of the missionary and her or his role. Illich sarcastically describes the dominant profile in a letter addressed to an imaginary "Mary", a potential volunteer. The point in the letter is to offer a critique of the motivations of volunteers who aimed at satisfying their personal desires without leaving the security and comfort of their lives and keeping a religious vocation, serving God by doing what she loved to do - while gaining experience and freedom. In his view, "Mary" would be fooling herself if she thought she was serving God and the Church. She was single, and wanted to postpone marriage in the search for freedom. It is not a matter of deep faith. His point is that there was not a profound reflection from the faith, and that a search of that faith would lead to a different decision; one needs to go deep to find the ultimate vocational sense, engage in a radical search. Behind the commitment, there was a motivation that needed to be known and questioned before making the decision to act. The influence of psychoanalysis is evident. We read this letter in relation to Padre Gregorio Lemercier, Belgian, a contributor to the Reports and Illich's friend who advocated for a process of interiorization and stressed that psychoanalysis does not dissolve religion. "Religion then becomes mature. It accepts all the human values, while permeating those values with the divine..."<sup>57</sup> Erich Fromm, talking of doubt in the introduction to Illich's *Celebration of Awareness*, clarifies this well:

To doubt [everything must be doubted, particularly the ideological concepts which are virtually shared by everybody and have consequently assumed the role of indubitable common-sensical axioms] in this sense does not imply a psychological state of inability to arrive at decisions or convictions, as is the case of obsessional doubt, but the readiness and capacity for critical questioning of all assumptions and institutions which have become idols under the name of common sense, logic, and what is supposed to be natural.<sup>58</sup>

## FORMATIVE MATERIALS

The materials for missionaries in the preparatory classes in Cuernavaca (published in the first two years of the *Reports*, April 1962 to

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<sup>57</sup> Lemercier, G. 1965. "A Benedictine Monastery and Psychoanalysis". In CIDOC. 1970. *CIF Reports v. 4 January-December 1965*: 10/25. CIDOC Cuaderno no. 39, Cuernavaca: Centro Intercultural de Documentación.

<sup>58</sup> Fromm, E. 1971. "Introduction". In Illich, D. I. 1971. *Celebration of Awareness. A Call for Institutional Revolution*: viii. New York: Doubleday.

March 1964) posed the big questions of the moment: Should the work of the Church be simply palliative, doing whatever it can to relieve spiritual and material hardship? In other words, should the Church be involved in charity and welfare work? Or should the Church encourage reform and change the existing social conditions?<sup>59</sup> The notions of charity and justice appear delineated in these dilemmas. What are the pastoral methods to take care of the urban masses, to give them identity as a Christian community? The central question asked: is a Christian community possible in a slum? Will religious and lay missionaries live there?<sup>60</sup> There was an urgency to find answers. This questioning was accompanied by hard data on land distribution, life in the slums, education and level of illiteracy. The questions were nourished by the socio-economic, political, and cultural reality in Latin America, from where various Catholic and non-Catholic political strands developed during this time. The *Reports* were written in Cuernavaca with associate editors and advisors from Canada, U.S. A., and Latin America.

The CIF and related Centers implemented an educational program for prospective missionaries, who would eventually be involved in community programs and literacy campaigns. However, there was no specific construction of the understanding of community education, but rather definitions coming from different practices. An article by M. Bandeira in the Report states:

Basic education, according to the Movement for Grassroots Education (MEB) is designed to help the student open his [sic] eyes and to discover and understand his own problems and to do so effectively and on his own initiative. It is a special type of education of adults; it is not directed solely to the need of the students to read, write and know technical matters necessary for their work. The MEB also has the mission of helping men to understand their social situation that conditions their life and their destiny. In order that we may understand the matter better let us use the word 'conscientization', that is, man's [sic] training and 'effectivization' to the point where [s/he] is able to take account of himself as a human being, of his problems, and of his duties and rights, including the right to fight for a fair and just solution to his problems.<sup>61</sup>

There is a great similitude with Freire's thought that would be developed later on. At the beginning of the 1960s, probably 1962, Illich met Freire through Hélder Câmara -to whom the notion of conscientization

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<sup>59</sup> CIC. 1962. "Facts that Pose Questions About Latin America". In CIDOC. 1969. *CIF Reports v.1 April 1962-March 1963: 1/13*. CIDOC Cuaderno no. 36, Cuernavaca: Centro Intercultural de Documentación.

<sup>60</sup> Ídem.

<sup>61</sup> Bandeira, M., op. cit.: 1/12.

is attributed- when Freire was Director of the University of Recife's Cultural Extension Service. There, Freire implemented what is now known as Método Paulo Freire to thousands of peasants in the northeast of Brazil, a practice nourished by the environment and the concepts developed in Brazil at the time.<sup>62</sup>

The articles, originating in various Latin American countries and other places, captured political projects in gestation, social positioning on the part of local churches grounded in social movements, and the epistemic turn on theology that had been developing for some time in the Western world and had taken specific characteristics in Latin America. Thus, a quotation from members of a Peace Corps team, trained at Notre Dame University and at the Instituto de Educación Rural in Chile echoed a statement of principle that goes well with the line of the *Reports*: "We are not the leaders in these projects; we are there to help the leaders in any way they decide can help".<sup>63</sup> In the same article, the author includes a pastoral letter from the Bishop of Temuco, Chile, Bernardino Piñera, written in 1962, that embodied a strong Catholic current in Chile:

Finally, our analysis suggests that we must always disentangle ourselves a little more from established institutions, avoid costly buildings, complex organizations, works that require and involve a lot of money, and recuperate the spiritual vitality of primitive times... Our times are more those of catechism and missions than of schools and colleges, times of humble chapels in the slums not of sumptuous temples, times of hermitages not rich monasteries. And, although it seems paradoxical, it is preferable that we be seen as poor rather than as benefactors of the poor.<sup>64</sup>

There is direct critique of the role of Catholic institutions and their costly bureaucracies acting as mediators through the missionaries. The critique relied on the notion of a simple spirituality rooted in the community (as in early Christianity), embedded in reality and in the life world. It was a matter of incarnating "poverty" rather than charity. There is quest for authenticity (existentialism). We see a movement toward the notion of justice in the context of a political reading of Chile and Latin America.

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<sup>62</sup> Illich related that he intervened through Teodoro Moscoso, who had been one of the five members of the board of higher education in Puerto Rico, where they served together and the administrator of the Alliance for Progress, to liberate Freire from jail the military coup that overthrow João Goulart. Moscoso intervened on behalf of Paulo Freire and Francisco Julião, peasant leader. Illich had met Freire a year and half before (Cayley, D. op. cit: 205-206).

<sup>63</sup> McKeon, Fr. W. 1963, "The Church in Chile: A visit to a country in crisis", In CIDOC. 1969. *CIF Reports v.1, April 1962-March 1963: 3/24*. CIDOC Cuaderno no. 36, Cuernavaca: Centro Intercultural de Documentación.

<sup>64</sup> *Ibíd*em, 3-28.

Piñera's positions are related to developments in the Christian Democratic Party in Chile.

The themes for the formation of the missionaries expounded in the *CIF Reports* during 1962-1964 include socio-economic problems in Latin America (such as unjust land distribution, internal migration to the cities and the slums, and illiteracy). Using questions as an inquiry method the text asks the future missionary: what does all this mean for the Church? What is needed in the cities described or what are the answers to the problems, in light of the role of demagogues? Who uses the means of communication, and ignorance?

The Church is introduced to prospective missionaries reading the *Reports* or attending classes in Cuernavaca or in Petrópolis (Brazil) as following a European model with its monumental structures, schools, welfare, press, formation movements, and so on, without always counting on financial support from the government, and while tending to rely on donations from the wealthy. The poor did not have a sense of belonging to the project of the Church, or a sense of building up the Church. The recourse of the Church to the rich became offensive "when crying injustice of social structures makes it more urgent for the Church to take a clear position".

Some of the articles reproduced in the *Reports* bring a language of denunciation and a claim for social justice and radical changes. Such is the case of an article by Francisco Julião, Brazilian lawyer, peasant leader from northeast Brazil, founder of the Ligas Camponesas, co-founder of the Brazilian Socialist Party, and a friend of Illich. Julião denounced the industry of anti-communism, its surrounding publicity and its discourse that portrayed the left as harassing the Christian family and introducing foreign systems. He said:

For these last-minute 'saviours', the 'Christian family' is the one of the landowner who, in every country, arms himself with a rifle and a machine gun in order to defend, like a feudal lord, his property rights in the land...Brazil, 'Christian country', is underdeveloped, underfed, and oppressed... I do not believe that my country will be freed by the elections. Nor by the elite. Nor by the Christian family. I will be liberated, and of this I am sure, by the desperate masses, by the worker without land...<sup>65</sup>

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<sup>65</sup> Julião, F. 1962. "Brazil. 'Christian Country'" [Originally published in *Monthly Review Press* (September 1962: 243-250)]. In CIDOC. 1970. *CIF Reports v. 3, April-December 1964*: 1/11. CIDOC Cuaderno no. 38, Cuernavaca: Centro Intercultural de Documentación.

The missionary, in line with the Church's pastoral renewal advocated by Illich, is expected to understand her locality, the milieu where she develops her apostolate, and recognize the virtues which had not been incorporated in pastoral formulations: "solidarity, hospitality, generosity, and adaptability of this same miserable proletariat."<sup>66</sup> In other words, the missionary needs to be attentive to the local Church; the way people lived Christianity and the virtues they cultivated. Many of them were profoundly Christian. The text went on to say that "where pastoral renewal has taken the care to put these values in perspective and unite them to the sacramental life of the parish community very encouraging results have been obtained."<sup>67</sup> There is insistence on the need for a new pastoral theology, one that pursues an "authentic Christianity"; Christianity rooted in the human structure of society, in societies where there is even a religious mix-up, a form of syncretism.<sup>68</sup> This approach would take shape in Vatican II documents with an emphasis on the local church.

The task and the Church's role is "to order that man's [sic] dignity be respected and that society be organized in a way in which the minimum of comfort – without which the practice of virtue is impossible or difficult - be promoted."<sup>69</sup> The argument leads to the issue of rapid de-Christianization; the missionary needs to counter the forces promoting this process, which are also the forces offering solution to the injustices. It is a matter of Catholics responding effectively, the text says, to the spiritual, religious, cultural, and social demands of the situation. Economic underdevelopment cannot be overcome only in economic terms; it is fundamental to move the spiritual forces: "The essence of the Christian message contains the whole answer".<sup>70</sup>

It is clear that the missionaries are entrusted with a political-spiritual role, to help "apply in their entirety the social teachings of the Church, as explained at the Center, and to diffuse among the faithful charity and the love of justice" as the solution for Latin America. However, although there is no mention of specific papal documents or political parties, the call includes a plan: "the continent's social structures were no longer suited to the conditions of development." They needed to be

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<sup>66</sup> CIC. 1962. "The Church and Catholics in Latin America". In CIDOC. 1969. *CIF Reports v.1, April 1962-March 1963: 1/22*. CIDOC Cuaderno no. 36, Cuernavaca: Centro Intercultural de Documentación.

<sup>67</sup> Ídem.

<sup>68</sup> CIF. 1963. "The Future of 'Cristianismo' in Latin America". In CIDOC, 1969. *CIF Reports v.2 April 1963-March 1964: 2/24*. CIDOC Cuaderno no. 37, Cuernavaca: Centro Intercultural de Documentación.

<sup>69</sup> CIC. 1962. "Facts that Pose Questions About Latin America". op. cit.: 1/22.

<sup>70</sup> CIC. 1962. "The Church and Catholics in Latin America", op. cit.: 1/23.

transformed, for example, to institute land reform, initiate social legislation, and respond to all new aspirations of the people. It is not surprising then, that the situation in Chile had a special place in the materials for missionary formation (printed in the first two years of the Reports) and later on in the collection of articles published as *Reports*.

The Christian Democratic Party had been founded in 1957 and in 1958, its candidate Eduardo Frei, an admirer of Jacques Maritain, reached national prominence when he received a substantial number of votes. The Party moved to create a Catholic powerful grassroots network made up of neighborhood committees, mothers' groups, and youth clubs in many slums. It was an example of community development, and the Party leaders claimed that both capitalism and socialism could be transcended in a communitarian society, a concept that was not clearly defined. It was an attempt at social reform including the agrarian reform combined with a strong attachment to democracy and was encapsulated in the phrase, "a revolution in liberty".<sup>71</sup> There was a great deal of hope around the ideas expounded by the Christian Democratic Party, although Illich was cautious since he did not support the idea of developing European style Christian Democratic Parties in Latin America. He tried to rescue the uniqueness of each place and its people, as the Catholicity of the Church resides in assuming, incarnating difference. The formative texts in the *Report* do not spare the Church. It needed its own reform and also needed to reorient its pastoral work according to the needs of the time: "She must be present among men [sic] of all times to lead them to God's eternal kingdom".<sup>72</sup>

The Alliance for Progress was a central macro-component of the context presented to missionaries who were introduced to the various readings of its concept and implementation in 1962-1964. Thus, through the use of quotations, the editor organized an imaginary round table around the questions: "What would your over-all estimate be of the Alliance for Progress now completing its second year?"<sup>73</sup> It included a range of opinions that were expressions of political positionings with reference to Latin America: Hélder Câmara, who was quoted saying, "Liberty is only a name, a sound for the two thirds of mankind, without houses, without clothes, without food, without a minimum of education and above all without human conditions";<sup>74</sup> Father Vekemans (Belgian Jesuit working in Chile and supporter of the Christian Democratic Party;

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<sup>71</sup> Collier, S. and Sater, W. F. 2004. *A History of Chile, 1808-2002*: 307. United Kingdom: Cambridge University Press, (second edition).

<sup>72</sup> CIC, "The Church and Catholics in Latin America", op. cit.: 1/23.

<sup>73</sup> CIC. 1963. "The 'Alliance in Progress'". In CIDOC, 1969. *CIF Reports v.2 April 1963-March 1964*: 3/6. CIDOC Cuaderno no. 37, Cuernavaca: Centro Intercultural de Documentación.

<sup>74</sup> *Ibíd*em: 3/9.

Teodoro Moscoso, U.S.A. coordinator for the Alliance for Progress; and João Goulart, President of Brazil deposed by a coup in 1964, among others.<sup>75</sup> The point here was for the missionary to become familiar with the political forces working in Latin America, the conceptual spaces containing social and political positions, and contesting visions around change including the notion of revolution (from the Marxist perspective, the reformist one of revolution in freedom, to Kennedy's notion of 'revolution').

It was clear in "The Seamy Side of Charity," published in the first issue of the February Reports of 1967, that the Reports were aimed at developing a critical understanding of the U.S.A. presence in Latin America. Illich obviously had developed an anti-imperialist position, critical of interference and became increasingly critical of the alliance of the institutional Church with U.S.A. policies and agendas arguing that the use of the Gospel in the service of capitalism or any other ideology was wrong. In his view revolutionary changes were needed.

The article contained a powerful critique of the missionary project and the papal volunteers, a project that Illich described as an effort to keep Latin America within the ideology of the West. This radical critique generated a strong reaction from the Vatican and a consequent confrontation. This situation did not seem surprising in the context of Illich's biography. He had left Rome in 1951, following his account, because he did not want to become part of the papal bureaucracy. As he said to Cayley, "I wanted to get away from Rome."<sup>76</sup>

In "The Seamy Side of Charity," Illich made a call to the Church policy makers to "review their vocation as Christian theologians and their actions as Western politicians".<sup>77</sup> A number of themes emerged powerfully in the article: the transplantation of a foreign Christian image, a foreign pastoral approach, and a foreign political message; the artificial sustenance of the Church and its work with injection of external money rather than local development; the Church as an official agency of one kind of progress and missionaries "projecting the image of United States outposts":<sup>78</sup> and a strong critique of the propaganda of the Alliance for Progress and its partnership with the Church. Illich construed this propaganda as "publicity for private enterprise and indoctrination to a way of life that the rich have chosen as suitable for the poor. The receiver

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<sup>75</sup> *Ibidem*, 3/10.

<sup>76</sup> David Cayley. *Op. cit.* 84.

<sup>77</sup> Illich, D. I. 1967. "The Seamy Side of Charity". In *CIC. CIF Reports v. 6 january-june 1967: 2/2*. CIDOC Cuaderno no. 41. Cuernavaca: Centro Intercultural de Documentación.

<sup>78</sup> *Ídem*: 2/8.

inevitably gets the message: the *padre* stands on the side of W. R. Grace and Company, Esso, the Alliance for Progress, democratic government, the AFL-CIO, and whatever is holy in the Western pantheon”.<sup>79</sup> He refers in the text to a certain kind of democracy. Perhaps the most powerful statement and the theme behind the article is condensed in the following lines:

Exporting Church employees to Latin America masks a universal and unconscious fear of a new Church. North and South American authorities, differently motivated but equally fearful, become accomplices in maintaining a clerical and irrelevant Church. Sacralizing employees and property, this Church becomes progressively blinder to the possibilities of sacralizing person and community.<sup>80</sup>

In June 1967, Illich published “The Vanishing Clergyman” in Chicago’s *Critic* magazine and reproduced in the very last Report the same month. In the article he questioned full-time celibacy, the structure of the Church, saw the future of ministry as “ordained laymen”, and advocated the reduction of the number of professional clerics. In July 1967, Archbishop of Cuernavaca, Sergio Méndez Arceo, friend of Illich, expressed his disagreement with Illich who, in Arceo’s reading of “The Vanishing Clergyman,” looked for the dissolution of the Church rather than its renewal.<sup>81</sup>

In September 1967, just after “The Seamy Side of Charity “ and “The Vanishing Clergyman,” CELAM conducted an inspection of the Center in Cuernavaca, questioned the lack of “objectivity”, and asked Illich to tone down the publications. The Vatican opened a file on Illich and in December 1967, the Sacred Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith recalled him to the archbishopric of New York, the office that had given him permission to work in Cuernavaca. Illich would not go back. Then, Rome asked him to go there for an interrogatory. Illich went on June 17<sup>th</sup>, 1968 and there he received the infamous list of questions. In his response to Cardinal Franjo Šeper, Illich said that he could not and should not accept the inquisitorial process, which neither corresponded with the principles of the Church, nor with the human and spiritual relation of the

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<sup>79</sup> Ídem: 2/4.

<sup>80</sup> Ídem: 2/6.

<sup>81</sup> Méndez Arceo, S. 1967. “Carta del Obispo de Cuernavaca a Monseñor Ivan D. Illich”. In CIDOC, 1969. *Cuernavaca Fuentes Para el Estudio de una Diócesis*: 4/9. CIDOC Dossier no. 31, Cuernavaca: Centro Intercultural de Documentación.



The Vatican did not react, but in January 1969, Cardinal Šeper sent a letter to the Archbishop of Cuernavaca, Sergio Méndez Arceo, in which the Vatican prohibited clerics and religious from attending classes or seminars at the Cuernavaca Center. The various Superiors adhered to the Vatican decision. Meanwhile, on February 2<sup>nd</sup> an article by Edward B. Fiske in *The New York Times*, described the Vatican's attack on Cuernavaca, and Illich decided to publish the written questions given by the Vatican in the *Excelsior* of Mexico on February 3<sup>rd</sup>, 1969. The Vatican remained silent, and priests and religious continued attending the Center. However, the teaching of Spanish took the characteristics of a school of language (which contained the conception and method of the early years relating culture, language, and socio-political issues) open to everyone, and the themes at the Center moved to education, health, energy, and transportation. The reaction to "The Seamy Side of Charity" closed a period in the history of the Center and the debate on the role of the missionary.

## CONCLUSION

The early 1960s signaled an historical conjuncture in which the Cuban Revolution, the American response with the Alliance for Progress and a project of modernization of Latin America, John XXIII's call to a renewed mission in Latin America, and Vatican II (1962-65) enabling changes in the Catholic Church converged. Latin America had undergone many changes under the aegis of North American capital, as well as regional and national political and social reactions. The spread of "communism", as construed by the U.S.A., had become the identified threat. Ivan Dom Illich attempted to influence missionaries' work by re-signifying the concept of missionary and consequently the Catholic community worker and developed a critique of the Catholic Church, as an institution, and of its liaison with the Alliance for Progress.

The official position of the Vatican, highly centralized, aimed at creating an inter-American project with strong anti-communist tones, and moving financial and human resources from the North to the South. Not all of the Latin American archbishops and bishops were in line with the Vatican's vision. While some had been involved in modernizing developmentalist projects as a counter-measure to the spread of

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<sup>82</sup> Illich, D. I. 1968. "Carta al Cardenal Franjo Šeper, comunicándole que no puede aceptar la base inquisitorial del 17 de junio": 4/103. In CIDOC. 1969. *Mexico "entredicho" del Vaticano al CIDOC 1966-1969*. CIDOC Dossier no. 37. Cuernavaca: Centro Intercultural de Documentación.

“communism”, others supported movements of social action, including educational ones like MEB in Brazil, rooted in the needs and realities of the people.

Illich’s network of Centers –starting in 1961 with the CIF with offices at Fordham University in New York, the CIC that offered the courses in Cuernavaca (having a counterpart in Petrópolis, Brazil), and the CIDOC– became a hub visited by critically-minded social scientists and educators from North and South America. The illocutionary force behind Illich’s discourse was the notion of love at the basis of his pastoral theology. He developed a critique of the Church as an institution framed by a desire to transform the Church from within. He feared the potential damage that the missionary as an agent trapped in a cultural and political agenda could cause to the people in Latin America and even impede necessary changes. Illich advanced a concept of the missionary grounded in the notion of incarnation inspired by the Gospel, and cultivated the “poverty” of the missionary as a virtue sustained by love. The *CIF Reports* (1962-1967) intended to influence missionaries’ work by conveying a vision of Latin America different from the official line of the Catholic Church and expressed a critical view of the Alliance for Progress and its project of modernization. He did not promote a break with the Church. The radicalization of his position led to the publication of “The Seamy Side of Charity” and “The Vanishing Clergyman”, and the inquisitorial call from the Vatican. Illich continued his work in CIDOC and the school of language, but moved away from the critique of the Church and engaged himself in education, health, and transportation, among other issues.

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