

**LATIN AMERICAN PROGRAM**

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**WORKING PAPERS**

Number 68

OLD ALLIES, NEW OPPONENTS:  
THE CHURCH AND THE MILITARY IN CHILE,  
1973-1979

by Brian H. Smith  
Woodstock Theological Center, Georgetown University

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Author's note: This paper was presented at a May 1980 Workshop on "Six Years of Military Rule in Chile," sponsored by the Latin American Program of the Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D.C., 20560. The paper is a draft version, and no part of it should be quoted without the previous consent of the author.

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## ABSTRACT

### Old Allies, New Opponents: The Church and the Military in Chile, 1973-1979

The paper describes the various resources of the Catholic Church for opposition to the military regime in Chile since 1973. It focuses on four different aspects of the Church as a complex religious organization: (1) its moral or legitimating influence, exercised primarily by bishops; (2) its layered institutional network, maintained by lower clergy, women religious and lay leaders; (3) its changing class alliances, and (4) its transnational linkages, which give it access to foreign personnel and finances.

During the first two years of military rule (1973-1975), these four levels of the Church did not act in tandem as a cohesive force of opposition. The Episcopal Conference granted cautious but definite legitimacy to the regime at the outset. Thereafter, the bishops occasionally criticized what they considered to be unavoidable and transitory abuses of power, and several spoke out individually in support of the junta's policies. At lower levels of the Church, new structures were quickly formed and older ones expanded to offer humanitarian assistance to the persecuted and to blunt the force of the repression. They did so with the help of large amounts of international financial support. In so doing, lower Church leaders attracted many new adherents from among the popular classes (including those with Marxist sympathies), while upper-income Catholics distanced themselves from the institution. The government exerted strong pressures on the organizational network of the Church, and capitalized on its dependency on the state and foreign sources of support to limit its freedom.

After 1975, all four Church levels worked more integrally as a force of opposition to the regime. The hierarchy, in defensive reaction to direct attacks on individual bishops and on the Christian Democratic Party, took a more unified prophetic stance against the structural and ideological dimensions of repression. The layered institutional network of the Church exhibited remarkable resilience after its major human rights organization (the Committee for Peace) was dissolved in 1975, and thereafter created new structures to counter the state apparatus (under the aegis of the Vicariate of Solidarity). International monetary support increased during this period, as did allegiance commitments of low-income Catholics. The military and conservative Catholic sectors continued to harass the Church, but with less success than in the former period. International political and economic factors, along with creative adaptive strategies by higher and lower Church leaders, limited the options of the Church's opponents.

Despite this more consistent opposition by various Church levels to the junta's policies since 1975, such opposition has not significantly changed any of these policies. It has acted, however, as an important second-line or rear-guard locus for resistance and serves as a surrogate for participation while other social and political organizations are severely restricted.



OLD ALLIES, NEW OPPONENTS:  
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I. Introduction: A Falling Out Among Friends

The Church and the military in Latin America have traditionally acted on the margins of the political system. While both possess important symbolic and institutional resources and have intervened decisively at crisis moments, neither (except in a few cases) has historically exercised a sustained central role in determining the course of political and economic events in any Latin American country.

Moreover, the Church and the military have long been allies in regard to some mutually shared concerns, antipathies, and internal organizational dynamics. Both have preferred order, stability, and harmony among social classes, and both have valued the importance of religious legitimation for the state. Each had long-standing fears of radical political movements, especially those with socialist or Marxist orientations. Each prized tradition, discipline, hierarchical control, and institutional autonomy within its respective organization.

Over the past 15 years, however, each has come to play a more active and central role in many Latin American societies. In some instances, this has resulted from an attempt by the Church and the military to catch up with rapidly changing events and defend their respective institutional interests. In others, it has occurred semi-reluctantly, with each institution drawn into the political arena as a surrogate for other social organizations that have been unable to manage severe societal disruptions.

Vatican II (1962-1965) legitimized a more socially active role for contemporary Catholicism, partially as an adaptive strategy to regain lost influence. Medellín (1968) and Puebla (1979) both interpreted this mandate as requiring a closer identification by the Latin American Church with the needs of the poor. Throughout the 1960s, the growing attraction of both Marxism and Protestantism among workers and peasants, a major influx of socially committed clergy and religious, and the inauguration of social and economic reforms by democratic governments all provided an added stimulus for greater Church involvement in societal affairs.<sup>1</sup> More recently, severe political and economic repression in many Latin American countries has forced the Church (as an agent of last resort) to

undertake a whole series of humanitarian tasks previously performed by democratic governments, political parties, and labor unions.<sup>2</sup>

Since the mid-1960s, the military have also intervened in more systematic and sustained fashion to take control of the state in several Latin American countries. In some cases, this has been due in large part to a new type of training and professionalization that has convinced the military that they, better than civilians, can effectively guide the process of development (Brazil, Peru). In other instances (Chile, Argentina, Uruguay), this has resulted from prolonged social and economic disruptions and domestic violence which have led the armed forces to consider themselves as the last resort to restore stability. In situations where the military have long played a dominant role in government (Paraguay, prerevolutionary Nicaragua, El Salvador, Guatemala), growing opposition to authoritarian rule in the 1970s precipitated a deepening of their control of the state apparatus.

Regardless of the causes or the motivations, this more active and sustained role in the public domain by the Church and the military has brought these two traditional allies into direct conflict in most of the above-mentioned countries. Some bishops have denounced abuses of coercive power against real or perceived dissidents, and have publicly criticized what they consider to be disproportionate social and economic costs levied on peasants and workers under military rule. Lower clergy, religious and lay leaders have become active leaders on the human rights front, offering assistance to many of the opponents of military governments.

The military in many Latin American countries have claimed that the Church hierarchy is meddling in politics. They also have charged that lower Church echelons have been infiltrated by Marxists and are acting as havens for dissidents committed to insurrection. The armed forces of several countries maintain a close surveillance on Church activities, and in some instances have placed restrictions on Church-sponsored programs for reasons of national security.

Suddenly two old allies are at odds with one another. Each has undergone significant changes on behalf of what it believes to be in its own best interest and in the interest of society at large. Each feels betrayed by the other, and is taking steps to check the other's new active role in the political arena.

## II. Need for More Systematic Analysis of the Church as Opposition

While there has been a significant amount of research on the causes and the impact of the expanded role of the military in Latin America since the mid-1960s,<sup>3</sup> thus far there has not been sufficient analysis by social scientists of the Church's new function as a counterforce to the armed forces. While some popular reporting (and statements by some Latin American military leaders)

would give the impression that the Church is becoming a radical force and a cohesive and formidable foe of military regimes, the reality is far more complex. In no Latin American country did the Church initially oppose the military overthrow of a civilian government in the 1960s and 1970s, and at the official level it has only gradually (and sometimes inconsistently) moved to a position of critical opposition.

Furthermore, divisions exist within the hierarchy, and between different social strata of Catholics, concerning the proper stance of the Church toward the military. In almost every country, the institution is badly understaffed and financially weak, which places restrictions on its freedom of action and choice. Its national and international leadership is primarily concerned with keeping the Church's energies focused on its religious mission, and will sacrifice other objectives to keep this mission viable in all types of societies. All of these institutional factors place limitations on the Church's capacities as an opposition force to the military.

What is needed, therefore, is more systematic probing of the causes and the extent of the Church's disagreements with military governments and the effectiveness of the strategies it has employed at different levels to pursue its new objectives. For example, under what conditions does a national hierarchy act as a unified moral force to withhold legitimacy from a military government? When a coherent prophetic stance is taken by bishops, what impact does this have on the politics of a military regime? How effectively (and at what costs) can Church organizations act as surrogates for political participation and the fulfillment of basic needs when other social structures have been coopted or suppressed by the military? What is the impact on the Church's multi-class membership allegiances when it identifies closely with groups that are marginalized by military governments--workers, peasants, intellectuals, political dissidents? Are international support mechanisms a help or a hindrance to local churches confronting strongly nationalistic military regimes?

Chile since 1973 offers rich experience with which to explore these questions and issues. For a long time both the Church and the military played minor roles in determining the outcome of political and economic events. Each has been thrust into the center of the public domain after Allende's downfall--the military as government, the Church as its former ally turned into a rallying point for the opposition.

The Chilean bishops have gained world-wide respect as forthright defenders of human rights, while the junta has received almost universal scorn for imposing a brutal regime. In the wake of the coup, Church structures quickly mobilized to deliver a broad range of social, economic, and legal services. Conversely, the military government cut off or restricted many of the programs inaugurated by Frei and Allende to help the poor.

The class focus of the Church's attention has shifted significantly in the last six years to concentrate on the needs of those it had long neglected--workers, peasants, and those with Marxist sympathies. The military have solidified their class alliances with large landholders, industrialists, financiers, and speculators.

Internationally, the Chilean Church has drawn upon significant support from both religious and secular agencies opposed to the military government (churches and Western governments). The junta has become more and more isolated internationally, and has relied primarily on the aid of private foreign banks and multilateral lending institutions.

Hence, the Chilean case provides important material with which to explore recent divergences between old allies and the extent and limits of "Church as opposition" to current military regimes in Latin America. Based on 11 months of field research in Chile during 1975, I shall offer an assessment of these critical issues using documentary evidence, personal survey data, and firsthand experience as a participant/observer when I was an assistant pastor in a working-class neighborhood in Santiago.

To provide a nuanced understanding of the Church, I shall focus on four different elements in its complex organization: (1) its moral or legitimating influence, exercised primarily by the hierarchy through public statements; (2) its layered institutional network, maintained by lower clergy, religious (especially women) and lay leaders; (3) its variegated membership allegiances, and how these have shifted since the coup; and (4) its transnational linkages, which give it access to foreign sources of personnel, money, and materials.

I shall divide the six years into two time periods--1973 to 1975, and 1976 to 1979. The critical variables have functioned more cohesively in the second period, and thus help to explain why the Church as a whole has been a more consistent, though limited, force of opposition to the military after 1975.

### III. Church and Military in Chile

#### Between September 1973 and December 1975

During the first two years of military rule in Chile, the four levels of the Church did not act in tandem to oppose the regime. The Episcopal Conference granted cautious but definite legitimacy to the new government as soon as it came to power. Thereafter, the conference occasionally criticized what it considered to be unavoidable and transitory abuses of power, and several bishops spoke out individually in clear support for the junta and its policies.

At lower levels of the Church's institutional network, new structures were formed and older ones expanded to offer assistance to those suffering the brunt of repression. They did so with the help of large amounts of international financial and material support,



and in so doing attracted many new adherents from among the lower and middle classes.

Reactions to these new developments at the structural and behavioral levels of the Church by upper-income Catholics were critical, and sometimes severely divisive and vituperative. The military also exerted strong pressures on the layered organizational network of the Church, and capitalized on the Church's dependency on the state and on foreign sources of support.

Ambiguous Prophecy by the Bishops. Two days after the coup, the Cardinal and the Permanent Committee of the Episcopal Conference issued a public declaration decrying the bloodshed, and called for moderation by the military and respect for previous social gains by the poor. These bishops, however, also asked that citizens cooperate with the regime in restoring order, and expressed trust in the prudence and patriotism of the armed forces.<sup>4</sup> Five days after the coup, at the annual ecumenical service commemorating national independence, Cardinal Silva prayed for those who lost their lives, but explicitly offered the Church's "impartial collaboration to those who at difficult times have taken upon their shoulders the very heavy responsibility of guiding our destiny."<sup>5</sup>

On September 28th, after the military regime had been recognized by several Western governments (including the United States), the Permanent Committee of the Episcopal Conference met with four members of the junta. In return for guarantees that the Church's religious ministries would continue unimpaired and an invitation to collaborate in the "work of reconstruction," the bishops expressed their "respect for the armed forces and the police" and thanked them for the "deference which the new authorities have extended to the bishops in every part of the country."<sup>6</sup>

The September 28th declaration of the Permanent Committee of the Episcopate thus reflected the desire of the official ecclesiastical leadership to preserve the Church's freedom and flexibility of action. In exchange for this guarantee, both the Cardinal and the Permanent Committee of the Episcopal Conference rejected the option of clear and specific denunciations of abuses of power. They feared strong repressive measures against the organizational network of the Church (similar to those taken against other major social institutions) which would restrict its pastoral works and also prevent the inauguration of humanitarian programs to assist the persecuted. As we shall see in the next section, this cautious approach by the bishops at the symbolic or moral level of the Church in the aftermath of the coup made it possible for those at the lower institutional level to immediately begin a whole range of programs in defense of human rights.

Another decisive factor influencing the bishops' ambiguous position was the sense of relief that the disruption of the final months of the Allende period was over. During my own personal interviews with the bishops in 1975, the overwhelming majority indicated that they believed the coup was necessary in order to prevent civil war. Table 1 shows that many priests, nuns, and lay leaders shared this opinion as well.<sup>7</sup>

TABLE 1

DO YOU THINK THE MILITARY INTERVENTION WAS NECESSARY IN SEPTEMBER 1973?

	Bishops (27)	Priests (72)	Nuns (33)	Laity (51)	Totals (183)
1. Yes, there was no alternative	88.9% (24)	76.4% (55)	51.5% (17)	64.7% (33)	70.5% (129)
2. No, there were other alternatives still possible	3.7% (1)	12.5% (9)	9.1% (3)	23.5% (12)	13.7% (25)
3. Don't know, no answer	7.4% (2)	11.1% (8)	39.4% (13)	11.8% (6)	15.8% (29)

Although relations between the Church and Popular Unity were correct (and despite the fact that the bishops, unlike the Christian Democratic Party, had not contributed to Allende's downfall), the bishops and many lower leaders in the Church privately harbored fears of Marxism and were pleased with the military intervention.<sup>8</sup> This helps explain the official Church's openness to the military and the reluctance on the part of many bishops to believe how severe the initial repression actually was.

The final factor which accounted for initial ambivalence by the Episcopal Conference as a whole was the outspoken support given to the junta by several bishops acting on their own. Bishop Francisco Valdés of Osorno offered a public prayer of thanksgiving on the day of the coup, equating the Popular Unity years with darkness and sin and explicitly identifying the new regime with an era of light and salvation.<sup>9</sup> A month later, Archbishop Emilio Tagle of Valparaíso stated on television that the armed forces "have taken steps to save the country from falling irrevocably under the power of Marxism." He also remarked that ". . . like a sick person freed from death by a skillful operation, the country has lost some blood, has suffered some pains and has some wounds which need to be healed."<sup>10</sup> Several months later, in March 1974, Bishop Augusto Salinas of Linares in a press interview described the coup as a just rebellion against an illegitimate government, and praised the armed forces and police for carrying out their task with "swiftness" and "precision."<sup>11</sup>

However, in the face of continuing repression in society and mounting pressures on the hierarchy from groups at lower levels of the Church working with the persecuted, the Episcopal Conference in late April 1974 issued its first major criticism of the government. The bishops expressed concern about the atmosphere of terror and lies pervading the country and about a range of human rights violations that were becoming institutionalized. In the same statement, however, they said that they had no doubts about the "good intentions nor the good will of our government authorities," and praised the junta's recent Declaration of Principles for "its explicitly Christian inspiration."<sup>12</sup>

Despite its nuanced tone, the statement drew strong criticism from those closely associated with the regime, and had no significant impact on diminishing the repression. General Gustavo Leigh remarked publicly that, while he respected the Church, "like many men, without realizing it, they are vehicles for Marxism." Letters subsequently appeared in several newspapers (all of which by 1974 were in control of those favorable to the regime) attacking the Cardinal for his criticism of the present government and for not being harder on the Allende administration. Two prelates (Archbishop Fresno of La Serena and Archbishop Tagle of Valparaíso) distanced themselves from the critical parts of the document, and a month later publicly reiterated support for the values and strategies of the military.<sup>13</sup>

For the next year and a half, the Episcopal Conference issued no major statements pertaining to government policies. Private conversations between individual bishops and the military occurred from time to time, and these led to lenience or releases from prison on a case-by-case basis, particularly in provincial areas.

The only major public event involving the Church and the military in 1974 was the dedication of the Shrine of Maipú in November. Bishops and military alike turned out in full dress to commemorate Chile's war heroes from the struggle for independence. The Cardinal's homily stressed traditional values of patriotism but also included concern for the present poor. No mutual recrimination occurred at the ceremony, as each institution renewed contact with older customs and values which had bonded them closely in the past. Many of those who participated in the religious processions and ceremonials were from the working classes, and they came as a sign of support for the human rights work underway at lower levels of the Church and in defiance to a regime that had outlawed all public demonstrations. Hence, Maipú was a sign of the changing interaction between two old allies, each moving in a new direction but both wanting to maintain correct formal relations based on past allegiances.

By mid-1975, however, the institutionalization of the repression was reaching extremely serious proportions. The DINA was by then operating several torture centers in the vicinity of Santiago (one of which was visited peremptorily by a bishop who forced his way in). The "shock treatment" approach to curb inflation, begun earlier in the year, was inflicting almost unbearable pain on low-income Chileans by 1975, with unemployment reaching 16 percent by June and the purchasing power of workers since the coup having fallen over 60 percent by September.<sup>14</sup> Graphic accounts of torture, forced disappearances, malnutrition among children, and despair by the unemployed were coming to the bishops from local clerical, religious and lay leaders (especially in major urban areas). Many of these leaders were urging their respective bishops to speak out once more against the now systemic proportions of repression.

In September, therefore, the Episcopal Conference issued its third major statement since the coup, entitled "Gospel and Peace." The document contained both criticisms and praise of the military, and reflected the continuing divisions within the hierarchy concerning the performance of the government.

The statement underscored the primacy of certain human rights, such as the right to life, to bodily integrity, and to participation in society. It did not claim, however, that torture was actually occurring in Chile, or that the regime was in fact denying genuine popular input into governmental decisions.<sup>15</sup> While questioning some of the extremist attitudes and reactions of anti-Martists, the bishops also thanked the armed forces for "freeing" the country "from a Marxist dictatorship which appeared inevitable and would have been irreversible,"<sup>16</sup> (a judgment for which there was no authoritative evidence).

The hierarchy criticized the gains being made by some at the expense of the poor, and expressed concern over the decline in public services that was hurting workers. However, they renewed their confidence in the "spirit of justice of our armed forces to re-establish a fair equilibrium among the competing sections of the economy," praised some of the regime's palliatives for the poor (such as the minimal employment program), and offered glowing praise for the efforts being made by the wives of the junta to aid orphans and the aged.<sup>17</sup>



One major reason for this deference was that some bishops still believed it possible to influence government leaders through private negotiations. A good number continued to maintain good personal relations with representatives of the government in their provinces. The majority were treated respectfully and cordially by local military commanders, and also felt that they were successful in obtaining lenience or freedom for political prisoners in their respective areas. Hence, many bishops still did not take a systemic view of the deeper structural contradictions that were causing both economic exploitation and political repression, and believed that quiet diplomacy was the best strategy for them to employ in order to alleviate the abuses that did exist.<sup>18</sup>

An added reason for the very cautious and deferential tone that characterized several parts of "Gospel and Peace" was the hierarchy's concern for unity, especially in the Episcopal Conference itself. Many wanted to avoid open disavowal by some of their brother bishops of the general thrust of the document after it was released (as happened subsequent to their April 1974 statement). A few conservative bishops insisted that the new joint declaration contain special words of praise for the military, and, although some of the most laudatory paragraphs were not present in the original draft, they were added in the final stages of its preparation to satisfy those who strongly supported the government. While this strategy minimized the possibility of later utilization of Episcopal disunity by government sympathizers for their own purposes, it also produced a document riddled with contradictions, full of generalities, and openly supportive of the military.

Despite the extremely respectful attitude towards the government expressed in the pastoral letter, however, even the mild criticism and suggestions it contained had no impact on public policy. In a major speech delivered a week later on the second anniversary of the coup, Pinochet announced no changes in his political and economic policies. The press made no editorial comment on the bishops' statement, and El Mercurio printed it serially over several days, burying it in the back pages of its Santiago edition.

Although "Gospel and Peace" was written partially in response to information and pressure coming from those at lower levels of the Church, it was far from prophetic. The fact that lower clergy, religious and laity wanted a clearer Episcopal denunciation of the regime was confirmed in my own interviews, conducted between April and November of 1975. While 90 percent of the bishops told me that they felt the Church should normally adapt to authoritarian regimes so as to maintain its structures and thus continue its sacramental mission, almost one half of the priests and nearly three-fifths of the nuns and laity in my survey said they preferred Church leaders to be more prophetic under such conditions.

Many lower-level religious, clerical, and lay leaders in the Church saw and experienced the effects of political and economic repression more directly than the bishops, due to the close daily contact

TABLE 2

## OPINIONS ON THE PROPHETIC ROLE OF THE CHURCH UNDER AUTHORITARIAN REGIMES (1975)

Throughout history the Church has had to coexist with authoritarian regimes whose ideologies or practices are in conflict with Catholic doctrine (e.g., Nazi Germany, various communist governments in Eastern Europe and Asia). Leaders of the Church frequently have adapted to the situation in such societies rather than publicly confront governments, because they wish to maintain the structures of the Church and the possibility of administering the sacraments. Are you in agreement with this position and strategy, or do you think that the institutional Church should be more prophetic under these conditions?

	Bishops (30)	Priests (72)	Nuns (33)	Laity (51)	Totals (186)
1. <u>First Position</u> (Prudence is needed; depends on the situation; Church really does not have that much power; Church must clarify doctrinal issues; private conversations better than public denunciations; satisfied with present stance of Chilean Church)	90% (27)	40.3% (29)	12.1% (4)	29.4% (15)	40.3% (75)
2. <u>Second Position</u> (Church should speak and act more decisively, including Chilean Church)	10% (3)	47.2% (34)	57.6% (19)	56.9% (29)	45.7% (85)
3. Combination of both strategies-- dialogue and cooperation when possible combined with strong public defense of human dignity and rights	--	8.3% (6)	--	--	3.2% (6)
4. Don't know, no answer	--	4.2% (3)	30.3% (10)	13.7% (7)	10.8% (20)

with people and involvement in new programs designed to alleviate suffering. Many of these leaders believed by mid-1975 that the time for prudence, dialogue, and private negotiation between the Church and government was over, and that clear and specific public denunciations were the only tactic that was then honorable. Several told me they believed that even if a formal persecution of the Church did result from a more prophetic stance by the bishops, they themselves and their parishioners would not suffer any more pain than they were already experiencing.

Throughout 1975, however, the hierarchy as a whole continued to judge otherwise. No form of repression aimed at the Chilean people was sufficient to resolve the internal divisions in the Episcopal Conference, or to make it risk governmental limitations on the Church's freedom to perform its religious and humanitarian functions.

Decisive Action Across the Layered Institutional Network of the Church. Despite the cautious and inconsistent public statements of the bishops during the first two years of military rule, the organizational resources of the Church were a significant factor in alleviating some of the most brutal effects of the repression. With the collapse or entrenchment of other major social institutions, local churches became the focal point for those being sought by the police and for those whose family members or friends had been murdered or had disappeared.

Moreover, the Catholic bishops' acquiescence to military intervention made it possible for ecclesiastical leaders at the local level to mobilize immediately to meet these needs. Within a month after the coup, Catholic, Protestant, Orthodox, and Jewish leaders joined in an ecumenical effort to coordinate emergency services to the persecuted with the permission of the junta. A National Committee to Aid Refugees was set up at the end of September, and by February 1974 had helped approximately 5,000 foreigners to leave the country safely. In early October, leaders from these various denominations inaugurated the Committee of Cooperation for Peace to provide legal assistance to prisoners and those arbitrarily dismissed from their jobs, as well as economic aid to families of both these groups of Chileans in Santiago. Over the next several months, local offices or representatives were established in 22 of the 25 provinces to provide the same services as in the capital.<sup>19</sup>

Between October 1973 and December 1975, the Committee of Peace initiated legal actions on behalf of more than 7,000 in Santiago alone who had been arrested or condemned, or had disappeared. It defended over 6,000 workers dismissed from their positions for political reasons. It was successful in gaining reduced sentences for many who were actually brought to trial (a small minority of those arrested or disappeared), as well as compensation for countless numbers of those who had been peremptorily fired.<sup>20</sup> During 1974 and 1975, the Committee expanded its services to include 126 self-help enterprises managed by workers, 10 cooperatives for small farmers, health clinics in Santiago (where 75,000 patients were treated by the end of 1975), and approximately

400 soup kitchens (the majority in Santiago) for pre-school-age children suffering from malnutrition (providing a hot lunch to 30,000 youngsters daily).<sup>21</sup>

None of these projects was capable of changing the structures of repression, nor did they reach all of those in need. In addition to reducing the sufferings of many, however, the Committee established a network of communication. Its nation-wide staff of over 300 full-time lawyers, social workers, and medical personnel provided information for almost every area of the country on arrests, disappearances, torture, unemployment, health and nutrition. Such data were channeled to international human-rights organizations as well as to national and international church leaders. In such a way, a detailed and comprehensive account of the extent of the repression was provided to opponents of the regime inside and outside of Chile which acted as a counterbalance to statements of the government.

Furthermore, the work of the Committee of Peace acted as a catalyst to encourage and assist many other projects at the local church level. Drawing upon the experience and advice of the skilled staff of the Committee, small groups of working-class people in parishes and neighborhoods set up self-help employment projects, day-care centers, health clinics, and independent soup kitchens. These satellite projects formed another network of communication and participation. They also helped to create a sense of solidarity among the persecuted and their families, and enabled many to survive who otherwise might have lost all hope.

In addition to these expanded social services, the religious activities of local churches also took on added dimensions and a new vitality. Rates of participation in Sunday Mass, and in weekly Bible study, prayer and catechetical training programs increased significantly. Moreover, much of what has been described in theory by liberation theologians began to be a living reality in these small base communities in Chile after the coup. A deepening of religious faith was combined with critical discussions of the economic and political structures of repression and about the community's own responsibility in mobilizing its resources to meet the basic needs of its members.

Rectories and convents also became places of refuge for those seeking to escape arrest and subsequent torture or execution. With the assistance of those closely associated with the Committee of Peace, many priests, nuns, ministers, and lay men and women helped these persons exercise their right of political asylum and gain entrance into foreign embassies. The story is yet to be told of the countless numbers of lives these courageous men and women saved, risking their own safety to do so.<sup>22</sup>

In addition to these actions on behalf of human rights, the Jesuit-sponsored monthly magazine Mensaje provided a balanced but critical viewpoint on public events from the outset. During the initial period after the coup, the journal, like the bishops, expressed cautious acceptance of the regime as the only alternative to civil war.



At the same time, however, it specifically condemned in its editorials the widespread use of violence and torture, stressed the need for the re-establishment of traditional freedoms and an early withdrawal of the military from power, and supported the continued desirability of some form of socialism in Chile.<sup>23</sup>

During the period of consolidation of government power, Mensaje voiced a concern over the lack of adequate social and political participation. Throughout 1974 and 1975, the magazine also published articles describing the devastating impact of the government's economic policies on the purchasing power and quality of life of workers and other low-income sections of the population.<sup>24</sup>

Although its circulation numbered only 5,000 subscribers, its importance was enhanced by the fact that 80 percent of the communications media were in the hands of government supporters. Mensaje provided one of the few continuous alternate perspectives on public events, and copies were passed by subscribers to many others interested in reading a critical analysis of government policies. It was also circulated abroad among church circles and in the international human-rights community, providing them with additional authoritative data on developments inside Chile.

Military Reprisals Against the Church. Despite the emergence of new services at the organizational level of the Church, some older ones suffered critical restrictions. Ninety percent of the operating budget of the Catholic university system (and approximately 50 percent of the finances necessary to operate Catholic primary and secondary schools) came from the state after the coup. The military quickly exploited this institutional weakness of the Church to consolidate its control over all branches of education and eliminate what it considered to be "Marxist" influences in schools and universities.<sup>25</sup>

The junta appointed military rectors in all three branches of the Catholic university system (Santiago, Valparaíso, and Antofagasta) in October 1973. These men proceeded to exercise the same firing privileges as did their counterparts in the State universities, and dismissed numerous faculty and students sympathetic to both Popular Unity and Christian Democracy. Courses in social science, journalism, and fine arts were severely cut back, along with scholarship assistance to students from low-income families. The television and radio networks associated with these university campuses have also been given over to government sympathizers.

The military also would quickly place restrictions on Catholic primary schools, subjecting them to the same controls imposed on public schools. Books which local military commanders considered an attempt "to conscientize students with strange ideologies" were banned, parents' councils were limited in their scope of activities, public subsidies were reduced, and health and nutritional services administered through schools cut back.<sup>26</sup>

The police also harassed local church meetings throughout this period. Informants (usually unemployed workers, desperate for money

to feed their children) spied on the activities of small base communities, and gave lists of participants to government agents. The DINA regularly carried out search and seizure missions in rectories, convents, and Catholic schools, looking for former union or leftist party leaders and confiscating church documents and files. Periodic arrests of clerical, religious, and lay leaders occurred, the latter remaining incarcerated for longer and treated more brutally than priests or nuns.

Beginning in mid-1974, the media carried on a continuous campaign to discredit the Committee of Cooperation for Peace, charging that it was infiltrated by Marxists, was giving aid to subversives and sending false and disparaging information to Chile's enemies abroad. The members of the junta criticized the Committee frequently in the press, and privately urged the hierarchy to close it down. The junta also imposed self-censorship on Mensaje in 1974 and engaged in behind-the-scenes attempts to get the bishops to withdraw Church support for it in 1975 so that they could suppress the journal entirely.

In November 1975, after a group of priests and nuns (some of whom were members of the Committee of Peace) assisted four activists in the Movement of the Revolutionary Left (MIR) to gain asylum in the Costa Rican embassy and the Vatican nunciatura, severe pressure was applied on Church leaders to dissolve the ecumenical organization. Over a two-week period, 18 clerical, religious, and lay participants of the Committee were arrested. In a letter, General Pinochet urged the Cardinal to close down the organization, since it was "a means whereby Marxist-Leninists were creating problems threatening the civic order."<sup>27</sup> The fact that Bishop Carlos Camus, Secretary of the Episcopal Conference, had acknowledged in an off-the-record press interview (given in late September and subsequently published) that there were those with Marxist sympathies in the Committee also fueled the fire of the Committee's opponents.<sup>28</sup>

Moreover, the Orthodox and Lutheran Churches withdrew from the Committee out of concern that the latter's activities were becoming too political, and some Catholic bishops (Tagle and Salinas) openly criticized the priests and nuns who had assisted members of the MIR. Amidst such mounting criticisms and pressures, Cardinal Silva (Chairman of the Committee) acceded to Pinochet's request and dissolved the organization in December 1975. In granting this concession, however, the Cardinal denied that the Committee had been "simply an instrument used by Marxist-Leninists to disturb the peace," praised the organization for the humanitarian work it had carried out "under very difficult circumstances," and committed the Church to continue such activities on behalf of the poor "within our own respective ecclesiastical structures."<sup>29</sup>

This concession gave the hierarchy some added credibility with the regime. The same month that the Cardinal agreed to dissolve the Committee of Peace, the Episcopal Conference issued a strong public endorsement of Mensaje, expressing a "fervent desire" that it continue its "positive effort of clarification" of crucial public issues.<sup>30</sup> The government subsequently relinquished its pressure on the bishops to close down the magazine, and for a time diminished harassment of local church personnel.

Hence, while the institutional network of the Church during the first two years after the coup played an important role in blunting some of the policies of the regime, it encountered serious, and in some cases debilitating, opposition by the military. Under withering pressure, new structures less formally part of the official Church (the Committee of Peace) had to be terminated in order to continue humanitarian efforts and a critical voice through organizations more integral to the institution (small base communities, and Mensaje). Moreover, in an area where the Church was heavily dependent on the state for the continuance of an apostolate (education), there was almost no room for maneuverability or trade-off with the government, and the Church had to suffer the consequence of severe public controls.

Transfusion from International Lifelines. Of all the significant variables that shaped the role of the Church as opposition, the one that was most significant in the first two years of military rule was its access to international resources. Without massive outside help, none of its new institutional commitments to human rights--the National Committee to Aid Refugees, the Committee of Cooperation for Peace, health and nutritional programs--could have been inaugurated or sustained over time.

Catholic organizations in Western Europe and North America donated over \$16 million in money and materials (food, clothing, medicines) to Chile in 1974 and 1975, and Protestant groups contributed approximately \$2 million during the same period. Moreover, foreign government aid was also given to the Chilean Church, some directly and some channeled through churches. The U.S. Inter-American Foundation donated \$3.7 million directly during 1974 and 1975, and the West German government's program for overseas Church development projects (Zentralstelle), administered by the German bishops, sent \$168,699.<sup>31</sup>

This assistance (totalling \$21.7 million) was quite small in comparison to the aid received during the same two-year period by the military government. This amounted to \$724.4 million in grants and loans from public bilateral and multilateral agencies (the U.S. and Brazilian governments, the IMF, the IDB, and the IBRD), and \$99.8 million in loans from private banks in the United States and Western Europe.<sup>32</sup>

Foreign contributions to the Church, however, far surpassed the domestic revenues generated by the Chilean Church through modified tithing programs. These totaled only \$356,347 for 1974 and 1975 combined.<sup>33</sup> Over 98 percent (\$21.7 million out of \$22 million) of the funds and materials available to support Church-sponsored humanitarian programs in Chile in 1974 and 1975 came from abroad. It also largely originated from international opponents of the Chilean regime, and was dispensed to a very different clientele inside Chile than the \$824.2 million received by the military regime from friendly foreign governments and banks.

A Second Front for Military Attack on the Church. Just as the government had exploited the Church's vulnerable dependency on the state in the area of education, it also moved quickly after the coup to cut the Church's international umbilical cord. It was far more successful in its surgical strike against foreign personnel already in Chile than against new foreign finances coming in from abroad.

In 1973, nearly one-half (48.3%) of the total number of priests serving in Chile (1,202 out of 2,491) were foreign-born, very few of whom were naturalized citizens. Since most had come as missionaries to work among the poor, many had closely identified with the economic and social struggles of workers and peasants during the Allende years. Some had taken political stands through the Christians for Socialism movement, and a few had joined leftist parties or movements (the Socialist Party, the Movement of Popular Unitary Action [MAPU], and the MIR).

After the coup, three were killed, some were arrested and expelled, while others had their permanent residency permits revoked by the government. Many simply left the country knowing full well that they were marked men and could not continue to function in Chile without serious danger to themselves and their parishioners. The result was that during the first two years after the coup, the Church suffered an over-all decline of 380 priests (15% of the total), the overwhelming majority of whom (314 of 380) were foreigners. Consequently, the number of baptized Catholics per priest rose from 3,251 in 1973 to 4,336 in 1975, thereby taxing the sacramental capacities of an already badly understaffed Church.<sup>34</sup> This also removed from Chile many priests sympathetic to the left who would also have been in the forefront of opposition to the new regime through their support for the Committee of Peace and other Church-related programs.<sup>35</sup>

On the financial front, the military's efforts to cut international support for the Church were far less successful. In early 1975, the government issued a decree requiring organizations with a private-law juridical personality to disclose all currency transactions with groups outside Chile--the main target undoubtedly being the Committee of Cooperation for Peace. The Committee was able to ignore this requirement because it was covered by the legal privileges of the Archdiocese of Santiago, which since the separation of Church and State in 1925 has (along with the whole Catholic Church) enjoyed a public-law juridical personality. Such an exemption did not pertain to Protestant churches, however, and since 1975 they have had to disclose to the Chilean government all the assistance they receive from abroad.

Since the government was itself concerned with attracting foreign monetary support during its period of consolidation of power, it took no further steps in 1974 and 1975 to cut off international assistance to the Church. Some foreign donors (e.g., the U.S. government) were giving money to both the Church and the government, while others (private U.S. and West European banks) held Church accounts and were already facing ecclesiastical pressures by 1975 for their loans to the Chilean government. Any further action on the part of the Chilean military to cut foreign aid to the Chilean Church would have been counter-productive to their own economic self-interest.



Hence, at this third critical level also the Church exhibited both strengths and weaknesses in acting as an opponent to the government during its consolidation period. The Church gained a great deal of resources for its humanitarian efforts from foreign support, but simultaneously lost one out of six of its priests, almost all of whom were foreigners. While fears of sanctions from abroad limited the government's options regarding the Church's foreign financial support, it was within the government's legal prerogatives to revoke residency permits to foreign priests and it did so with no serious political or economic losses.

New Adherents and a Self-Distancing of Traditional Clientele.

One of the factors that helped to offset the loss of a considerable number of clergy in Chile between 1973 and 1975 was the increase of lay initiatives, especially among those previously alienated from the Church or with no close participatory association with it--middle-class Catholics with Marxist sympathies, and working-class sectors. Upper-class Catholics, those with more traditional religious orientations, and certain reactionary groups, however, all expressed varying degrees of opposition to a Church more closely identified with the left and the poor.

In the period following the coup, among the first volunteers for new Church-sponsored organizations to assist the persecuted were those Catholics with Marxist leanings. Of the more than 300 professional and clerical personnel who initiated the projects of the Committee of Cooperation for Peace, the majority were identified with leftist Christian parties (MAPU and Izquierda Cristiana), and a few included non-Catholics formerly active in the Communist or Socialist parties.<sup>36</sup>

Their new or renewed association with the institutional Church did not necessarily entail a return to participation in the sacraments, but it did signal a pragmatic recognition that the Church provided the only opportunity for them to alleviate the intense suffering of their fellow Chileans and also oppose the repressive tactics of the military. Among some it also involved a renewal of emotional ties to the institution and a rekindling of religious faith as well, as they witnessed priests, nuns, and lay leaders risking their personal safety and security to save lives.

A similar pattern of closer identification with the Church occurred among those in the working classes, many of whom had been supporters of Allende. The overwhelming majority of the clientele of the various humanitarian projects undertaken by the Committee of Cooperation for Peace and small base communities after the coup were the poor who were penalized by the military for their former party and union affiliations. Moreover, those administering such programs at the neighborhood level were lay men and women who previously had little formal contact with the Church.<sup>37</sup> These developments gave the Church a unique opportunity to evangelize sectors who had drifted away from it in the past, or simply never had received much of its attention. After the coup, Bible study circles, catechetical leadership programs, prayer groups, and deaconate training projects all blossomed in working-class urban areas.

Such advances among these social strata, however, coincided with certain losses among the Church's traditional clientele. Wealthier Chilean Catholics were scandalized by what they considered a betrayal of the Church's traditional class character. Some were angry at the Church's concern for their government's enemies. Others simply found it hard to adapt to a post-Vatican II, post-Medellín Church that was finally putting into practice a synthesis of deep religious faith and a strong commitment to social justice.<sup>38</sup> There also re-emerged after the coup a small but articulate group of reactionary Catholics (mostly from upper-middle-class families) closely identified with Opus Dei and the Integralist movement, the Society for the Defense of Tradition, Family and Property (TFP). These groups date back to the 1930s in Chile, and were active opponents of both Christian Democracy and the new social orientation of the Chilean Church begun in the 1960s. Although they went underground for the most part during the Allende years (or focused their energies in the militant Fatherland and Freedom movement), they surfaced after 1973 as staunch supporters of the new regime. Moreover, they publicly opposed the official humanitarian position of the Church, and even the cautious position of the bishops, on several occasions between 1973 and 1975.<sup>39</sup>

Although these conservative and reactionary Catholics together constitute a relatively small part of the total number of Catholics in Chile (less than 10 percent), their influence goes far beyond their numbers. Several TFP sympathizers were invited by the military into key government positions after the coup, including Chief Legal Advisor to the Junta and the leadership of National Secretariats of Youth and Women respectively. They also were very active in the communication media after 1973, and several Opus Dei members replaced Christian Democrats in the administration of the Catholic university system.<sup>40</sup>

Moreover, these are the Catholics best equipped financially to contribute to the Church. Their alienation meant that all of the new and expanded social and religious services by the post-coup Church had to be supported from outside the country. Any hopes of a financially autonomous (and therefore less vulnerable) Church were dashed by the further self-distancing of these Catholics after 1973.

Hence, at the fourth level of the institution (the variegated membership allegiances) there were both advances and losses during the first two years of military rule. While the gains perhaps outweighed the losses from a gospel perspective, the withdrawals significantly weakened the Church as a coherent and independent force of opposition, and also provided the military with a political "trojan horse" within the institution.

#### IV. Church and Military in Chile Between 1976 and 1979

After 1975, all four levels of the Church worked much more cohesively as a force of opposition to the regime than during the period of its consolidation of power. The hierarchy, in defensive reaction to direct attacks on individual bishops and on the Christian Democratic Party, took a more unified prophetic stance against the structural and ideological aspects of the regime. The layered institutional network of the Church exhibited remarkable resilience after the Committee of Cooperation for Peace was dissolved, creating new structures to counter the state apparatus. International monetary support increased during this period, as did allegiance commitments among low-income Catholics.

The military and conservative Catholic sectors continued to harass the Church, but with less success than in the former period. International political and economic factors, along with creative strategies by higher and lower Church leaders, limited the options of the Church's political and religious opponents.

Emerging Consistent Prophecy Among the Bishops. From mid-1976 through mid-1979, the public statements of the Episcopal Conference became more consistent and critical of governmental policies. Public divisions among the bishops ceased, and as a group they denounced what they considered specific abuses as well as the deeper structural causes of the political and economic repression. Two major developments precipitated this about-face by the Episcopal Conference--the military's efforts to severely limit the Christian Democratic Party, and their permitting the secret police to humiliate several members of the hierarchy publicly.

In 1976, the government began a series of attacks on the Christian Democratic Party, whose leaders protested to the OAS (during its Sixth Assembly held in Santiago) the state of siege and the arbitrary detentions occurring in Chile. Renan Fuentealba (former president of the party), Eugenio Velasco (former Dean of the Law Faculty of the University of Chile), and Jaime Castillo (Minister of Justice under Frei) were subsequently expelled from the country for purportedly threatening the internal security of the country.

On August 12, three Chilean bishops attending a meeting in Riobamba, Ecuador, were arrested along with 14 others from several countries in the hemisphere (including the United States). The military government of Ecuador charged that the 17 prelates were discussing "subversive themes of a Marxist orientation," and, after detaining them overnight, expelled them from the country. Upon returning home, the Chilean bishops (Enrique Alvear of Santiago, Fernando Ariztía of Copiapó, and Carlos González of Talca) were greeted at Pudahuel airport by a group of pro-government demonstrators (including members of the DINA), who shouted insults, threw stones, and physically mistreated those accompanying the prelates. The media gave the event wide coverage, and several commentators denounced the "leftist bishops" for meddling in politics.<sup>41</sup>

The Permanent Committee of the Episcopal Conference reacted almost immediately, issuing two strong statements on the same day--one criticizing the treatment of the prominent Christian Democrats, and the other threatening excommunication for those involved in the attack on the bishops. These were the first unequivocal statements by the bishops as a group in almost three years of military rule.

In the first, they denounced the arbitrary expulsion of Castillo and Velasco "without a decision about their culpability by a free and impartial judge." They concluded by asking that if this could happen to "two prestigious professional people . . . what could happen to simple and ignorant citizens?"<sup>42</sup> (No acknowledgement was made of the fact that thousands of "simple and ignorant citizens" had already been expelled from the country since 1973.)

In the second statement, the bishops protested the "violence and verbal aggression" against the Church by the press and television, and also the insulting demonstrations at Pudahuel airport. They named specific members of the DINA who had taken part in the incident, and reminded them that Canon Law automatically imposes excommunication on those Catholics who "perpetrate violence against an archbishop or bishop."<sup>43</sup>

In this latter statement the hierarchy also took the occasion to address themselves to what they now considered to be systemic repression being imposed by many military governments throughout Latin America:

The actions which we denounce and condemn are not isolated incidents. They are part of an overall process or system . . . which threatens to impose itself relentlessly throughout Latin America. By a constant appeal to national security, a model of society is being consolidated which takes away basic liberties, runs roughshod over the most fundamental rights and subjugates citizens to a dreaded omnipotent police state. . . .

The Church cannot remain passive or neutral in face of such a situation. The legacy which she has received from Christ demands that she speak out in favor of human dignity and for the effective protection of the liberty and rights of the person.<sup>44</sup>

Hence, the hierarchy as a group were coming to realize that abuses of power by the Chilean security forces were not isolated, transitory, or unavoidable mistakes. They were part of a whole system of repressive state power present in Chile and several other Latin American countries in the mid-1970s. It took, however, a direct attack on themselves and prominent laity in the PDC to open their eyes to this fact.

In late 1976 and 1977 (after Pinochet had announced that the military would remain in control of the state indefinitely to protect national security), the Christian Democratic Party again stepped up its activities against the government. Its members became more involved in legal defense of prisoners and the disappeared, and the PDC radio station (Radio Balmaceda) increased its broadcasts on repressive aspects of the government's political and economic policies. The party leadership (encouraged by Carter's election in the United States) inaugurated internal discussion on feasible scenarios that would bring an end to military rule and also establish a tactical alliance between the PDC and moderate sectors of the left.

The junta responded decisively. At the end of January 1977, it closed down Radio Balmaceda permanently. On March 12, Pinochet also announced the dissolution of all political parties, and justified this action by claiming that the Christian Democrats had broken the political recess imposed on all non-Marxist parties in September 1973.

In the wake of these latest reprisals against the PDC, the bishops issued another clear denunciation of the regime. The pastoral letter (entitled "Our Living Together As a Nation") included an analysis of the structural weaknesses of the system as a whole, and placed the Church clearly behind those urging an early return to constitutional and representative government. The statement did not mention the suppression of the PDC as such, but addressed itself to what the bishops considered a basic flaw in the regime which the dissolution of the party reflected. They pointed out (in continuity with traditional Catholic social teaching about subsidiarity) that intermediate organizations between the state and the individual must not be suppressed. Such institutions, they argued, guarantee both social and political participation and a healthy pluralism of ideas which are essential ingredients in the pursuit of the common good.<sup>45</sup>

They also affirmed that social, labor, and professional organizations had manifested "a maturity as well as a realistic and patriotic understanding, even when they have dissented from government viewpoints." Such groups, they argued, deserved not more restrictions but "greater possibilities to express themselves and thus collaborate in generating an authentic consensus."<sup>46</sup> Using the same line of argument, the hierarchy criticized the economic plan of recovery for not being subject to wider societal debate or allowing for more popular input into its formulation. They asked that economic decision-making "not be reserved to only one scientific school of thought or to some of the most privileged economic sectors." They stated that "more wisdom is bound to result from the open discussion of various opinions, rather than from only one judgment that is handed down dogmatically. . . ."<sup>47</sup> Finally, the bishops called for an end to government by decree, and urged popular ratification of any future constitution or set of laws:



We believe that there will not exist full guarantees for the respect of human rights so long as the country does not have a Constitution, old or new, ratified by popular vote. Such guarantees will also be lacking so long as laws are not written by legitimate representatives of the citizenry, or while all the structures of the state, from the highest to the lowest, are not subject to the Constitution and to a set of laws. . . .<sup>48</sup>

This was the first time in three and a half years that the hierarchy implied that the military were not the legitimate representatives of the people. It was also the first time that they acknowledged that inadequate protections for personal, political, and economic rights were due to the absence of accountable government rather than to failures by some individuals within the administration.

It was also clear that the factor which precipitated the bishops' criticism of the lack of the regime's legitimacy and their most comprehensive analysis to date of its structural weaknesses was the suppression of the Christian Democratic Party. Although not an official Catholic party, the PDC's ideology traditionally has paralleled that of the bishops (and vice versa). Moreover, close family and friendship ties have long existed between the party's leaders and the bishops. The junta's attack on the Christian Democrats, more than any other factor, acted as a catalyst in early 1977 to galvanize Episcopal opposition to systemic trends in the regime.

The reaction of the government and its supporters was swift and acerbic. El Mercurio accused the bishops of having for the first time adopted a "political position in face of the military regime," thus overstepping their "pastoral authority."<sup>49</sup> The Minister of Justice publicly called the bishops "useful fools, ambitious, bad-intentioned and resentful" who have "abandoned the care of souls" and have "launched a hypocritical political attack on the government."<sup>50</sup>

Although the minister was removed from his position, no positive action was taken by the government in response to the hierarchy's request for more freedom and genuine participation and for a return to representative government. In fact, in July 1977 Pinochet announced that a return to civilian rule would not occur until 1985, nor would the new institutional order allow for political parties or a popularly ratified constitution.<sup>51</sup>

Over the course of the next two years the Episcopal Conference continued to issue statements critical of the regime, and for the most part each declaration focused on a specific aberration of public power. At Christmas 1977, they issued an appeal for amnesty to those in forced or voluntary exile.<sup>52</sup> At about the same time, they sent a public letter to the junta asking for a postponement of a precipitously announced referendum rigged to guarantee a favorable outcome for the government.<sup>53</sup>

Throughout 1978, the maneuvers of the Episcopal Conference addressed themselves to three more problems--restrictions on salaries and rights of workers, the lack of information on the disappeared, and the harassment of clergy. The Permanent Committee of the Conference issued six separate public statements criticizing specific government actions or programs that aggravated these situations.<sup>54</sup>

In 1979 the bishops publicly denounced government policies that undermined the Mapuche Indians' cultural identity and right to land.<sup>55</sup> They also issued a long critical analysis of the junta's agrarian program, claiming that it denied small farmers access to credit, technical assistance, and adequate power to protect themselves against large landholders.<sup>56</sup> The Conference also publicly requested the government to surrender for Christian burial the bodies of those murdered and concealed in large common graves after the coup.<sup>57</sup>

None of these clear and pointed statements by the hierarchy after 1975 had any significant impact on the government's political policies. Neither did the junta make any substantial change in its economic measures that continued to impose a heavy burden on the basic needs and rights of workers.

This entire series of public declarations by the bishops signalled, however, a definite distancing of the official level of the Church from many of the principles and tactics of the regime. Once the bishops themselves and the party they considered closest to the Church's position were subjected to direct and sustained attack, they closed ranks as a group and identified themselves more closely with the judgments of the majority of local Church leaders and those in society suffering the brunt of political and economic repression.

Closer examination of the public stance of several other national Church hierarchies in Latin America living under military rule in the 1970s shows the same pattern that has occurred in Chile. The bishops in Brazil, Argentina, Bolivia, Paraguay, and El Salvador have only slowly come to take a prophetic position in the face of government repression. In these countries, as in Chile, a period of "cooking time" elapsed between the institutionalization of human rights violations by such regimes and a clear denunciation of these practices by the respective hierarchies.<sup>58</sup> In all of these cases, the bishops initially accepted military rule and have done their best to maintain good relations with the regime. Only when they considered core interests of the Church to be under attack (usually the lives or safety of the clergy) have they spoken out clearly and critically against the wider structures of oppression affecting the whole of society.

New Initiatives at the Lower Levels of the Church after 1975. Although the Committee of Cooperation for Peace was dissolved by Cardinal Silva in December 1975, he established a new organization the following month to take its place--the Vicariate of Solidarity. While there were some changes of personnel, the Vicariate continued the same services of the former Committee. It was, however, made an integral part of the juridical structures of the Catholic Church, with representatives appointed by the bishops in local episcopal chan-  
ceries. It established regional offices in 20 of the 25 provinces, and over the course of the next two years provided legal, health, nutritional, and occupational services to more than 500,000 Chileans throughout the country (5% of the population).<sup>59</sup>

The Vicariate also inaugurated the publication of a biweekly bulletin (Solidaridad) that has published accounts of the various projects undertaken by the Vicariate as well as articles on problems affecting workers, peasants, and students. Solidaridad as of 1978 reached a circulation of 33,000 copies, which were distributed gratis throughout parishes, small base communities, and social action projects of the Vicariate throughout the country. It also was distributed abroad through international Church networks.

In addition, the Vicariate has undertaken the printing and dissemination of pamphlets on special topics of popular concern, such as the status of investigations regarding disappeared persons, the opinions of labor leaders on the rights of unions, and recent papal and international episcopal statements on social justice and human rights. In such a way, an effective source of communication and information among Church personnel and others at the local level was maintained that could counter the distortions presented in the secular media.<sup>60</sup>

Hence, while the Church had lost a tactical skirmish with the government in 1975, the strategy of the bishops (under the Cardinal's leadership) was shrewd and foresighted in the way they went about replacing the Committee of Cooperation for Peace. The Vicariate of Solidarity was much more closely tied to the official Church than its predecessor, making it both easier for the bishops to control and harder for the government to smash without directly attacking the core of the Church itself.

The government and its sympathizers did in fact attempt to discredit and harass the Vicariate, as they had done to the Committee of Peace. In late 1977, Pinochet accused the Vicariate of being sympathetic to Communists. At the same time La Segunda, El Mercurio, and El Cronista all bitterly criticized the Vicariate for engaging in partisan politics (since it continued to assist the same clientele as its predecessor).<sup>61</sup>

The bishops, however, stood firmly behind the Vicariate and publicly defended it against these vilifications.<sup>62</sup> Unlike its predecessor, they considered it an integral part of the Church and essential to its core interests.<sup>63</sup> Furthermore, by the time

the junta and its supporters began to attack the Vicariate, the Chilean bishops had already closed ranks and decided upon a more consistent policy of public opposition to many of the regime's strategies. The Vicariate benefited from this decisiveness and has continued to function with periodic public endorsements of Episcopal support to a greater degree than its predecessor.

At the parochial level of the Church, humanitarian and religious activities continued with the same vitality after 1975 as before. Social action communities, soup kitchens, and health clinics, as well as bible-study circles, prayer groups, and catechetical leadership training, all maintained the same services to those with material and spiritual needs. They also continued to provide surrogate forms of social participation and networks of accurate information in the absence of viable secular structures to accomplish these ends.

Moreover, recruitments into the clerical ranks among Chilean youth significantly expanded after 1975. Between 1976 and 1979, the total number of Chilean priests grew from 1,161 to 1,402, an increase of 11.4 percent. In the same period, the number of ordained deacons (who perform all the ritual functions of priests, except celebrating the Eucharist and hearing confessions) increased from 128 to 167, a jump of 30.4 percent.<sup>64</sup> Such additions provided fresh cadres of indigenous leadership for the Church's humanitarian and religious activities, thus strengthening lower levels of the institution's chronically understaffed network.

The security forces and supporters of the government in the media continued their attacks on these local structures of the Church after 1975, but with less frequency than before. The bishops not only protested publicly and vigorously on each occasion, but they also officially removed some of the grounds for previous accusations that small base communities were havens for Marxist political activists. In 1979, Cardinal Silva issued criteria for who and what kinds of activities could be legitimately considered as part of the local Church. In this statement, he acknowledged the danger of the Church's being manipulated for political purposes, and explicitly ruled out any type of activity with clearly partisan political goals. He also, however, defended as integral to the Church's mission all humanitarian activities to those in need regardless of religious affiliation, and indicated that all lay persons could exercise leadership positions in local Church projects provided they were at least open to the religious message of the Church and were not militant atheists.<sup>65</sup> In such a way he removed from the government excuses for its harassing local Church programs, by publicly taking upon himself the responsibility of safeguarding the institution's proper focus and clientele.

Beginning in 1976, Mensaje also stepped up its criticisms of the government. Once it had received strong Episcopal endorsement in late 1975, it expanded its coverage of sensitive issues such as the continued inaction of the courts in the face of violations of constitutional rights, government censorship of the media, the lack

of information on the whereabouts of disappeared persons, and the chronic suppression of worker's rights and denial of adequate salaries. Like the bishops, the magazine in 1977 and 1978 pressured editorially for a speedy return to democratic government. As intermediate steps towards this goal, it also urged a termination of the state of emergency, the reconstruction of voting lists, the election of a constitutional assembly, and freedom for nongovernmental organizations (unions, universities, the press) to function without severe government controls.

The articles appearing in Mensaje since 1976 have also continued to provide some of the best analyses of the effect of repression on various aspects of public life--labor, health, agriculture, the legal system, and practices of the DINA (which was replaced in 1978 by the Center for National Information--CNI). As a result of this expanded critical stance assumed by the journal in recent years, the circulation jumped from 5,000 in 1974 to over 11,000 in 1978.

The only area where more forthright words and actions by the hierarchy after 1975 did not gain more protection or consideration for the local structures of the Church was in the realm of education. The junta maintained firm control of the Catholic university system and continued to reduce state subsidies by more than 10 percent each year, making it more difficult for all except the wealthy to attend. At the primary and secondary level, government support also continued to decline. By 1977, enrollment in private grammar and high schools had fallen by more than 13 percent since the coup, and the majority were students from families of modest income.<sup>66</sup> Such cutbacks have, therefore, continued to make it difficult for the Church to carry through on previous plans to train more of the poor in its schools, and have guaranteed that all private education has become more selective and elitist since the coup.

With this one exception, the layered institutional network of the Church has expanded its capacity since 1975 to act as an important counterforce to government policies and propaganda. More forthright statements and shrewd tactics by the hierarchy have been a major factor in making this possible.

#### Strengthening of International Resource Support Since 1975.

Foreign financial and material support to Church-sponsored humanitarian projects in Chile increased substantially after 1975. The government attempted briefly to block some of these donations. It had to back off, however, once international pressures were exerted and it realized that its own economic support from private banks and multilateral lending institutions (which has also significantly increased) might be jeopardized.

Once the Vicariate of Solidarity began to function in January 1976, it immediately received foreign assistance from the same benefactors as the Committee of Peace. Between 1976 and 1978, Western European and North American Catholic agencies sent \$31.9 million in financial aid or the equivalent in food, medicines, and



The government also ceased expelling foreign priests after 1975. The number of foreign clergy in Chile has continued to decline during this period (from 950 in 1976 to 824 in 1979, a drop of 13.3 percent). These men have left on their own accord, however, and (as seen earlier) have more than been replaced by substantial increases in Chilean priests who accounted for 1402 (63 percent) of the 2,226 priests in the country in 1979.<sup>72</sup>

Hence, during this second period the third critical dimension of the Chilean Church (its international support linkages) also acted as a strong reinforcement for its humanitarian and religious programs. The government also found it more difficult to undermine this strength, due to international economic pressures protecting the Church's access to foreign money.

Continued Opposition of Traditionalist Catholics and a Consolidation of New Supporters. Since 1975, traditionalist Catholics associated with the Integralist movement have continued to distance themselves from the Church. The hierarchy at this level as well have taken more decisive action to protect the Church from their attacks. Moreover, sectors of the working classes and middle-income Catholics have continued their new forms of participation in the Church, and some have also increased their financial contributions.

In 1976 the Society for the Defense of Tradition, Family and Property (TFP) published a book entitled The Church of Silence in Chile, printing 10,000 copies for domestic and international circulation. The work claimed to represent the views of those conservative Catholics in Chile who purportedly had been betrayed by their clergy and no longer had any voice in the Church. The book argued that since 1960 almost all the bishops and a decisive part of the priests in the country had been undermining traditional Catholic positions on social issues, especially in regard to private property and Marxism. The authors claimed, therefore, that the leadership of the Chilean Church was in heresy, and that Catholics had the duty to resist such bishops and clergy. Opposition, they said, should take the form of condemning these ecclesiastical leaders publicly, preventing them from using their prestige for further damage to the Church and Christian civilization in Chile, and severing all spiritual relations with them to the point of refusing the sacraments from their hands.<sup>73</sup>

The reaction of the bishops to such a frontal attack on their authority and upon Church unity was swift and decisive. Once the book appeared, they immediately issued a declaration condemning the movement for setting itself up as a "parallel teaching office" in the Church. They reminded Catholics that the Church "is founded on Jesus Christ in communion with the Holy Father and the bishops" and that those who "do not accept this doctrine do not belong to the Catholic Church." They also clearly implied that members of TFP had automatically placed themselves in a state of excommunication by their activities:

clothing (double the amounts these groups donated in 1974 and 1975). Protestant organizations from the same regions also doubled their gifts in this second period, from \$2 million to \$4 million.

Foreign governments more than doubled their grants to the Vicariate and other Church-related projects in Chile as well. The U.S. Inter-American Foundation expanded its assistance from \$3.7 million in the 1973-1975 period to \$6.2 million between 1976 and 1978. The West German government's aid (Zentralstelle) jumped 20-fold, from \$168,699 in the first period to \$3.2 million in the second.<sup>67</sup>

The Chilean government by 1977 had become concerned about these substantial increases of foreign aid to the Church. In late 1977, Pinochet publicly charged that the World Council of Churches (one of the major donors of aid to the Chilean Church) was financing subversion in Africa and was also sending over \$2 million annually to Chile to underwrite similar activities. A subsequent statement issued by the Archdiocese of Santiago rejected these accusations as inaccurate.<sup>68</sup> The Vicariate also defended the Protestant agency publicly. It pointed out that the Roman Catholic Church and the World Council of Churches in recent years have established closer cooperative relationships in different parts of the world, strongly suggesting that a vilifying campaign against the Council was also an attack on the Roman Church.<sup>69</sup>

In early 1978, El Mercurio printed a full-page disclosure of the programs supported by the U.S. Inter-American Foundation (IAF) since the coup (almost all of which were under the aegis of the Catholic Church). The article distorted the facts (claiming that the amount of aid from the IAF was four times higher than it was), and tried to create the impression that large-scale financial support was coming from the U.S. government to dangerous dissidents in Chile.<sup>70</sup> Subsequently, the Chilean Central Bank froze funds for a project coming into Chile from the IAF through the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB), which dispenses some of the funds at the IAF's disposal.

The U.S. ambassador, members of the U.S. Congress, and representatives of the IDB all protested discreetly but strongly against such tactics, arguing that the Chilean government was interfering with the free flow of currency. The junta backed off since it could not afford to alienate the U.S. government and international lending institutions simultaneously. It has received massive increases in loans from abroad since 1975--\$2.3 billion from private banks in Western Europe and the United States, and \$458 million from multilateral lending institutions.<sup>71</sup> Interference with the free flow of currency could have undermined the Chilean government's attempts to maintain and attract more loans and credits from abroad, renegotiate debt repayments, and establish a favorable climate inside Chile for international business. Given these serious economic constraints, the junta has ceased such harassment of the Church's foreign benefactors and the aid has continued to flow in.

The persons who have collaborated in these writings and in this campaign, whether in preparation of this publication or in editing or circulating it, have by their own actions placed themselves outside the Catholic church whose Spirit is absolutely opposed to what they are doing.<sup>74</sup>

As in the aftermath of the DINA's humiliation of the bishops at Pudahuel airport, the hierarchy's reaction to the TFP's challenge was unequivocal and ecclesiastically punitive. This further discredited the movement in the eyes of Catholics and undermined its credibility. Some wealthier and conservative Catholics continued after 1976 to withdraw from the Church for the same reasons as in the 1973-1975 period. Middle-class Catholics, however, increased their participation in the Church's social and religious activities, and some substantially raised their financial support for the institution. The revenues from the Church's voluntary contribution program (Contribución a la Iglesia) rose steadily after 1975, and by 1978 reached nearly \$1 million annually (an increase of 200 percent since 1974).<sup>75</sup> Although this accounted for a very small part (about 4 percent) of the total amount of Church income (96 percent coming from abroad) between 1976 and 1978, it was double the amount given by Chileans in the prior period and indicated their growing identification with the institution.

Working-class sectors of the population also continued their increased rate of participation in the Church's social and religious programs. Many more came forward to take leadership roles in these new activities, especially women. Over 10 percent of all parishes are administrated by women (particularly nuns), and these are mostly in rural and urban working-class areas. Both lay and religious women in Chile now administer several of the sacraments, conduct prayer services and leadership training programs, and are accepted by men as surrogates for priests.<sup>76</sup>

Finally, these new forms of participation in the Church by middle- and low-income sectors have provided the opportunity for greater mutual understanding and collaboration among persons who in former years were very much divided politically. Christian Democrats and sympathizers of leftist parties over the past few years have worked together in both social and religious programs at the neighborhood level, and as a result some reconciliation has occurred between the two groups. Such a process of practical cooperation is paving the way to greater mutual respect across party lines that was sadly lacking in the final months of the Allende regime.

## V. Conclusion

(1) The articulation of moral norms by official ecclesiastical leaders under an authoritarian regime tends to be general and diffuse until core interests of the Church itself are threatened. Clear and specific prophetic denunciations of the state by the hierarchy normally occur as defensive reactions to protect the religious

mission of the institution, but even when they are made they have little impact in changing over-all policies of repression.

Although the Chilean bishops have gained an international reputation for exercising a prophetic function in the face of state repression since 1973, this judgment must be qualified. During the first three years of the regime, the bishops' moral critique of the principles and practices of the military government tended to be cautious, cast in very general terms and only rarely denunciatory. Furthermore, the style and tone of their public statements provided the government with important legitimacy during the initial transition period, and during 1974-1975, when it was consolidating its power. Only after mid-1976, when the repressive apparatus of the state touched the bishops themselves personally and the Christian Democratic Party were they able and willing as a group to issue clear condemnations of both the underlying ideology as well as the behavior of military leaders.

This pattern of initial caution and gradual evolution toward more prophetic positions by Catholic bishops in the face of conservative authoritarian regimes has been repeated elsewhere in Latin America--Brazil, Bolivia, Argentina, Paraguay, El Salvador, and Somoza's Nicaragua. Hierarchies in all of these countries in recent years have followed the same general strategy as the Chilean bishops, and this reflects a concern for some basic normative and structural characteristics of Catholicism as a complex religious institution.

Latin American Catholic bishops initially find the ideology employed by military governments far less threatening to Church norms than that of leftist regimes. The former normally profess Christian principles and use forms of social analysis closer to traditional Catholic positions than do governments that are socialist or Marxist in inspiration. Military governments also frequently come to power after periods of turmoil, and promise to restore peace and order quickly (which resonates with long-standing Catholic preferences for harmony in society); and they cultivate Church leaders to gain badly needed legitimacy for having overthrown constitutional governments.

Despite the fact that the Chilean bishops had maintained fairly cordial relations with Allende and articulated public moral values close to many of those espoused by his government, they harboured deep-seated private fears of his administration's future objectives because of its Marxist orientation. Such fears, coupled with the promise, by an avowedly Christian group of military officers, to restore order after a period of social chaos, predisposed the hierarchy at the start to be relatively understanding of the ultimate goals of the junta whatever their misgivings about some of the initial tactics used.

A significant structural limitation on the prophetic capacities of bishops is the institutional weight of the Church. The

instinct of bishops under a repressive military regime is to act as protective caretakers of their own organization rather than as outspoken guardians of public morality. They conceive their first responsibility to be one of preserving the presence of the Church in every type of political context so that its primary religious mission--preaching the Gospel and administering the sacraments--may continue. Not until there occurs what they consider to be an attack on a core interest of the Church are they willing to risk an open confrontation with an authoritarian government by denouncing its policies.

Thus, use of the term "prophetic" to describe the words and strategies of Latin American Catholic Church leaders in the face of military rulers is misleading. The hierarchy in such circumstances do not act in the mode of religious prophets since they do not normally speak truth to powerful secular rulers consistently or unequivocally. They act more as administrators of large (and vulnerable) bureaucracies rather than as decisive moral leaders. Nor does their canonical office carry with it the role of prophecy. In the Roman Church, the responsibilities of bishops (as described by Vatican II) do not entail prophecy in its strict and classical sense, but include teaching, sanctifying, and governing.<sup>77</sup> The charisma of prophecy in the Judeo-Christian tradition is a gift tied to no office but given to persons marginated from administrative and priestly functions. The pattern of the Chilean bishops' responses to military rule between 1973 and 1975 confirms this truth.

Prophetic positions by Episcopal Conferences do, nevertheless, occur. When they emerge, however, they are not primarily in response to brutality against the populace as a whole but to specific acts of violence or abuse aimed at those directly engaged in religious work or closely associated with the Church. In Chile it was an attack on bishops personally and the suppression of the PDC. In Brazil and Argentina, it was mistreatment or murder of priests. In Paraguay, it was the smashing of Church-sponsored peasant leagues and small base communities. In none of these cases in recent years have the hierarchies as a group taken a united prophetic stance against their respective governments until the repression touched the innermost circles of Church elites themselves.

To some, this pattern of defensive prophetic reaction by bishops may appear self-serving, cowardly, and insensitive to the sufferings of those not closely associated with the Church's leadership. While the Chilean case provides evidence for such judgments in the case of some individual bishops, the concern for the institutional survival of the Church manifested by Episcopal Conferences as a whole also provided the opportunity for the inauguration of many humanitarian services which otherwise would not have occurred if ecclesiastical structures were smashed or severely curtailed. The new programs to defend legal rights or to meet basic social and economic needs of those persecuted probably would have encountered greater difficulties initially and experienced less freedom had the Chilean bishops strongly condemned the junta from the start. The same is true in Paraguay, Bolivia, and Brazil, where



delayed prophetic reactions by the respective hierarchies to the escalation of terror in recent years have given lead time for local ecclesiastical structures to expand and strengthen their networks before persecution hit the Churches themselves.

Moreover, in Chile as well as in all of these other Latin American countries where Catholic bishops have eventually articulated clear and specific condemnations of both ideological and behavioral aspects of governments, military leaders have not significantly changed their policies. Prophetic episcopal statements may reduce pressures on the Church for a time, diminish the moral legitimacy of these regimes, and discredit them further in world opinion. They do not by themselves, however, precipitate the downfall of such governments, or even influence basic structural changes in their principles or tactics. While not insignificant, the moral power of the Church is clearly limited in comparison with the resources for physical coercion enjoyed by repressive military rulers.

(2) The layered organizational network of the Church under military regimes is capable of significant role expansion to perform a variety of secular functions, and can serve as a surrogate for resistance to the state when other institutions have collapsed. Ecclesiastical structures, however, cannot sustain unlimited conflict with such governments, since they are vulnerable to a variety of direct and indirect restrictions on their freedom and flexibility.

The institutional resources of the Church are more effective than its moral voice in checking the repressive effects of a military regime. Latin American military governments that profess Christian values cannot afford to conduct an all-out attack on the Church, particularly during the period of consolidation of their power when they want moral legitimation. Under such circumstances, the layered organizational network of the Church can act as a focal point of popular resistance and also launch a whole range of services geared towards the defense of human rights and the promotion of basic survival needs.

In the absence of other forms of organizational mobilization, the structures of the Church, even when they are inchoate or underdeveloped, can expand rapidly. The building of communication networks, the dissemination of accurate information, the delivery of legal and economic services, and the promotion of alternate forms of social participation are all roles that the institutional apparatus of the post-Medellín and post-Puebla Latin American Church is capable of performing in repressive societies.

Chile is perhaps one of the best-known cases of a national Church organization acting as a surrogate for such activities when there are no other viable institutions mediating between the state and the individual. It is not the only one to perform such functions in recent years, however. Paraguay, Brazil, Bolivia, Argentina, and

El Salvador are other examples where both Catholic and Protestant churches have set up new ecumenical organizations to offer a broad range of legal, social, and economic services to those being persecuted.

As resilient and inflatable as are the structures of the Church under military regimes of purported Christian inspiration, however, the Chilean case clearly indicates that the Church's institutional network is unable to effectively challenge the fundamental structural causes of oppression in those societies. Church-sponsored programs can alleviate some of the worst aspects of brutality, but they cannot effect changes in the dynamics of the economy or in the apparatus of the state--the two critical structural factors that underlie the repression.

While not subject to annihilation or manipulation as in some totalitarian societies, ecclesiastical structures are vulnerable to some forms of state pressures once they begin to oppose the objectives of authoritarian military regimes. The Chilean case indicates that there is a range of strategies such a government can employ short of declaring a persecution of the Church in order to hamper its effectiveness--harassment and arrest of local leaders, threats against, and censorship of, its media channels of communication, and periodic vilification campaigns against its personnel and programs. When the pressure becomes relentless and adamant (as in the case of the Committee of Cooperation for Peace), Church leaders are likely to accede to government demands rather than risk losses in other areas, especially those that relate more directly to its religious activities.

The Church clearly has some maneuverability in countering such tactics of the state. The immediate creation of the Vicariate of Solidarity as successor to the Committee of Cooperation for Peace, and the invoking of the privilege granted by its public juridical personality under law to avoid financial disclosures, are examples of shrewdness on the part of Church leaders to parry attempted government restrictions on their institutional freedom. Nevertheless, when the Church is heavily dependent on the state for financial support for a critical apostolate (e.g., education), it has no effective options to resist controls. In such situations, it must forego the possibility of using such a channel or program to oppose the ideology or policies of the regime.

It is a tribute to the courage and ingenuity of local Church leaders in these countries that they continue to promote efforts to defend the persecuted and organize the poor under such trying circumstances. It is clear, however, that the Church has neither the force nor the autonomy to match the coercive power of a military-dominated state or to prevent some limitations on its institutional base of operations.

While it is true that the structural weight of the Church cannot undermine the power of the military, it is also a fact that

the Church has staying power and is not easily smashed. There is a certain line beyond which Latin American military governments will not go even when they have begun to mount an offensive against Church personnel and programs. The organizational network of the Church, therefore, can act as an important holding operation or locus of minimal resistance until other forms of domestic and international pressure can be mobilized. It cannot by itself, however, act as an effective first line of major opposition to authoritarian regimes.

(3) Linkages with the international Church provide essential resources for national Church commitments to human rights under military regimes. Such transactions, however, also reinforce dependency relationships, some of which can be readily exploited by sovereign nation-states to limit the Church's freedom at the local level.

The most important source of support offered by international ecclesiastical bodies to Churches in repressive Latin American countries is financial in nature. The Chilean case is a dramatic illustration of how absolutely crucial outside monetary aid is for the rapid expansion of local Church roles and structures to defend human rights against state brutality. None of the new social efforts undertaken by the Chilean Catholic and Protestant Churches since the coup could have been inaugurated or sustained without massive and immediate increases of financial assistance from Western Europe and North America. The general economic situation of the country and the extreme poverty of those directly benefiting from these new humanitarian programs in Chile make autonomous financing of such efforts, both now and in the foreseeable future, highly unlikely.

Moreover, not all international aid now flowing into new humanitarian programs undertaken by the Chilean Church is ecclesiastical in origin. The governments of the United States and West Germany channel money directly and indirectly into Chile. Hence, Church networks can also serve as alternate conduits for democratic governments to transmit change-oriented resources into countries governed by authoritarian military regimes, thus bypassing the repressive apparatus of the state in these countries.

While there has been little published research to date on transnational financial support to other third-world Churches carrying out projects relating to the defense of civil and political rights and to the promotion of social and economic needs, one could well expect the pattern to be the same as that in Chile, given the poverty and structural underdevelopment of most national Churches in Asia, Africa, and other parts of Latin America. My own comparative study of several other Churches in the subcontinent of Latin America in fact confirms the same heavy dependency on outside private and public monetary assistance that characterizes the Chilean Church since 1973.<sup>78</sup>

The Chilean case also demonstrates that there are definite limitations on the options available to authoritarian states which wish to curtail international financial flows to Churches in their respective countries. Many of the military governments now in power in Asia, Africa, and Latin America are themselves heavily dependent upon public and private institutions in Western Europe and North America for grants, loans, and credits. When such governments attempt to interfere with ecclesiastical financial transactions, they are tampering with the free flow of international currency--an essential condition for their own economic viability as credible recipients of foreign aid and investment. The benefits such governments would gain by attempting to curtail international aid to Churches in their societies would likely be far outweighed by crucial losses in loans and credits from foreign governments and banks that place a high value on unhampered currency transfers on all fronts. Hence, economic dependency linkages can sometimes have unforeseen positive consequences, since in the case of economically weak authoritarian regimes these provide a certain maneuverability which internationally supported Churches can turn to their own advantage.

One might hypothesize, however, that if authoritarian regimes in contemporary third-world countries become more economically autonomous, more strategically significant in Western military alliances, or more important in the production of crucial resources needed by North Atlantic countries (e.g., oil), they will be freer to cut the international financial ties of Church groups in their respective countries that oppose their policies. Under such circumstances, international economic and political pressures on their domestic strategies will probably become less intense, and the heavy dependency of Churches on outside support will prove to be a greater liability in such countries. In these contexts, Churches are more likely to be treated as "trojan horses" for foreign interests (including hostile governments who are suppliers of Church monies), and therefore more vulnerable to closer control by the state.

Furthermore, the present government of Pinochet in Chile is an illustration that even in dependent authoritarian regimes not all international transactions with local Churches are free of state limitations. Personnel support from abroad to Churches in such countries is very vulnerable to immediate government controls. Concordats between the Vatican and nation-states do not cover protections for foreign clergy, nor do host countries from which such priests come normally protest against the expulsion of these persons, provided that their lives and physical integrity are not jeopardized in the process. Revocation of residency permits to foreign clerics by authoritarian governments in third-world countries can be carried out swiftly, expeditiously, and without much risk of serious repercussions from abroad. Such actions by nation-states, despite the reasons for which they are undertaken, are considered a legitimate exercise of sovereignty and not subject to international controls.

Hence, international resource supports for Churches in dependent authoritarian regimes are invaluable short-term assets for local ecclesiastical strategies in defending human rights. Not all of them, however, are insulated from state controls in the same degree. In the case of personnel, government restrictions can reverse the direction of the transactions quickly and effectively, thus leaving the recipient Church in some respects weaker than before. Moreover, if over the long term some authoritarian regimes gain sufficient political power and economic autonomy so as to take on the characteristics of totalitarian societies, international Church financial linkages are also likely to be reduced drastically. Under such circumstances, local Church structures that expanded rapidly with the help of foreign aid in earlier crisis periods will shrink unless autonomous bases of support are generated.

(4) Membership allegiances in Churches that provide essential survival services under authoritarian regimes also tend to expand, especially among those with previously weak associational ties to the institution. Such crisis support, however, may only be transitory and can be accompanied by self-distancing by more traditional Catholics.

When a Latin American Church in an authoritarian society becomes an important source of needed services as well as a focus for popular opposition to the government, rank-and-file participation increases significantly. Under such conditions, the Church enjoys a unique opportunity to evangelize many of its nominal members who have never been sufficiently socialized into its value system--workers, peasants, intellectuals, leftist sympathizers--all of whom are the ones most in need of the Church's protection in repressive contexts. Despite all of the problems confronting Chilean society since the coup, the vitality of the Church's life has risen dramatically and several of the goals of Medellín are finally being realized--deeper voluntary commitments, incorporation of laity into leadership positions, promotion of more communitarian styles of spirituality, and the generation of new attitudinal clusters combining religious faith with work for justice.

As exciting and hopeful as are all of these signs of an awakening of new commitments and value changes among laity, the Chilean Church since the coup also is confronted with some critical behavioral challenges which will have to be resolved once the repression subsides. While participation in various social and religious programs has swelled since the coup, much of this new rank-and-file identification may reflect temporary crisis support. Workers, peasants, intellectuals, and Marxists presently have few alternatives for sustenance and solidarity other than Church-sponsored projects. One could expect that, once the repression subsides and other forms of social participation in society become viable, attendance patterns among the new churchgoers will decrease. Cross-pressures from other organizations will then begin to compete with the Church for the attention of Chileans, and more customary and long-standing low rates of religious participation will likely re-emerge.



Significant withdrawals will almost certainly occur among those engaged only in human-rights or social-action work when the crisis passes and secular structures to accomplish these goals are again functioning. Many Christian Marxists will take with them more positive attitudes about the Church and religious beliefs, and this will reduce the possibility of religiopolitical conflicts in the future, especially between the Church and the left. Very little associational identification with the Church on the part of contemporary social activists will be likely, however, once they can achieve their goals more effectively elsewhere.

The Chilean case also suggests that, while inflated rates of participation by new adherents might be reversible once the repression is over, the erosion of the allegiances of more traditional Catholics may not be a transitory phenomenon. The self-distancing from the Church by wealthier members and their public opposition to its commitments to the poor and to new styles of evangelization are not sudden changes but have been growing steadily in Chile since the late 1960s. Moreover, there is no indication that the official position of the Church to support social justice and to construct more communitarian lay-directed programs of religious formation will be altered in the foreseeable future, regardless of changes in the political system. Unless there are dramatic changes (as of now unpredictable) in the attitudes and behavior of upper-income Catholics regarding these new emphases in ecclesiastical policy, one would have to expect that their alienation will continue rather than diminish.

Although this group is relatively small in comparison to middle- and low-income sectors (and accounts for less than 10 percent of the Catholic population), its role in contemporary Chilean society is most significant. These Catholics cannot be written off if the post-Puebla Church wants to exert influence in policy making through its most prestigious laity. Furthermore, if the Church is going to develop an autonomous base of financial support for its own apostolates, it will have to convince these people to shoulder much of the responsibility. The exodus of wealthy Catholics from the institution precisely at a time when it is attempting both to develop new lay resources for influence in society and to expand its services to the poor weakens the Church considerably, and places serious limits on the possibility of effectively carrying out some of its newly announced commitments in the future.

This slippage of allegiance among upper-income faithful is not unique to the Chilean Church. Other national Churches in Latin America which in recent years have redirected their energies toward the protection of human rights and the fulfillment of survival needs of the persecuted--such as those of Brazil, Paraguay, El Salvador, and Peru--have also experienced mounting disaffection by wealthier members. Evidence from Western Europe and North America also indicates that upper-income Christians are reluctant to accept new social emphases in their Churches and do not readily change their behavioral patterns regarding justice merely because they are exposed to sermons on social morality or to official priorities for justice decided upon by Church leaders.<sup>79</sup>

This phenomenon illustrates the preponderant weight of class interests over religious motivations in shaping attitudes of believers with money and status. The proportionate influence of these factors may be very difficult if not impossible to reverse in a church-type religious organization, since it can demand compliance to its teachings (and use penalties) only on very narrow areas of doctrine that seldom affect economic issues.

More empirical work is needed to determine the depth and seriousness of alienation of more affluent participants from Churches actively pursuing a reordering of economic priorities in their respective societies. The evidence to date from Chile and elsewhere, however, would suggest the hypothesis that as church-type religious organizations emphasize new social priorities, such goals are likely to be ignored or rejected by those clientele who have the greatest resources to make them effective in society but who also have the most to lose economically by supporting their implementation. If this hypothesis proves to be true, then not only will the religious ministry of Churches among such groups be adversely affected, but the Churches' prospects of effecting long-range changes in political and economic structures through different choices and behavior of their most prominent parishioners will be minimized.

Hence, the recent experience of the Chilean Church highlights both the great potential and the crucial challenges which emergency situations under authoritarian regimes present to the attitudinal and behavioral levels of a complex religious organization. In some respects, national Churches under such circumstances have unique opportunities to develop new methods of religious socialization and to deepen the internalization of their goals and values among many sectors of their nominal membership. Given the variegated and multi-class scope of allegiances of such institutions, however, a weakening of influence is almost inevitable among other clientele who are adversely affected by new Church commitments in these periods.

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<sup>4</sup>"Declaración del Señor Cardenal y del Comité Permanente del Episcopado Chileno," Santiago, 13 septiembre 1973, in Mensaje (Santiago) 22 (octubre 1973), 509.

<sup>5</sup>"Homilía del Señor Cardenal en el acto ecuménico de oración por la patria," 18 septiembre 1973, in Mensaje 22 (octubre 1973), 510-11.

<sup>6</sup>"Episcopado ofrece colaborar en la reconstrucción," El Mercurio, 29 septiembre 1973.

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<sup>7</sup>In addition to all 30 active bishops, I also included in my survey 41 priests serving different social classes in 16 provinces, a randomly selected stratified sample of 31 priests in Santiago, 33 women religious doing direct pastoral work in 7 provinces, and 51 lay men and women from all social classes who were active in small base communities (mainly in Santiago).

<sup>8</sup>For an account of the positive advances between Christians and Marxists at the official external level of Church and State during the Allende period, see Smith, The Chilean Catholic Church and Political Change, 1920-1980 (Princeton: Princeton University Press, forthcoming), ch. 7.

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<sup>10</sup>El Mercurio, 14 noviembre 1973.

<sup>11</sup>El Mercurio, 3 marzo 1974.

<sup>12</sup>Los obispos de Chile, "La reconciliación en Chile," Mensaje 23 (mayo 1974), 197.

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<sup>15</sup>Comité Permanente del Episcopado de Chile, "Evangelio y Paz," Santiago, 5 septiembre 1975, in Mensaje 24 (octubre 1975), 465-66.

<sup>16</sup>*Ibid.*, pp. 466, 469.

<sup>17</sup>*Ibid.*, pp. 470-71.

<sup>18</sup>The belief that private conversations with the military were more effective than public condemnations to correct abuses of state power was mentioned by many bishops during my interviews with all of them in 1975.

<sup>19</sup>P. N., "¿Qué hacen las iglesias por la paz?" Mensaje 22 (noviembre-diciembre 1973), 561-63.

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- <sup>22</sup>For a vivid account of some of the heroic efforts of these local church leaders, see Sheila Cassidy, Audacity to Believe (London: Collins, 1977).
- <sup>23</sup>"Pronunciamiento militar," Mensaje 22 (octubre 1973), 468-70; "Un grito de alerta," Mensaje 22 (octubre 1973), 470-71; "Hacia un nuevo año," Mensaje 23 (enero-febrero 1974), 9-10; "¿Rectificando una línea?" Mensaje 23 (marzo-abril 1974), 78-80.
- <sup>24</sup>Aldunate, "Remuneraciones y costos de vida," Mensaje 23 (diciembre 1974), 634-36; Ruiz-Tagle, "El estatuto social de la empresa," Mensaje 24 (mayo 1975), 145-47; Alejandro González Poblete, "El anteproyecto del Código del Trabajo," Mensaje 24 (agosto 1975), 371-75; Sergio Molina, "La encrucijado actual de la política económica," Mensaje 24 (octubre 1975); 439-44.
- <sup>25</sup>During the Frei and especially the Allende years, all levels of Catholic education made attempts to meet more effectively the needs of low-income sectors of the population. Government subsidies to Catholic schools were expanded to enable them to grant scholarships to students from working-class families, and tuition payments for wealthier students were increased. Additional public aid to the Catholic university system during the Popular Unity period facilitated the establishment of new social science research centers sympathetic to Marxist analysis. Adult education programs at night and on weekends for workers were also significantly expanded with the help of this assistance to the Catholic universities from the Allende government.
- <sup>26</sup>El Mercurio, 10 octubre 1973, p. 21; Carlos Hurtado E., S.J., "Las subvenciones de la educación particular gratuita," Mensaje 24 (octubre 1975), 447-50.
- <sup>27</sup>Chile-América (Rome) 3 (noviembre-diciembre 1975), 41.
- <sup>28</sup>"Infiltración Marxista," El Mercurio, 12 octubre 1975, p. 3.
- <sup>29</sup>Chile-América 3 (noviembre-diciembre 1975), 42.
- <sup>30</sup>"Carta de los obispos a 'Mensaje'," Santiago, 30 diciembre 1975, in Mensaje 25 (enero-febrero 1976), 1.



<sup>31</sup>Sources: Catholic Relief Services (New York); U.S. Catholic Conference (Washington, D.C.); Inter-American Foundation (Rosslyn, Va.); International Catholic Confederation for Social and Economic Development (Brussels); World Council of Churches (Geneva); Adveniat and Misereor (West Germany).

<sup>32</sup>Michael Moffitt and Isabel Letelier, Human Rights, Economic Aid and Private Banks: The Case of Chile (Washington, D.C.: Institute for Policy Studies, 1978), p. 8.

<sup>33</sup>Source: Mutual Pax Chile, Secretariado del Episcopado de Chile.

<sup>34</sup>Source: Oficina de Sociología Religiosa (OSORE), Secretariado del Episcopado de Chile.

<sup>35</sup>In my interviews with all of the Chilean bishops in 1975, I asked about their opinions concerning the expulsion of these priests. Of the bishops who had lost clerics from their dioceses (19 out of 30), over two-thirds (68.4 percent) said it was better that they left the country since they were troublesome persons or former political activists.

<sup>36</sup>This judgment is based upon my own personal observations and conversations with several persons active in the Committee of Cooperation for Peace in 1975.

<sup>37</sup>Allende never discouraged workers from practicing their faith, but low-income sectors in Chile (as in all Latin American countries) seldom attended Mass. The Church until very recently was not institutionally present in densely populated poblaciones due to a scarcity of clerical and religious personnel and a traditional sacramental focus on middle- and upper-income Catholics.

<sup>38</sup>Several bishops and priests whom I interviewed in different parts of the country in 1975 said that they found upper-income Catholics reluctant to volunteer their services for new lay-led religious or social ministries. These Catholics preferred older forms of piety, centered around Mass attendance and private devotions.

<sup>39</sup>For an account of the tactics of Opus Dei and TFP after the coup, see Thomas G. Sanders and Brian H. Smith, "The Chilean Catholic Church During the Allende and Pinochet Regimes," American Universities Fieldstaff Reports, West Coast South America Series, 23 (March 1976), 18-19.

<sup>40</sup>Ibid., p. 16.

<sup>41</sup>R. A. H., "Sentido del episodio Riobamba-Pudahuel," Mensaje 25 (octubre 1976), 455-60.

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- <sup>46</sup>Ibid., p. 168.
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