

can be said that these bishops are pastorally orientated and pose no political threat to the country. But their arrest did create a negative shock wave which was felt both inside and outside China, which only served to diminish peoples' trust in the present religious policy put forth by the government. Their early release would not only help to clarify matters with regard to their role and identity, but they would also be in a better position to continue to carry out their pastoral functions, free of political involvements. Also, making an issue of this case could bring embarrassment to the government-sanctioned Bishops' Conference. What is clear is that the basic issue and crucial task facing the Church in China today is how to enable and assist all the bishops of China to achieve reconciliation and unity.

Footnotes, see page 20

Authority in the Church: A Central Issue and Some Other Issues

by David Stagaman

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He never wanted to help out at Mass on the village feast days. The priest from the neighboring district who came to say those Masses asked him to serve as sacristan, frequently he demanded it. Lahuaymarca had an Indian sacristan.

"That Indian doesn't know anything; he repeats the words like a parrot, and he's almost not Christian. You're a mestizo and the organist, and you can answer in Latin. The Mass will be a bigger affair with you," the priest told him the night before the big fiesta.

"I'm suffering, Father," the sacristan answered. "The Church inside my breast is burning. How am I going to be able to sing. This Gertrudis sings like an Angel."

"This Gertrudis doesn't think about God; she's too melancholy when she sings--yeah--because she's deformed."

"Look, Father, you don't understand the soul of the Indians; Gertrudis, even though she doesn't know God, belongs to God. If not, then

who gave her that voice that can even wipe away sin? She consoles the sad people and makes the happy person think; she can remove the filth from any blood."

"Okay, you obstinate old fool; I can't make you; that old 'hunchback' has something--something strange--it hurts."

"It's God, Father. She's suffered among the masters. The God of the masters has no equal. He makes people suffer without letting up. . .She's arrived all jaundiced, broken. . .without even her cap. She's come back with those same old clothes, but in her eye, there's God."

"What God? How do you know?"

"God is hope; God is happiness; God is life. When he came he was sickly, weak, and beaten down. He left firm and strong, like an eagle. He was a true man. God is here now, in Lahuaymarca. He's left the town of San Pedro, I imagine forever."

"Why, you're not even a real Christian, my child! And you've been a sacristan all these years! You think like one of the witchdoctors. God is everywhere! Everywhere!"

The old sacristan from San Pedro shook his head to say no. "Was God in the hearts of those who broke the body of our innocent school teacher, Bellido? And is God in the body of the engineers who are killing our 'Emerald Mountain'? And is God with our politicians who took away the corn fields from the rightful owners where the Virgin used to play with her Son during every harvest? Don't make me cry, Father! I'm walking around like a dead man, too. God's with Don Demetrio, and he's with that 'hunchback' when she sings; God fights with the devil in Don Bruno; but for me there's no comfort--not from nobody!"¹

The dialogue between the visiting priest and the mestizo, sometime sacristan, presents us with a number of conflicts. They differ over who belongs to the Church, where God is found, what are the signs of God's presence, and on a host of other issues. In the present essay, I will concentrate on one aspect of their difference: who has the power of and responsibility for speaking and acting in the name of the community and its God? What do we count as authoritative in Christianity? We should also admit that, in the past twenty-five years, there has occurred a dramatic shift in what we take for granted regarding authority; and the change can probably be appropriately described as a

shift in paradigms.² The term paradigm shift implies that there are decisive differences regarding the data and human experiences deemed to be relevant, in the presuppositions that undergird the argumentation, and even in the foundational imagery in which the sense of what constitutes the good and the true is grounded. Let us begin our discussion on the issue of authority in the church by describing the shift that has taken place.

First of all, there has been a shift from viewing church officials in terms of their status (i.e., their designated position within the institution) to viewing them in terms of their charisms (i.e., the skills they actually display in their official acts, not the least of which is the skill of promoting the development of the charisms possessed by others in the community); furthermore, there has been a correlative shift in the way in which response to authoritative acts is seen: from evaluation in the light of allegiance to the institution (am I a heretic or no? a schismatic or no?) to evaluation on an interpersonal basis (is communion of the church members enhanced in such a way that it can be celebrated in sacrament?)

Secondly, our viewpoint has changed about the exercise and acceptance of official acts in regard to both church officials and members. Formerly, official judgments were authoritative opinions to be imposed on the church; and the officials were answerable to God and higher religious authorities for the content of those judgments. For other members of the Church, acceptance of such opinions was a matter of obligation ("do I have to?" was a crucial question). Now, we see a movement towards understanding such acts as attempts to persuade both church members and the outside world of some value which will improve the quality of religious experience, especially in its human dimension. Ratification by both church and the world is the principal sign whether the authoritative judgment is in accord with divine will; the crucial question is "should we want to?"

Thirdly, church authorities themselves were seen hierarchically in such a way that a pyramid of authorities could be constructed with God at the summit, the Pope next in line, followed by bishops, clergy, religious, and laity in that order. Presently, we are moving towards an understanding along the lines of a dialogue model so that all Christians are granted some participation in the divine authority through baptism, and the church officials derive their power from the body of the Church as actualized by the Spirit of God. In this context, we might note that the dominant metaphor for understanding official authority has changed: they are no longer legates or representatives of God or higher religious

authorities to whom obedience is owed, but servants of the community whose function is to foster the attitudes, values, etc. which are deemed Christlike and whose responsibility is to God through the community. Furthermore, the relationship between official authority and divine dominion has altered. The will of God is not communicated simply and directly to church officials, but through a Spirit whose activity in the Church is both complex and diverse (i.e., pluralistic).

Fourthly, church authorities were enjoined to exercise broad jurisdictional powers and maintain orthodoxy among the faithful who were expected to do and say "the right thing in the Lord." Religious authority was principally a matter of jurisdiction (a legal power of a superior over subjects) and obedience was largely a matter of conformism within the community. Today, church officials are asked to exercise their authority primarily in the celebration of the Eucharist and the proclamation of the Word so that church members are brought to a sense of their individual and collective culpability, and of the fact that divine forgiveness has been offered and conversion possible. Religious authority is first and foremost a sacramental power and obedience manifests itself in individual and communal change towards liberation.

Fifthly, the Church used to view itself as a self-contained, almost completely visible, unit which had all the answers within itself; now it seems to have a grasp of itself as an open-ended, in large part mystical, people who understand themselves best in dialogue with non-church. Again, the central metaphors are different. The Church has ceased to be an anatomical body which shares in the divinity and unquestionability of its founder; it has become a pilgrim people commissioned by its founder to discover its authentic meaning through union and confrontation with the world.

Finally, the concept of authority in the Church was thought to be a fixed essence whose structure could be defined once and for all; the accompanying metaphors were usually physical and spatial. Now the concept could be better described as a rational stability in which lines of authority are constantly in flux, though not haphazardly, and temporal metaphors are more appropriate.

The above analysis certainly has a surface plausibility; and our subsequent discussion will substantiate that it is by and large accurate. It does, however, have a number of shortcomings. First, it assumes that the office-versus charism conflict is peculiar to religion. That is not true. The crisis of religious authority is part of a much larger crisis in Western industrialized society; and the office-versus-charism conflict

pervades multinational corporations as well as churches.³ Secondly, the analysis does not take sufficient account of the historical roots of the present crisis. Those roots are deeply embedded in the taken-for-granted thinking about authority today and need to be explored if we are truly to understand what is going on. Finally, the above descriptive analysis does not penetrate the office-versus-charism conflict to the point where the ideological components of the conflict are separated from its dialectical character. At the heart of all the differences we have described lies a conflict over how we should think; and the logic of those two ways of thinking needs to be examined in some detail. Thus, the remainder of this chapter will supplement the above analysis by exploring the historical roots of the present crisis, examining the logic inherent in conflicts over the nature of authority, and re-cast the office-versus-charism conflict as a dialectical relationship between structures and liminality.

We live today against the background of a quite profound and often trenchant critique of authority, especially religious authority, to which we are heirs as the sons and daughters of the Enlightenment. That "coming of age" has altered drastically what we take for granted about authority and what we count as authoritative. We need to understand the issues that this critique has raised if we are ever to make sense of our present situation.⁴

At the outset, we have to take account of the fact that the Enlightenment has changed the very notion of what counts as knowledge. It has called for an understanding of knowledge as full-scale criticism. Only by continually examining and dispelling the illusions which limit our possibilities in thought and action, can we transcend the insufficiencies in the present state of what we know. Before the Enlightenment, knowledge was discovery. It was the nature of things known which conditioned our knowledge. It was true knowledge if it faithfully represented the order of things external to the mind. These orders were pre-established; some were so by the commandment of God or the gods, some because they were inherent in the laws of nature or of history. In any of these cases, however, the orders existed quite independently of the human mind. The goal of human beings was to bring both the self and the community into conformity with these objective orders. What everyone accepted as true was that all known orders were external to human knowers and were constituted by forces beyond human control. In those times, authority figures ruled on the basis that they know the order of things. After three centuries of relentless questioning, we are left with several different kinds of order, all of which are the creations of human wills. And the rewards and punish-

ment which order brings are all internal to the system. We live in a world where human harmony results from human making, and responsibility is a matter of owning up to what we have done (and not to a force outside ourselves). In this world, the central concern about authority is law and order with a vengeance; what rules of human conduct we will construct so that we can live in harmony with one another and extrapolate from the system the maximum number of benefits for the greatest number of people like ourselves.

Since the Enlightenment, our notion of what is ethical behavior has also changed. Obedience to a tradition and its values, customs, and so forth is no longer tenable. Our exclusive loyalty is to the critical assessment of the evidence. Our moral ideal is the hard-nosed skeptic whose inquiry is open-ended and whose search ends in autonomy. Morality used to be group morality based on the conviction that any shared custom was better than no custom at all. The overriding purpose of morality was the preservation of community. Community customs set the limits to what was proper and determined the boundaries of belonging: either accept the way we do things or find another tribe. Authorities in such communities (which we call to our detriment "primitive") were founders and prophets. The former created the traditions, foundational values, and customs of time immemorial; the latter summoned the community to correct certain abuses in the name of traditions, values and customs which all agreed were right and just. But, whether they were founders or prophets, authority figures were mediators between the gods (or reasonable facsimiles thereof) and ourselves. They exercised authority because they could reenact and reaffirm the harmony that existed between an ontological order and the human realm. Their overriding conviction was that the quest for human identity was inseparable from legitimation in terms of a reality independent of and beyond the control of the human being, whether individual or in solidarity with others. Today custom is no longer a crucial determinant of moral limits in society; and received opinion is as likely to be rejected as accepted. Instead, the person who would be moral, is likely to see authentic moral behavior as a separation from the group. Moral self-consciousness has been individualized. The issue in moral authority has, therefore, become: how can we be conscious and individual, yet share in the bonds and limits of community: Are all social and collective commitments self-imprisonment?

Finally, the Enlightenment has created an existential predicament for us: what counts as genuinely real? What about our lives, thoughts, and actions has lasting significance? And, in regard to religion, can any interpretation of the supernatural ever pass muster if judged by

the standards of knowledge and action in our secularized culture? The rational for us follows certain specified, objective rules and procedures. Problems are carefully defined, and solutions to such problems are techniques which involve rearrangement of the elements surfaced in the defining process. The reasonable individual is one who combines in his/her inquiry the values of non-involvement, anonymity, and efficiency. The ideal society is one dominated by neutral observers who coordinate their efforts to get the job done. Basic ends and procedural assumptions have taken-for-granted status; the questioning of such ends and assumptions is both heretical and wasteful. Instrumental values constitute the rational; most personal and social problems are matters of re-programming and re-organization. In such "rational" societies, action for the good of the whole is achieved through automation and automizing of the process. The whole in question is a cluster of parts which can be broken down and then arranged according to the similarities of the parts. In such societies, the criteria of good status performance are threefold: (1) all cases which come before the responsible authorities are to be treated in disregard of all the personal idiosyncrasies involved (the good bureaucrat is, in principle, objective and impersonal); (2) the highest expectation of any official is that he/she, in the conduct of office, will be detached from all personal feeling (feelings are subjective and to be left in the home); (3) in theory, at least, any official is just another cog in the machine--replaceable by any other individual who knows the rules and possesses the requisite skills.

Now what is missing from such a "rational and good" society? Only about half of what we know as life--things like conscience, intuition, empathy, dreams, and, by and large, common sense. The unseen hand is not only Adam Smith's ideal regulator of the free market; it is also our ideal of authority. People who cry on the steps of small town newspapers are not fit to lead our countries. Everyone knows that feelings are not objective. Such people are out of contact with reality. Let them weep at home.

Quite obviously this critique of authority since the Enlightenment has been sketched in rather bold, often exaggerated strokes. There never has been a society in which human harmony was simply a matter of conformity to external order, where longstanding customs went unquestioned, and dreams were replaced by the all rational analysis of whole into parts. And all our attempts at a brave new world, constructed by individuals responsible only to themselves for their orders and consisting exclusively of mechanized processes, have floundered against the protests or, at least, the apathy of the people with sense. It is true,

however, that there have been certain tendencies inherent in this critique. And those tendencies have left us with a certain heritage. We are suspicious of any order not of our own making, regard inherited customs and received opinions with jaundiced eyes, and presume that feelings, emotions, and the like are not objective. Too often we are forced to acknowledge our blindness to the dangers of analytic reasoning, autonomy of process, moral individualism, and the human will responsible only to itself. These suspicions and blindness, however, have another impact which is highly significant for the present study. They make it very difficult for us to understand and assimilate the lessons that history and our traditional societies teach us about the nature of authority. And they profoundly alienate Christians from understanding and assimilating the meaning of authority in the New Testament, documents issuing from traditional society which, untutored by Sigmund Freud, still knew that dreams provided significant information. Further consideration of the lessons of history will have to be left to another essay. Suffice it to say for now that many of our problems in grappling with issues of authority in contemporary societies are the result of historical development over the past two hundred years.

Before we pass to consideration of the logic involved in disputes over authority, it is important to note why alterations in what we count as knowledge and what we conceive to be rational are so crucial. The meaning of power, which undergirds any genuine understanding of authority, has changed radically in recent times. Power used to be a matter of getting someone else to do what I wanted him/her to do, especially in those instances where the action was for my benefit and not for his/hers. Such a notion of power made eminent sense in societies where the central concern in power relationships was the control of either property or the means of production. In either case, power relationships are regulated by rules governing the use of tools. But, increasingly in contemporary societies, the crucial issue in power relationships is control of the flow of information. Power is more and more becoming a matter of getting others to think what I want them to think, especially in those cases where the way they think legitimates my advantages and precludes the rising of their disadvantageous position to explicit consciousness. Power today is roughly the shaping of the perceptions, cognitions, and preferences of underlings. Procuring their acceptance of allegiance to the status quo is generally achieved by convincing them that there are no alternatives, or that the present order is natural and unchangeable, or that the way things are is divinely ordained and beneficial. Who has the right to set the agenda for this discussion is the question to be asked if we want to know who holds power in any of our institutions today.⁵

The conflict between office and charism can be reinterpreted in terms of the logic inherent in their argumentation. Officials usually assume that tasks in any organization are infinitely divisible and can be adequately viewed in independence from one another; "charismatics" generally counter that such tasks are linked in networks of dependencies, and that the criterion of divisibility depends on the nature of the task and the stage of completion of the task.⁶ For the former, all individuals are elements within a system, isolated from one another; for the latter, individual elements are unique and interrelated only contextually. Officials further assume that all individual elements of the organization are best related hierarchically; the best organized organization is one whose structure can be written down on paper. Charismatics, on the other hand, insist that structures are always related to the task at hand and shift over time; the demand that we be able to write all structures down on paper is akin to the assertion that the movie Gone with the Wind could be reduced to a set of still pictures without any aesthetic loss. Officials contend that the only relationships of significance for an organization are of a superior-subordinate type; how individuals on the same level interrelate is either inherently problematic or of no consequence. Charismatics recognize no uniform type of relationship. People emerge as leaders according to the dictates of the task. Sometimes decisions are made jointly, sometimes they are entrusted to individuals because they alone have the necessary skills or because the group has allowed them to act thus. The power to make a decision and consequent responsibility for it, however, are never permanent characteristics of any individual or status within the group. Officials are always concerned about boundaries: both the boundaries which separate the group from the other groups and those which compartmentalize individuals within the group. Here definitions play a crucial role. It is of paramount importance to define who we are in contrast to others and where each of us fits into the whole system. Curiously, maintenance of such boundaries and definitions seems to require, invariably, an individual at the summit of the hierarchy who is unbounded and omniscient. Charismatics argue that boundaries are always drawn for particular purposes, and that, as those purposes change, so do the boundaries. Furthermore, they observe that official definitions often don't fit the reality of the situation. Here they note that the identities of groups often overlap in actual fact, and that individuals and their competencies cannot be so clearly demarcated from one another as officials would like them to be. The only boundaries which charismatics recognize as legitimate emerge as the result of the characteristics of task structure, geography, or communication. In all these instances, boundaries are related to the nature of the particular case and not the nature of things.⁷

Depending on one's taste, one will prefer either the official or the charismatic views of society and its institutions. If one prefers things like permanence, clarity, order, and a strong sense of identity, one will be inclined towards the official view. If one, however, values above all flexibility, movement full steam ahead, recognition of uniqueness, and a sense of complexity of things, then one will opt for a charismatic perception. Regardless of one's tastes, it is important for present purposes to recognize that societies are only humane if both views are adequately represented. Both logics are correct; but they are correct insofar as they are being corrected by one another. When either official or charismatic logic operates to the exclusion of the other, the result is an ideology in support of totalitarianism. Here a contrasting of totalitarian and dialectical logic might be helpful.

A logic has become a totalitarian ideology when persons are conceived to be good or evil--but not both. Good persons are people with good characteristics; and evil persons are those with evil characteristics. Furthermore, good persons have only good characteristics and evil persons only evil ones. And such characteristics are not subject to change and are identifiable without possibility of error. If a person appears to have both positive and negative characteristics, then either the positive ones are pseudo-positive or negative pseudo-negative. Here an interesting decision-rule emerges: since the potential costs of misidentifying an evil person are much greater than misidentifying a good person, persons are presumed to be evil in cases of doubt. Totalitarian logic has both an overriding goal and an overarching need. The goal is a world free of evil; and the need is for absolute and total certainty. They are also non-dialectical in the sense that theory always triumphs over the appearance of counter-evidence; troublesome data need only be arranged in terms of the theory to be properly understood.⁸

It might at first seem that the official view is more prone to becoming an ideology in support of totalitarianism than the charismatic view; history by and large bears out this intuition. The more serious danger that charismatic developments confront is evanescence. But on occasions they have become totalitarian ideologies. When they do so, they inevitably become millenarian and define truth as like-mindedness. The group has a special vision of reality that separates it from the rest of their benighted brothers and sisters. They conceive themselves as the vanguard of the future; they alone have seen it.

The dialectical logic has five characteristics. First, it recognizes that questions which emerge at the outset of inquiry are the result of the presuppositions of the inquirer and of the view he/she shares in

common with his/her fellows. Thus, inquiry both shapes and discovers the resultant knowledge. The search for truth is a matter of both the construction of theories adequate to the subject matter and the therapeutic destruction of those presuppositions which prove to be personal or cultural biases. Secondly, a dialectical logic assumes that the real is in motion and not at rest. To represent reality as static or changeless is to do it violence. Stabilities are discoverable within the real; but they are regularities soon to change, and the real is a complexus of open forms. Thirdly, reality is an admixture of good and evil. As a consequence, reality is an unstable coexistence and successive resolution of incompatible forces. The importance of this postulate epistemologically and especially for the study of history is that a dialectical logic expects that the good in defining itself will simultaneously create certain opposites which it theoretically excludes. Fourthly, the real essence of things, which are relations of contradiction and not mere regularities, are discovered by penetrating the systemic distortions which we individually and collectively impose on reality. The path towards the discernment of true essences begins with the recognition and analysis of the illusion which holds us captive. Finally, knowledge of things in their true causes consists of analogies and is often necessarily ambiguous. It must speak in analogies, examples, and metaphors because the description of essences is an analysis of reality in its historical concreteness. The language of dialectical logic is almost inevitably ambiguous because it attempts to capture reality in its fundamental composition--as both structure and anti-structure.⁹ Dialectical logic is not a repudiation of such intellectual ideas as clarity and precision--only a relativization of their merits. The goal of its inquiry was, perhaps, best described by Wittgenstein: "What is most difficult here is to put this indefiniteness, correctly and unfalsified, into words."¹⁰

At the outset of this chapter, the issues of authority in the Church were described as a conflict between office and charism. In light of the previous paragraph we might say that the conflict obtains between structure and anti-structure. The terms this author prefers are structure and liminality.

Liminality is community as a communion of equals. It is community in its existential phase; for liminal, community is event, a happening, something going on here and now. Their stress is on the centrality of personal relationships in society. They promote spontaneity--that quality of human existence which brings us into contact with ourselves as nature. Their organizations are open-ended; and their language is replete with metaphors and affectivity. Their God is an artist who fashioned the world out of the primeval energies lurking within the

godhead.

Structure is a community as a society of unequals. It is community in its normative phase; for structural people, community is a differentiated and hierarchical system where individuals are situated according to the "more or less" of their talents. They stress social obligations and the necessity of limits upon spontaneity. Without them, we would never mobilize our resources toward group goals; community would be formless. Their organizations are the consequences of lucid thought and sustained will. They speak of the cognitive mode. And their God had, has, and will continue to have a plan.¹¹

If liminal figures are allowed to form community unfettered by structures, they and their companions will hold their generally small band together for a time. But, once the excitement of the beginning wears off, their destiny is structure or evanescence. These are their options unless a utopian, usually millenarian, vision takes hold of the group. Then, the call of the future may hold them together; but almost always that call, if unstructured, destroys the very ideal which gave birth to the group. They cease to be a communion of equals with all humanity as nature, and transform themselves into an elitist faction which alone sees the dawning age and knows what is moral action on behalf of what is coming. They sit in judgment on all who are outside the group. Their symbols become masks to hide how untrue they are to the ideals of liminality. Morally, anything goes if the ingroup approves it as activity on behalf of the future--even those things which history has taught us lead to degradation of the human condition.

If structures are allowed to be substituted for all spontaneous action, then community becomes a legalism of conventions. Such legalism destroys the raison d'être of all structures for legalism homogenizes and does not preserve human differences. Tradition ceases to be the living guide of the community. Law becomes a set of prescriptions proclaiming a god who willed us to be automatons in a system. The past is myth in the worst sense--not the story of origins which cannot be recounted in neat terms and categories, but an idealized primeval epoch where all the elements of present structures were present in all their important features. Men and women in the past are never permitted to be different from us. Legalism lives by a myth of eternal return where nothing new ever happens, happened, or can happen. And the code of rule is maintained by exception for certain individuals--but seldom on the basis of lucid or publicly defensible criteria.

From the very first letter that Paul wrote and the very first one

that a local community kept, the primitive Christian community committed the Church of Jesus Christ to structure. And every time they celebrated the eucharist and proclaimed the Word anew, they reminded themselves of their liminal nature. The Church of Jesus Christ is the community of a book embedded in a ritual and a community which celebrates sacrament and proclaims a message. That is, it is both structure and liminality. The tension between the two, whether they are described as office and charism, or structure and anti-structure, is of enduring significance for the Church as a human community. The thesis, then, of this essay is that the conflict between office and charism is best understood as the dialectical interrelationship of structure and liminality, a tension which needs to be preserved and fostered if the Church is to remain the bride of Jesus Christ, the revelation of a God who is both the source of our being and provident.

The principle purpose of this paper was to delineate an abiding problem regarding authority: the dialectical tension/balance that exists between liminal and structural approaches to community. In conclusion we need to note at least four other considerations which must enter into analysis of the problems religious authority faces today.

First of all, as we have already noted, there has been over the last two centuries an ongoing, often bitter, critique of authority in general. One pole of this critique, which originated with the Enlightenment, has made the point that authority is inimical to solidly grounded knowledge because it is based on beliefs and opinions. Authority may sometimes have its place; it seems suitable for parents to possess authority over their children, and civil authorities must exercise jurisdiction over criminals; but authority is really unworthy of mature, responsible people. Such people have learned to question the traditional truisms and to base their knowledge on experiment. The other pole, which has its origins in romanticism and has most recently appeared in the guise of the New Left, has objected to authority on the grounds that authority is necessarily opposed to the unfettered spontaneity that is required for authentic freedom. Authority invariably places limits on spontaneous expressions of freedom and thus prevents individuals from actualizing themselves and collectivities from discerning the common will.

Both of these critiques assume that authorities are always rigid, pledged to the mindless and insensitive repetition of the past. The meat of authority figures is the superstition and fear of the masses. All authorities are coercive and manipulative. Their task is to convince the "great unwashed" that the common good is identical with the interests of a traditional but outmoded order of a privileged class.

The result of two hundred years of such critique is that the popular mind has become instinctively suspicious of all authority figures, including religious ones, and their exercise of power. Often authorities and their actions are condemned without a fair hearing. This persistent, and occasionally trenchant, critique has led one of our most prestigious and astute analysts of modern culture to suggest that authority has ceased to be a tenable notion in our times.¹²

Secondly, in the aftermath of each of the two world wars, we have experienced a breakdown of the consensus in our culture in regard to values. The consensus which held the West (and other parts of the world dominated by Western countries) together for several centuries appear to be a thing of the past. Political oppositions seem to run even deeper; pluralism on ethical issues is the order of the day; the ideological allegiances and alliances change with frightening rapidity. The Roman Catholic Church has also undergone a profound transformation in the network of values which holds it together as a community, especially since Vatican II. That the church has been profoundly affected in this regard should not surprise us. When cultural values are called into question, it is the value-bearing institutions of the culture which bear the brunt of criticism. Schools, churches, and their like are judged by the highest standards and found wanting.

Thirdly, people look to the state to provide them with security, both economically and militarily. Any regular reading of the daily newspaper reveals how little control nation states now possess over the national economy. Banking, industry, commerce in general have taken on an international character, and, even if they are based in a particular country, they often operate according to interests in conflict with those of the home nation. One thinks of the way in which budget deficits today have variable impacts depending on the flow of international dollars in or out of the particular country involved. A more serious problem for nation states is the bomb. No nation on the earth today can assure its citizens that they are safe militarily. It can promise only a balance of terror where the rule seems to be: though we cannot protect our own citizens from serious harm, we can inflict equal or worse harm on theirs.¹³ Because they really cannot provide economic or military security in any traditional sense of those terms, nation states are inevitably weakened in regard to the allegiance they can expect from their constituents. Institutions and the officials who govern them never operate in a vacuum. A crisis of confidence in civil institutions and their officials affects all the others. And, so, people nervous about their money and their borders, eventually turn their glance towards the Church and ask whether the latter can make them secure with God.

Finally, the pace of change in our world has increased at a rate unimaginable a century ago. Parents today share center stage with television (and the world opened up therein) in the rearing of their children. As children grow up, the values of the parents are frequently tested against those of their peers and rock stars. And the same children often have opportunities to travel (with or without their parent) which were the exclusive prerogative of the super-rich at the beginning of this century. All this technological change and its consequences for child-rearing could be ignored, save for the fact that the church has regularly looked to and expected parents to inculcate the religious values the church treasures. Wherever several agencies compete to socialize the individual, the influence of each is lessened.¹⁴ In our pluralistic culture both parental authority and the nurture in religious values the church presumes can no longer make the kinds of impressions on the young which were taken for granted in the past. We can only conjecture, therefore, that the future of religious authority will have to take into account that the undergirding consensus which makes religious authority feasible will be partial and that all exercises of religious authority are going to be increasingly the subjects of debate.

Notes

1. The passage is from Jose Maria Arguedis, Todas Las Sangres and is the frontispiece to the Spanish edition of Gustavo Gutierrez, Theologia de la Liberacion. The translation is by T. Matt Garr, S.J.

2. The term "paradigm shift" is from Thomas Kuhn, The Structure of Scientific Revolutions (Chicago: University Press, 1962). The notion has already been applied to the study of church authority by T. Howland Sanks, Authority in the Church; A Study in Changing Paradigms (Missoula: Scholar's Press, 1974). The notion has been criticized by Stephen Toulmin, Human Understanding (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1972), 98-123.

3.CF. John Mee, "Understanding the Attitudes of Today's Employees" Nations Business (August, 1976), 22-28. Mee notes essentially the same changes in views of authority after studies of several corporations and his own experience in the management of a livestock company.

4. The roots of the present crisis have been explored by John Schaar, "Reflection on Authority" New American Review (VIII), 44-80. There have also been studies by David Tracy, Blessed Rage for Order (New York: Seabury, 1975), 3-14.

5. How the meaning of power has changed in contemporary society has been studied by Steven Lukes, Power: A Radical View (London: Macmillan, 1974)

6. By "charismatics" I obviously am not referring to members of

the charismatic renewal movement in the Roman Catholic Church.

7. The logic of the office-versus-charism conflict is based on the work of Ph.G. Herbst, Alternatives to Hierarchies (Leiden: Martinus Nijhoff, 1976), 17-22

8. Ibid. Where Herbst also analyzes totalitarian logic which he calls Manichean, 74

9. This analysis of dialectical logic is based on Robert Heilbroner, "The Dialectical Vision" The New Republic (3/1/80), 25-31

10. Ludwig Wittgenstein, Philosophical Investigations, tr., G.E.M. Anscombe, Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1968), 227

11. The dialectic of structure and liminality has been described by Victor Turner, The Ritual Process: Structure & Anti-Structure, (Ithaca: Cornell, 1977). First published by Aldine in 1969.

12. Hannah Arendt, Between Past and Future, (New York: The Viking Press, 1954), 91-141.

13. "The general decline in authority which has been discussed is particularly marked in this area, because states are no longer able to provide the security which has been considered a mainstay of the public's acceptance of government. Not only authority but legitimacy. . .have been corroded by the threat of nuclear war." Carl Friedrich, Tradition and Authority, (London: Pall Mall, 1972), 72.

14. Peter Bergen has pointed out how agencies of socialization in competition with one another inevitably weaken the impact that each one has on the persons being socialized. Cf. The Sacred Canopy, (Garden City: Doubleday, 1967), chapters 5-7 and A Rumor of Angels, (Garden City: Doubleday, 1969), chapters 1-2.

A Long Lost European-Chinese Atlas Found

by Angelo Lazzarotto

It was 400 years ago this year that Michele Ruggieri returned to his native Italy after a lengthy missionary sojourn in China to begin work on what is reputedly the first European version of an atlas of the Chinese empire drawn from original Chinese sources. He began His work in 1590, but died in 1607 before completing it.

Michele Ruggieri was born in Italy in 1543 and became a pioneer Jesuit missionary to China. Arriving in Macao in 1579, he made several excursions across the Chinese-Portuguese border before finally receiving permission from the Viceroy of Guangdong to take up residence there.