

Introduction

In one of the most compelling and contentious biographies of the twentieth century, Shirley Du Boulay, writing about the Catholic monk Swami Abhishiktananda, argued that his history was 'a story of transformation': 'the monk became a *sanyasi*, and Dom Henri became Swami Abhishiktananda'.¹ Biographical writers often highlight continuities, personal consistency rather than personal contradiction. However, this work explores both the continuities and discontinuities in the personal history of the Argentinean Jorge Mario Bergoglio from his birth until his election as Pope Francis. On 13 March 2013 Bergoglio, born in Buenos Aires on 17 December 1936, was chosen as the 266th bishop of Rome, and the pope of the Roman Catholic community throughout the world. This history of Pope Francis is not primarily about the public figure, Pope Francis, but more about the Argentinean, Jorge Mario Bergoglio, who became a priest, archbishop of Buenos Aires, and later a cardinal in the Roman Catholic Church. Finally he left his Argentinean roots in order to live within an international pastoral and theological milieu, that of the globalised Roman Catholic Church.

This work explores and outlines the history of Bergoglio, an Argentinean son of Italian immigrants, who became a Jesuit and was a Jesuit provincial during the difficult time of the rule of the military junta in Argentina. The decisions he had to make at this time were very testing.² Bergoglio was not a liberation theologian, but a confessor and parish priest, who felt very close to the people to

1 Shirley Du Boulay, 'Introduction' to *Swami Abhishiktananda: Essential Writings*, Maryknoll, N.Y.: Orbis, 2006, p. 19.

2 I share Monica Furlong's approach when writing the biography of Thomas Merton: 'I have avoided the reverential approach, have tried to see him as the normal man he was, with his fair share, perhaps more than his fair share, of human frailties', *Merton: A Biography*. San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1980, p. xx.

whom he ministered and who, because of his health, did not venture into missionary work in other countries and therefore did not gain the international experience of most Jesuits. He completed all his studies in Chile and Argentina, but did not complete his doctorate in theology or other related fields as most Jesuits do. His theology was traditional and conservative, but his pastoral openness to other people enormous, warm and empathic. As bishop, he was extremely close to the people of Buenos Aires. This closeness demonstrates his traditional spirituality and popular religiosity rather than political actions. He was able to move thousands of people, who saw in Bergoglio a shepherd who intentionally sought out all types and classes of persons from the different social spheres of Buenos Aires. In so doing Bergoglio brought the Catholic Church out of its self-centeredness, and in the periphery of society he found the centre of his concerns. He shared very similar experiences to Archbishop Óscar Romero of El Salvador, a traditional priest who was changed and educated by the people around him, and who wrestled with those challenges in prayer.¹

There have been many biographies of Pope Francis in which historiography and myth have been mixed with personal opinion; good contributions, but some of them devoid of references to primary textual sources (the writings of Bergoglio).² This work, written by a Latin American theologian and historian of the Church in Latin America, explores the life and theological thought of Bergoglio through primary and secondary Spanish sources and in the context of the Latin American history that challenged Bergoglio and shaped his theological thought.

In the writing of any biography, the biographer, in the words of Monica Furlong, 'has to maintain equilibrium, like a tightrope walker, discovering a balance and a kind of truth between all

1 James R. Brockman SJ, 'Introduction' to *Archbishop Oscar Romero: A Shepherd's Diary*, London: Catholic Fund for Overseas Development (CAFOD) and Catholic Institute for International Relations (CIIR), 1993, p. 11.

2 Biographical contributions have been taken from the following works: Saverio Gaeta, *Papa Francisco: Su vida y sus desafíos*, Buenos Aires: San Pablo, 2013; Evangelina Himittian, *Francisco: El Papa de la gente*, Buenos Aires: Aguilar, 2013; José Medina, *Francisco: El Papa de todos*, Buenos Aires: Bonum, 2013; Sergio Rubin and Francesca Ambrogetti, *El Jesuita: La historia de Francisco, el Papa argentino*, Buenos Aires: Javier Vergara, 2010; Paul Vallely, *Pope Francis: Untying the Knots*, London: Bloomsbury, 2013; and Mariano de Vedia, *Francisco, el Papa del pueblo: La primera biografía del hombre que quiere cambiar la Iglesia*, Buenos Aires: Planeta, 2013.

extremes'.¹ However, Bergoglio consistently demonstrated his concern for the poor and the marginalised, for the fostering of a prophetic and servant church, and for a church in full dialogue with the world and with other faiths. Those without faith, and those with faith in material comfort and the fashions of a globalised world, are not excluded. Bergoglio fundamentally sees the world as good because it is made and nurtured by God, and human beings are co-pilgrims in the journeys of hope and sorrow. Humans must question the world of politics, of economics and particularly the world of social injustice, as Bergoglio did in twentieth-century Argentina.

Annuntio vobis gaudium magnum:
Habemus Papam!
Eminentissimum ac Reverendissimum Dominum
Dominum Georgium Marium Sanctae Romanae Ecclesiae
Cardinalem Bergoglio
Qui sibi nomen imposuit Franciscum.

These were the words read by Cardinal Jean-Louis Tauran, a 67-year-old man fighting to control his Parkinson's disease, who gave the good news to Rome, to the Catholic Church and to the world: a new pope had been elected and a new bishop of Rome was about to greet his diocesan flock. The news had begun to spread with the appearance of the white smoke coming out of the chimney of the Sistine Chapel, where the conclave had been in session for only two days.² On the evening of Tuesday 13 March 2013, the 115 cardinals elected Jorge Mario Bergoglio, a cardinal from Argentina and archbishop of Buenos Aires, as the 266th pope of the Catholic Church.³ A moment of silence followed the public announcement. The name of Cardinal Bergoglio was not familiar to the general

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- 1 Monica Furlong, *Merton: A Biography*. San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1980, p. xiv
 - 2 Pius XII was elected after 3 ballots, Juan XXIII after 11 ballots, Paul VI after 5 ballots, John Paul I after 4 ballots, John Paul II after 8 ballots, Benedict XVI after 4 ballots and Francis after 5 ballots.
 - 3 For a history of the other 265 popes, their controversies and their elections, see Eamon Duffy, *Saints and Sinners: A History of the Popes*, Yale University Press, 2006; P.G. Maxwell-Stuart, *Chronicles of the Popes: The Reign by Reign Record of the Papacy from St Peter to the Present (Chronicles)*, Thames & Hudson, 1997; John Julius Norwich, *Absolute Monarchs: A History of the Papacy*, Random House Trade Paperbacks, 2012; John W. O'Malley SJ, *The History of the Popes: From Peter to the Present*, Sheed & Ward, 2011; and Claudio Rendina, *The Popes: Histories and Secrets*, Seven Locks Press, 2002.

public; he was not in the list of frontrunners expected to succeed Benedict XVI as the leader of 1.2 billion Catholics.¹ Later, the fact of his low public profile became a point of ongoing discussion and surprise because, during the ballots to elect Benedict XVI in 2005, Bergoglio had come second in one ballot with forty votes. At that time Bergoglio had implored his supporters among the cardinals to vote for Cardinal Ratzinger in order to provide continuity to the long years served by John Paul II as Supreme Pontiff. Bergoglio's election as Pope Francis followed the resignation of Benedict XVI in February 2013 when he surprised Catholics all over the world by stepping down on account of his frailty and age. Arrangements for a conclave in March 2013 were quickly made after his announcement, as well as arrangements for the residency of two popes in Rome.

Jubilation and great emotion met the customary appearance on the balcony by the new pope to greet the Catholic world and give his first papal blessing. Benedict XVI's resignation had only just been accepted, and the new pope had been quickly elected. The new successor of Peter the Apostle was an Argentinean cardinal who had chosen the papal name Francis for St Francis of Assisi, the saint of the poor and friend of animals. Days after his election, Pope Francis told the media at the Vatican that the name had entered his head after he was given a two-thirds majority of the vote and a round of applause from the cardinals. At that moment, Cardinal Claudio Hummes, Emeritus Archbishop of Sao Paulo and Emeritus Prefect of the Sacred Congregation for the Clergy, embraced and kissed him, saying: 'do not forget the poor'. Cardinal Bergoglio thought of St Francis because of his relation to the world of the poor and because St Francis was as a man of peace, a value that had been stressed by Bergoglio in his previous messages to the Argentinean nation.² Cardinal Bergoglio was not only an Argentinean but a Jesuit, and the Latin American press, expressing a general public sentiment, very quickly embraced him as a Latin American citizen, loved and accepted by Catholics of all nation states in Latin America.³

1 While the Vatican commentators very quickly searched their bibliographical notes they were all taken by surprise by Bergoglio's appointment and the investigation of Bergoglio's history started in earnest the following day.

2 Papa Francisco, Encuentro con los representantes de los Medios de Comunicación, Sala Pablo VI, Vatican City 16 March 2013, see also Cardenal Jorge Mario Bergoglio, Homilías, Te Deum, Catedral Metropolitana de Buenos Aires, 25 May 2010 and *En él solo la esperanza: Ejercicios Espirituales a los Obispos Españoles*, Madrid: Biblioteca de Autores Cristianos, 2013.

3 See for example 'El nuevo Papa es latinoamericano: El argentino Jorge

Born in Buenos Aires on 17 December 1936, Cardinal Bergoglio entered the Jesuit order on 11 March 1958 and was ordained a priest on 13 December 1969. On 31 July 1973, Bergoglio was appointed provincial of the Jesuits of Argentina, a role that he filled for six years. A novice master, parish priest, confessor and university professor, Bergoglio was ordained auxiliary bishop of Buenos Aires in 1992, became archbishop of Buenos Aires in 1998, and a cardinal of the Catholic Church in 2001.

After his election, Pope Francis greeted the crowds at St Peter's Square in the Italian language with the simple and warm sentiment of 'Good Evening'. The pope 'from far away', as he presented himself to the crowd, asked those present to pray for him; he observed a moment of silence for prayer and, after imparting his papal blessing, bid them good night and a good sleep. Pope Francis has said that, while he regularly sleeps only five hours or so, his greatest penance is to go to bed after midnight. There is no doubt that the first Latin American pope in the history of the Catholic Church left millions wanting to hear more.

Latin American heads of state stressed the fact that for the first time the pope was from the Americas, or, more broadly, from the southern hemisphere, where the majority of the world's Catholics live. Thus, on the day of the papal inauguration, 18 March 2013, the Argentinean president could not stop repeating that the pope was Argentinean. The Brazilian liberation theologian, Frei Betto, replied with the words of an old rivalry: while the pope is Argentinean God is Brazilian. The pope made his first visit outside Europe in July 2013 to Brazil for the Youth World Congress.¹ The Brazilian President Dilma Rouseff, representing the country with the most Catholics in the world (123 million), met Francis at the private library of the Apostolic Palace to discuss Francis' visit to Brazil, and she similarly joked with the press, suggesting that Argentina was very blessed for having a pope but that God was Brazilian.² President Piñera of Chile was quick to remark that Francis had spent some years in Chile, and had accepted an invitation to visit Chile in the near future.

The evening before Francis' inauguration in Rome, there was a vigil at the Plaza de Mayo in Buenos Aires – the very square where

Mario Bergoglio', *La Nación* (Chile) 13 March 2013.

- 1 'Elección del Papa Francisco despierta vieja rivalidad Argentina-Brasil', AFP 14 March 2013.
- 2 'Dilma: "El papa es argentino pero Dios es brasileño"', *La Nación* (Argentina) 20 March 2013.

Francis lived for a few years – in which an atmosphere charged with the prayers and the songs of thousands was broadcast worldwide by Argentinean television. Among those present for the occasion were young people from the shanty towns where Pope Francis worked and served every weekend while archbishop, as well as priests, known as '*curas villeros*', who live a humble and dedicated life among the poor of Buenos Aires.¹ One of them, Fr José María Di Paola (el 'Padre Pepe'), reflected on the occasion, saying: 'One of the teachings that the new pope left us was that this place is not the centre. The Plaza de Mayo is not the centre. Pope Francis taught us that the centre is the periphery, the villas (shanty towns), where people are excluded. We hope that the wonderful things he did here will start to happen in the Catholic Church all over the world'.²

There is no doubt that the pope from Latin America fuelled the imagination of the world, and that the spirit of change – full of Francis' hope, happiness, closeness, warmth and affection – was associated with Latin America. Pope Francis spent most of his life in Argentina, and therefore it would be difficult to understand his religious experience without understanding the changes and developments that took place in Latin America after the Second Vatican Council. Also important for understanding him is a knowledge of the Latin American Bishops' conferences of Medellín (1968), Puebla (1979), Santo Domingo (1992) and Aparecida (2007), as well as the political developments in Argentina since the 1970s, particularly the Argentinean 'dirty war' that took place during the time of the military junta rule of Argentina (from 1976 to 1983). Pope Francis, as a Latin American and as a pope, can be best understood, personally, intellectually and theologically, by considering his role in changing the Catholic Church in Latin America over the past fifty years, and the social and religious history of this period in Latin America that affected and changed him. In the words of the Brazilian president, it is

- 1 Silvina Premat, *Curas villeros: De Mugica al padre Pepe*. Buenos Aires: Editorial Sudamericana, 2010 and Jorge Vernazza, *Para comprender una vida con los pobres: los curas villeros*. Buenos Aires: Editorial Guadalupe, 1989.
- 2 'La emoción del padre Pepe y los curas villeros en la Plaza de Mayo', *La Nación* (Argentina) 20 March 2013. Fr Di Paola has received the recognition of many for his work with the poor, for example, he received a donation from the profits of the sale of each copy of Sergio Rubin and Francesca Ambrogetti, *El Jesuita: La historia de Francisco, el Papa argentino*, Buenos Aires: Ediciones B Argentina, 2010. For a biography of Fr Di Paola see Silvina Premat, *Pepe: El cura de la villa*, Buenos Aires: Editorial Sudamericana, 2013.

clear that Pope Francis is a person 'with a significant option for the poor'.¹ It is this theme of the poor, and the enormous concern for the poor shown by the Church in Latin America, that one must study in order to understand the pastoral outlook of Bergoglio. However, a word of warning: he was not strongly influenced by the so-called 'liberation theologies'; he preferred the currents of popular religion, and, as a Jesuit provincial, did not go as far as other Jesuits, such as those of El Salvador, in the reform of schools, universities and Jesuit communities in Argentina.

Vatican II and Latin America

In 1956 the Latin American bishops, led by Chilean Bishop Manuel Larraín of Talca, created an organisation called the Latin American Episcopal Conference (CELAM). This organisation would allow all Latin American bishops to exchange views on the pastoral issues of their related countries, and would also provide some pastoral and biblical support in the form of further education for their clergy and a select number of lay people. The first meeting of CELAM took place in Brazil, pioneering a pastoral change that would embrace the whole of the Catholic Church when, in 1959, Pope John XXIII called for a council (Vatican II). Vatican II would foster the formation of local bishops' conferences in every country as well as in Africa, Asia and Latin America.²

These events coincided with the start of the period of novitiate of the future Pope Francis, which commenced on 11 March 1958 in the Jesuit novitiate of Villa Devoto. In the following years, Bergoglio studied within the Jesuit community in Chile, returning to Buenos Aires in 1963 to complete his licentiate in philosophy at the Colegio San José in San Miguel. By the time Bergoglio had completed his studies in philosophy and had become a teacher at the Colegio de la Inmaculada Concepción in Santa Fe (1964 to 1965), the Second Vatican Council had already made significant changes to the outlook and self-understanding of the Catholic Church. These changes, triggering an openness to the world and to other faiths, strongly influenced the early years of the young Jesuit Bergoglio's ministry, and later were to be manifested in his pastoral role as archbishop of Buenos Aires.

- 1 'Papa Francisco se reunió por media hora con la presidenta de Brasil', *La Nación* (Chile) 20 March 2013.
- 2 For a reflection on this moment fifty years later see Joseph A Komonchak, 'Convening Vatican II: John XXIII Calls for a Council', *Commonweal*, 12 February 1999.

Two issues became central at Vatican II: conscience and human dignity. Without reflection on those two theological issues – the freedom of conscience given by God to all human beings, and the assertion of the dignity of each human being made in the image of God – further discussion about an inclusive church would have been extremely difficult. Those two concepts created a clear link between the Vatican II document on other religions, *In Our Age (Nostra Aetate)*, the *Constitution on the Church (Lumen Gentium)*, the *Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World (Gaudium et Spes)*, and the *Declaration on Religious Liberty (Dignitatis Humanae)*. They were central to the development of the order of the Jesuits in Argentina at a time when such communities were still somewhat inward-looking. This was due to an educational model of pastoral work that primarily served the Argentinean elites, and the fact of the close alignment of the Church with the Argentinean state. Minority organisations of the Argentinean Church such as the Jesuits put the developments of Vatican II into action with great enthusiasm.

The opening of the Catholic Church to the world – and particularly towards other Christian churches and other faiths – was signalled by *Dignitatis Humanae* (7 December 1965), a document partly prepared by the American theologian John Courtney Murray SJ. It safeguarded the religious freedoms of the individual by making them part of official Church teaching.¹ This was a complete reversal of Pius IX's policy: he had included all religious or political pluralism in his so-called *Syllabus of Errors*.² It was a change that was particularly needed by Catholics living in mostly Protestant societies such as the United States. *Dignitatis Humanae* argued that a state is not able to recognise the Church's authority, which flows from individual freedom rather than the establishment.³ The platform for this change in doctrine, breaking with tradition from the time of Constantine, Justinian and Charlemagne, was the examination of the dignity of the human individual.⁴ The right to individual freedom extends to all groups of believers and includes freedom of enquiry, association,

1 *Dignitatis Humanae* § 1-2; cf. John Paul II, *Essays on Religious Freedom*. Milwaukee: Catholic League on Religious and Civil Rights, 1984.

2 For a fuller commentary on *Dignitatis Humanae* see James Tunstead Burtchaell CSC, 'Religious Freedom (*Dignitatis Humanae*)' in Adrian Hastings, ed. *Modern Catholicism: Vatican II and After*. London: SPCK and New York: Oxford University Press, 1991, pp. 118-125.

3 *Dignitatis Humanae* § 6.

4 Owen Chadwick, *Catholicism and History: The Opening of the Vatican Archives*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1978.

communication, finance, public testimony, worship and common moral endeavour.¹ *Dignitatis Humanae* put a new, strong emphasis on individual conscience, stating that 'it is through this conscience that man sees and recognises the demands of the divine law'.²

Vatican II also established a magisterial principle of inclusion for the world religions that was based on a return to an inclusivist understanding of church, and a refreshed sense of the spirit of dialogue. Both concepts were outlined by Paul VI in the encyclical letter 'On the Church' (*Ecclesiam Suam*), promulgated on 6 August 1964.³ The encyclical manifested a new openness, necessary to enhance the work of the Church. According to Cardinal F. König, President of the Secretariat for Nonbelievers, in an interview given to Vatican Radio before *Ecclesiam Suam* was approved by the council fathers, 'the Church was called to dialogue, but only in order to carry out its proper task, namely the saving proclamation of Christ'.⁴

The first of Paul VI's encyclicals, *Ecclesiam Suam* is divided into three parts dealing with self-awareness, renewal and dialogue, and it describes the Church's role as being 'to serve society'.⁵ The Church must reflect 'on its own nature, the better to appreciate the divine plan which it is the Church's task to implement'.⁶ The Church, according to Paul VI, belongs to the world, 'even though distinguished from it by its own altogether unique characteristics'.⁷ Further, 'the Church is deeply rooted in the world'; 'it exists in the world and draws its members from the world'.⁸ However, because it exists in the world it is bound to feel worldly tensions and pressures.⁹ Thus it is necessary, according to Paul VI, to frequently revisit the Church's own existence in the scriptures and the apostolic tradition.¹⁰

1 *Dignitatis Humanae* § 4-7.

2 *Dignitatis Humanae* § 3.

3 Text available at http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/paul_vi/encyclicals/documents/hf_p-vi_enc_06081964_ecclesiam_en.html

4 Ricardo Burigana and Giovanni Turbanti, 'The Intercession: Preparing the Conclusion of the Council' in Giuseppe Alberigo, ed. *History of Vatican II*, vol. IV *Church as Communion: Third Period and Intercession September 1964 – September 1965*, pp. 453-615 at p. 610, Maryknoll, N.Y.: Orbis and Leuven: Peeters, 2003.

5 *Ecclesiam Suam* § 5.

6 *Ecclesiam Suam* § 18.

7 *Ecclesiam Suam* § 18.

8 *Ecclesiam Suam* § 26.

9 *Ecclesiam Suam* § 26.

10 *Ecclesiam Suam* § 26.

Paul VI considered two documents that had shed important light on the activities and the task of the Church in the past: the encyclical *Satis Cognitum* (Leo XIII, 1896) and the encyclical *Mystici Corporis* (Pius XII, 1943).¹ According to Paul VI, the strengthening of understanding of the Mystical Body of Christ, the Catholic Church, creates conditions in which a spiritual uplifting can come from a deep reflection on the nature of the union between Christ and his Church.² Further, this self-reflection can create a 'renewed discovery of its vital bond of union with Christ'.³ However, for Paul VI, the nature of the Church is not a matter for speculative theology; it has to be lived, 'so that the faithful may have a kind of intuitive experience of it, even before they come to understand it clearly'.⁴

Time and again Paul VI stressed the importance of the conciliar deliberations on the nature of the Church, and reaffirmed that the foundational principle for a Church immersed in the world is 'in the world, but not of it'.⁵ He reminded readers of John XXIII's word for the council – 'aggiornamento', 'a bringing up to date' – and his own adherence to the concept as it was still necessary for the Church to be immersed in the contemporary world and to look for the 'signs of the time'.⁶ One of the important points mentioned by Paul VI for the renewal of the Church in general, and the renewal of ecclesiastical life in particular, was 'the spirit of poverty, or rather, the zeal for preserving this spirit'.⁷ Such was the centrality that Paul VI gave the theme of the spirit of poverty that he asserted: 'it is a fundamental element of that divine plan by which we are destined to win the Kingdom of God, and yet it is greatly jeopardised by the modern trend to set so much store by wealth'.⁸ The Pope recognised the difficulties that everyone has in maintaining a spirit of poverty, and announced particular canonical regulations and directives regarding poverty to highlight clearly that 'spiritual goods far outweigh economic goods, the possession and use of which should be regulated and subordinated to the conduct and advantage of our apostolic

1 *Ecclesiam Suam* § 30.

2 *Ecclesiam Suam* § 31.

3 *Ecclesiam Suam* § 35.

4 *Ecclesiam Suam* § 37.

5 *Ecclesiam Suam* § 49.

6 *Ecclesiam Suam* § 50.

7 *Ecclesiam Suam* § 54.

8 *Ecclesiam Suam* § 54.

mission'.¹ Regarding wealth, the pope also spoke on issues of technical economics and of the importance of helping those who are in need; thus wealth should be used 'justly and equitable for the good of all', and ultimately redistributed.² Together with the spirit of poverty, charity emerges as 'the very heart and centre of the plan of God's providence as revealed in both the Old and the New Testament'.³ Paul VI, using the word charity rather than love, was inspired by Paul's hymn of love (1 Corinthians 13) to argue strongly that 'charity is the key to everything. It sets all to rights. There is nothing which charity cannot achieve and renew'.⁴

The third part of *Ecclesiam Suam* deals with the issue of dialogue, and particularly with dialogue with the world.⁵ The world for Paul VI was defined as:

Either those human beings who are opposed to the light of faith and the gift of grace, those whose naive optimism betrays them into thinking that their own energies suffice to win them complete, lasting, and gainful prosperity, or, finally, those who take refuge in an aggressively pessimistic outlook on life and maintain that their vices, weaknesses and moral ailments are inevitable, incurable, or perhaps even desirable as sure manifestations of personal freedom and sincerity.⁶

Paul VI reminded Catholics that Christians are different from people in 'the world' because that they have been justified, which, in Catholic terms, alludes to the theological understanding that they are participants in the Paschal Mystery through baptism, 'which is truly a rebirth'.⁷ Christians differentiate themselves from the world without indifference, fear or contempt toward the world; on the contrary, the Church distinguishes herself from humanity in order to become closer to humanity, and to show

1 *Ecclesiam Suam* § 54.

2 *Ecclesiam Suam* § 55.

3 *Ecclesiam Suam* § 56.

4 *Ecclesiam Suam* § 56.

5 It is important to recall here that the Church and the world in Catholic theology are not opposed means of grace – as has been assumed by some Calvinist Protestant theology – but that God imparts grace on a world that is his creation and that is completely under his positive guidance; see Vatican II's Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World – *Gaudium et Spes* § 1.

6 *Ecclesiam Suam* § 59.

7 *Ecclesiam Suam* § 60.

more concern and more love for all.¹ Thus, the Church must enter into dialogue with the world because it has something to say, a message to give and an important communication to make.²

Paul VI acknowledged that issues of dialogue with the world are built upon a foundation laid by Leo XIII, Pius XI, Pius XII and John XXIII.³ Those popes showed that if the Church is to bring people to Christ, she must engage in dialogue with the world.⁴ Dialogue arises out of the experience of God in prayer and in spiritual discernment: God Himself is 'the noble origin of this dialogue'.⁵ It is in the dialogue between Christ and human beings that He reveals how he wishes to be known: as pure love.⁶ Paul VI stressed the paradigm of dialogue established by the Father who sent his Son, and who is in dialogue with us through the Church, a dialogue that should be established with the whole of humanity.⁷ In his reflection, Paul VI stressed that God initiated this dialogue first in love, which should be an important characteristic of the Church's dialogue with others: it should be initiated by the Church without waiting for others, and in the spirit of love.⁸ God's dialogue was conducted freely, without coercion, in a spirit of conversational openness. The same process of dialogue with others in 'human friendliness, interior persuasion, and ordinary conversation' is expected of the Church.⁹

Within Paul VI's teachings, the concept of dialogue is promoted as catholic and perseverant, with the Church taking the initiative; dialogue is therefore the advised method for creating closer relations between the Church and the world.¹⁰ In order to respect a human being's freedom and dignity, Paul VI suggests that dialogue must have the following characteristics: (i) dialogue should be intelligible, (ii) it should be humble, truthful and peaceful, (iii) it should carry confidence in the power of words as well as in the goodwill of the other party, and (iv) it should be conducted with the prudence of a teacher.¹¹

1 *Ecclesiam Suam* § 63.

2 *Ecclesiam Suam* § 65.

3 *Ecclesiam Suam* § 68.

4 *Ecclesiam Suam* § 69.

5 *Ecclesiam Suam* § 70.

6 *Ecclesiam Suam* § 70.

7 *Ecclesiam Suam* § 71.

8 *Ecclesiam Suam* § 72-73.

9 *Ecclesiam Suam* § 74-75.

10 *Ecclesiam Suam* § 76-78.

11 *Ecclesiam Suam* § 81 cf. § 79.

In the final part of *Ecclesiam Suam*, Paul VI provided a positive view of developments and changes in the world, stating that:

All things human are our concern. We share with the whole of the human race a common nature, a common life, with all its gifts and all its problems. We are ready to play our part in this primary, universal society, to acknowledge the insistent demands of its fundamental needs, and to applaud the new and often sublime expressions of its genius.¹

Among the most difficult sectors of society with whom the Church might dialogue, Paul VI mentioned those who followed atheism and communism because of their non-adherence to a world ordered as communal by God.² Among positive partners in dialogue, Paul VI mentioned those who seek and work for peace, those who share a faith in the One God (Jewish and Muslim) and those who follow Afro-Asiatic religions.³ Regarding those who follow non-Christian religions, Paul VI asserted:

We desire to join with them in promoting and defending common ideals in the spheres of religious liberty, human brotherhood, education, culture, social welfare, and civic order. Dialogue is possible in all these great projects, which are our concern as much as theirs and we will not fail to offer opportunities for discussion in the event of such an offer being favourably received in genuine, mutual respect.⁴

Finally, Paul VI referred to those who share a belief in Christ, stressing the commonalities between the Christian churches rather than the differences.⁵ The fact that representatives of all the Christian churches were present at the Second Vatican Council (properly labelled 'ecumenical') was already a sign of the things to come.

As a result of all those reflections, dialogue was to be central to the life of the Church in a post-conciliar climate. In the case of Jewish-Christian relations, many groups started conversations and lives-in-dialogue via groups that took part in each other's rituals, an ecclesiological development that was to influence Bergoglio's active dialogue with Jews and Muslims in Buenos

1 *Ecclesiam Suam* § 97.

2 *Ecclesiam Suam* § 99-104.

3 *Ecclesiam Suam* § 106-107.

4 *Ecclesiam Suam* § 108.

5 *Ecclesiam Suam* § 109.

Aires.¹ As Donald Nicholl has argued, 'the depth of that change is probably hard for anyone to measure who was not personally acquainted with the situation before the Second Vatican Council'.²

Latin America after Vatican II

Following the completion of Vatican II in 1965, the Latin American Episcopal Conference, headed by the progressive Chilean Bishop Manuel Larraín, scheduled a general meeting of Latin American bishops at Medellín (Colombia) that took place in 1968. The meeting coincided with a period of soul-searching about the poverty and injustice in Latin America, and was the start of a period in which the rule of military regimes was the norm rather than the exception.³ Preparations at local diocesan level for Medellín were intense. Those leading the deliberations at the continental level were not theologians but pastoral bishops, who, in the case of Brazil, had already witnessed systematic violations of human rights since the military had taken charge of the Brazilian government in 1964.

Within this difficult political context, the Latin American countries had responded to the implementation of Vatican II with enthusiasm, supported by a committed Catholic laity that had been heavily influenced by John XXIII's *Pacem in Terris* (1963) and Paul VI's *Populorum progressio* (1967). Both encyclicals spoke of the possibility of a just order in society, but an order that must consider development rather than armed struggle as its core value, and whose aim is an economic stability that provides the possibility of restoring dignity to all nations and to all human beings. It is worth remarking again that, within the Argentinean Church, the majority of persons chose to dwell more on the pragmatic importance of the Catholic Church to the building of the nation, rather than prioritising *Populorum Progressio's* suggestions for development and economic justice.

- 1 According to Evangelina Himítian, Bergoglio had three obsessions: poverty, education and inter-religious dialogue. See Evangelina Himítian, *Francisco: El Papa de la gente*, Buenos Aires: Aguilar, 2013, p. 227.
- 2 Donald Nicholl, 'Other Religions (Nostra Aetate)' in Adrian Hastings, ed. *Modern Catholicism: Vatican II and After*, London: SPCK and New York: Oxford University Press, 1991, pp. 126-134 at p. 131.
- 3 For a detailed analysis of the relation between Church and State at the period and within different Latin American countries see Jeffrey Klaiber SJ, *The Church, Dictatorships, and Democracy in Latin America*. Maryknoll, N.Y.: Orbis, 1998.

The genesis of Latin American liberation theology coincided with broader Christian reflections on development, and the Church's expanding involvement with the world, an involvement that extended to the search for a theology of inculturation in Africa, and of dialogue with world religions in Asia.¹ However, also during this time, a Peruvian priest, Gustavo Gutiérrez, became the face of liberation theology. Such priests were trying to develop a systematic framework of thought that connected the life of the Latin American poor, development theory, and a divine sense of history, under the umbrella of theological and material liberation.² Gutiérrez's *A Theology of Liberation* (1971) became the classic theological monograph on the subject, while many other theologians started concurrently working on Christology, ecclesiology, soteriology, the history of the Church and the role of the Basic Christian communities.³ The final document of the general meeting at Medellín supported the theological program of engaging with the world by reiterating the

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- 1 At the theological level African and Latin American theologians encountered each other through the Ecumenical Association of Third World Theologians (EATWOT) and the first period of their work was coordinated by Enrique Dussel and François Houtart, see a useful historical overview in Enrique Dussel, 'Theologies of the "Periphery" and the "Centre": Encounter or Confrontation?', in Claude Geffré, Gustavo Gutiérrez and Virgil Elizondo (eds.), *Different Theologies, Common Responsibility, Babel or Pentecost?*, Concilium 171, 1984/1, Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 87-97, see also EATWOT, *The Emergent Gospel*, Maryknoll, N.Y.: Orbis Books, 1976. For a theological overview see Theo Witvliet, *A Place in the Sun: An Introduction to Liberation Theology in the Third World*, London: SCM Press, 1985. An Asian Christianity as a Christian project was more problematic; numbers of Christians in Asia, with the exception of the Philippines, remain small and the post-Vatican II discussions on salvation within the world religions created more than an impasse between those who adhered to a Christ centric option (exclusivists) and those who understood the world religions as places where God could save (inclusivists), see Paul F. Knitter, *No Other Name? A Critical Survey of Christian Attitudes towards the World Religions*, London: SCM Press, 1985.
 - 2 For historical data on his life see Sergio Torres, 'Gustavo Gutiérrez: A historical sketch', in Marc H. Ellis and Otto Maduro (eds.), *The Future of Liberation Theology: Essays in Honor of Gustavo Gutiérrez*, Maryknoll N.Y.: Orbis, 1989, 95-101.
 - 3 Gustavo Gutiérrez, *Teología de la liberación: Perspectivas* (Salamanca: Ediciones Sígueme, 16th edition 1999 and Lima: Centro de Estudios y Publicaciones 1971); for a full review of the theological works of 18 Latin American theologians see Mario I. Aguilar, *The History and Politics of Latin American Theology*, vols. 1-2, London: SCM Press, 2007.

materiality and humanity of God's salvation and incarnation, and by encouraging ecclesial immersion in the life of the materially poor, the marginalised and those victimised by unjust social structures – included by the Latin American bishops under the term 'structural sin'.¹

The development of Latin American theology is enormously complex, but it can in part be traced to the European training received by Gustavo Gutiérrez and Juan Luis Segundo SJ, who both studied in France when, in 1959, John XXIII called the Second Vatican Council and spoke of 'a church of the poor'.² Juan Luis Segundo SJ and Gustavo Gutiérrez had different pastoral experiences, however, and these experiences shaped what Segundo called 'two kinds of liberation theology'.³ As a result of his life in the slums, Gutiérrez believed that the poor and the marginalised were at the centre of God's work. They represented the incarnation of God and the presence of God within society. Theology, within this social context is a reflection, a 'second act' in the social drama of God and his people. In Gutiérrez's opinion, Jesus expressed a real closeness to the poor, and so for him liberation theology arose from 'our better understanding of the depth and complexity of the poverty and oppression experienced by most of humanity; it is due to our perception of the economic, social, and cultural mechanisms that produce that poverty; and before all else, it is due to the new light which the word of the Lord sheds on that poverty'.⁴ As a consequence, the 'option for the poor' assumed by the Latin American bishops came out of God's own option for the poor and the marginalised.

1 See Second General Conference of Latin American Bishops 1968, *The Church in the Present-Day Transformation of Latin America in the Light of the Council II Conclusions*, Washington, DC: United States Catholic Conference USCC, 1970.

2 For a comprehensive history of liberation theology and of some of the most prominent theologians of liberation see Mario I. Aguilar, *The History and Politics of Latin American Theology*, 3 volumes, London: SCM Press, 2007-2008.

3 Juan Luis Segundo SJ, 'Two Theologies of Liberation', Toronto 22 March 1983 in Alfred T. Hennelly (ed.), *Liberation Theology: A Documentary History*, Maryknoll, N.Y.: Orbis, 1990, 353-66.

4 Gustavo Gutiérrez, 'Option for the Poor' in Ignacio Ellacuría SJ and Jon Sobrino SJ (eds.), *Mysterium Liberationis: Fundamental Concepts of Liberation Theology*, Maryknoll, N.Y.: Orbis and North Blackburn, Victoria: Collins Dove, 1993, 235-250 at 250.

For Segundo, who had experienced pastoral work with the social sphere of the Uruguayan educated elites, liberation theology remained within the realm of educated theologians, whose primary pastoral ministry was to pass fresh ideas about the implementation of Vatican II to the laity and to the Catholic faithful in parishes. Segundo himself worked extensively with university students and young professionals, and was committed to a systematic investigation of theological themes in service of the Church.

There is no contradiction in the role of the theologian in Gutiérrez and Segundo's theological writings, but Gutiérrez's work certainly inspired numerous theological writings that used Marxism as a hermeneutical tool for exploring social realities. Within the Latin American context of the 1970s, Christians and Marxists encountered one another while involved in the same project of challenging unjust social structures. Christians followed the values of the Kingdom of God, Marxists the ideals of a movement which advocated for revolution to achieve equality. They were inspired by the Cuban Revolution of 1959. The radicalisation of Latin American theologians coincided with the ascent of Christians who equated the Gospel with the socialist political project, the so-called groups of Christians for Socialism that supported the election and the government of Salvador Allende in Chile.¹ These clergy and pastoral agents were persecuted by the military in Brazil, Chile, Argentina, Uruguay, Paraguay, El Salvador and Guatemala. Bergoglio was part of an educated elite that assumed the values of Vatican II, but he certainly did not agree with the involvement of Christians within radical political movements such as the Christians for Socialism in Chile. Nor did he believe Christians should play a leading political role, as the Christian communities in Brazil did when they challenged the private ownership of land (they held large demonstrations against this practice, supported by the Brazilian bishops).²

The optimism of the Council Fathers, and the rich documents that reincorporated the Church into the contemporary world, created

- 1 John Eagleson, ed. *Christians and Socialism: Documentation of the Christians for Socialism Movement in Latin America*, Maryknoll, N.Y.: Orbis, 1975, and Gonzalo Arroyo, *Golpe de estado en Chile*, Salamanca: Ediciones Sígueme, 1974.
- 2 The ideological mover of the Brazilian Christian communities was the Brazilian theologian Leonardo Boff who challenged the clerical developments within the Catholic Church arguing for the centrality of the Basic Christian Communities (BCC), see Mario I. Aguilar, *The History and Politics of Latin American Theology*, vol. 1, London: SCM Press, 2007, 121-36.

an optimistic and exciting atmosphere in Latin America. However, there was no way that all the Catholic pastoral agents were going to act and think in the same way. There was a need to renew the Christian communities during this period, but also a need to outline a course of economic development in Latin America for a better distribution of wealth within society. The complexity of the bishops' task at Medellín was therefore enormous, and the dissemination of pastoral ideas was needed and greatly desired by religious sisters, lay people and particularly grass-roots communities.

The means to achieve this social and economic change were the concern of Christians and Marxists alike, and after the Cuban revolution some Christian communities and priests, following a more political stance on Vatican II's call to watch 'the signs of the time', felt called to join Latin American groups attempting to foster violent revolution. Such was the case for Fr Camilo Torres Restrepo, a Colombian priest who was to become a symbol of Christian commitment to Latin American revolutions. Already, at the time of the Council, Camilo Torres had developed the idea that the revolutionary struggle could be a Christian and a priestly activity. He held large influence in Colombian society because he came from a well-to-do family, but also because he was involved with students at the National University of Colombia. Cardinal Luis Concha moved him from the university to a suburban parish, where he started verbally attacking the hierarchy of the Church by suggesting that they were part of the Colombian oligarchy; a group that, according to him, impeded the formation of a more just society in Colombia. In June 1965, he asked to be relieved from his priestly duties, and in November 1965 he joined the Colombian guerrilla, the Ejército de Liberación Nacional. Torres was killed on 15 February 1966, and became an iconic revolutionary figure to many Christians in Latin America.

Within this context of ongoing change and political challenges, in 1968 Paul VI travelled to Bogotá, Colombia to open the thirty-ninth International Eucharistic Congress. The first visit by a pope to Latin America was seen as a great moment for the growing Church. Leading Latin American bishops, such as Cardinal Silva Henríquez of Chile, felt great excitement about the pope's visit to Latin America, seeing the visit as a service to all.¹ The 'continent of hope', according

1 Silva Henríquez gave the following thoughts in an interview with U.S. News & World Report: 'Este proceso, válido para toda la Iglesia, se singulariza y reviste de connotación particular en América Latina. Continente en vías de desarrollo, el servicio eclesial a América Latina

to Paul VI, was felt to be the best ground for the implementation of the changes of Vatican II. Finally the servant of the servants of God was arriving to visit the poor of Latin America. The meeting of the Latin American Episcopal Conference at Medellín in 1968 would set the guidelines for the implementation of Vatican II in Latin America. Protests against the papal visit took place in Bogotá, orchestrated by radical Christians who thought the expenses of such a visit inappropriate when Latin America was immersed in levels of extreme poverty. It is possible to argue that without the arrival of Paul VI, the meeting of Latin American bishops at Medellín would not have had the same strength or impact on the pastoral life of the Church in Latin America as it did. The papal visit opened the meeting of bishops in which the Latin American Catholic Church opted for a more simple life of poverty and immersed herself in a ministry located in places where the materially poor lived.

On 21 August 1968, the Chilean cardinal Silva Henríquez travelled to Colombia to await the pope's arrival on the following day. During his visit to Colombia, Paul VI ratified the changes of Vatican II, including increased focus on the poor and a Church that would learn from the poor. He also condemned violent attempts to achieve a just society in Latin America and his visit coincided with the celebration of the International Eucharistic Congress in Bogotá between 18 and 25 August 1968. Unlike previous Eucharistic congresses in Buenos Aires and Sao Paulo, the Colombian one was a celebration of the Christian communities under the motto *Vinculum Caritatis* (*The Union of Love*).¹ During the Eucharistic Congress, the pope, addressing peasants, stressed his commitment, and the commitment of the whole Church, to defending the poor, proclaiming human and Christian dignities, denouncing injustices and abuses against peasants and fostering initiatives and programs that supported impoverished peoples and their development.² In summary, the pope reaffirmed a strengthening ecclesial conviction in Latin America: that the poor are a sacramental presence of Christ

se concreta en un servicio al desarrollo, entendido en la acepción de Populorum Progressio: de condiciones menos humanas, hacia un humanismo integral, que incluye el don de la fe', *Memorias* II: 137.

1 Josep-Ignasi Saranyana, director and Carmen-José Alejos Grau, coordinator, *Teología en América Latina*, vol. III: *El siglo de las teologías latinoamericanistas 1899-2001*, Madrid: Iberoamericana and Frankfurt am Main: Vervuert, 2002, p. 124.

2 *Ibid.*, vol. III, P. 124.

because Christ is in those who are the most vulnerable in society.¹ The pope warned those attending the celebrations about the danger of putting their trust in violence or revolution.² The importance of the first papal visit to Latin America cannot be overstated: this was the first time that a pope had visited Latin America to be physically present with the sick and orphans.³

Paul VI inaugurated the second general meeting of Latin American bishops at Medellín in the cathedral in Bogotá on 24 August, and then returned to Rome. Those in attendance at the Medellín conference were 137 bishops with right to vote, and 112 delegates and observers.⁴ The Medellín conference was a fruitful opportunity for renewal, and many of the concepts outlined in the final document became additions to the social doctrine of the Church: for example, 'truly human economics', and the avoidance of 'institutionalised violence' and 'sinful structures'.

The Impact of Medellín

At Medellín, in 1968, a Latin American theological movement driven by lay unpublished theologians was born.⁵ The Church in Latin America had had to consider their religious practice within difficult political circumstances, and, aided by the theological reflection of Gutiérrez, the bishops did not separate religion and politics. Their response included commitment to political change and the defence of human rights, a commitment that Paul VI would honour during his visit to the United Nations. Virgilio Elizondo has argued that the transformative impact of the Medellín Conference on the Church's pastoral practice and theology was far greater than that exercised by any other council of the Church. No particular dogmas or confessions of faith were questioned or challenged – Protestant or Catholic. Instead, the whole edifice of Constantinian Christian thought, imagery, and symbolism was radically challenged in the name of Christianity. Hallmarks of Constantinian practise included keeping the altar at a distance from the people, and an absence of

1 Ibid., vol. III, p. 125.

2 Ibid., vol. III, p. 126.

3 Ibid., vol. III, p. 126.

4 Ibid., vol. III, p. 126.

5 'Emergence of a World Church and the irruption of the poor', in Gregory Baum (ed.), *The Twentieth Century: A Theological Overview*, Maryknoll, N.Y.: Orbis, 1999, p. 108.

churches at the margins of society. What was initiated was not a new academic or philosophical theology, but the transformation of the very structures and methods of the practice of theology. To be faithful and authentic, it was decided that Christian theology must spring from the spiritual experience of the believing community, grapple with its history and respond to its situation. The pastoral implementation of the conclusions of Medellin was very different in different Latin American countries, but, with the exception of Argentina and Colombia where the Catholic Church continued being conservative in doctrine and practice, allowed a renewed challenge to the state of oppression understood as 'structural sin'. In the case of Chile, for example, the bishops challenged the military regime of President Pinochet; by contrast, in neighbouring Argentina there was an avoidance of any denunciation of the government in the name of the Gospel.¹ The Argentinean Church supported the military for the most part, while the Jesuits – and Fr Jorge Bergoglio SJ, who was teaching and leading retreats there – followed the directives of their congregations to lead a more simple life and to embrace poverty in the spirit of St Ignatius of Loyola, their founder. While Bergoglio supported the persecuted, this was not a specific national pastoral guideline laid down by the Argentinean bishops, a fact that gives Bergoglio's actions for the protection of the persecuted much more weight: during this period the Argentinean Church did not protect those persecuted by the military regime. He did not follow the general trend among the clergy of ignoring the political realm and ignoring the violence that abounded in Argentina in the period before and during military rule.

Several religious groups particularly were experiencing spiritual renewal during the 1960s: what might even be called a Latin American reformation. Among them were the Jesuits. In 1968 they made a public declaration about their lifestyle and their pastoral work throughout Latin America, an announcement that preceded the conference at Medellin. When the provincials of all the Jesuit provinces of Latin America met in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, 6-14 May 1968, they reflected on their view of mission and their positioning within Latin America. As a result of their deliberations, they decided to reiterate their involvement 'in the temporal life of humankind'.²

1 See Mario I. Aguilar, *A Social History of the Catholic Church in Chile*, vol. 1, *The First Period of the Pinochet Government 1973-1980*, Lewiston, Queenston, and Lampeter: Edwin Mellen Press, 2004.

2 Provincials of the Society of Jesus, 'The Jesuits in Latin America', May

However, within the particular context of Latin America, their statement pushed for a greater involvement with social movements that challenged unjust structures. There was no high theology within the document, but a challenge to the individual and community lives of the Jesuits who had become attached to the elites and had strayed from their social and religious utopia. In a central passage of that document they asserted:

In all our activities, our goal should be the liberation of humankind from every sort of servitude that oppresses it: the lack of life's necessities, illiteracy, and the weight of sociological structures which deprive it of personal responsibility over life itself, the materialistic conception of history. We want all our efforts to work together toward the construction of a society in which all persons will find their place, and in which they will enjoy political, economic, cultural, and religious equality and liberty.¹

Within this document the Jesuits responded to a frequent criticism of their academic institutions, particularly their schools and universities: that Jesuit schools educated the children of the rich, and that their universities reinforced an elitist social system. The document argued that all Jesuit institutions should foster the social gospel, and that all students should be involved in practical activities that would expose them to different social realities: for example, working in soup kitchens, living in shanty towns, harvesting and visiting prisons.² The Jesuit provincials called for the formation of consciences among their students, and encouraged the use of media to foster such formation. A call was directed to all Jesuit superiors to implement these changes as soon as possible, even when some of those changes would take some time. Deep questions were asked of each individual Jesuit working in Latin America posing a real challenge towards a new religious conversion:

Are we capable of responding to the world's expectations? Are our faith and charity equal to the anxiety-ridden appeals of the world around us? Do we practice self-denial sufficiently, so that God is able to flood us with light and energy? Does personal prayer have its proper place in our life, so that we

1968, in Alfred T. Hennelly (ed.), *Liberation Theology: A Documentary History*, Maryknoll, N.Y.: Orbis, 1990, pp. 77-83.

1 Provincials of the Society of Jesus, 'The Jesuits in Latin America', § 3.

2 Provincials of the Society of Jesus, 'The Jesuits in Latin America', § 7.

are united with God in this great human task that cannot succeed without God? Can the Society keep within its ranks those members who do not want to pray or who do not have a real and personal prayer in life?¹

The response to the tenets of Medellín by the Jesuit communities in Latin America was swift, and sometimes unsettling for parents and teachers of the students involved. Parents were told about the revised Jesuit aims within their schools and were asked to adhere to them, despite conservative parents' apprehension about the proposed formation of their children through extracurricular pastoral activities led by the Jesuits. Despite the fact that a large number of Jesuits left the Society of Jesus after Vatican II, Jesuit secondary schools maintained their academic excellence while instituting programmes of extra-curricular activities such as summer work in harvesting for students, or activities of a social nature in their last years of secondary school. Within universities it was easier for the Jesuits to implement social service programmes, as most university students were inspired by a climate of change, political awareness and political questioning to go out into the communities. Thus, the Jesuits not only affected the developments of theologies in Latin America, pastoral or otherwise, but also became practically involved in many activities related to the defence of indigenous minorities, political refugees and migrants.

In El Salvador, where the prominent theologian Jon Sobrino SJ worked, the Jesuits decided to build a university that was to be a reflection of the open spirit of Vatican II, and, at the same time, demonstrate a deep commitment to the poor and the marginalised. The Jesuit community in El Salvador felt assured that Medellín was not only a *kairos* (a time of grace), but also a movement that could not easily be stopped. A short outline of the influential educational Jesuit enterprise arising out of Medellín is in order here, particularly the contribution of the Jesuit University of Central America (UCA). The educational reform led by the Jesuits in El Salvador resulted in several assassinations of Jesuits by the Salvadorian Army and death squads paid by Salvadorian landowners. However, the new reforms had strong support among Jesuits, and they, together with Mgr Óscar Romero, were pivotal in applying its tenets to Central American society in general and El Salvador in particular.

1 Provincials of the Society of Jesus, 'The Jesuits in Latin America', § 10.

The UCA campus was built in the 1970s by loans from the Inter-American Development Bank (Banco Interamericano del Desarrollo – BID). The UCA, under the rectorship of Román Mayorga Quirós, quickly aligned with the progressive changes of the Jesuit order, and by 1976 Professor Ignacio Ellacuría SJ attracted the animosity of El Salvador's President Arturo Armando Molina by writing an editorial in the university's magazine that criticised the halting of Salvadorian agrarian reform. The government withdrew educational subsidies to the UCA, and attacks on the Jesuits started with the assassination of Rutilio Grande in March 1977. From that moment, the UCA supported all pastoral plans by Archbishop Romero through its department of theology, headed by Jon Sobrino. In 1979, Ignacio Ellacuría SJ became rector of the UCA, and oversaw a move towards research programs related to the national realities of El Salvador, while immersing students, staff and the university community into the social realities of the poor of El Salvador. As the Salvadorean Civil War continued, Ellacuría became prominent as the mediator of peace accords, and spoke out strongly against injustice and human rights abuses via television, UCA radio and the UCA publications.

Ellacuría, rector of the university at the time of his assassination, articulated the particular ministry of the university in the following words: 'the university should be present intellectually where it is needed: to provide science for those who have no science; to provide skills for the unskilled; to be a voice for those who have no voice; to give intellectual support for those who do not possess the academic qualifications to promote and legitimate their rights'.¹ Jon Sobrino SJ, by contrast, was less optimistic about the scope of the university, due to past experiences of Jesuit universities becoming top educational institutions but, in the process, compromising their ability to challenge unjust and sinful structures within society.

Sobrino advocated 'the option for the poor' within Christian universities by arguing that it was unrealistic to suggest that a university should be located in poor areas, but that all activities of a Christian university should be geared towards the poor. In his opinion, the central activities of the university must include the dialogue between faith and science, and the teaching and researching of theology as a reflection on the life of the poor and the marginalised. Sobrino's statement about theology within a university is central to understanding the challenges that the Jesuit

1 Ignacio Ellacuría SJ, 'The Task of a Christian University', in Jon Sobrino, Ignacio Ellacuría and Others, *Companions of Jesus*, p. 150.

Order posed to the powerful in El Salvador. The Jesuits provided many communities with their extra-mural courses (non-curricular courses that could be followed by those who were not reading for a degree) and training for leaders of Christian communities. Sobrino argued very strongly that 'theology must be turned, then, towards the people of God; it should be inserted effectively among them, draw its agenda from them and accompany them. In this sense, university theology should be a moment of theopraxis for the whole people of God and should be considered as a theo-culture, a Christo-culture, an ecclesio-culture – that is, an instrument that cultivates and nurtures faith, hope, and love of God's people'.¹

The impact of the 1968 conference of bishops on Latin America cannot be underestimated. The conclusions of the conference followed deep reflection on the role of the Catholic Church in Latin America, and triggered change both within the Church and within spheres of ecclesial influence in Latin America.

The Jesuit response to the Medellín conference – a response also embraced by Jorge Bergoglio – was crucial, because the Jesuits were in charge of the best schools and best universities of Latin America. They had a timely influence on Latin American intellectuals and professionals. The Jesuits responded to the Medellín document with communitarian acts of love, and a theological response to liberation that allowed the questioning the contemporary Jesuit way of life. Thus, the Jesuit reformed *themselves* while simultaneously triggering challenges and reform within the Latin American Catholic Church in which they played a central religious and political role. Other religious congregations followed their example, and undertook an exodus from well-to-do areas of ministry. Christian nuns and laywomen left their teaching positions in affluent public schools and moved to where the poor lived and worked: mainly in shanty towns and deprived areas of Latin American cities. Missionary orders staffed by foreigners also took the conclusions of Medellín very seriously, and opened new parishes in locations only accessed previously by Marxist activists and left-wing ideologists.

The role of religious communities has been generally underplayed in the assessment of political changes that took place in 1968 and after in Latin America. It is important to remember that

1 Jon Sobrino SJ, 'The University's Christian Inspiration', in Jon Sobrino, Ignacio Ellacuría and Others, *Companions of Jesus*, pp. 170-1.

many Catholics, though expatriate missionaries (from Ireland, Spain, France and the United States), also expressed their own journey to follow the Gospel more closely in a movement away from their convents and religious houses toward the periphery, to the shanty towns and to places where they were most needed.

This movement towards the peripheries of society, and the involvement of Christians with movements of liberation more generally, amounted to a golden pastoral moment in Latin America which, by the 1970s and 1980s, could be called a true *kairos* arising from the events of 1968. The period marked the formation of a movement for liberation that would shape the pastoral development of the universal Catholic Church. In conclusion, the year 1968 marked the beginning of a new reformation in and for Latin America. The third meeting of Latin American bishops in Puebla (Mexico, 1979) re-emphasised the importance of this movement towards the poor in society, and proclaimed God's preferential option for the poor once more. The fourth meeting of Latin American bishops in Santo Domingo (1992) reflected on the 500 years since the arrival of Christianity in Latin America, and stressed the central role of indigenous populations in the decision-making for and future of the Church in Latin America. The fifth meeting of Latin American bishops in Aparecida (Brazil, 2007) reflected on the role of the Church in a secularising and increasingly democratic Latin American society, emphasising – under the guidance of Cardinal Bergoglio – the mission of the Church to the marginalised in society. Aparecida's final document was written with the help of Bergoglio's strong hand, a document that emphasises the service and mission of the Church and gives a secondary role to the expansion or self-reflection of the Church.

It is this Argentinean cardinal, Jorge M. Bergoglio, with his wide experience of focusing on the poor and the marginalised since 1968 in Latin America, who is elected as pope. He was born into an immigrant Italian family, and experienced violence and political tension under the Argentinean military regime, and laboured diligently for years as auxiliary bishop, archbishop and cardinal in Buenos Aires. From these experiences Bergoglio learned the importance of a simple life, and of a Catholic Church that reaches out to the marginalised, who need the support, grace and the comfort of God. The following chapters outline some crucial influences on Bergoglio from his childhood, and consider some of his main speeches, homilies and involvement with the social, ecclesial and political world of Argentina.