

The New Prophetic Movement
and
The New Charismatic Church

(AGGIORNAMENTO IN OFF-BEAT STYLE)

Introduction, Translation and Epilogue

by

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INTRODUCTORY RETROSPECTION

“THE SHOES OF THE FISHERMAN” —

It was the first traitor who first said: “Why was this ointment not sold for three hundred denarii and given to the poor?”, signalling the hour of betrayal. The recent movie production, “Shoes of the Fisherman” portrays the Red take-over of the Papacy and the dissolution of the Church by playing the same tune of helping the poor. This is significantly preceded by a display of stubborn opposition, in the person of a clergyman, to the supernatural Christian dogmas, through the defense of modern naturalism and rationalism in the form of Teilhardism. The portrayal of the machiavellic scheme in film is highly effective to ward away suspicion and to infuse groundless assurance that the whole matter is merely fictitious and is not actually carried out.

THE ENEMY'S LONG-RANGE PLAN. —

It is not for man to see the future. But we who have lived already some time in this planet can look back at the past and from the light of subsequent events can size up better the relevance of past events.

In the summer of 1953 tourists, as usual, poured into Spain and the writer was among them. As the summer progressed, stories circulated to the effect that the Spanish police had been successful in intercepting some foreign impostors who had passed around as priests and seminarians. It was easier for them to travel through Catholic Spain under that guise, but tell-tale slips had given them away.* Under police grilling several of them came out with the following startling revelation.

"At the end of World War II, during which Soviet Russia ran the risk of defeat, the Red Bosses had decided that it was not expedient to carry on the fight against the Catholic Church from the outside in an open manner. The past confrontation had not been very successful. Experience had shown that the main sources of resistance were the clergy and hierarchy, which were the accepted leaders of the Catholic Church, Christian dogmas, and the Christian ideology. From thence onwards, the destruction of the Church was to be done from the inside, on an infiltration basis.

At the end of the War, the Reds became masters of half of Europe and many Seminaries had been depopulated. The master plan was to people the Seminaries with their recruits. In fifteen years time, they will become parish priests and bishops, theologians and Seminary professors. Then the strongholds of Catholic opposition will unobtrusively, but effectively be taken over from the inside and by a natural process. We are from those recruits."

The master plan was frightful. It could easily be implemented and when carried through, the results would spell tragedy. Their men would be our Church leaders; their spokesmen, our theologians; their views our new insights; their doctrines, our re-thought theology; their ideology, our new progressive Christianity. There would be confusion and uncertainty in the Catholic ranks. And defections that should ensue would only work towards demoralization and shame in the Church.

Under the guise of progressiveness and scientificness, a new Theology could be proposed that should be anthropocentric and anthropological. A new Christianity, that should be "less mythical and less dogmatic" but more socially aware and involved, would be more appealing. And under the ideology of social commitment, Marxism could be wed with the "new" Christianity.

THE COUNCIL. —

Through Vatican Council II, Pope John XXIII had wanted to "open a window and let some fresh air into the Church." However, other elements saw in this opening an opportunity to penetrate into

(a) In one instance an impostor priest was asked how the hymn of *Tertiu* started. He did not know; he had never recited the *brevariary*. In another instance, an impostor bishop failed to give the episcopal blessing the way other bishops did at the end of the Mass. The writer himself was also booked by the police at Badajoz on suspicions of being an impostor. He was wearing the clerical suit which, at that time only foreigners wore. After proper verification, the police commissar said: "Excuse us. You are a foreigner in clerical attire: we thought you were a spy."

Conf. the deployment of Msgr. Kiril in "Shoes of the Fisherman."

the brain centres of the Church. The delegation from the Northern countries of Europe, living with Protestant Majorities, played the tune of Ecumenism, of friendly brotherliness, towards the separated brethren, in order therewith to earn their sympathy. "But why restrict it to our separated brethren?" asked some quarters. It should also be extended to all men. They should be taken as they are, with friendliness.

"Dialogue" was thereupon played up as the modern and necessary formula to erase misunderstandings, to open up friendliness and solve problems. But dialogue can do well on the professional and scientific levels, wherein the exchange of ideas are carried in an impassioned and objective manner, not on every level. To raise dialogue into a master formula for progress smacks of Hegelian dialectics which is the philosophical substratum of the Dialectical Materialism of Marxism. Nonetheless, the progressive elements insisted that the Church should dialogue with the modern world, with modern men. In order to do so, She must be ready to admit Her mistakes, and to ask pardon for Her mistakes in the past.

The Church did ask pardon in the Council for Her past mistakes through the organ of the Magisterium. The interested elements had their wish at last. The Church had asked pardon for Her past mistakes. That means that the Church can commit mistakes. In that manner, the sins and mistakes of some of the Church's misguided children in the past were imputed on the Church itself. But, if the Church could commit mistakes in the past, who can be sure that Her dogmatic and moral heritage from the past is altogether free from error? Infallibility, as such, is now something superated, unacceptable to modern man, a hindrance to progress and brotherly understanding.

AGGIORNAMENTO. —

Aggiornamento means updating. The term was officially circularized as expressing Pope John's idea for the celebration of the Council. The catch-word struck like wildfire. The Council itself, buzzed with aggiornamento undertone. We have to update the Church, ourselves, and our ideas. The Church Herself, recognized the need of updating Herself, to adjust Herself to the modern world, and to modern men. Updating means change. There must be changes. The word Aggiornamento, fired imaginations and expectations; it roused the lust for change; and the door was open for changes.

Of a sudden, everything old, traditional, lost its value. But the concept and limitations of the updating and adaptation processes were ill-defined. No necessary discrimination was laid down. What are we to change? Everything and anything that needs change! But, gold is gold, and diamond is diamond, even when they are old. So also are the time-tested truths and values. We are not to throw them away as useless just because they are old things of the past. That criterion is of uncertain value. And who are the "modern men" and the "modern world" we are to adjust the church too? Are they the modern Catholics? Apparently not.

There were elements who would push the ill-defined premises to their last conclusions. The Church should be adjusted to secular men and secular society. It should do away with the wall of distinction, with every distinction. What should be done, is not to "sacralize the world, but to desacralize religion and the Church." All of a sudden, the secular world was amused at seeing nuns turn to the streets with shorted skirts; but the secular world was not edified. The world was not converted; but many were converted to the world. All of a sudden, without much ado, secularism became an ideal, it became a value. It was forgotten that Christ did not compromise, but died in defense of the truth. It was forgotten that Christianity did not convert the world by adjusting itself to the world, but by adjusting the pagan world to itself.

Many "Theologians" worked fast in adjusting the dogmas of the Church to the modern mind. "Dogmas must be demythified, desupernaturalized." They must be made acceptable to the matured scientific mind; they must be given natural explanations. Those that do not fit into natural explanations should be left out in the realm of myths. Unobtrusively, in a "cloak and dagger" manner, supernaturalism, which is the essence of Christianity had been stabbed. The distinction between the supernatural from the natural was felled. The conclusion is not far to fetch: If Christianity has had its share of myths as pagan religions, it is as worthless as the others.

All of a sudden, the seculars were right and the Church was wrong. It was forgotten that the Apostle Paul christianized the men of his time by preaching the scandal and folly of the Cross (1 Cor 1, 23.) without trying to water down its irrelevance to the wise men of the world. The most recent call of the progressivistic movement is for an "irreligious religion and an atheistic Christianity", as one that suits best the secularized world. That was to be expected because true religion and true Christianity have never been relevant to the secularized atheistic world. Through the binoculars of secularism, atheists loomed with heroic proportions before the eyes of the "renewed and modern Christians". They are the men who can face the problems of life and work for the betterment of their fellowmen without relying on a God-support.

COMMITMENT. —

The fever of *aggiornamento* also suddenly disclosed to many the "irrelevance" of the Church in modern times, so they claim. In their view, the Church means nothing to modern men, and to the great masses of workers, students, and professionals. The reason is, they say, that the make-up of the Church is irrelevant: Her dogmas, Her structures, parochial and diocesan organizations, Her Theology, Her liturgy. In order to appeal to men and to mean something to them, the Church must leave behind her smug attitude, Her load of irrelevancies and really work with men and for men.

In order to be truly Christ-like, the Church, they say, must be for the poor and of the poor.* She must engage in the upliftment of the downtrodden and do away with all the ostentations of wealth and power. The renewed Church and postconciliar Christianity must really be concerned with the poor. Unfortunately, outspoken voices claim, the Institutional Church is so busy keeping up with Her institutional organization, that She does not show enough concern for the poor. In particular, the hierarchy, aligned with the administration of wealth, is sluggish in instituting the needed social reforms. It is completely irrelevant, a hindrance to social reforms, hence something supererogatory. It should be confronted and denounced. It has become necessary to act independently and even to break away from the institutional Church and the hierarchy, in order to be truly Christian, nowadays.

The New Church, genuine Christianity cannot be an institution with its heavy burden of irrelevance. It must be concerned with men and with their problems, not with dogmas and moral principles, much less with the cult of institutionalism. In this light, the Magisterium is another hindrance, and therefore something superseded. The New Church is made up of dynamic groups of committed men, suffused with the Holy Spirit and acting from His charisms for the upliftment of their fellowmen. The New Church is essentially a charismatic Church. In it, laymen are to play a prominent role. They are the recipients of the charisms of the Holy Spirit and of the renewed post-conciliar Christian vitality. They know the problems of the world better and have attained their maturity. Hence, the Council itself, has assigned to them a greater role in the postconciliar Church.

This means that the postconciliar laymen have outgrown their infantilistic subservience to the hierarchy and are to lead in post-conciliar apostolate. They are to show the way in matters of social commitment and reforms. They have their own value and, therefore, their own initiative, their own role and action in the renewal of the Church.

CHRISTIAN ACTIVIST GROUPS. —

Such is the rationale that has given birth to the new phenomenon of Christian Activist and Social Action Groups. The youthful individual members may not be fully aware of it. They may have been drawn into the movement by the enthusiasm of their groups, or by

* Once they get you to admit that the Church is the Church of the poor, they immediately lash at the Church saying, "the Church has betrayed her mission or is not the true Church of Christ, because she has done 'little' for the poor."

To admit that the Church is the Church of the poor, without qualification, is to admit that it is a "class" Church and, therefore, not universal or catholic. The Church is of the poor, but of the poor "in spirit."

Christ did not serve only the poor, nor did He feed them everyday. He had as friends Nicodemus, Zachaeus, Lazarus and Mary, who were not poor. To Judas, who feigned scandal at Mary's seemingly "wasteful act" saying, "Why was not this ointment sold for 300 pence and given to the poor?", Christ answered: "The poor you have always with you..."

the elation that public demonstrations and confrontations with Church dignitaries impart. But it is the rationale of their master leaders and of the activist movement itself and of its anti-hierarchical demonstrations.

Parting from the assumption that the Church should be of this world and for this world because She is for the men of this world, they see the cross-section of the Church and her essential structure and components loaded with irrelevance. They fail to grasp that if their criterion were valid, then the Church would have been irrelevant from the moment Christ founded it, because it was "not of this world". (Conf. John 18, 36; 15, 19.) Christ Himself would have been an irrelevant Master-leader because He had come to "save sinners", not precisely to uplift the poor (Matt. 9, 13; Mark 2, 17; Luke 5, 32.). They fail to sense that the norm they use in order to evaluate the relevance of the Church is taken from a purely secularistic basis.

On such unchristian basis, they want to foist on us the image of a "New" Church and Christianity; and their own image as the enlightened postconciliar christians. It is a kind of Christianity that is only so from their choice of the word, but it is devoid of the Christian substance.

THE ENEMY WITHIN. —

It is far from us to cast any aspersion on these new groups as enemies of the Church. It may be the honest persuasion and considered opinion of their individual members that they are the concerned and enlightened Christians, impatient at the delay of the hierarchy in instituting postconciliar reforms, as they understand matters. Nevertheless, there is a dark masterhand working behind the manipulation of the legitimate aspirations embodied in the Council, to the effect of sowing confusion, of orienting restive postconciliar thinking of Catholics towards secularism and the desupernaturalization of Christianity with the aim in view of selling out Marxism as an acceptable thing under the wraps of progressiveness and commitment.

In its plans "dialogue" should be used to force a confrontation with the hierarchy and the Magisterium. The concept of Lay participation in the Apostolate should be a means for dictating the "reform" of the Church it wants. The ideal of *aggiornamento* should be a premise to undervalue the structures and traditional elements of the Church; the principle of social commitment, a leverage for secularization. It has made use of the Council itself in order to clobber the Church and Her dogmas; it has denounced the Council itself as superseded and as having left the work half-done. It has cleverly manipulated the concepts of religious freedom, and freedom of conscience to promote defiance and disobedience to the Magisterium and Papal authority. In its plan, confrontation with the hierarchy is only the first stage for its public downgrading and final overthrow. Charges adduced are mere occasions for the attacks.

There is a revolution within the Church, agitated by the enemy. The enemy is within and operating within our quarters. It is elusive, but nonetheless, it is there. Its agents cannot be visually detected. They cannot be distinguished from our own men. Some of them may even be its couriers without their knowing it. They may even be its exponents from their persuasion that their role is a new Theology and a New Christianity to propose. But the enemy's work of undermining the Church goes on through shut-in lectures and clandestine seminars of postconciliar renewals, wherein under the excuse of "renewal", the Church dogmas and the Magisterium are attacked before an audience that is selected and invited for its docility and unpreparedness to put up a resistance but enjoying capacity to influence the youth.

In the following Chapters we provide the reader a brief report on the "Movement" which of late has wrought much devastation to the Church in many countries. The report has been culled and translated from a lengthier one compiled by the Catholic Action of Spain out of the reports turned in, in the manner and style of data or journalistic releases, without any attempt at evaluation, and given by professionals of diverse occupations and backgrounds.^b The report is sketchy, but sufficient to acquaint the reader with the main features, the ideology and methods of action of the movement and of its groups. Our fellow Catholics should not only be alerted of the danger, but also given the means to identify the activists and the organs of action of the Movement. Catholics must be made cognizant of the ideology and tactics of the Movement so that they may not be misled by the Movement, and so that harm to our Faith and to the Church may be minimized, if not forestalled.

This is not the place for making an apology of the hierarchy. Perhaps, many of its members have already minds that are as wilted as their bodies. Many of them may not know other methods, other than the authoritarian or the paternalistic ones. But when certain activist groups exploit just and reasonable charges to carry out clandestine and devious purposes, then we, Catholics, have reason for concern, because they are using very effective and respectable means of leverage.

The enemy has already left the Church in shambles in many countries, even in Spain. It has already started to act here in the Philippines. Its master-leaders and couriers are within our ranks.

THE NEW PROPHETISM: FOREWORD

This work does not aim to present an exhaustive discussion of the "Prophetic Ideology", nor to offer a theological treatise or a doctrinal evaluation of the same. The aim is to present a reality by way of summary report of ideas and events that are well within

^(b) NUEVO PROFETISMO? Corriente y grupos proféticos. 2nd. ed. Madrid, 1969. p. 5. Translation done with permission.

the reach of anyone, and to extend a little help to anyone who should wish to make a deeper analysis and a more thorough study. It is outside the scope of this work to single out particular groups or persons.

Bearing the aforesaid limitations in mind, this work has been the result of the collaboration of individuals having altogether different backgrounds. We believe that all their contributions can serve to reveal the milieu in which we are living and to which we are exposed at present.

A period like the present which affords to us wonderful opportunities for renewal demands from everyone a state of alertness, of searching and of probing. It demands effort at keeping up the true spirit. In this regard, the calm examination of the problems brought up within the Church can help us face a reality from which we often shirk or which eludes our grasp owing to its complexity. Acquaintance with these problems can also move us to a greater commitment of trust and love for the Church, which is the path of genuine propheticism.

This work covers the main features of the "prophetic movement" which carries a striking resemblance to the manner of thinking of the "Theologians of the Death of God." Then it incorporates a reference of recent declarations of the Pope which can help to better size up the problem and to adopt the proper posture towards it.

Our last word is an expression of gratitude to all those who have contributed to this work. It is our persuasion that they have rendered an excellent service to the Church. This alone would already deserve our sincerest appreciation.

I. THE NEW MOVEMENT

THE SMALL GROUPS —

As we scan our eyes on the panorama of the present day Lay Apostolate we come across the following phenomena: the emergence and proliferation of small independent groups detached from any particular apostolic organization¹.

This development may be the outcome, among other causes, of the natural yearning of modern man to form part of small associations wherein his personality may be acknowledged and reckoned in

¹ Francois Houtart: I.C.L., n. 303, p. 6.

"It is necessary to detect, as a recent and accelerating phenomenon, the emergence of small groups of laymen, which at times, acquire true importance. They establish themselves outside the official margin, maintain no organic relations with the hierarchy but stay within the Church."

—J. Grottaers: Living Structures and Communities in the Post-Conciliar Church, IDOC, 15 May, 1967, p. 14.

"For twenty years now, we are witnessing the spontaneous births of innumerable groups of laymen, which represent one of the forms of the Lay Apostolate for the future in a secularized society."

a climate of warmth and friendship; and wherein he may find a channel for expressing his individuality through the sharing of a responsible role. In the present day society of masses the individual oftentimes and in many ways, feels that his personality is lost in anonymous insignificance. Side by side with this natural yearning we have to single out a trend, which is rather pronounced in certain sectors, of rejecting anything that carries the semblance of a complex organization.

From these standpoints, these manifestations are proper to our times. They are legitimate forms and should be respected. They have their counterparts within the Church. Within the Church, and within the field of the Lay Apostolate, there are many kinds of callings, of choices and of ways that are perfectly legitimate. Small groups can, therefore, have *raison d'être* nowadays. Their dynamics can provide outlets for active participation in the task of evangelization to segments of the Church which until now have remained passive.

Nevertheless, we understand that their kind of constitutional pattern can carry some risks which, among other may be the following:

1. A horizontal cleavage from the community and a ghetto-like fencing in, with an "elite" complex;
2. Existence and activity on the margin of the ecclesial community and of its needs, constituting a factor of segmentation within the Church;
3. Breaking away in a more or less conscious manner from the hierarchy.

If all these dangers are overcome through a bond with the basic communities of the Church, (parish, diocese) and through an attentive docility to the directives of the Magisterium (Pope, Bishops), then the pattern is a valid acquisition. There is nothing to be disturbed about. It is a simple embodiment of natural tendencies that tread along new avenues opened to the Lay Apostolate by Vatican II.

Nevertheless, these new embodiments of the Lay Apostolate display within the Church, in increasing number of instances, disturbing characteristics which call for serious study and evaluation. As a matter of fact, among the category of small groups bearing a fluid constitutional pattern, there are groups that bear out constant special traits that serve to identify them in an unmistakable manner as moving along a "current" of a definite manner of thinking and of feeling. This current defines itself as "prophetic movement."²

Notwithstanding the apparent dispersion of these groups and their different nationalities, the individuals belonging to them partake of the same trend, to a greater or lesser extent, and in a more or less conscious way. This owes to the fact that the said groups are linked among themselves through persons, ideas and common techniques, even if in the majority of cases the members are not aware of such links.

² J. Grottners; *Conf. cit.*, p. 14 fol.

This does not mean, however, that the "prophetic movement" is limited to only these groups. These are its main propagators, but the movement transcends them and succeeds to infiltrate every time, wider sectors of the Universal Church. Thanks to the dynamism of these groups and the effective techniques that they employ, they succeed in infiltrating seminaries, apostolic organizations, religious orders, pastoral centres, catholic presses and congresses, where, either personally or through representatives of the Catholic clergy and laity, they sow ideas that find a wonderful response in a climate of post-conciliar "aggiornamento".

THEIR CHARACTERISTICS —

Among the more salient characteristics of these "prophetic groups" we find the following:

1. These groups do not so much emerge from the impulse of a specific apostolic calling as from a more or less open confrontation with the ecclesiastical hierarchy, that leads them to break away from the latter.
2. They designate themselves not just as another form of the apostolate, but as the *only valid form* to bear witness and represent the "true face of the Church".
3. They consider themselves specially assisted with the charisms of the Holy Spirit, to Whom they ascribe their marvellous and "spontaneous" proliferation in all continents, for the purpose of accomplishing a prophetic mission.

This mission consists in the denunciation of the corruption of the different levels of society and of the Church, and in the presentation of a New Church attuned to the demands of a secularized world and of a mature laity.³

4. On this account they consider the following as absolutely necessary:
 - a) A radical reform of the main components of the "Institutional Church", Magisterium, theology, morals, sacraments, liturgy, etc., to be effected by the "Charismatic Church" (Laical).
 - b) Acceptance of the view that the only valid Christian testimony is a "personalized temporal commitment", that is, the effective collaboration between Marxists and the members of the Christian denominations in order to achieve the "liberation of the oppressed and the exploited class", making use of every means for this purpose, including violence.
5. These groups are distinguishable by their vitriolic criticisms:
 - a) Against every apostolate that is associated with the hierarchy which they consider out of phase, superseded and incapable of syntonization with the modern world in order to give an adequate solution to the needs of our time, and

³ Gunnel Valquist: *Le reveil du prophetisme*, I.C.I., n. 303, p. 8.

"On every side I have found the same thing. On the one hand, the "Youthful or New Church", represented by a large number of young people: students, workers and priests. On the other hand, the "Established Church" with its hierarchy at the lead, with very few exceptions, including Holland, where the Episcopate has had the courage to assume the responsibility of the Youthful Church."

b) Against the Magisterium. The ground of these criticisms, which they aim against the Bishops, including the Pope and the Council, is the alleged resistance of the episcopate of the Universal Church to accept the new ideas concerning the role of the Church in the world and commitment in temporal affairs.

These characteristics shed light for the understanding of the roots that lie at the bottom of some happenings that are taking place nowadays within the Church.

For example, many think that the tensions and "crises" obtaining nowadays within the organizations of Catholic Action in different countries, (France, Italy, Belgium, Spain, etc.) are simply due to the differences in view between the hierarchy and the more "dynamic" leaders regarding the concrete ways of implementing the basic principles of the Lay Apostolate, as formulated by the Council, in the different circumstances and countries.

But the truth is quite another. The object involved in the polemics is the fundamental principles themselves, the very essence of the Lay Apostolate in all its extent. What is placed on the table of discussion is not the readjustment of the organization of Catholic Action, or the admission of other movements to the level of institutional dialogue, or the recognition of other more flexible forms of apostolate. What is laid on the table of discussion is the annexation to, or separation from, the ecclesiastical hierarchy, depending on whether the hierarchy is willing to accept particular temporal commitments or not. And this has a bearing on all sectors of the Lay Apostolate whether organized or not.

Separation is one of the characteristic traits of the "prophetic movement". Its aim is "the liberation from too burdensome structures" within a short period, that is, the renouncement of the hierarchical mandate and the creation of "prophetic groups" to engage in temporal commitments. At the bottom of this initial formula, which is taken as a necessary reform of the structure of organized Lay Apostolate in order to adjust it to the Conciliar directives and to a secularized society, lies a new concept of the Church. This concept opposes, as a matter of fact, the "Church community of men" with the "Church institution", and the "lay prophetism" with the Ecclesiastical Magisterium.

(to be continued)