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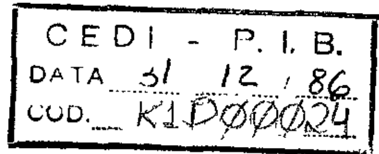

Ideologies of Catholic Missionary Practice in a Postcolonial Era

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In recent years, a number of anthropologists have come to recognize that missionaries, who play a central role in many of the social systems that anthropologists study, have yet to receive the ethnographic and theoretical attention they deserve. Often, when anthropologists discussed missionaries at all, they treated them as part of the setting, much like rainfall and elevation: matters one felt obliged to mention, but peripheral to the real object of social anthropological description and analysis. There were, to be sure, exceptions, notably the body of anthropological literature that has dealt with the effects of missionaries on various areas of native life. It is only recently, however, that anthropologists have come to view missionaries themselves as the "natives" to be studied.[1]

Perhaps the most likely context in which to place research on missionaries is the wider study of colonialism. The preceding articles by Thomas O. Beidelman and Peter Rigby analyze missionaries as a particular type of expatriate colonial community and explore the relationship of Christian missionaries to the European colonial enterprise. Missionaries, as colonizers of the human spirit seeking to transform the most deeply held cultural values of a people, may, as Beidelman puts it, be viewed as "the most ambitious and culturally pervasive of all colonialists."

The tie between missionization and colonialism is something that missionaries themselves have been forced to address as the political situations in which they operate have changed.[2] This article will examine two cases in

This article is an expanded version of a paper presented at the 1979 American Anthropological Association meetings in Cincinnati, in a symposium entitled, "Theoretical and Ethnographic Attention on Missionaries." The purpose of the symposium, which was organized by Elmer Miller, of Temple University, and myself, was to emphasize the need for systematic anthropological study of missionaries and to bring together some results of research carried out thus far.

I am grateful to Edward L. Schieffelin, whose comments on the first version of this paper stimulated my thinking as I was in the process of revision.

[1] Two seminal contributions to the anthropological study of missionaries are Elmer Miller, "The Christian Missionary, Agent of Secularization," *Anthropological Quarterly* 43 (1970): 14–22; and Thomas O. Beidelman, "Social Theory and the Study of Christian Missions in Africa," *Africa* 44 (1974): 235–49.

[2] Anthropologists, it should be pointed out, are confronted with this issue as well, and may in fact have dealt with it less fully and less satisfactorily than many missionaries. This point has been discussed by Elmer Miller in a paper entitled, "Great Was the Company of the Preachers: The

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which Catholic missionary practice can be viewed in its "decolonializing" phase or, at least, in a phase in which the attempt is being made to escape from structures of domination characteristic of the relationship between missionizers and missionized. I will first discuss the Little Brothers and Little Sisters of Jesus, missionary congregations founded in the 1930s whose vocation represents a departure from earlier forms of the religious life and a radically new style of evangelization.[3] The second case I will examine is the concept of missionary practice developed in the 1970s by the Conselho Indigenista Missionário (Council of Missionaries working with Indigenous Peoples), a group of priests and missionaries in Brazil.

THE HIDDEN LIFE OF CHRIST AT NAZARETH: THE LITTLE BROTHERS AND LITTLE SISTERS OF JESUS

> Comme Jésus pendant sa vie humaine, fais-toi *toute à tous*: arabe au milieu des arabes, nomade au milieu des nomades, ouvrière au milieu des ouvriers . . . mais avant tout humaine au milieu des humains. . . .
>
> Comme Jésus, fais partie de cette *masse humaine*. Pénètre profondément et sanctifie ton milieu par la conformité de vie, par l'amitié, par l'amour, par une vie totalement livrée, comme celle de Jésus, au service de tous, par une vie tellement mêlée à tous que tu ne fasses plus qu'*un avec tous*, voulant être au milieu d'eux comme le levain que se perd dans la pâte pour le faire lever.[4]
>
> ———Little Sister Magdeleine of Jesus, Foundress of the Little Sisters of Jesus

Founded respectively in 1933 and 1939, the Little Brothers and Little Sisters of Jesus constitute one of the most important innovations in the Roman Catholic Church in the twentieth century, anticipating many of the changes

Word of Missionaries and the Word of Anthropologists" presented in a symposium, "Theoretical and Ethnographic Attention on Missionaries," at the 78th annual meeting of the American Anthropological Association, November 1979, Cincinnati. See also Paul Hiebert, "Missions and Anthropology: a Love/Hate Relationship," *Missiology* 6 (1978): 165–80, for a missionary's view of this issue.

[3] I am currently engaged in an ethnographic and historical study of these orders, focusing particularly on the Little Sisters of Jesus. My research thus far, which has been carried out in Brazil, France, Italy, and the United States, has been supported by funds from the Roslyn T. Schwartz Lectureship and the Frederica de Laguna Fund of Bryn Mawr College. A fellowship from the American Council of Learned Societies will enable me to devote a year to this project beginning in January of 1981.

[4] "Like Jesus during his life as a man, be *everything to everyone*: an Arab among Arabs, a nomad among nomads, a worker among workers . . . but above all, a human being among other human beings. . . . Like Jesus, become a part of this *human mass*. Enter deeply into and sanctify your surroundings through conformity to a way of life, through love, through a life totally given, like Jesus's, to the service of everyone, through a life so mingled with others that you are no longer anything but *one among them*, wishing to be in their midst like the leavening that is lost in the dough in order to make it rise."

This passage is taken from a pamphlet entitled, *A la suite du Frère Charles, le 'petit frère universel,'* written by the foundress of the Little Sisters of Jesus. The booklet, which is generally known as the *bulletin vert*, or green book, because of the color of its paper cover, contains what the Little Sisters consider to be the most essential information about their vocation.

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associated with Vatican II.[5] They take their inspiration from the life and writings of the French hermit priest Charles de Foucauld (1858–1916), who lived among the nomadic Tuareg of the Sahara and drew up a number of plans for the foundation of religious orders, none of which was realized during his lifetime.[6]

Father Foucauld, or Brother Charles, as he came to be known, was a particularly colorful figure in the recent history of the Catholic Church. Born into a well-known aristocratic family, Foucauld pursued his studies and received his military training first at the academy of Saint Cyr and then at Saumur. As a young man, he experienced a total loss of religious faith and, during his years as a cadet, distinguished himself primarily by the degree of indulgence and dissipation that characterized his general style of life. In 1880, he left for Algeria as a member of the 4th Chasseurs d'Afrique. His career in the army was a checkered one. He was discharged in 1881 for flagrant violation of military discipline—in particular, for openly keeping a mistress—but returned to his regiment three months later to join them in battle. It was during this time that his attachment to North Africa began to develop and that he formed ties with men who were to occupy important positions in the French colonial army during Foucauld's years as a priest in the Sahara. In 1882, he resigned his commission in order to undertake an exploratory voyage through Morocco. At a time when Europeans did not travel through this area, Foucauld, disguised as a rabbi, charted over 1,200 miles of hitherto unknown territory, an achievement that won him the gold medal of the Royal Geographical Society in 1885. He wrote a book based on his travels, *Reconnaissance au Maroc*, which became a general handbook for French soldiers and administrators in Morocco.[7]

[5] Most of the published material on the Little Brothers and Little Sisters can be found in the spiritual writings of René Voillaume, which include *Au coeur des masses* (Paris: Editions du Cerf, 1950) and the various volumes of his *Lettres aux fraternités*, which have appeared over the years (vol. I: *Temoins silencieux de l'amitié divine* (1960), vol. II: *A cause de Jésus et de l'Evangile* (1960), vol. III: *Sur le chemin des hommes* (1966), vol. IV: *Voyants de Dieu dans la cité* (1975) (Paris: Editions du Cerf). Some information on the fraternities is also presented in M. Carrouges, *Le Père Foucauld et les fraternités d'aujourd'hui* (Paris: Editions du Centurion, 1963). The information that I am presenting here comes primarily from my own ethnographic research, and from consulting various documents that circulate either within the congregations or to members' relatives and friends.

[6] There are a number of biographies of Foucauld, the earliest being that of René Bazin, *Charles de Foucauld, explorateur du Maroc, Ermite au Sahara* (Paris: Plon, 1921), which was translated into English in 1923. Other good sources include Anne Fremantle, *Desert Calling, The Life of Charles de Foucauld* (New York: Henry Holt, 1949; London: Hollis and Carter, 1950); Lancelot C. Sheppard, *Charles de Foucauld* (Dublin: Clonmore & Reynold, Ltd., 1957), Msgr Leon Cristiani, *Charles de Foucauld, Life and Spirit* (New York: St. Paul Publications, 1965), and Jean-François Six, *Vie de Charles de Foucauld* (Paris: Editions du Seuil, 1962), translated into English by Lucie Noel as *Witness in the Desert* (New York: Macmillan Co., 1965). Of special interest, given Foucauld's orientation toward Islam, is Ali Merad, *Charles de Foucauld au regard de l'Islam* (Editions du Chalet, 1974).

[7] According to Fremantle, "Lyautey used the *Reconnaissance au Maroc* as his guide-book during his conquest of the country in 1912." (Fremantle, *Desert Calling*, pp. 94–95.

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Foucauld's encounter with Islam during these years in North Africa made a profound impression upon him. He was struck by the piety of Muslims and the degree to which their faith and beliefs regulated their daily lives. He was, as he later wrote in a letter to a friend, "much pleased by Mohammedanism, with its simplicity: simple dogma, simple hierarchy, simple morality"; he added, however, that he "saw clearly that it was without divine foundation and was not the truth."[8] Islam, then, was an important contributing factor in Foucauld's return to the Catholic Church and, at the same time, helped set the course for his own particular vocation within it.

Back in Paris, Foucauld underwent a sudden and total conversion in 1886. This return to Christianity also marked his decision to take up a religious life. "As soon as I believed that there was a God," he continued in the letter just cited, "I understood that I could not do otherwise than to live solely for Him; my religious vocation dates from the same time as my faith."[9] The vocation itself was in part shaped by the influence of the man who served as Foucauld's spiritual adviser, Abbé Huvelin. Foucauld was particularly struck by Huvelin's remark that "our Lord has taken the lowest place so absolutely that no one has been able to wrest it from Him,"[10] and also by Huvelin's observation that "when you want to convert a soul, you shouldn't preach to it: the best way is not to sermonize, but to show love."[11]

After several retreats, Foucauld resolved to join the Trappists, since this seemed to him to provide the best prospect for being able to follow a life dedicated to poverty and prayer. He entered in 1890, going first to the monastery of Notre-Dame-des-Neiges in France and then to a smaller and poorer monastery in Syria. He was not, however, satisfied with this choice of a vocation, since it did not provide him with as close an imitation of Christ as he desired, nor was the monastic poverty he was experiencing the same as the real poverty he had known in Morocco. The loosening of restrictions in the Trappist rule, which followed upon Pope Leo XII's reunification of the Cistercian order in 1892, was a source of distress to Foucauld. He sought release from his vows in 1896 and was given permission to leave in 1897. In that same year, he went to Nazareth where he spent several years as a servant to a convent of Poor Clares, living alone in a small hut outside their gates. It was during this time that most of his spiritual writings were produced[12] and that he studied for the priesthood. In 1901, Foucauld was ordained as a priest and realized his long-held desire to return to North Africa. With the help of past

[8] The letter, written in 1901 to Henri de Castries, is cited in Sheppard, *Charles de Foucauld*, p. 35.

[9] This much cited passage is quoted in Cristiani, *Charles de Foucauld*, pp. 39–40.

[10] Cited in Fremantle, *Desert Calling*, p. 119; see also Cristiani, *Charles de Foucauld*, p. 41.

[11] See Six, *Vie*, p. 26, and Cristiani, *Charles de Foucauld*, p. 36

[12] An anthology of these writings can be found in Denise Barrat, ed., *Oeuvres spirituelles de Charles de Jésus Père de Foucauld* (Paris: Editions du Seuil, 1958). An earlier collection, edited by René Bazin, appeared under the title *Ecrits spirituels*.

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army connections, he settled first at the garrison of Beni-Abbès in Algeria. Here he built a hermitage, which he called a "fraternity" after the Arabic term used to designate the centers of hospitality maintained by Muslim brotherhoods. It was Foucauld's goal to be a "universal brother" whose hermitage would be not a cloistered retreat, but a place open to all who cared to come to him. In addition to being generally available to his neighbors, Foucauld spent as much time as he could in prayer, putting particular emphasis on adoration before the exposed sacrament.[13]

Foucauld's spirituality centered around the example of Christ's hidden life at Nazareth, and around the infant Jesus, who came into the world in the smallest, most powerless and defenseless of shapes. He conceived of evangelization as the offering of love and friendship with no immediate expectation of a concrete return. His idea was to provide an example of the Christian life rather than to preach. He understood that Muslims were not likely to be converted by any kind of direct proselytizing and believed that conversions would have to come in time of their own accord, however long it might take. His task, as he conceived it, was to prepare the ground for others who would come after him.

Though there is little information on how Foucauld was himself viewed by the local Muslim population, it seems that he was respected as a holy man, or *marabout*.[14] Indeed, given the various meanings of this term—used first for referring to soldiers attached to frontier posts, then for religious devoted to defending the borders of the Islamic empire, and ultimately for any religious living as a hermit[15]—it seems a particularly suitable designation for Foucauld. First a soldier, later a priest, Foucauld was all along very much a part of the French empire in North Africa. He had close ties to French army officers in Algeria, many of whom he knew from his own days in the army. General Laperrine, the military head of the area in which Beni-Abbès was located, was a particular admirer of Foucauld, whom he spoke of as "a perfect instrument of pacification and moralization," going on to say that Foucauld "will do on a small scale down here what the great Cardinal [Lavigerie, founder of the White Fathers] did in Tunisia for French influence."[16] Foucauld, for his part, came to be known among some members of the overseas French community as Laperrine's *eminence grise*; less friendly observers called him Laperrine's *mouchard*, or spy.[17]

[13] Foucauld's belief in the efficacy of the eucharistic wafer in its physical presence has been considered theologically problematic by some. See Sheppard, *Charles de Foucauld*, pp. 70–71.

[14] See Merad, *Charles de Foucauld*, pp. 39–51.

[15] *Ibid.*, pp. 39–40.

[16] This statement, which was made in a report to one of Laperrine's superiors in 1902, is cited in Cristiani, *Charles de Foucauld*, p. 116.

[17] Upon his death, Laperrine was buried next to Foucauld at Tamanrasset. When the White Fathers moved Foucauld's body to El Golea, they left his heart at Tamanrasset, to remain close to Laperrine, with whom he had been so intimately associated during his lifetime. See Fremantle, *Desert Calling*, p. 56.

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Foucauld also appears to have instigated the military expedition into Morocco led by Captain Regnault. "We hope the day will come," Foucauld wrote a letter to Henri de Castries, "when the border will vanish and that the Maghreb will belong to France and above all to Jesus."[18] Foucauld's interest in extending French control over Morocco was tied to his own desire to return there as a representative of Christ. However, instead of realizing this long-standing wish, he was to travel southwards to the Hoggar, first in 1904, in the company of Laperrine and his soldiers, and again the following year, at which time he settled permanently among the Tuareg. In Tamanrasset, where he built his new hermitage and felt himself finally, in this more isolated spot, able to live the vocation he sought, he developed a close tie to the local Tuareg *amenokal*, or leader, and served as his political advisor.[19]

Foucauld, along with such men as Laperrine and Lavigerie, represented the "enlightened" wing of colonialism, in which the responsibility to civilize was emphasized and sheer exploitation condemned. Foucauld believed that replacing local leadership by French administration was in the best interest of the native population, was an enthusiastic promoter of a trans-Saharan railroad, and campaigned actively against slavery.[20]

At the time of his death in 1916, Foucauld was storing a cache of arms in his hermitage at Tamanrasset, which had been fortified because of the war situation. On 1 December, a Senussi raiding party plundered the hermitage and took Foucauld prisoner, apparently intending to keep him as a hostage. In the course of the raid, they were surprised by the sudden arrival of a couple of camel-drivers who were passing and had stopped for a visit. They shot the priest and fled. Foucauld thus died the martyr's death he had described many times in his spiritual writings.

While it is clear from the foregoing biographical sketch that Foucauld was deeply involved in the French colonial project, it is also true that his general view of missionary activity and the plans he drew up for missionary congregations have proven particularly suited to the period of revolt against colonial domination. His followers have been accepted and able to remain in certain areas from which other Christian missionaries have been barred or expelled, and have survived revolutionary upheavals that have forced many other missionary organizations to suspend their operations.

Foucauld first began thinking about founding a congregation that would embody his own principles of a religious vocation as early as 1893 and, over the years, he drew up a number of different rules.[21] The Little Brothers and Little Sisters of Jesus, Foucauld's most important legacy to the religious life

[18] Cited in Six, *Vie*, p. 102.

[19] During his years in the Hoggar, Foucauld also engaged in a prodigious amount of research on the Tuareg, producing a dictionary, grammar, and collections of prose texts, poems, and proverbs.

[20] See Six, *Vie*, pp. 86ff, 203.

[21] For information on these various rules, see Sheppard, *Charles de Foucauld*, pp. 85–89, and Carrouges, *Le Père Foucauld*, pp. 64–66, 87–89, 110–11. The first congregation that can be

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and the missionary vocation, do not attempt to follow any of Foucauld's rules literally, but have rather drawn upon them, emphasizing what the founders of the respective orders have taken to be his most important principles and the essential spirit of his message. These principles include: living among the poorest and most abandoned groups of people, and adopting their general mode of life; taking a special vow of poverty, similar to the one taken by Foucauld himself when he left the Trappist order, that refers not just to religious poverty, but to the actual life conditions of poor people living in the world; having small individual communities of three to four members, so that the communities would keep from taking on too much importance and would remain more like families;[22] evangelizing by example rather than by direct proselytizing; and engaging in a type of contemplative life that centers around simple forms of prayer, in which emphasis is shifted from the full formality of the Divine Office to individual communion with God, silent adoration before the exposed host, and saying the rosary, which is sometimes referred to as "the poor man's prayer." The general spirit of the vocation is to imitate as closely as possible Christ's life at Nazareth, which was a family life and a hidden life in terms of its outward identity to the lives of ordinary men.

The most important innovation of these congregations, as a form of the religious life, is the breakdown of the general categories of cloistered contemplative orders and active service orders. The Little Brothers and Little Sisters are contemplatives who live in the world. The activity they engage in is not the kind of charitable service work that meets important needs while at the same time placing members of the religious community in a position of authority over those who receive their services; it is rather the same kind of work their neighbors do.

The missionary vocation of the Little Brothers and Little Sisters represents a radical departure from the usual emphasis on proselytizing. Their notion of evangelization is to provide the example of a Christian life and to offer friendship gratuitously, that is, with no particular return or result expected. The idea of "inefficacy" is an important one to them, that is, a renunciation of all the means whereby one imposes oneself and one's goals upon the world and upon others. Their ideological perspective thus represents the polar opposite to the missionary who measures accomplishment in terms of the number of converts.

The Little Brothers and Little Sisters of Jesus are separate congregations, founded independently of one another.[23] The Little Brothers of Jesus, origi-

considered to be Foucauld's followers are the Little Sisters of the Sacred Heart, founded in 1933, who adopted a rule he drew up in 1902 for a cloistered order of women.

[22] Small communities have become more common in Catholic religious orders in recent years, but the Little Brothers and Little Sisters were innovative in this respect at the time they were founded.

[23] Some published information on the founding of these respective orders is included in Carrouges, *Le Père Foucauld*, pp. 181–89, 197–201.

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nally called the Little Brothers of the Sacred Heart, began as a monastic congregation, provisionally following a Trappist-like rule drawn up by Foucauld in 1899. The congregation was founded by René Voillaume, who, along with four other priests from the seminary of Saint Sulpice, settled in El Abiodh, Algeria, to lead a life of silence, cloister, and canonical prayer. By 1939, the group numbered fifteen, but was dispersed by the war. When they came back together, they embarked on a new mode of life, splitting into smaller groups and moving into working-class settings as of 1947, when they established a community in southern France. At present, the congregation has about 250 members. Some Little Brothers are priests and others are not, but all take the same course of theological training, to keep status differences from developing among them. The hierarchy within the traditional monastic orders had always been difficult for Foucauld to accept and, in his own rules, he sought to do away with it.

The beginnings of the Little Sisters of Jesus were quite different. The woman who was to found the order and become Little Sister Magdeleine of Jesus had from childhood a wish to live among the Muslims of North Africa. She read René Bazin's biography of Foucauld[24] when it came out in 1921 and from then on wanted to follow his example. For many years she was unable to realize her desire to go to North Africa, first because of World War I, and then because of ill health and family responsibilities. When she finally departed for Algeria in 1936, she was already close to forty.[25] Accompanied by another woman, who was to be her sole companion for many years, and, for a while, by her aged mother, she went to live in Boghari, where she devoted herself to running what turned into a dispensary, soup kitchen, and workshop for her poor Arab neighbors. She did things that were unheard of for European women at the time, which included traveling around the countryside, staying overnight with Arab families. After a couple of years at Boghari, Little Sister Magdeleine realized that the kind of life she was leading left no time for silence, prayer, and contemplation and was thus not the imitation of Brother Charles's way that she was seeking. During a pilgrimage to his tomb at El Golea in 1938, Little Sister Magdeleine met René Voillaume for the first time and spoke to him of her desire to live among the tent nomads with a small group of women. Father Voillaume was skeptical about this plan, but allowed her to remain in touch with him. At that same time, she also consulted with Monseigneur Nouet, the apostolic prefect from Ghardaïa, who advised her to spend six months as a novice among the White Sisters in order to acquire some religious formation. She went to the house of the White Sisters outside of Algeria, having no plans yet to found a new religious congregation. During

[24] Bazin, *Charles de Foucauld*.

[25] Now eighty-one, Little Sister Magdeleine spends most of the year at the congregation's center in Rome. Her perference for being known only by her religious name is honored here, although officially she was not Little Sister Magdeleine until she took her vows.

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her stay there, it was decided that she would extend her novitiate to the full canonical year and draw up constitutions for a new congregation. She did so, and 8 September 1939, the day she took her vows, is considered the date of foundation of the Little Sisters of Jesus.

The congregation, then, sprang directly from the example of Foucauld's life and did not pass through a stage of following any of his monastic rules. It was Little Sister Magdeleine's original wish to dedicate the congregation exclusively to Muslim nomads. Some of the women who came to join the new congregation in its earliest years, however, had desires to go elsewhere. But even before that occurred, Little Sister Magdeleine, like the Little Brothers, saw her plans disrupted by World War II, which had begun a few days before she took her vows. Forced to leave Algeria, she settled in a house outside of Aix-en-Provence, which became the mother house of the congregation. In 1946, a small group of Little Sisters moved into a working-class area of Aix, the same city to which the Little Brothers were to come the following year. The order continued to grow, and in 1954 Little Sister Magdeleine made a trip around the world establishing communities of Little Sisters in what was a veritable explosion of new foundations. Originally under the authority of the Bishop of Aix-en-Provence, the congregation moved its center to Rome in the late 1950s and became a pontifical congregation in 1964. While the membership of the congregation was largely French in the early years, currently the more than 1,300 Little Sisters are from close to 60 different countries; less than half of them are from France. The Little Brothers, on the other hand, are still mostly French, a matter of some concern to the congregation.

Although there is no official administrative connection between the two congregations, the Little Brothers and Little Sisters have close ties with one another. Father Voillaume, founder of the Little Brothers, serves as spiritual advisor to the Little Sisters and is present at their center in Rome each year during the month of September, when the Little Sisters have a general session. El Abiodh, where the mother house of the Little Brothers is located, was the site of an early novitiate for Little Sisters and continues to be a center of retreat for members of both congregations; Little Sisters regularly pass through there before taking their final vows. In the past, several attempts were made at setting up associated communities of Little Brothers and Little Sisters to live and work in the same locale. These projects were, however, abandoned, since the Brothers and Sisters tended to fall into sex-stereotyped patterns, with the Brothers taking charge and the Sisters becoming overly dependent upon them, a situation that both congregations found unacceptable.

The individual communities of Little Brothers and Little Sisters, called fraternities after Foucauld's own hermitage, are located throughout the world in a range of settings that include tribal settlements, rural villages, urban proletarian neighborhoods, circuses, and prisons. Depending on the milieu of the fraternity, and on the kinds of activities considered appropriate to the respective sexes by the local community, Little Sisters and Little Brothers will

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engage in such work as factory labor, farming, fishing, producing small craft items for sale, and sewing costumes and selling soft drinks at a circus. They avoid any kind of work that puts them in a position of importance or authority over others. Little Sisters with nursing backgrounds or medical training, for example, will not work as nurses or doctors unless this is the only way they can be admitted to a particular country, though they will provide needed medical assistance to neighbors insofar as they are competent to do so. One member of the fraternity generally stays home to be available to neighbors.

Each fraternity seeks to cultivate a balance between being open to the surrounding community and fostering a close family life within the fraternity itself. A special effort is made to have each fraternity composed of members of different nationalities, since one of the most important goals of the congregations is to achieve unity across national, racial, cultural, and class lines.

The habit worn by the Little Sisters is a blue dress made of inexpensive material, a leather belt from which hangs a rosary of wooden beads, sandals (where weather permits), and an insignia of a heart and a cross patterned on the one worn by Foucauld.[26] Their veil is a blue headscarf knotted at the neck. The habit is adapted to various local styles of dress, though always blue and made of similiar material: in India, for example, it looks like a sari; in Southeast Asia, it is a pajama-like pants and tunic; among the gypsies, the Little Sisters wear a red veil instead of a blue one. The Little Brothers wear no special habit at present. Formerly, they wore one for prayer in the chapel, but this has been given up.

Certain modes of life have a particular significance for the congregations. Nomadism is perhaps the most important of these, being linked to Foucauld's own life among the Tuareg. Fraternities of nomadic Little Sisters form a special administrative section within the larger congregation and include Little Sisters living with tent nomads, foraging peoples like the Bushmen, gypsies, circus people, and carnival workers. One Little Sister who spent several years living with the Bushmen, and then went on to study anthropology at Oxford with E. E. Evans-Pritchard,[27] wrote a thesis about Bushman values and world view, particularly as they relate to nomadism. The relationship between the

[26] The habit is generally patterned on Foucauld's mode of dress in North Africa. Sheppard, *Charles de Foucauld*, p. 58, provides the following description of Foucauld's appearance when he arrived in Beni-Abbès: "He wore a long white Arab robe, all stained and torn from the journey; on his head was a tarboosh from which fell a folded linen cloth as protection from the sun for the nape of his neck. Around his waist was a rosary with large beads from which hung an ebony crucifix, on his feet were rope sandals, the soles of which, worn through by the long journey, showed the acute observer the large sores they had caused. A rough representation of a heart fashioned from red serge was fastened to his breast."

The insignia of the heart and cross also appears on the door of each fraternity of Little Brothers and Little Sisters, along with Foucauld's motto, "Jesus Caritas," written in the language of the country.

[27] It should be noted that this is an extremely atypical experience for a Little Sister. The thesis, which the Little Sisters in Rome were kind enough to lend to me, will be published as a monograph, though the Little Sister's own name will not be used.

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outlook of the Bushmen and the ideological goals of the congregation, though not developed explicitly in the manuscript, seems to be an implicit theme underlying the description.[28]

The way in which Little Sisters and Little Brothers go about their attempt to adapt to other modes of life is a matter that will be commented on in the concluding discussion. At this point, I wish merely to stress the importance of such adaptation within the congregations' own conception of themselves, and note the degree to which it constitutes a central, ongoing preoccupation in the daily business of life. This has become clear to me during my long period of association with the Little Sisters who have been living with the Tapirapé Indians of central Brazil since 1952.[29] On my last trip back, in 1978, after an absence of four years, the Little Sisters were anxious to know my reaction to changes they had made in their lives since my previous visit, and whether I, as a friend and an anthropologist, would consider that they were becoming more "Tapirapé." One thing they had done was to give up their table and stools in order to eat sitting on the ground; they had also made changes in their sleeping arrangements and pattern of receiving visitors, so that the rhythm of life and spatial organization of activities within the house was closer to a Tapirapé pattern. They had moved out of the house they previously occupied and moved to one located more closely within the village circle. Their former house, set off a short distance from the rest of the village, had been taken over by the young man who was in the process of succeeding to his father's role as headman of the village—a crossing of paths that is becoming more and more a part of the missionary experience.

THE DOCTRINE OF THE INCARNATION AND THE SPIRIT OF CULTURAL RELATIVISM: THE CONSELHO INDIGENISTA MISSIONÁRIO

Quem quiser dedicar-se à evangelização e à cataquese dos índios deverá imitar Jesus. Isto implica, primeiro, em encarnar-se, para que a sua palavra tome carne da carne dos índios.[30]

——Bulletin of the Conselho Indigenista Missionário

[28] It is interesting in this context to consider Rigby's remarks, at the conclusion of his article in this issue, about the ostensible harmony between early Christian beliefs and pastoral ideology and praxis.

[29] My first encounter with members of the congregation dates from my first field trip to the Tapirapé in 1966. Relationships between the Tapirapé and the Little Sisters were touched upon in my earliest publications, "Tapirapé Kinship" and "Ceremonial Redistribution in Tapirapé Society," *Boletim do Museu Paraense Emilio Goeldi, Antropologia*, nos. 37, 38 [Belém, Brazil] (1968); I dealt with the subject more extensively in a recently published historical essay on the Tapirapé, "The Tapirapé During the Era of Reconstruction," in *Brazil: Anthropological Perspectives*, ed. William E. Carter and Maxine L. Margolis (New York: Columbia University Press, 1979).

[30] "Whoever wishes to dedicate himself to evangelizing and catechizing among Indians should imitate Jesus. This implies, first of all, an incarnation in which his word becomes the flesh of the flesh of the Indians." *Boletim do CIMI* 6, no. 40 (September 1977): 35.

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The Conselho Indigenista Missionário, or CIMI, as it is generally known, was founded in April of 1972 with the purpose of bringing together missionaries working with Indian groups. Its goal was to develop and coordinate a type of missionary activity suited to the current realities of Indian life within the wider context of Brazilian society. The organization came into being in the wake of the 1968 Medellín Conference of Latin American Bishops and is a part of the wider movement within the Latin American Catholic Church associated with the "theology of liberation."

CIMI's activities have centered around visiting Indian groups in order to gather and disseminate information about them, promoting regional and national assemblies of missionaries, organizing assemblies of Indian leaders in order to foster solidarity among different tribal groups and to help Indians develop a unified political movement, and arranging training or "recycling" programs for missionaries that include the study of such subjects as history, anthropology, and theology. CIMI has been particularly active on the issue of Indian lands and has sought to influence Brazilian legislation and general Indian policy in the direction of a firm recognition of Indian rights. The group publishes a regular bulletin, which appears every one or two months, in which activities are reported and general views expressed. In 1977, CIMI was placed more directly under the aegis of the Conselho Nacional de Bispos Brasileiros, or CNBB.[31]

CIMI's central concern lies in responding to what its members sense as a crisis, a calling into question of the entire missionary enterprise. They seek to define and pursue a form of evangelical activity that respects the diverse cultural traditions of Indian societies and addresses itself to their most pressing problems. This involves a critical examination of past missionary activity and an assertion that the first and proper candidate for conversion is the missionary himself. A general theme running through CIMI writings is that missionaries, in their attempts to transmit their faith, have instead only imposed their culture. This error has been all the more unfortunate insofar as Indian societies are in certain respects—notably in their egalitarianism, community-centeredness, and emphasis on sharing—closer to the vision of

My description of the Conselho Indigenista Missionário comes primarily from the bulletin it publishes every one to three months, and from various of its mimeographed documents, some of which are undated. I have not interviewed directly the major active members of the Conselho, nor have I attended any of its meetings or other functions, but the Little Sisters of Jesus with whom I worked in Brazil, who are closely associated with the organization, provided me with valuable information.

[31] I do not at this point have much information on the particular events leading up to this change, but the issue seems to have been a concern on the part of the CNBB that CIMI might be devoting itself to political activities to the exclusion of religious concerns. In any case, shortly thereafter CIMI published a special issue of its bulletin entitled, "Evangelização e Mundo Indígena" (*Boletim do CIMI* 6, no. 40 (September 1977)), which focused on the question of evangelization. This issue, already cited in note 30, is a particularly valuable source for statements of CIMI's approach to evangelical work among Indians.

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life expressed in the Beatitudes than are the more "advanced" societies from which the missionaries come. Capitalism, while not equatable with original sin, can be understood as one of its modern expressions, with its attendant exploitation of man by man and gross inequality in the living conditions of different social groups.

In looking for a model of missionary activity as it should be carried out, the members of CIMI pay special attention to the fraternity of Little Sisters among the Tapirapé, noting with approval the place given to presence as opposed to preaching, and the simple offer of friendship. Though some might ask what the Little Sisters have accomplished with their style of evangelization, since there have been no converts, CIMI points to the rapid increase in the Tapirapé population that has occurred since the Little Sisters have been with them, and proposes that helping a tribal group to regain its strength and will to live must be considered a way of bringing the "good news."[32] The significance of Christ's many hidden years in Nazareth, which, as we have seen, serve as the model for the Little Sisters's vocation, is invoked in CIMI writings as well: "Whoever wants to dedicate himself to evangelizing and catechizing Indians . . . should, like Jesus, share their life for thirty years in order to talk just for three."[33]

The members of CIMI have, however, developed a more elaborate rationale for missionary practice than the Little Brothers and Little Sisters of Jesus, who have tried to keep formulations of their vocation as direct and uncomplicated as possible, simplicity being a cardinal value of the congregations.[34] According to CIMI, a transformation and justification of missionary practice depends upon recognizing the distinction between *faith* and *religion*: faith is universal and transcends cultural differences; religion is the institutional complex within which faith can be expressed in particular societies. Faith must be "incarnated" through concrete religious expression, but the relationship between the two is dialectical rather than static or merely reflective. One analogy used by CIMI to discuss the relationship between faith and religion is that of an electric current running along a wire conductor. Different types of wire can carry the charge. When missionaries destroy the cultural and religious institutions of a tribal people, they are destroying that people's own "conductors" rather than finding the way to make these conductors carry the charge that evangelization, when practiced truly, should help transmit.

According to CIMI, Indian societies must be allowed to find their own

[32] At the same time, CIMI is critical of the Little Sisters for their inadequate linguistic preparation and for having devoted insufficient attention to such aspects of Tapirapé culture as mythology, points to which I shall return below. *Ibid.*, pp. 5–6.

[33] *Ibid.*, p. 35.

[34] The Little Sisters of Jesus living with the Tapirapé have taken up many of CIMI's ideas, just as, more generally, the Little Brothers and Little Sisters in Latin America have become a part of developments within the Latin American Church. I will discuss this issue further in the concluding section.

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unique path to Christ. The Old Testament chronicles the path of the Jews; the Indians must live their own equivalent, taking however much time they must to make a journey that occupied many centuries of Jewish history. The interpretation of Indian experience in terms of the Old Testament, and vice versa, is a central element in CIMI's ideology. Parallels are drawn with respect to the function of myth and tradition, and the importance of a people's own sense of cultural identity is emphasized. The issue of land rights is also interpreted in the light of Biblical understandings of the Promised Land: land that is not merely metaphor, but real territory, and, at the same time, not just a productive resource, since land is made meaningful through the webs that myth weaves around it.

In writings issued by CIMI, the focus is on the culture or society, rather than on the individual. Missionary practice aimed at converting individuals is seen as producing cultural misfits, at odds with their own surroundings and traditions; it creates divisions within Indian societies instead of fostering strength, unity, and a sense of communal purpose and self-worth. It is interesting to contrast this position with one that was put forth by a group of North American Protestant missionaries and missiologists at a 1977 meeting of the American Anthropological Association,[35] a position in which emphasis was put on the freedom of the individual conscience. In some of the presentations, the position of the missionary was likened—though, to be sure, not explicitly—to someone who comes into the marketplace with a product he hopes consumers will freely choose because it is superior. One would not expect this essentially laissez-faire free enterprise view of evangelization to be shared by a group of activist priests in Latin America.

In CIMI's view, then, the main and immediate goal of the missionary is not to produce conversions in others, but first to enter fully into the society he hopes to Christianize. The process is spoken of as "Incarnation." The missionary must take on the "flesh," the experience, of the Indians with whom he lives; this way, it is felt, the message he brings will be the answer to their own questions.

Theologians have pointed out that Christianity is an incarnational religion in two senses: in the broader sense, this means that God's plan for man and man's own destiny are revealed in history, in the realities of the world; in the narrower sense, Incarnation refers to the unique event of God appearing in history as Christ. Several years ago, a group of British theologians made the controversial suggestion that Christians can dispense with belief in the Incar-

[35] The symposium, entitled "Anthropologists, Missionaries, and Culture Change," presented at the 76th annual meeting of the American Anthropological Association, November 1977, in Houston, was an attempt to explain and justify missionary practice to an anthropological audience, and also to present a critique of certain anthropological assumptions and orientations. A representative and particularly clear statement of some of the general issues raised can be found in the paper presented by William R. Merrifield, of the Summer Institute of Linguistics, "On the Ethics of Christian Mission."

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nation in the second sense.[36] They claimed that such a belief belonged to an earlier time, an earlier cultural milieu. If, as T. S. Eliot remarked, "Christianity is always adapting itself into something that can be believed," then making Christianity believable to the modern educated person may involve leaving behind this vestige of former religious systems, or, perhaps, looking upon it as inspiring myth rather than as doctrine. In the case of CIMI, however, and the wider "theology of liberation" of which it is a part, the doctrine of the Incarnation, far from being defended in a spirit of theological conservatism, has been reworked to make Christianity "believable" in terms of the contemporary Latin American and Third World context. The example of God taking on a particular human shape at a particular moment in history provides a model, a charter for missionaries seeking to come to terms with revolutionary aspirations and the claims of cultural pluralism. The "imitation of Christ," which in one way or another defines all missionary and priestly vocations, becomes the faithful imitation of a concrete, definite, and perfect Incarnation.

COMPARATIVE DISCUSSION AND CONCLUDING REMARKS

The missionary orientations presented in the foregoing account are, in many respects, quite different from one another. CIMI is an activist group both in the apostolic sense, since its core membership is composed of secular priests, and in the political sense. The Little Brothers and Little Sisters of Jesus, on the other hand, have renounced the usual forms of acting upon the world in order to change it.[37]

For the Little Brothers and Little Sisters of Jesus, the choice of where to found a fraternity is a matter of finding those who are most abandoned. For the members of CIMI, poverty and abandonment are viewed within a more sharply focused political and economic context; their mission is to the marginalized who, as they see it, were the true audience for the original gospel message and are the current source of both a new social order and a revitalized Church.

CIMI sees one of its main goals to be *conscientização*, raising the consciousness of Indians about the wider socioeconomic system that is determining their fate. The Little Sisters of Jesus did not engage in such activity during most of their years with the Tapirapé, and this omission might indeed have

[36] John Hick, ed., *The Myth of God Incarnate* (London: SCM Press, 1977).

[37] During the 1960s, two new congregations, founded by René Voillaume and called the Little Brothers and Little Sisters of the Gospel, emerged from among the membership of the Little Brothers and Little Sisters of Jesus. The new congregations, which are still quite small—the larger of the two, the Little Brothers of the Gospel, numbers a little over a hundred members—are made up of men and women who felt called to a more active mode of evangelization. They work in settings where a cohesive Christian community already exists and where their activities would thus be welcome. Engagement in political action is also less problematic for them than for the Little Sisters and Little Brothers of Jesus.

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proved a disadvantage to the Tapirapé had they not also had the services of a French priest who performed this function for twenty years until he was arrested as an agitator in 1973, imprisoned, and deported in 1975.[38] Yet it seems clear that the approach taken by the Little Sisters has proven beneficial in many ways for the Tapirapé, notably in supporting their own cultural traditions and self-esteem, and in providing a context for them to deal with Europeans in what is probably the closest possible approximation to a relationship between equals.[39] In recent years, the Little Sisters have taken to doing a certain amount of consciousness-raising among the Tapirapé, a change of approach stimulated by the Little Sisters's ideological affinities with the left wing of the Latin American clergy. Fraternities in Latin America have, as a group, in turn been exerting pressure on the wider congregations, particularly as more Latin Americans, some from proletarian backgrounds, are themselves becoming Little Sisters and Little Brothers.

The concept of evangelization held by the Little Brothers and Little Sisters of Jesus antedates the influence of the social sciences on missionary groups, and the congregations have, for the most part, tended to remain close to their original impulse in defining their vocation. As mentioned above, the congregations strive for simplicity and are not given to elaborate theoretical formulations or complicated theological discussion. The members of CIMI, like many of the major architects of liberation theology, have, on the other hand, sought to incorporate and to come to terms with the dominant intellectual trends of the time. Marxist perspectives provide not only a general political orientation, but tools for social and theological analysis. Thus, the centrally important distinction between religion and faith is developed along the following lines: religion, insofar as it is a part of a particular social system, is amenable to analysis within the framework of an infrastructure-superstructure opposition. Indeed, the anthropological concept of culture, though seen to be useful, is at the same time subject to Marxist critique in CIMI writings as being overly idealistic and failing to anchor symbolic constructs of culture, including religion, to relations of production. Faith, however, transcends this framework and is not to be referred to the particular social and economic institutions of a society.

Structuralist terminology is also employed: the relationship between religion and faith is expressed in terms of the relation between signifier and signified. (The CIMI rendering of the Saussurean distinction between signifier and signified is, as it happens, somewhat loose and inaccurate—but this can be said of most academic structuralist writings as well.) The process of *con-*

[38] The priest, Father François Jentel, who died a few years ago, was originally preparing to be a Little Brother of Jesus, but found that this was not his vocation; in the course of his work in Brazil, he became associated with CIMI.

[39] For a more detailed discussion of the complementary roles played by the Little Sisters of Jesus and Father Jentel among the Tapirapé, see Shapiro, "Tapirapé During Reconstruction."

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scientização is sometimes expressed in terms of a linguistic analogy: evangelization involves providing Indians with a "grammar" whereby their own experience can be made intelligible to them.

The CIMI goal of raising Indian consciousness and providing tribal groups with a language for understanding their current situation puts into perspective the concept of the missionary vocation as an Incarnation which was outlined above. If the CIMI missionary is able to "become an Indian," it is insofar as the Indian can be absorbed—has, in fact, been absorbed—into a wider national and international struggle that is understandable to the missionary in political and economic terms that are familiar to him. This is not to say that the CIMI statements about respecting the differentness, the cultural integrity, of Indians are insincere; it is to say that the real point of attachment on the part of CIMI, as in any missionary endeavor, is a fitting of the missionized into the missionary's own cosmology. CIMI's struggle to develop a mode of missionary activity free from cultural imperialism only reveals the internal contradictions of such a goal in a particularly pointed, even poignant, manner. While members of CIMI insist upon the need to see Indian cultures in their own terms instead of imposing the categories of an alien culture upon them, they nonetheless read the Indian experience in the light of Judaeo-Christian tradition. American Indians are once again the tribes of Israel. CIMI looks to Indian myths for evidence of a transition from the cyclical, recurring time of traditional myth to the linear time of actual history, searching for the familiar transformation that will herald the beginning of a familiar new age.[40] Even as they admire Indian societies for their deep religiosity that imbues the world as a whole with sacred meaning, so they also speak of the need to help Indians understand the distinction between the natural and the supernatural. Some CIMI members have noted the need for a "desacralization of the culture." Here we have a self-conscious program for the kind of secularization that has commonly been a major unintended effect of missionary activity.[41]

The attempt by CIMI to establish contact with Indian cultures through their myths can be contrasted with the approach the Little Sisters and Little Brothers take toward integrating themselves into societies where they set up fraternities. The Brothers and Sisters seek to adapt mainly in terms of outward habits of life, primarily work. Thus, the Little Sisters who live with the Tapirapé, for example, have their own garden plot, go fishing, and participate

[40] This state of affairs, in which an attempt to assimilate to a different cultural scheme nonetheless ends in cultural projection, can be compared with the situation described in this issue in Edward L. Schieffelin's essay: there, an effort by Papuan missionaries to repress certain native beliefs has nonetheless left intact a general cultural orientation that continues to constitute the prism through which Christianity takes on its local color among the Kaluli. Schieffelin's case study might, in fact, give CIMI pause, since it gives a rather dark picture of what can actually happen when the evangelical message of Christianity is grafted onto a tribal people's own cultural scenario.

[41] See Miller, "Christian Missionary."

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to a large extent in the daily round of activities in the village. Their view of getting to know the people with whom they live seems essentially to be a matter of personal friendship, and of accompanying individuals through such universal life experiences as births, deaths, illnesses, and sudden changes of fortune, whether for better or worse. While mention is commonly made of culture, in terms of general outlook or world view, the focus is not on learning another culture as an anthropologist or, for that matter, a CIMI member, would understand this.[42] Similarly, though much is said about the need to learn the local language, the Little Sisters who live with the Tapirapé are still, with one exception, unable to converse fluently in Tapirapé after being in the area for many years. To be sure, the Tapirapé present a difficult linguistic situation for people without special training; moreover, since the Little Sisters have been able to communicate with them in pidgin Portuguese, pressure to learn the language was not what it would otherwise have been. In general, Little Sisters living in foreign countries where the local languages are less exotic and can be studied in a conventional manner do learn them satisfactorily. However, the Tapirapé case shows that learning a native language is not viewed by the Little Sisters as an indispensable part of getting to know a people.

In making these observations, I do not intend an invidious comparison between the Little Brothers and Sisters and those missionaries who devote special attention to native languages and cultures. The issue is more complex. Consider the case of fundamentalist Protestant missionary organizations whose members receive considerable linguistic training and devote much time in the field to language learning, in order to translate the Bible into the native tongue. These same missionaries will often speak of "cracking a culture," one of the many military metaphors they use to describe their operations; they are, as it were, in the service of God's Central Intelligence Agency, learning to intercept messages in a foreign code so that they can use that same code to transmit messages of their own. What these missionaries may themselves feel they are doing is finding the clues, the foreshadowings or even prophecies that God himself has planted in a tribal culture to prepare it for Christ.[43] The outside observer, however, may see them as engaged in a sophisticated form of cultural engineering and symbolic manipulation, in a setting of marked social inequality between missionary and missionized. Moreover, whereas the

[42] One American Little Sister, after reading an ethnographic account of the Tapirapé Indians, said that she felt she was "reading about their sins without really knowing them." "Sins" here referred to such practices as infanticide ; "really knowing them"—a point I unfortunately did not follow up at the time—meant, I feel reasonably sure, participating directly in the suffering and joys of daily life.

[43] A clearly developed and intriguing account of this missionary perspective can be found in Don Richardson, *Peace Child* (Glendale: G/L Publications, 1974). In describing his missionary work among the Sawi of New Guinea, Richardson shows how he proceeded by finding what he calls "redemptive analogies" in the native culture.

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missionary may feel he has discovered a true compatibility between Christianity and the society to which he is bringing it, analyses such as those presented in this issue by Rigby and Edward L. Schieffelin show the costs of building this cultural bridge, both to the native societies and to Christianity itself.

A final point: in using the term *ideology* for the conceptualizations of missionary practice described and analyzed in this article, I have, implicitly following Mannheim's usage,[44] been pointing to their function in justifying continued missionary activity in an historical period when such activity is seriously called into question. One recent analyst of the concept of ideology, André Béteille, suggests that Mannheim's familiar distinction between ideologies (which serve to preserve the status quo) and utopias (which reject the existing order and propose radical change) is analytically problematic and conceptually inappropriate for dealing with current uses of the term *ideology*; Béteille proposes that we distinguish instead between status-quo-oriented and change-oriented ideologies.[45] At the same time, he draws a distinction between ideologies and religious beliefs, defining ideology in terms of its intrinsic concern with power and its focus on solving problems in the "present world of day to day realities."[46] Thus, the point of view propounded by CIMI, which I have spoken of as an ideology for one reason, would also be considered an ideology according to Béteille's schema, though here in opposition to *religion*. Indeed, liberation theology itself may well be characterized as an ideologization of religion.

What, then, of the Little Brothers and Little Sisters of Jesus? Their general refusal to traffic in power, an endeavor at which they have been impressively even if not completely successful, makes the use of ideology, in Béteille's sense, somewhat problematic in their case. Religion, as Béteille uses it, is hardly more satisfying though, since he draws the opposition between ideology and religion essentially in terms of a worldly versus otherworldly orientation—an apparent step backward from the achievements of Weberian sociology of religion.

Perhaps it is only at the intersection of these various analytical distinctions—Mannheim's opposition between ideology and utopia, and Béteille's contrasts between ideology and religion, on the one hand, and between different kinds of ideology, on the other—that we can properly locate the two cases I have been discussing here. I would prefer, however, to leave aside for now such questions as how we distinguish heaven from earth and how we conceive of the relationship between the real and the possible, concentrating

[44] Karl Mannheim, *Ideology and Utopia* (New York: International Library of Psychology, Philosophy and Scientific Method, 1936).

[45] André Béteille, "Ideologies: Commitment and Partisanship," *l'Homme* XVIII (1978): 46–67. See pp. 51–52.

[46] *Ibid.*, pp. 47–50.

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instead on the single issue of stasis and change—the issue that is, in fact, of most interest to both Mannheim and Béteille as well. In this context, the beliefs held by the Little Brothers and Little Sisters of Jesus and by CIMI can be seen to perform a double function. First, they justify the continued existence of the missionary enterprise; this is their conservative function. Second, they transform the meaning of that enterprise. And they do this precisely by invoking the central elements of Christianity itself: Jesus of Nazareth, Jesus Incarnate. This general process is, of course, familiar to historians and sociologists of religion. However, it is worth emphasizing that traditional legitimation, to use Weber's term, can function not only to preserve the status quo, but also to validate or even propose a new order.[47] Indeed, we can say of religious beliefs, as of the more general systems of meaning we refer to as *cultures*, that their very ability to remain the same is the key to their effectiveness in dealing with change.

[47] This point is nicely discussed, and illustrated with a case study, in Michael Hill, *The Religious Order, A Study of Virtuoso Religion and Its Legitimation in the Nineteenth-Century Church of England* (London: Heinemann Educational Books, 1973).