The jocist bishops and the Vatican II Church of the Poor group

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“In the face of under-developed countries, the Church presents herself as she is and as she wants to be: The Church of all and particularly the Church of the poor.”

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1. The Three Truths or Cardijn’s Dialectic
2. The jocist network at Vatican II
3. The Church of the Poor group

Conclusion

Founder of the Young Christian Workers (YCW or JOC) movement

Three official roles at Vatican II

a) Member of the Preparatory Commission on Lay Apostolate
b) Peritus in the Conciliar Commission on the Lay Faithful
c) Council Father after being made archbishop and cardinal by Paul VI
Three fundamental truths dominate and illume the problem of the working youth of the world. They inspire, explain, and direct us towards the solution that the Y. C. W. has to give:

1. **A truth of faith.** The eternal and temporal destiny of each young worker in particular and of all the young workers in general.

2. **A truth of experience.** The terrible contradiction which exists between the real state of the young workers and this eternal and temporal destiny.

3. **A truth of pastoral practice or method.** The necessity of a Catholic organisation of young workers with a view to the conquest of their eternal and temporal destiny.

   - Joseph Cardijn, 26 August 1935

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Cardinal Achille Liénart, a founding JOC chaplain in France
Bishop Alfred Ancel, Lyon
Worker bishop
IYCW World Council and Pilgrimage, Rome, 1957

Make contacts, profound contacts - Gerlier

‘Conversion’ experience for Helder Camara

100 future Vatican II bishops
IYCW World Council, Rio de Janeiro, Nov. 1961

THE APOSTOLIC NATURE OF THE YCW

Study presented to the 2nd International Council of the YCW, held in Rio de Janeiro, from November 2nd to 11th, 1961.

I. THE THYME OF FAITH
II. THE THYME OF REALITY
   A. Conditions of work
   B. Unemployment
   C. Other problems
   D. A greater reality - the modern world
   E. The demographic force
   F. The colonialist structure
   G. Migration
   H. The power of modern man
   I. A shrinking world
   J. A new social order
   K. The implications of man by man

III. THE FOUNDATIONS OF THE YCW
   A. The Apostolate Mission of the YCW Member
   B. The stage of his apostolate formation
   C. The intimate character of this apostolate formation
   D. “Social” love
   E. The YCW apostolate of social action and conquest of friends
   F. To give Christ... to all young workers
   G. Conclusions

IV. THE APOSTOLIC NATURE OF THE YCW Movement
   A. An organized movement
   B. The apostolate
   C. The apostolate
   D. The place of the YCW in the apostolate movement
   E. The YCW and the trade-unions
   F. Dynamic function of the apostolate
   G. Collaboration of the YCW and the trade-unions
   H. Conclusions
The Three Truths in Argentina 1958
Truth of Method (Review of Influence/Life)

See, judge, act

Aristotelian/Thomist virtue ethics: Prudence

Educate, serve, represent (advocate)

Theological of baptism: Prophet, priest, and king

Transforming life, milieu and mass

Hippolyte Taine: Theory of social influence: Race, milieu, moment
Influence: Contacts, friends, teams

Make contacts in the parish, among your fellow workers (peers) (Notebooks, contact lists...)

Life: Build friendships with those contacts

Milieu: Teams: In parishes but also in workplaces, local community, among priests

Mass: Large scale actions, events, publications

Review the influence you had achieved at each meeting; chaplain’s role as counsellor
2. The jocist bishops and theologians at Vatican II

>200 conciliar bishops with a “jocist” formation

- 20 JOC national chaplains, >100 other JOC chaplains
- Another >100 from other Spec. Catholic Action or jocist mvts: JEC, JUC, JAC, JIC, etc.
- At least 8% of Council Fathers with this direct experience (1 in 12)
- Many more who supported the movements

>85 French bishops, most Belgian bishops but NOT Suenens

Latin American bishops: Larrain, Camara, Angelelli, Rau, Fragoso, Proaño, Bogarin, McGrath...

Africa and Asia: Hurley, Zoa, Gantin, Cooray, D'Souza...
Vatican II First Session: 11 Oct - 8 Dec 1962

Message to the World: Chenu, Congar, Guerry, Ancel, Garrone...

Change in Council Agenda: Cardinal Achille Liénart

Key intervention: Bishop Emile De Smedt: Triumphalism, clericalism, legalism

Camara and Larrain to Cardijn: “The JOC is dominating the Council”
Problems...

“Preparatory Commission on Lay Apostolate” (PCLA) renamed “Commission on Apostolate of the Faithful...” (still called unofficially “Lay Apostolate Commission” or LAC)

Cardijn initially not chosen as peritus, i.e. excluded

Bishop Charles-Marie Himmer excluded from LAC by Cardinal Suenens
Cardijn’s visit to Rome, 18-22 Nov 1962

Cardijn meets Camara, Larrain (Chile) and other allies

21 November: Quorundum Patrum Petitio


21 November: Quorundum Patrum Votum

Subscriptserunt: Exc.mi J. Zoa, Helder Camara, Petrus Veuillot, Michael Darius Miranda y Gomez, Angelo Fernandes, P. Ngo-dinh-Thue, Marco McGrath, Emmanuel Larrain, Maurice Baudoux, Thomas Cooray.

Call for Vatican II to focus on Church’s role in the world
3. Jesus Christ and the Church of the Poor Group

Paul Gauthier (1914-2002)
Seminary professor from Dijon
Worker-priest in Galilee
Fraternity of Companions of Jesus the Carpenter
Later married

Circulated document entitled “Jésus Christ et l’Eglise des Pauvres” at Vatican II First Session
Encouraged by Bishop Georges Hakim of Galilee (later Maximos V)
Bishop Charles-Marie Himmer called meeting to take up this call
26/10/1962: Meeting called by Himmer and Hakim

Chair: Cardinal Gerlier

Present: Yago, Maury, Riobé, Béjot, Fragoso...

Apology: Camara

Organising Committee: Himmer, Hakim, Ancel, Angerhausen, Bettazi, Blomjous, Camara, Coderre, Gand, Gonzalez Moralejo, Huyghe, Larrain, Mercier, Riobé, Yago
Members of the Group

“Jocist” members

11/15 Members of Animation Committee

28/85 bishop participants

9/27 theologians
Review of life

“Twelve bishops gathered with Cardinal Gerlier for the first meeting...

“They reviewed their lives and their thinking, as well as that of their churches and the Church, on the issues raised for them by the poor and the workers, and more radically by Jesus of Nazareth, the Carpenter.”

- Sociologically, bishops appear to be on side of rich and poor do not understand
- One bishop left his episcopal palace to live among the workers
- Another stopped building a cathedral to construct workers’ housing
Drama of modern world, the world of workers, the world of the poor

Not just a group of “progressive” bishops: the issue of poverty is an issue for all bishops and above all the pope (John XXIII), i.e. the whole Council
5th Meeting: 30 November

Advocacy:
Call for Secretariat “ad extra” issues
Letter to John XIII: Unable to be delivered

Method:
Gospel reflections

Action: Surveys in parishes, change vestments
Animation Committee Mtg: 5 Dec: Method of Work

Five points defined:

Animation Committee: Coordination

Doctrinal Research and Awareness Raising

Review of life meetings

Newsletter for between sessions

‘Bishop to bishop’ contacts (Camara)
Cardinal Lercaro’s speech on poverty: 7 Dec

Cardinal Giacomo Lercaro (1891-1976) of Bologna

Close to John XXIII

Turned his palace into orphanage

Patron of Group of Poor with Gerlier and Maximos IV
Intersession 1963
Second Session October - December 1963

Paul VI: Mandates Lercaro to put proposals into “doctrinal, institutional and pastoral form”

Camara proposes three year plan

a) Short term: Work with Lercaro to introduce these elements into schemas
b) Long term: Start planning for after the Council (CELAM 1968)
c) Proposal and examples
   i) Work with Ivan Illich on “Spirituality of development”
   ii) Work with lay movements for “conscientisation”
   iii) Mobilise experts, e.g. via talks, etc.
   iv) Petition to Paul VI
   v) Form teams of 5-10 bishops to work on these issues (Gauthier)
Himmer’s evaluation

Positive

Many want to continue

Many discussing poverty

Council taking it up, several interventions

Negative

Approach too sentimental, doctrinal difficulties

Many questions: Presence of Christ in the poor

How to live poorly without paternalism?
Actions taken

Larrain (Chile): Sold solitaire from his episcopal cross for vocational school

Botero Salazar (Colombia): Left episcopal residence for more humble home

Himmer: Appointed extra chaplains for the lay worker movements

Hakim: Launched housing coops for Muslim and Christian workers
Advocacy

Regular circular letters published

Letter to Pope Paul VI
Fourth Session 1965: Overview of achievements

Himmer:

Texts inserted in schemas on Church and Ecumenism

Schema 13 (*Gaudium et Spes*): significant references to poverty

(4 members of group involved in drafting: Camara, Ancel, Blomjous, Larrain)

Lay people expect more simplicity from priests/bishops
Work to be done

Ensure passage of Schema 13 in form desired

Proposal for special assembly on Third World issues (Synod on Justice in the World 1971)

Mass for workers with Cardinal Cardijn
Camara’s letter to Cardijn: 17 September 1965

Mass in Cardijn’s cardinal parish (St Michael Archangel in Pietralata)

Mass dedicated to workers concelebrated by 20 bishops

Take a vow “prepared by yourself (Cardijn) in the line of the vow you made on the death of your father... vow concrete, well adapted to today”
Cardijn’s collaborators pose questions

Initiative should come from Church of Poor group

Don’t divide “bishops of poor” and “bishops of the rich”

Idea of a vow a little strong

No question of holding the mass at Pietralata

Propose 17 October
Outcome: Two masses

1. Mass for the Poor: 16 November
   Held at Domitilla Catacombs
   Pact of the Catacombs adopted

2. Worker Mass: 17 November
   Held at Cardijn’s cardinal’s parish of St Michael Archangel, Pietralata
   Concelebrated mass followed by a meeting bringing together all the bishops who had been chaplains of the JOC at any level (there must be a hundred or so).
   Aim: Participants formally commit to pastoral program on social and religious issues facing young workers and the whole worker world

Photo: Dennis Jarvis / Flickr / CC2.0
Pact of the Catacombs: Bishops commitment

• We will try to live according to the ordinary manner of our people

• We renounce forever the appearance and the substance of wealth, especially in clothing

• We will not possess in our own names any properties or other goods, nor will we have bank accounts or the like.

• As far as possible we will entrust the financial and material running of our diocese to competent lay persons.

• We do not want to be addressed verbally or in writing with names and titles that express prominence and power

• We will give whatever is needed to the apostolic and pastoral service of workers and labor groups and to those who are economically weak and disadvantaged. We will support lay people, religious, deacons, and priests whom the Lord calls to evangelize the poor and the workers by sharing their lives and their labors.

https://www.pactofthecatacombs.com/the-document
Lay people are keen to understand their own proper role in the world as sons and daughters of the Church and their capacities for “apostolic responsibilities”: 

Our hope is that all our brothers in the episcopate become increasingly conscious of the possibilities of the laity, and particularly the worker laity, hope of the Church at the heart of the world today

(It is) action, as humble as it may be, that enables workers to deal with issues and try to resolve them (and) by the witness of their love gives their brothers at work access to the revelation of Christ and thus by their example opens the way to Salvation