

Chile Looks Forward Rather Than Left

By GEORGIE ANNE GEYER

Santiago — (NC) — The solid victory of Christian Democrat Eduardo Frei in Chile's national election last September may result in a new era of Church-state relations in this country. But if this is true, as many believe it is, the relations will be a significant change from the old pattern of political alliance.

Although given only a slight edge in pre-election estimates, Frei took 56% of the vote while the Marxist Salvador Allende. He thus became the first Christian Democrat chosen to head a Latin American state.

THE ELECTION was different from those of the past in two respects. The Christian Democrats, although founded on the social teaching of the Catholic Church, is not a "Catholic" party. The Church, although obviously sympathetic with the party's aims, did not openly support it.

The election was, in fact, the result of a parallel development in the thinking of both religious and political leaders.

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Until a few decades ago, the Catholic Church was closely allied with the Conservative party which had been formed to "defend Christian values" against the encroachments of liberalism and secularism. At one time the Conservatives were called the Catholic party.

Then, in the late 1930s, a group of young Catholics led by Frei broke away from the National Falange party (no relation to the Spanish Falange party.) Several bishops, although pressured by Conservatives to condemn the new group, spoke out in its defense. The party evolved into the Christian Democrats.

The party was developing during a period when the Church itself was in ferment, largely because of the leadership of the young Jesuit, Father Alberto Hurtado, who initiated a social apostolate among the poor through low-cost housing programs and militant Catholic Action groups. Most of the young Chileans trained by him became Christian Democrats.

In time Church leaders came to realize that this was not enough. As Father Renato Poblete, S.J., explained: "In the last five years the Church has realized that if we fostered only our own institutions we were, in effect, fostering a ghetto mentality contrary to the idea of the universal Church."

During this time the Church and the Christian Democratic party retained their mutual independence despite a constant interchange of ideas. Father Poblete, one of the foremost authorities on the Chilean Church, said it was not a matter of the

Church helping the party, but "simply a coincidence of goals." Eight years ago, another dynamic Jesuit, Father Roger Vekemans, arrived from the Netherlands and gave impetus to the Church's drive to build entirely new social structures in Chile. With financial help from German Catholics he organized a sociological center called De Sal, which is associated with Santiago's Bellarmine Center for social research.

"What we are trying to do is to weave a new fabric of society," said Father Vekemans, "but always from the bottom up. We are trying to find channels to bring people closer to the economic and cultural power centers."

To do this, Father Vekemans has helped establish the Institute of Rural Education to teach peasants, another organization for urban slum dwellers, and a third to set up consumer and housing cooperatives and manufacturing plants. Father Vekemans sometimes jokes about turning communist, but he was deadly serious when he said:

"If Christian Democracy has failed by 1970 (to meet the needs of the Chilean people), then the country will certainly go left. That will be the point of no return."

The new direction of the Church's apostolate gained momentum in November, 1962, when Chile's 24 Catholic bishops issued a pastoral letter urging Catholics to support institutional changes on a political level. The bishops said Catholics must realize that serious human problems can only be solved through mutual collaboration, despite religious or ideological differences.

And so the new role for the Church in Chile was formulated. As Father Poblete explained, "The doctrine is above the parties, but the Christian Democrats are a political party. They provide a practical and technical solution to a problem."

"Take agrarian reform," he said. "The Church has a concrete doctrine on this, but it is not going to tell the Christian Democrats how to do it. We only ask the Christian Democrats to maintain the doctrine."

Regarding a civil divorce law now pending in the Chilean legislature, Father Poblete said the Church would not tell the Christian Democrat how to vote. "But they, as Christians, should know what to do." If a legislator wished to vote for the divorce law, he would do so.

Cincinnati — (NC) A Cincinnati layman, Terry Toepker, has been named co-director of the Summer School of Catholic Action, famous leadership training course founded by the late Father Daniel A. Lord, S.J.

Toepker, a teacher and coach at St. Xavier High School, will assist Father John J. Campbell, S.J., director of the program. In an interview Father Campbell also announced:

—That the name of the course will be changed this year to "Summer School of the Christian Apostolate," because the old term, Catholic Action, "has taken on political overtones."

—That the number of U.S. cities in which the one-week course will be given next summer will be 14, nearly double last year's total.

—That the NCAA expects to reach approximately 1,800,000

analysts and moderators next summer, some 5,000 more than ever before.

Youth director of the National Solidarity Service Center at St. Louis, the Denver-born Jesuit said that although the solidarity movement is 40 years old, it is as up-to-date as the ecumenical council and as relevant to the 1960's as it was to the 1920's.

An estimated three million Catholics in the U.S. are active in approximately 8,000 groups affiliated with the National Federation of Solidaries of Our Lady. A St. Louis layman, Arthur J. Conley, is federation vice law "we would never tell him not to, but he would have to live with his conscience."

Frei's party can be expected to insist on a society with religious freedom, but it will also work for a society where Christian values are present in every sphere. As Frei said after his election:

"We will triumph only when we have shown ourselves worthy of this faith and hope, when we prove that there exists within our Christian tradition of respect for human dignity a creative power capable of producing profound changes which in present hour demands of us."

The change which the Christian Democrats desire is also desired by Church leaders. But these leaders will not exert their influence in the old ways — through political pressures which once tore Chile apart and led to whole parties being organized along anticlerical lines. It will be done through ideological influence, through example, through appeals to conscience, and through collaboration with other religious groups.

'Consistency' Needed on Birth Control

New York—(RNS)—Whatever final moral decision is made by the form of a decision by Pope Paul VI on his own authority, or through a papal commission — will require "not merely consistency with past theological decisions, but also... with our traditional philosophy of human nature... and human sexuality."

This was stressed by Msgr. Francis W. Carney, director of the Family Life Bureau in the Diocese of Cleveland, in an article in America, national Catholic weekly, in which he said "the gravity of this decision... cannot be overestimated."

HE WROTE that while the decision must be made "in the light also of the scientific, philosophical, theological and social knowledge of the mid-20th Century," basically it must "rest upon a complete understanding of the nature of man and — as part of it — of the human reproductive faculties in male and female."

"To this," Msgr. Carney noted, "must be added, in the context of Christian marriage, the supernatural components of grace and salvation."

He said the concept of responsible parenthood "has been inherent in Catholic thought on marriage from the very beginning," nor has the importance of true love in marriage ever been attacked by the Church, which rather "has tried to elevate it from beyond the merely physical level" and extend it "into the realm of the supernatural."

In the present debate between the so-called conservatives and progressives whether in or outside the Second Vatican Council, lack of consistency with basic principles "could well constitute our most distressing problem," Msgr. Carney warned.

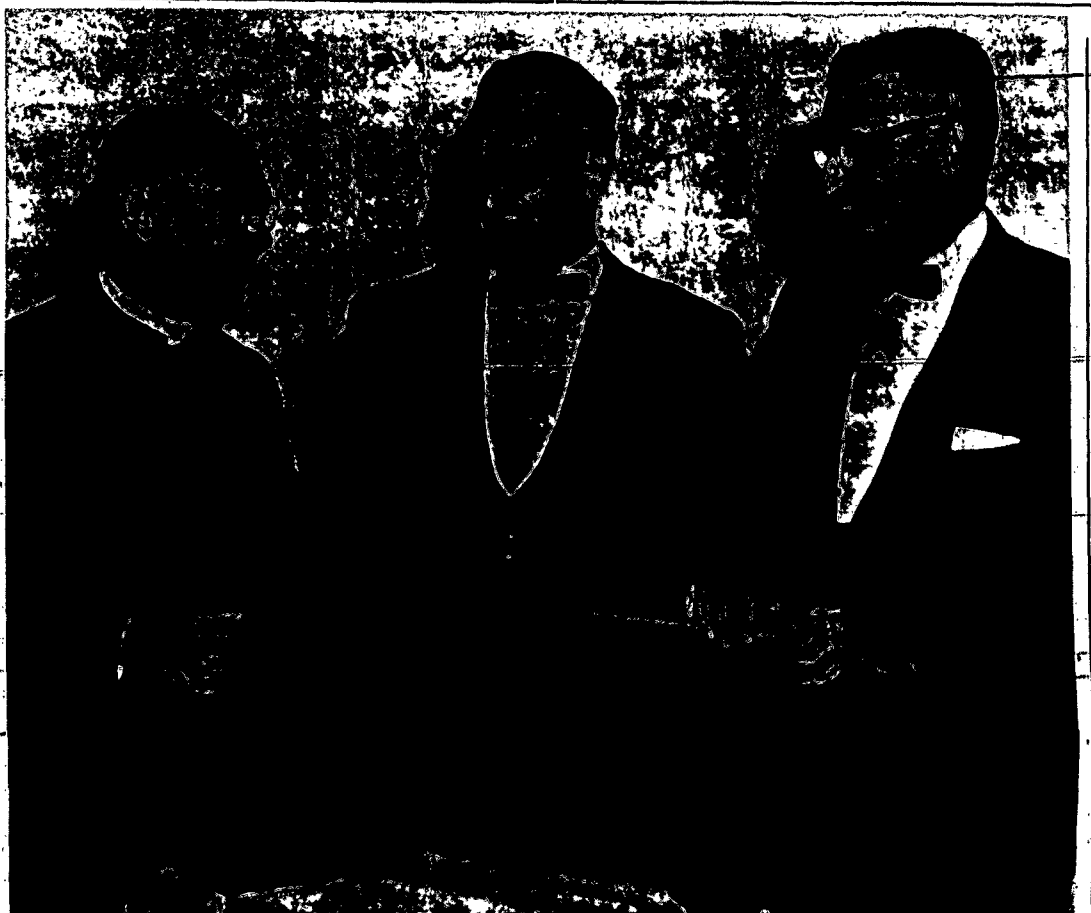
He said it would appear today that the Catholic Church "can advocate a responsible parenthood and can stress the human dimension in human sexuality as an expression of love without a fundamental change in her philosophy of marriage."

But, he said, "the manner of attaining both conception control and the suitable expression of love in marriage in a moral fashion must be solved within the structure of our philosophy of man and human reproduction."

Pointing out that the Church has traditionally argued for the preservation of the integrity of the marital act, and condemned artificial birth control as intrinsically evil, he wrote:

"Can the Church maintain these two moral positions in the mid-century, in view of her own philosophy of human nature and her own understanding of human sexuality?"

"Avoiding the extreme of angelism and animalism, the Church must come forward with a position on human conception control that respects the welfare of the whole man and must give proper moral direction about means of attaining it. This she is attempting to do under the sociological pressures of this decade and the inspiration of the Holy Spirit."



Jews Honor Cardinal Spellman

New York — (RNS) — Cardinal Spellman of New York receives Reform Judaism's 1965 Humanitarian Award from Dr. Maurice N. Elensdrath, president of the Union of American Hebrew Congregations (center). With them is State Comptroller Arthur Levitt who was given the 1965 American Judaism Award. Both awards were made at the annual Reform Jewish Appeal dinner which benefits the Union of American Hebrew Congregations and Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion, central institutions of Reform Judaism. Cardinal Spellman was honored for his efforts in behalf of interreligious understanding, and Mr. Levitt for outstanding service to the Reform movement and the people of New York.

Each One, Teach One

New York — (RNS) — Formation of "companies of compassion" — groups of 100 people each that would push forward the world fight against illiteracy — was urged here by Dr. Frank C. Laubach, noted literacy expert who originated the "each one teach one" reading program.

Having reached his 80th birthday last Sept. 2, Dr. Laubach has been honored at several events across the country. The banquet here was sponsored by the Laymen's Movement for a Christian World and Laubach Literacy, Inc., an organization he founded.

Among the several messages read at the event were notes of congratulations from President Johnson and Vice President Humphrey.

In his address, Dr. Laubach underscored the pressures of the population explosion in world areas when "the hungry, wretched masses" are also desperate for education.

"We have a wide-open door in the underprivileged countries where the government cannot act," he said. "These governments are desperately eager for help because they do not have teachers or books or money or know-how."

He pointed out that the USSR has "lifted one-half its people out of illiteracy" in the past 20 years. Urging that U.S. citizens, civilians and members of the armed forces alike, become teachers wherever they happen to be abroad, Dr. Laubach noted that this is the practice of the Communists in many places.

RUGS-CARPET Tabernacle, a Problem for New Altars

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Cleveland — (RNS) — Delegates to the first national conference on Catholic Church architecture here heard an expert on the liturgy state that placement of the tabernacle was the most difficult practical problem facing church builders.

Japanese 'At Home' At Mass
 Kyoto — (NC) — "At last I feel at home in Church," a Japanese told his American pastor after the first Mass in Japanese in his parish.

An elderly woman, baptized before the war, echoed this sentiment when she said: "Now we all seem to be praying with the priest at Mass."

These are typical reactions to the liturgical changes that went into effect on the first Sunday of Lent in Japan.

Altars are being moved, or portable ones are being pressed into service, and in some places altar rails are being taken out to implement the liturgical changes decreed by the Second Vatican Council. But more important than the changes in the altar and the communion rails is the lowering of the Latin language barrier.

Father George J. Hirschboeck, M.M. of Milwaukee, who has spent the last 16 years in Japan, summed up the new mood in this way:
 "Now I feel like the father of my parish at the most important time of the week — Sunday Mass. We are all together praying in a language we all understand."

He said there should be a single altar; the chair in which the priest presides at the Mass should be easily seen (perhaps directly behind the altar and slightly elevated); and the ambo should be a worthy structure "announcing that here the proclamation of God's Word takes place."

Some 450 priests and laymen — and a few women — from U.S. dioceses attended the three-day meeting.

Aim of the meeting was to discover how church design can best serve as the visible expression of the renewed liturgy.

GUIDELINES rather than rules were offered and the stress was on freedom and flexibility, challenging the architects to answer questions posed by the Church's new demands.

Father Frederick R. McManus, president of the sponsoring Liturgical Conference, said the Church was not committed to any particular style or period of architecture.

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New Location For Art Festival

The Rochester Bach Festival Art Exhibition has been offered a new home, one that will materially broaden the scope of the exhibition. Sibley, Lindsay and Curr Co. has made available their Fourth Floor Gallery, already familiar as the home of the Scholastic Art Exhibit, from May 8-May 31. Prizes totaling five hundred dollars will be awarded. Entries will be welcomed from anyone of college age or over; all entries will be insured.

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