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The Moderator's Message ... New Leaven - New Mentality

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The Moderator's Message . . .

NEW LEAVEN — NEW MENTALITY

In the early years of this century President Woodrow Wilson wrote: "The educated man is to be discovered by his point of view, by the temper of his mind, by his attitude toward life, and his fair way of thinking." One could as easily say that these qualities discover the *Christian* man. Spring, the Resurrection, the Council, all remind us of the "new leaven," the new mind which should characterize the Christian of the present time.

One of the Bishops from Latin America stressed the need for a "change of mentality" when he spoke at the CICOP meeting in Chicago. A great social revolution is taking place in Latin America, largely under Christian leadership. This represents a distinct change in thinking to the south. North American thinking must keep pace with the change.

Latin America is more than just Latin America. It is a complexus of many cultures, races, and languages; differing in economic development, political systems, and traditions; comprising many independent countries, proud of their national heritage. Their problems are diverse as well. We must grow in the awareness that, in offering our assistance in solving these problems, we are faced with *particular* problems, in *specific* countries, of Latin America.

Along with this growing awareness of individual countries in Latin America is the need to look beyond them as "developing areas" and see them as *people*—people who are in need of the opportunity to fight poverty, ignorance, and despair; people with the right to receive our interest and our aid, and the right to apply these assists to their own problems, in their own way. And our greatest investment in Latin American countries should be *people*, North American people. Why? As one South American priest gave expression: "We need you because we need other humans to solve human problems." Our Peace Corps men and the doctors involved in the Latin American Mission Apostolate are filling this need—they are our most effective ambassadors, for they lay the groundwork for the most essential change of mentality, understanding and mutual respect among the people of the Americas.

One other thought on change came out of the Chicago meeting, and very pertinent to the thinking of North Americans. It was the considered judgment of the Christian leadership of Latin America that the greatest threat to their Christian social revolution was "anti-communism." Latin American problems are of long standing and go very deep; necessary reforms often "seem" too radical to the North American mentality, but so did the ideas of Thomas Jefferson, as expressed in 1776. Destroy the Christian leadership with the smear of Communism, and we will drive the helpless and hopeless, masses into the hands of Communism. We must trust the Christian leadership to the south, for they know best both the problem and the solution.

A prominent doctor from the Midwest went to several Latin American countries last summer with the most acceptable greeting imaginable. To the doctors of those countries he said: "I have come to learn." And he did. He learned a great deal about the doctors and the people of Latin America, and they about him. Our doctor gathered valuable research material in his field of specialization; they learned something about medicine in North America. But the communication process was opened by a highly educated North American with a new outlook: "I have come to learn."

Along with the new spiritual leaven of this season of Resurrection, may the Triumphant Christ instill in us the new mentality so needed to understand and meet the needs of our time.

Reverend Kenneth P. MacKinnon