



**CHURCH-STATE RECIPROCITY IN CONTEMPORARY BRAZIL**  
**The Convening of the International Eucharistic Congress**  
**of 1955 in Rio de Janeiro**

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## **ABSTRACT**

Focusing on government support for the 36th International Eucharistic Congress of 1955 in Rio de Janeiro, this paper explores the reciprocities between church and state in contemporary Brazil. It argues that economic considerations were central to the link between religion and politics. Under the crucial church-state pact fostered under President Getúlio Vargas and nurtured throughout the democratic-populist era (1930–64) public subsidies helped the church expand its social and religious works and created dependence on the state. The International Eucharistic Congress highlighted how finances and faith mingled in Brazil's complex mosaic of religion, politics, and society. The paper discusses the history of the Eucharistic congresses, analyzes the church-state pact in Brazil, and gives an account of the 1955 Congress and its economic ramifications.

## **RESUMEN**

Usando como enfoque o apoio governamental ao 36<sup>o</sup> Congresso Eucarístico Internacional no Rio de Janeiro, o presente artigo investiga as reciprocidades entre igreja e estado no Brasil contemporâneo. Argumenta que as considerações econômicas foram um ponto central no elo entre religião e política. Sob o crucial pacto igreja-estado criado pelo Presidente Getúlio Vargas e estimulado durante toda a época democrático-populista (1930–64), as subvenções públicas ajudaram a igreja a expandir suas obras sociais e religiosas e portanto fizeram com que ela dependesse do estado. O Congresso Eucarístico Internacional realça como se misturaram fé e finanças no complexo mosaico de religião, política, e sociedade no Brasil. Este artigo apresenta a história dos congressos eucarísticos, analisa o pacto igreja-estado no Brasil, e explica o Congresso de 1955 e suas implicações econômicas.

In July of 1955 the Roman Catholic Church and the Brazilian government staged what *Manchete* magazine called “the greatest spectacle of faith ever seen in Brazil.”<sup>1</sup> Held in Rio de Janeiro to venerate Christ and inspire participation in Holy Communion, the 36th International Eucharistic Congress (IEC) drew over a million people. The government built a large plaza and provided lodging, security, and other aid for the week-long fair. Church reports underlined state commitment: not only would the IEC take place despite the political tempest following President Getúlio Vargas’s suicide, but the mourned leader’s last decree had granted 14 million cruzeiros in funds.<sup>2</sup> For its part the church backed Brazil’s policy of nationalist developmentalism by promoting the sacred pageant as a way to foster tourism and class harmony.

This paper explores the reciprocities between church and state in contemporary Brazil. Focusing on the IEC, it argues that economic considerations were central to the link between religion and politics. Indeed, the crucial church-state pact fostered under Vargas and nurtured throughout the democratic-populist era (1930-64) entailed an important financial angle usually overlooked.<sup>3</sup> Public subsidies helped the church

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1 *Manchete* 171 (30 July 1955), front cover.

2 Thirty-sixth International Eucharistic Congress, *Boletim Informativo* 7 (hereafter cited as *BI*), 4-5, no date, probably 1954, and no. 8, 1; see also *Coleção das leis de 1954* (Rio de Janeiro: Departamento de Imprensa Nacional, 1954) 3: 17.

3 Most scholars give only impressionistic treatment of the role of finances in the Brazilian church’s well-known political odyssey. Works generally concentrate on the church’s political transformation since World War II, including its clash with an authoritarian state in the 1970s and 1980s over human rights abuses, economic development, democracy, and the formation of politically active grassroots Christian communities. Outstanding examples are Thomas C. Bruneau, *The Political Transformation of the Brazilian Catholic Church* (London: Cambridge University Press, 1974) and *The Church in Brazil* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1982); Márcio Moreira Alves, *A Igreja e a política no Brasil* (São Paulo: Editora Brasiliense, 1979); Maria Helena Moreira Alves, *Estado e oposição no Brasil (1964-1984)* (Petrópolis: Vozes, 1985); Clara Amanda Pope, “Human Rights and the Catholic Church in Brazil, 1970-1983: The Pontifical Justice and Peace Commission of the São Paulo Archdiocese,” *Journal of Church and State* 27 (3, autumn 1985): 429-52; Scott Mainwaring, *The Catholic Church and Politics in Brazil, 1916-1985* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1986); *The Progressive Church in Latin America*, Mainwaring and Alexander Wilde, eds. (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 1989); and Marcello de Carvalho Azevedo, *Basic Ecclesial Communities in Brazil*, translated by John Drury

expand its social and religious works and created dependence on the state.<sup>1</sup> The IEC vividly highlighted how finances and faith mingled in Brazil's complex mosaic of religion, politics, and society.

The IEC marked the apex of church-state harmony originating in the bishops' campaign to reassert Catholic influence after disestablishment at the start of the First Republic (1889-1930). Preserving the colonial unity of cross and sword, during the Empire (1822-89) the church operated as part of the state bureaucracy. However, an undisciplined clergy and severe government regulation led to the church's institutional breakdown. In the 1870s bishops and imperial officials clashed over state intervention in ecclesiastical affairs. Church weakness and political frictions portended separation. The positivist-inspired military officers who toppled the monarchy ended subsidies to Catholic activities,

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(Washington, DC: Georgetown University Press, 1987). A rare example of economic focus is the work of Ralph Della Cava, "Financing the Faith: The Case of Roman Catholicism," *Journal of Church and State* 35 (1, winter 1993): 37-59. By the same author see also "Thinking about Current Vatican Policy in Central and East Europe and the Utility of the 'Brazilian Paradigm,'" *Journal of Latin American Studies* 25 (1993): 257-81; "Roman Catholic Philanthropy in Central and East Europe, 1947-1993: A Preliminary Inquiry into Religious Resources Networking," unpublished paper; and Della Cava and Paula Montero, ... *E o verbo se faz imagem: Igreja católica e os meios de comunicação no Brasil, 1962-1989* (Petrópolis: Dozes, 1991). See also Brian H. Smith, *More than Altruism: The Politics of Private and Foreign Aid* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1990); Daniel H. Levine, *Religion and Politics in Latin America: The Catholic Church in Venezuela and Colombia* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1981), 106-17. For theoretical considerations, see *Social Compass* 39 (1, March 1992), issue on "Religion and the Economic Order." For an example of faulty interpretation of the church in politics resulting from inadequate knowledge of its finances, see Kevin Neuhouser, "The Radicalization of the Brazilian Catholic Church in Comparative Perspective," *American Sociological Review* 54 (April 1989): 233-44.

1 I have also developed the theme of church dependence on state subsidization in other essays; for an overview, see Kenneth P. Serbin, "Brazil: State Subsidization and the Church since 1930" in *Organized Religion in the Political Transformation of Latin America*, Satya Pattnayak, ed. (New York: University Press of America, 1995), 153-75; on the origins and institutional framework of the Vargas policy of state subsidies, see Serbin, "State Subsidization of Catholic Institutions in Brazil, 1930-1964: A Contribution to the Economic and Political History of the Church," Helen Kellogg Institute for International Studies, Working Paper no. 181, October 1992; see also Serbin, "Igreja, estado e a ajuda financeira pública no Brasil, 1930-1964: Estudos de três casos chaves," *Textos CPDOC* (Rio de Janeiro: Centro de Pesquisa e Documentação de História Contemporânea do Brasil, 1991).

secularized education, wrote religious freedom into the Constitution of 1891, and generally undermined the church's position in Brazilian society. The bishops welcomed liberty from state control, but they also pushed for the reestablishment of time-honored privileges. Under the leadership of Dom Sebastião Leme da Silveira Cintra, the archbishop of Olinda and Recife (1916-21) and later Rio de Janeiro (1930-42), the institution rebuilt its cadres and strengthened ties to local and regional officials. As the church grew stronger, Brazil's leaders acknowledged it as a bulwark of social stability. When President Artur Bernardes (1922-26) paid an unprecedented official visit to Dom Leme, he stressed the church's collaboration in "maintaining order and promoting national progress." By the time of Vargas's rise to power in the Revolution of 1930, the church was poised to reenter national politics.<sup>1</sup> In exchange for the church's guardianship of the status quo, Vargas granted Catholicism quasi-official recognition. The IEC triumphantly embodied that relationship but also marked the start of a transition to a new era for the church.

This piece first discusses the Eucharistic congresses as major rallying points for the Catholic world and their contribution to the church's political influence in Brazil during the First Republic. It then analyzes the church-state pact under Vargas. Finally, it gives an account of the different sectors of government (and the private sector) that contributed to the IEC, of the economic nexus that complemented political ties, and of the catalytic effect that the Congress had on Rio, tourism, and the career of Dom Hélder Câmara, the IEC's secretary-general and arguably the most influential Latin American bishop of the 20th century. He was seen as "the brain" behind the event and best embodied the complex issues surrounding it, including the church's struggle to adapt to a rapidly modernizing society increasingly pluralistic and ever more conscious of poverty.<sup>2</sup>

## I. The Congresses and 'Romanization' in the First Republic

Inaugurated at Lille, France, in 1881, the international congresses

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1 Bruneau, *Political Transformation*, 37-39.

2 The allusion to the "brain" is in "A Praça do Congresso," *O Seminário* 30 (4, September-October 1955): 234-35.

arose from a European Eucharistic revival rooted in church reaction against secularization and persecution following the French Revolution. Inspired by successful pilgrimages to sites of Eucharistic miracles in the heatedly anti-clerical France of the 1870s, Catholic leaders sought to bolster believers' faith by assembling them in devotion to the Eucharist, the Body of Christ taken as Holy Communion, the central ritual of Catholicism.<sup>1</sup> The congresses quickly spread to other countries. A Permanent Committee of Churchmen chose the locations, each ratified by the Pope. The first international congress outside France took place at Fribourg, Switzerland, in 1885, followed by such cities as Jerusalem (1893), Montreal (1910), Chicago (1926), Sydney (1928), Carthage (1930), and Manila (1937).

Attracting millions, the festivals projected church power as it reasserted itself doctrinally and politically. At the 1905 Rome congress Pope Pius X, the "Pope of the Eucharist," increased the importance of the sacrament by shifting emphasis from simple adoration to daily consumption of Communion as spiritual food. The most controversial congress occurred at London in 1908 when Protestants convinced the prime minister to bar the Catholics from publicly showing the Blessed Sacrament. In contrast, at the Vienna festival of 1912 the emperor and his archdukes marched in a procession of hundreds of thousands of people. After a hiatus during the carnage of World War I, the congresses dropped earlier complaints about the secular state to underscore Pope Pius XI's notion of the Eucharist as sole unifier of humankind.

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1 Thomas W. Schwertner, *The Eucharistic Renaissance* (New York: The MacMillan Company, 1926): 9-10, 22, 31-62; Henrique Alla, *Os congressos eucarísticos internacionais* (Rio de Janeiro: Agir, 1955); J.C. Willike, "Eucharistic Congresses," *New Catholic Encyclopedia* (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, 1967), 5: 617-18; Roger Aubert, "Eucharistic Congresses from Leo XIII to Paul VI" in *The Church and Mankind. Dogma* (New York: Paulist Press, 1965) 1: 156. For an overview of French religiosity, see Thomas A. Kselman, *Miracles and Prophecies in Nineteenth-Century France* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1983); Ralph Gibson, *A Social History of French Catholicism, 1789-1914* (London: Routledge, 1989), esp. 256-60.

In Brazil the church fortified itself through a process of 'Romanization,' a campaign for the conservative modernization and moralization of Brazilian Catholicism. Begun in the 1850s, it flourished under republican religious freedom and lasted into the 1950s. For the first time the Brazilian Church adopted the rigid model of seminary training established at the Council of Trent in the mid-sixteenth century. Directed by a growing corps of priests either from or educated in Europe, the new system denationalized the Brazilian clergy and strengthened ties to the papacy. Romanization was intertwined with the Europeanizing tendencies of the First Republic. Pastors 'Europeanized' religious customs by essentially seizing control of popular Catholicism. They enforced the norms of the Counter-Reformation, long disregarded in Brazil, and substituted sacraments (dispensed by priests) and other rituals for lay practices considered unorthodox by the church. The church further worked to influence society by opening schools for the urban middle and upper classes, whose Eurocentrism meshed well with Romanization. Their attitudes contrasted sharply with the inward-looking, millenarian worldview of popular Catholicism in communities such as Canudos, the holy city opposed by the church hierarchy and destroyed by the army in 1897. Striving to instill in the masses moral order and obedience to authority, Romanization vaulted the church into the arms of Brazil's modernizing elite.<sup>1</sup>

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1 On Romanization, see Serbin, "Priests, Celibacy, and Social Conflict: A History of Brazil's Clergy and Seminaries" (PhD diss., University of California, San Diego, 1993), chaps. 2 and 3; Della Cava, *Milagre em Joazeiro*, second edition, translated by Yedda Linhares (Rio de Janeiro: Paz e Terra, 1976); Della Cava "Catholicism and Society in Twentieth-Century Brazil," *Latin American Research Review* 11 (1976): 11-12; Della Cava "Brazilian Messianism and National Institutions: A Reappraisal of Canudos and Joazeiro," *HAHR* 48 (August 1968): 402-20; Pedro A. Ribeiro de Oliveira, *Religião e dominação de classe: Gênese, estrutura e função do catolicismo romanizado no Brasil* (Petrópolis: Vozes, 1985); *Imigrações e história da Igreja no Brasil*, ed. Martin N. Dreher (Aparecida: Editora Santuário/CEHILA, 1993). See also Bruneau, *Political Transformation*, part 1; Robert M. Levine, *Vale of Tears: Revisiting the Canudos Massacre in Northeastern Brazil, 1893-1897* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1992), chaps. 1 and 3; Dain Borges, *The Family in Bahia, Brazil, 1870-1945* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1992), chap. 5; Jeffrey D. Needell, *A Tropical Belle Epoque* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987), 58-63. On Europeanization, see also George Reid Andrews, *Blacks and Whites in São Paulo, Brazil, 1888-1988* (Madison, WI: University of Wisconsin Press, 1991), chap. 3. On millenarianism, see also Todd A.

Romanization reinvigorated the institutional church after its poor performance in the 1800s. The church's new freedom allowed it to create dozens of additional dioceses and to import thousands of European priests and nuns. By the late 1920s the bishops had revived the church as a formidable institution. Its highly educated cadres ran social assistance works, publications, schools, convents, and seminaries and became ingrained in local and regional networks of power.<sup>1</sup>

Most importantly, Romanization spawned an ideology of neo-Christendom, which posited a Catholic religious monopoly and a central role for the church in Brazilian society through influence of the state and key institutions. The revitalized church marshaled the faithful to pressure the government for religious education in the public schools of the state of Minas Gerais, for instance. Neo-Christendom thrived under such leaders as Dom Leme. He reaffirmed Brazil's Catholicity and upheld the social order by rechristianizing the secularized upper classes and paternalistically administering charity to the poor.<sup>2</sup>

In line with Romanization Dom Leme made national Eucharistic congresses a religious and political tradition. On the periphery of the Catholic world, Brazil figured little in the first international congresses. Moreover, before 1955 only one took place in Latin America, the 32nd at Buenos Aires in 1934. But following a worldwide trend, Brazil held

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Diacon, *Millenarian Vision, Capitalist Society: Brazil's Contestado Rebellion, 1912-1916* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1991).

1 Sergio Miceli, *A elite eclesiástica brasileira* (Rio de Janeiro: Editora Bertrand Brasil, 1988); Tânia Salem, "Do Centro D. Vital à Universidade Católica" in *Universidades e instituições científicas no Rio de Janeiro*, Simon Schwartzman, ed. (Brasília: CNPQ, 1982), 97-134. During the First Republic many of the church's works were financed by the rural oligarchy; see José Oscar Beozzo, "Decadência e morte, restauração e multiplicação das ordens e congregações religiosas no Brasil" in *A vida religiosa no Brasil: Enfoques históricos*, Riolando Azzi, ed. (São Paulo: Edições Paulinas, 1983), 103-5.

2 On Minas, see John D. Wirth, *Minas Gerais in the Brazilian Federation, 1889-1937* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1977), 90-93, 109, 114, 124-26, 198-99, and Riolando Azzi, "O início da restauração católica em Minas Gerais: 1920-1930," *Síntese* 14 (1978): 65-92. On Dom Leme, see Bruneau, *Political Transformation*, chap. 2; Mainwaring, *The Catholic Church and Politics*, chap. 2; Azzi, "O início da restauração católica no Brasil (1920-1930)," *Síntese* 10 (1977): 61-90, and 11 (1977): 73-102.



diocesan festivals beginning as early as 1915 in São Paulo.<sup>1</sup> Led by Dom Leme, in 1922 Rio de Janeiro hosted the first congress of national significance, followed by others in Salvador (1933), Belo Horizonte (1936), Recife (1939), São Paulo (1942), Porto Alegre (1948), and Belém (1953).<sup>2</sup>

As part of Brazil's centennial independence celebration the Rio festival testified to the church's patriotism. It also marked the church's efforts to guide Brazilian society just as a newly formed Communist Party, nationalistic artists and intellectuals, and rebellious army officers began demanding political and social reform. Typifying Brazil's congresses, the Rio pageant showcased Holy Communion as the way to spiritual purity, the forbearance of life's difficulties, and the guarantor of social harmony. At the fair's end Dom Leme and other bishops laid the first stone of the Cristo Redentor, the statue of Christ the Savior, to be raised on public land atop Rio's imposing Corcovado peak. Approved by the government, this last touch broke a republican taboo against open church-state cooperation.<sup>3</sup> Conceived by the French Vincentian missionary Pedro Maria Bos and built by a French sculptor, the statue captured the essence of Eucharistic congresses' elevation of Christ—and not popular saints and rituals—as the center of official, Romanized Brazilian Catholicism.

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1 *Congresso Eucarístico de São Paulo* (São Paulo: Escolas Profissionais do Lyceu Salesiano S. Coração de Jesus, 1917); *São Paulo no IV Congresso Eucarístico Nacional* (São Paulo: Obra das Vocações da Arquidiocese de São Paulo, 1942), 211, 213.

2 Salvador held the first official national congress. The report of the Rio congress, however, also claimed its festival as first, probably because it gathered a large number of bishops and coincided with Brazil's centennial independence celebration; see *Primeiro Congresso Eucarístico Nacional* (Rio de Janeiro: Comissão Promotora do Primeiro Congresso Eucarístico Nacional, 1923).

3 Beozzo, "A Igreja entre a Revolução de 1930, O Estado Novo e a redemocratização" in *História geral da civilização brasileira*, Boris Fausto, ed. (São Paulo: DIFEL, 1986), tomo III, vol. 4, 297; Laurita Pessoa Raja Gabaglia [Sister Maria Regina do Santo Rosário], *O Cardeal Leme* (Rio de Janeiro: José Olympio Editora, 1962), 245-56. As discussed below, such taboos rapidly disappeared under Vargas. The Brazilian tradition of blending the religious and the public, church and state, stands in stark contrast to the US practice of strict separation; see, for example, M. Colleen Connor, "The Constitutionality of Religious Symbols on Government Property: A Suggested Approach," *Journal of Church and State* 37 (2, spring 1995): 385-411.

## II. Church and State under Vargas: Forging a “Moral Concordat”

The First Republic ended on 24 October 1930 as Dom Leme, invested as cardinal days earlier, escorted the deposed President Washington Luiz to safety after negotiating an accord with the rebels. As Brazilian Church historian José Oscar Beozzo has observed, “The First Republic, which began its history by establishing the separation between church and state and excluding the church from the new liberal positivist order, paradoxically leaves the scene 40 years later at the hands of a member of the Catholic hierarchy.”<sup>1</sup>

In the volatile political atmosphere following the Revolution’s defeat of the oligarchical political elite, Vargas sought to build support for his regime. His victory had the full blessing of Archbishop Dom João Becker and the powerful church of Vargas’s native state of Rio Grande do Sul, where priests, nuns, and Catholic activists had enthusiastically joined the Revolution. Yet Vargas was unsure of his stance towards the church until Dom Leme mobilized large crowds to convince the president of Catholic political power and the need to grant the church concessions. In May of 1931 the cardinal rallied the faithful en masse around Our Lady of Aparecida, the black virgin named patroness of Brazil in 1930 by Pope Pius XI. After a procession with the virgin’s image through the streets of Rio, Dom Leme consecrated the country to Our Lady as Vargas and his cabinet looked on. Crowds gathered again in October for a week-long devotion to Cristo Redentor. Vargas, his cabinet, and 45 bishops accompanied Dom Leme in dedicating the statue at the Corcovado. During the festivities Dom Leme presented Vargas with a list of Catholic demands to be included in a new constitution.<sup>2</sup>

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1 Beozzo, “A Igreja entre a Revolução,” 289-90.

2 Beozzo, “A Igreja entre a Revolução,” 275, 287-89, 293-98; Della Cava, “Catholicism and Society,” 13-14. For a detailed political analysis of the Vargas-church pact, see Margaret Todaro Williams, “Church and State in Vargas’s Brazil: The Politics of Cooperation,” *Journal of Church and State* 18 (3, autumn 1976): 443-62. Aparecida, of course, is a major exception to Romanization. The Cristo represented a white and masculine Catholicism, while Our Lady stood for its Afro-Brazilian and female aspects and the profound Latin American tradition of Mariology. As Beozzo notes, hers had become one of Brazil’s most popular devotions and, unlike many others, had no links to the country’s dominant classes.

Vargas and the church established an informal pact of cooperation, labeled an “unwritten concordat” by historian Ralph Della Cava.<sup>1</sup> The church offered the state an ideology, moral content, and models of social discipline, and it backed Vargas’s emerging corporatist system by aiming to “respiritualize culture” and foster cooperation among social classes.<sup>2</sup> For itself the church sought state support in the cultural and religious spheres. The Constitution of 1934, for example, contained all of the proposals made by the Liga Eleitoral Católica (Catholic Electoral League), the political pressure group set up by Dom Leme.<sup>3</sup> The government also

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Thus, while Europeanizing, the church chose Aparecida as a national religious symbol precisely as Brazilian nationalism and the impetus for national unity grew. Juliana Souza of the Universidade Federal Fluminense has begun much-needed research on the history of Aparecida.

<sup>1</sup> Della Cava’s phrase is cited in Oliveira, “Estruturas de Igreja e conflitos religiosos” in *Catolicismo: Modernidade e tradição*, Pierre Sanchis, ed. (São Paulo: Edições Paulinas, 1992), 42, note 2; see also Della Cava, “Catholicism and Society,” 13.

<sup>2</sup> Simon Schwartzman, Helena Maria Bousquet Bomeny, and Vanda Maria Ribeiro Costa, *Tempos de Capanema* (Rio de Janeiro: Paz e Terra; São Paulo: Editora da Universidade de São Paulo, 1984), 44-45, 56, 60-61; see also Alcir Lenharo, *Sacralização da política* (Campinas: Editora da UNICAMP/Papirus, 1989) and W.E. Hewitt, “Catholicism, Social Justice, and the Brazilian Corporative State since 1930,” *Journal of Church and State* 32 (4, autumn 1990): 831-50. Philippe C. Schmitter’s oft-cited definition of corporatism describes it as a system of interest representation in which the state organizes and grants representational monopoly to different social groups in exchange for political support. Corporatism resonated strongly with church teachings on social unity and against class struggle. For instance, Oliveira Diana, one of Brazil’s leading intellectuals and a key Vargas adviser, saw the Vargas regime as flowing from a “Christian-corporatism”; Schmitter and Diana cited in James M. Malloy, *The Politics of Social Security in Brazil* (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1979), 17, 63. On Diana and corporatism, see also Needell, “History, Race, and the State in the Thought of Oliveira Diana,” *HAHR* 75 (1, February 1995): 1-30; and Borges, “Review Essay: Brazilian Social Thought in the 1930s,” *Luso-Brazilian Review* 31 (2, winter 1994): 137-50. On corporatism, see also David Collier, “Trajectory of a Concept: ‘Corporatism’ in the Study of Latin American Politics” in *Latin America in Comparative Perspective: New Approaches to Methods and Analyses*, Peter H. Smith, ed. (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1995), 135-62; on the debate over corporatism under Vargas, see John D. French, *The Brazilian Workers’ ABC: Class Conflict and Alliances in Modern São Paulo* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 1992), and Joel Wolfe, “The Faustian Bargain Not Made: Getúlio Vargas and Brazil’s Industrial Workers, 1930-1945,” *Luso-Brazilian Review* 31 (2, winter 1994): 77-95.

<sup>3</sup> Alceu Amoroso Lima, *Indicações políticas* (Rio de Janeiro: Civilização Brasileira, 1936), 135-55. Comparing the new constitution with that of

placed religious images and crucifixes in public buildings and reinstated military chaplaincies, banned under the Republic. In light of Vatican concordats with Italy, Germany, and a dozen other countries, church and state later contemplated a formal accord. None was reached, however, presumably because Dom Leme feared the church would fall under the control of Vargas's authoritarian Estado Novo (1937-45), which repressed political organizations and closed the National Congress. Nevertheless, as one bishop put it, the informal pact endured as a "moral concordat."<sup>1</sup>

The moral concordat revoked prohibitions on state subsidization. During the First Republic the church had at times overcome this legal barrier through political accommodation and thus received some federal and state funds for charitable and other works.<sup>2</sup> Now Vargas

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1891, Lima pointed out, among others, the following conquests of the League: promulgation of the constitution in the name of God; the indissolubility of marriage; civil recognition of the legal validity of religious marriage; labor legislation inspired by the precepts of social justice and the principles of a Christian order; rights for Catholic unions; and other Catholic demands, for example, female suffrage and freedom of education.

<sup>1</sup> Beozzo, "A Igreja entre a Revolução de 1930," 334-41; see also Williams, "Church and State in Vargas's Brazil." As Bruneau has observed, Dom Leme had regained a "position for the Church in public life." This was an extraordinary achievement in comparison with the cases of such countries as Mexico, Chile, Cuba, and France, where the church failed to reenter the public domain after being forced out. See Bruneau, *Political Transformation*, 37. The Cristero War of the 1920s and the subsequent search for a *modus vivendi* between the church and the revolutionary state in Mexico provide the most interesting counterpoint to the Brazilian case. See, for example, Roberto Blancarte, *Historia de la Iglesia católica en México* (Mexico City: Fondo de Cultura Económica; Colegio Mexiquense, 1992).

<sup>2</sup> Sérgio Lobo de Moura and José Maria Gouvêa de Almeida, "A Igreja na Primeira República" in *História geral da civilização brasileira*, Boris Fausto, ed. (São Paulo: DIFEL, 1985), tomo III, vol. 2, 325-27. Miceli states that the church received large public subsidies and loans but offers no specific examples; see his *A elite eclesiástica brasileira*, 147, 149. Beozzo notes that the church also obtained subsidies under an 1843 law permitting it to act as the state in areas populated by Amerindians; see Beozzo, "As igrejas e a imigração" in *Imigrações e história da Igreja no Brasil*, 57. In contrast, a church administrator in the 1950s asserted that during the First Republic it was "absurd" to think of the federal government subsidizing private charitable and educational activities; see Laercio Leopoldino, "Serviço de procuratórios," *Revista da Conferência dos Religiosos do Brasil* (hereafter *RCRB*) (July 1955): 50. We lack a detailed study of church-state relations during the First Republic. On the bishops' ideology with respect to the state, see *A Igreja na República*,

collaborated openly with the church. In 1931, for example, he created a Caixa de Subvenções to fund charitable establishments—an area dominated by Catholic institutions. Moreover, in contrast to the first republican constitution, the 1934 Magna Carta permitted the subsidization of Catholic institutions. Subsidization increased during the Estado Novo. For instance, the church used public monies to organize anti-Communist labor unions known as Círculos Operários. Although the Círculos declined in importance after Vargas's fall in 1945, the state still expected the church to help control workers. Additional resources flowed to Catholic entities under the Conselho Nacional de Serviço Social (National Social Service Council), created by Vargas in 1938 and run by church allies. Subsidies continued under President Eurico Gaspar Dutra (1946-51), the second Vargas government, and the administrations of Kubitschek (1956-61), Jânio Quadros (1961), and João Goulart (1961-64), and even the military regime (1964-85).<sup>1</sup>

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Anna Maria Moog Rodrigues, ed. (Brasília: Editora Universidade de Brasília, 1981).

<sup>1</sup> Neither the government nor the church specified subsidy totals. They were awarded to thousands of Catholic entities, usually listed in the *Coleção de leis* (government lawbooks) or the *Diário oficial* (the government gazette) under diverse categories. Though only a fraction of total federal spending, subsidies were seen as important because they could represent a significant portion of a church project's budget. Many works also received state and local funds. An excellent source on subsidies is the archive of Gustavo Capanema, Vargas's Minister of Health and Education (1934-45) and later a prominent congressman and senator; see Centro de Pesquisa e Documentação em História Contemporânea do Brasil da Fundação Getúlio Vargas (hereafter cited as CPDOC), Arquivo Gustavo Capanema. For a discussion of these issues and of Capanema, see Serbin, "State Subsidization of Catholic Institutions." Further stress on subsidies is evident in the history of the Conferência dos Religiosos do Brasil (Conference of Brazilian Religious or CRB). Founded in 1954, the CRB opened a bureau to expedite subsidization requests. It was part of a small CRB economic empire, including an import service and a travel agency that handled thousands of church trips. See Irineu Leopoldino de Souza, "O problema das subvenções," *RCRB* (April 1959): 192-205; "Relatório da Conferência dos Religiosos do Brasil," *RCRB* (September 1956): 554-74; and Maria Carmelita de Freitas, "Os religiosos no Brasil nos últimos 20 anos: Elementos para uma história da Conferência dos Religiosos do Brasil," *Convergência* 194 (July-August 1986): 353-67, and 195 (September 1986): 421-44. Vargas also supported preservation of historic religious symbols; see Daryle Williams, "Ad perpetuam rei memoriam: The Vargas Regime and Brazil's National Historical Patrimony, 1930-1945," *Luso-Brazilian Review* (2, winter 1994): 45-75. While state support bolstered the Brazilian Church, it also had other sources of

The church used public funds to expand Brazil's social infrastructure, building hospitals, child-care centers, orphanages, charitable organizations, housing projects, libraries, and educational entities (schools, universities, seminaries, and convents) that taught hundreds of thousands of people. In line with neo-Christendom, the church saw these works as a way to instill Catholic truths in the populace. According to government statistics, in 1955 Brazil had 5,478 Catholic social works. By the mid-1960s 40 percent of the people in Salvador, Bahia, were receiving Catholic charity. Across Brazil government at all levels had 416 hospitals, while the church ran 300 hospitals known as *Santas Casas* and directed another 800 of the country's 2,854 private medical centers. In all, religious orders attended to 150,000 of Brazil's 284,000 hospital beds. A later church study estimated that 10 percent of Brazilians benefited from its establishments, with 61.6 percent of the activities backed by national, state, or municipal governments.<sup>1</sup> Thus, under the moral concordat the church became a major social arm of the state.

The surge of projects complemented the Brazilian state's own increased presence in the social arena after 1930. But the church believed that government efforts were inadequate. Seeking to bolster the state, in the 1950s the bishops hoped "to multiply by ten, by a hundred, by a thousand the action of official agencies." Furthermore, though reliance on public funds involved the institution in the practice of patronage, the bishops saw the church as a corrective to the inefficiency

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income such as private donations, rents, tithes, fees for religious services, collections, festivals, fund-raising campaigns, bingo, raffles, the sale of religious objects and, since the early 1960s, massive aid from the church in Europe. An overall economic history of the Brazilian Church analyzing these funding sources and other issues has yet to be written; for preliminary considerations, see Serbin, "Brazil: State Subsidization."

<sup>1</sup> On instilling Catholic truths, see Frater Wolfango, "O problema financeiro das missões católicas," *RCRB* (August 1956): 502-5; on numbers of those who benefited from Catholic education, see, for example, João Virgílio Tagliavini, "Garotos no túnel. Um estudo sobre a imposição da vocação sacerdotal e o processo de condicionamento nos seminários" (MA thesis, University of Campinas, 1990), 13; for the government statistics, see *XXXVI Congresso Eucarístico Internacional. Relatório oficial* (Rio de Janeiro: Secretariado Geral, 1955), 40. On Bahia and hospital figures, see Bruneau, *Political Transformation*, 50; the church study was *Recursos sociais da Igreja no Brasil* (Rio de Janeiro: Centro de Estatística Religiosa e Investigações Sociais, 1975), 13-14, 27-28.

and influence-peddling of the political system. The church could manage the social network better than “grandiose” government departments paralyzed by bureaucracy and electoral interests, they declared. Subsidies were not a political “favor,” but the “people’s money” used in service to the community.<sup>1</sup>

Strictly ecclesiastical projects also benefited. In 1954, for example, the Brazilian Congress voted 5 million cruzeiros for the construction of the National Basilica of Aparecida, which became a major attraction for pilgrims and a symbol of Brazilians’ devotion to Our Lady.<sup>2</sup> Celebrations such as episcopal anniversaries received state funding, as did Eucharistic congresses. The 1940 Recife festival, for instance, acquired resources at the municipal, state, and federal levels as well as from banks, commercial interests, industry, and numerous church groups, while the 1953 Belém congress secured a federal grant of three million

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<sup>1</sup> On state social action, see Malloy, *Politics of Social Security*; see also revisionist works that dispute the idea of a ‘strong state’ unilaterally imposing policies on other, weaker groups during the Vargas era; Barbara Weinstein, “The Industrialists, the State, and the Issues of Worker Training and Social Services in Brazil, 1930-50,” *HAHR* 70 (3, August 1990): 379-404; French, “The Origin of Corporatist State Intervention in Brazilian Industrial Relations, 1930-1934: A Critique of the Literature,” *Luso-Brazilian Review* (2, winter 1991): 13-26; and Wolfe, “Faustian Bargain.” The bishops’ comments are cited in Antônio Flávio de Oliveira Pierucci, Beatriz Muniz de Souza, and Cândido Procópio Ferreira de Camargo, “Igreja Católica: 1945-1970” in *História geral da civilização brasileira*, Boris Fausto, ed. (São Paulo: DIFEL, 1986), tomo III, vol. 4, 358, and Souza, “O problema das subvenções,” 193-94. Here the bishops echoed the Catholic principle of subsidiarity, developed in the Middle Ages and more explicitly defined in twentieth-century papal encyclicals. It stated that the state’s “intervention in social and economic affairs must be limited to cases where subordinate bodies are unable or unwilling to perform their own proper function”; see R.E. Mulcahy, “Subsidiarity,” *New Catholic Encyclopedia* 13: 762-63. On subsidies and patronage, see Leopoldino, “Serviço de procuratórios”; and Serbin, “Brazil: State subsidization” and “State Subsidization of Catholic Institutions.” For an example of church awareness of the importance of cultivating congressional contacts, see “Do serviço de procuradoria: Relação dos deputados com seus respectivos endereços,” *RCRB* (May 1956): 308-14.

<sup>2</sup> *Coleção das leis de 1954*, 3: 26. Similarly, as a concession to the church the Mexican state in the 1970s helped construct the new Basilica of Guadalupe in Mexico City. Blancarte states that no proof of such aid exists; see his *Historia de la Iglesia en México*, 302-4. However, I was able to confirm the fact of government help in an interview with the abbot of the basilica, Mons. Guillermo Schulemburg, Mexico City, 23 July 1993.

**cruzeiros.<sup>1</sup>**

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**<sup>1</sup> *Annais do III Congresso Eucharistico Nacional (1940): 296-402; Coleção das leis de 1953, 5: 19; see also Coleção das leis de 1948, 7: 156; Coleção das leis de 1953, 7: 63.***



### III. Church, State, and Society in the 1955 Eucharistic Congress

The 36th IEC in Rio was an immense display of piety—but also of luxury, efficiency, and power. Like previous congresses, it aimed to inoculate the faithful against modernity by focusing on the “great modern errors,” “the essential function of the priesthood,” an “intense Eucharistic life,” and the family.<sup>1</sup> The economics of the IEC joined different sectors of Brazilian society—church, state, military, entrepreneurs, journalists, workers, and the faithful—in an effort to polish Brazil’s international image. Public and private aid facilitated cooperation by making the IEC a Brazilian success story and giving the church a platform to preach the faith as the key to national unity. In the process church and state revealed common goals in national development, labor relations, and social policy. The religious and the political, the sacred and the secular, the traditional and the modern melded into one.

#### III. 1. Pomp and Religious and Political Circumstances

The Congress opened as a relay team, in an event inspired by Roberto Marinho’s *Rádio Globo* and his daily newspaper *O Globo*, carried the ‘Eucharistic Torch’ from the Corcovado peak to the Praça do Congresso, the downtown esplanade laid for the Congress’s main events. There world champion triple-jumper Ademar Ferreira da Silva used the torch to light a four-meter-high, 840-kilogram candle—claimed as the world’s largest—which would burn throughout the Congress. “This colossal candle marked the presence in spirit of millions and millions of persecuted brothers behind the iron curtain,” stated *O Seminário*, the official journal of Brazil’s candidates to the priesthood. In the Praça stood a 15-meter-high brazilwood cross and the throne of Dom Pedro II, lent by descendants of Brazil’s imperial family.<sup>2</sup> Participants could also

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<sup>1</sup> *BI*, no. 1, 3-4.

<sup>2</sup> “Colaboração do esporte,” *O Seminário* 30 (4, September-October 1955): 219; “A Praça do Congresso,” 234-35; untitled note, 255. For photos of the Praça and other aspects of the Congress, see *Relatório oficial*.

admire a giant monstrance 2.5 meters in height and containing 140 kilograms of gilded silver, 56 brilliants and encrusted diamonds, 1,029 semiprecious stones, and a bluish beryl weighing 790 grams. Cast for the Congress, this receptacle for displaying the Holy Eucharist deeply concerned the church. The *Boletim Informativo*, the IEC bulletin, insisted that it was “a work of art to be executed with the greatest diligence” and “without delay.” For the monstrance Dom Jaime de Barros Câmara, Dom Leme’s successor as cardinal-archbishop, received donations of gold and silver objects and at least nineteen collections of precious stones. From throughout the country people rich and poor sent jewelry and widows gave up cherished wedding rings.<sup>1</sup> The most imposing prop was the altar, conceived by Lúcia Costa, the urban planner who later designed the new capital at Brasília. Located at water’s edge, it took the form of a caravelle to symbolize the arrival of Catholicism in Brazil with the first Portuguese explorers. Its mast, made by the Brazilian Navy, rose 30 meters into the sky.<sup>2</sup>

Some 1.5 million people participated in the IEC, including 300 bishops, 20 cardinals, and thousands of priests and visitors from around the world. The attendance was striking given Rio’s population (according to the 1950 census) of 2.3 million. Officially the church registered more than 450,000 people in Rio alone, among them ‘Miss Brasil,’ Emília Barreto Correia Lima. Many Brazilians arrived from afar such as the passengers on Panair’s special pilgrim flights from Bahia.<sup>3</sup> In the Praça the crowd reached one million during the opening ceremony and half a million at the closing. Hotel-ships floated in the bay nearby, some carrying foreign delegations led by their pastors. For instance, Francis Cardinal Spellman, the Archbishop of New York, headed a group of 300 people on the ship “Brasil.” Others came from New Orleans, San Antonio, Latin America,

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<sup>1</sup> *O Mundo Ilustrado* 26 (27 July 1955): 13; *BI*, no. 6. *Relatório oficial*, 72. One critical observer noted that while Catholics were generous, they gave too much for objects such as the IEC’s precious chalices rather than for missionary work; Wolfango, “O problema financeiro das missões católicas.”

<sup>2</sup> *Relatório oficial*, 74; “Mastro para o Congresso Eucarístico construído pela Marinha,” *Jornal do Brasil* (hereafter cited as *JB*), 8 July 1955, part 1, 9.

<sup>3</sup> “Congresso Eucarístico Internacional,” *JB*, 5 July 1955, part 1, 6, 9.

numerous European countries and the Middle East.<sup>1</sup>

The Congress encompassed a myriad of activities intended to accent the church's presence and to inculcate Christian values in Brazilian society. In one march thousands of priests and seminarians walked down Rio Branco Avenue, a main thoroughfare in the heart of the business district. A maritime procession carried the Eucharist to the Praça. There were other processions, liturgies, study sessions, and concerts, as well as ceremonies honoring the bishops. Special events catered to foreign pilgrims, the military, girls, women, seminarians, the handicapped and the sick, and others. Pope Pius XII blessed the Congress during a radio address to Brazilians that emphasized social unity and Catholic traditions in the land of "order and progress." President João Café Filho, Vargas's immediate successor, also spoke over the airwaves and led other high officials in receiving Benedette Aloisi Cardinal Massela, Pius XII's legate to the Congress and the former apostolic nuncio (1927-46). In Geneva for talks with Western European leaders, US President Dwight D. Eisenhower telegraphed a greeting to IEC participants. Moreover, public officials pronounced Brazil's consecration to the Sacred Heart of Jesus. The church announced that it would distribute four million religious medals during the Congress, and the government issued special postage stamps.<sup>2</sup>

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1 "O XXXVI Congresso Eucarístico e o exército brasileiro," *JB*, 8 July 1955, part 1, 9; "XXXVI Congresso Eucarístico Internacional," *JB*, 1 July 1955, part 1, 9; "No desfile da abertura, a história do Brasil," *JB*, 14 July 1955, part 1, 10; Annibal Martins Alonso stated that several hundred thousand foreigners took part; see his *XXXVI Congresso Eucarístico Internacional* (Rio de Janeiro: Companhia Brasileira de Artes Gráficas, 1956), 8.

2 As the Pope's representative, Cardinal Massela was the most honored visitor at the IEC. Popes generally did not leave Rome for such events until after the Second Vatican Council (1962-65). For a description of the Congress and its preparations, see, in addition to sources already cited, *Programa oficial do XXXVI Congresso Eucarístico Internacional* (Rio de Janeiro: Gráfica Olímpica Editora, 1955); *Revista Intercâmbio*, year 13, no. 4/6 (1955); *Radiolândia*, year 2, no. 68, special edition on the Congress; *Rio Magazine* no. 249 (July 1955), special edition on the Congress; *O Mundo Ilustrado* no. 25 (20 July 1955); *Manchete* no. 170 (23 July 1955), no. 171 (30 July 1955), and "Número Especial" (1955); *O Cruzeiro* 30 July 1955. See also the extensive coverage in the newspapers *Jornal do Brasil*, *Tribuna da Imprensa*, and other Rio dailies; for a text of Pius XII's speech, see "Mensagem de S. S. o Papa Pio XII ao XXXVI Congresso Eucarístico Internacional (24-VII-1955)," *Vozes de Petrópolis* (July-August 1955): 425-27.

Rio underwent a spiritual awakening. The masses of people in the streets and the outpouring of emotion and religiosity made the IEC a “vast plebiscite of faith,” as Nereu Ramos, the president of the Brazilian senate, put it.<sup>1</sup> Wearing IEC emblems on their chests, for a week cariocas and their guests prayed, sang, and paid homage to Christ, Our Lady of Aparecida (the Congress’s patroness), and church leaders. Radio stations helped by broadcasting special programs about the IEC, as well as classes in Gregorian chant. Triumphalistic, highly Romanized Catholicism dominated. “Convert the Protestants!” the people exhorted God during one prayer, “Convert the Jews!” “We saw a different Rio, Catholic, perfectly conscious of spiritual values, disproving that the capital of the republic is just the land of carnival and *macumba* [Afro-Brazilian religion], a fame that erroneous publicity spreads everywhere,” observed journalist Hélio Damante following the Congress. Men in particular came out for the IEC in the hundreds of thousands, abandoning at least temporarily their usual indifference toward the Eucharist.<sup>2</sup>

The IEC celebrated Catholicism, but its implications went far beyond religion. Like the 1922 Rio congress, it took place at a critical historical juncture. Reelected in 1950, Vargas resumed his earlier nationalist drive for industrialization and built worker support to counter antistatist conservatives. As politics became increasingly polarized, Vargas’s opponents feared the resurgence of the Communist Party, outlawed in 1947 with encouragement from the church. They further disapproved of his sympathy for the syndicalist regime of Argentine President Juan Domingo Perón. Unlike Vargas’s downfall, Perón’s demise in September of 1955 resulted largely from conflict with the church—a situation much noted in the Rio press.<sup>3</sup> Vargas’s suicide in August of 1954

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<sup>1</sup> Cited in Dom Eugênio Araújo Sales, “Fonte de bênçãos,” *JB*, 15 July 1995.

<sup>2</sup> Hélio Damante, “Lições e exemplos do Congresso Eucarístico,” *Vozes de Petrópolis* (November–December 1955): 574–75. The IEC, of course, contrasted sharply with the raucous and bawdy annual carnival to which Damante alluded and which has since become a major international tourist attraction. For a discussion of Brazilian carnival, see Roberto da Matta, *Carnivals, Rogues, and Heroes: An Interpretation of the Brazilian Dilemma*, trans. by John Drury (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 1991).

<sup>3</sup> The Brazilian Church’s amicable relations with the state contrasted sharply with its Argentine counterpart’s opposition role. Perón wanted to

ignited further nationalist sentiment. Despite calls by the Right to suspend balloting, three months after the IEC Brazilians voted in Kubitschek, Vargas's political heir. In November the army staged a preemptive coup to block another anti-Kubitschek plot.

Like the 1930 Revolution, the crises of 1954-55 cast Rio's cardinal-archbishop as an intermediary. Two weeks before the suicide Dom Jaime and his auxiliary Dom Hélder Câmara (not related to the cardinal) visited Vargas at the Catete Palace to discuss a possible resignation. Vargas refused. Following the pro-Kubitschek coup opposing military factions requested the support of the cardinal, who frequently celebrated Easter Mass for members of the armed forces. Dom Jaime replied with an appeal for peace to military commanders.<sup>1</sup>

The IEC also came at a key moment for the church. Brazilian society grew increasingly pluralistic as alternatives to Catholicism gained appeal. Spiritist, Afro-Brazilian, and Protestant religious rivals—"enemy number one of the people's faith" in the eyes of Latin America's bishops—eroded the church's religious monopoly and even competed for state funding. In the 1950s Protestant ministers began to hold large revivals, while *Umbandistas* exalted their religion as a new national faith in newspapers and conferences. The bishops responded by organizing an official campaign against the *Umbandistas*, for example.<sup>2</sup> In addition,

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establish a state-run Christianity to eliminate the church's power and strengthen his own. Just weeks before the IEC the dispute reached its height. It was strongly reminiscent of the Mexican church-state conflict three decades earlier. The Peronist government expelled Catholics from the civil service, jailed priests, banned church access to the media, prohibited public religious acts, and burned churches. It further removed clerics from the schools, cancelled the church's subsidies and charitable status, and legalized prostitution and divorce. Catholic activists armed themselves to defend churches and clergy, and they built support for the subsequent coup against Perón through pamphleteering and lobbying of the military. They also staged massive Eucharistic protest processions. See Austen Ivereigh, *Catholicism and Politics in Argentina, 1810-1960* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1995); on Brazilian press coverage of Perón, see, for example, "O XXXVI Congresso Eucarístico e o exército brasileiro," *JB*, 8 July 1955, part 1, 9.

<sup>1</sup> Regina da Luz Moreira and Ivan Junqueira, "Câmara, Jaime," *Dicionário Histórico-Biográfico Brasileiro, 1930-1983* (Rio de Janeiro: FGV-CPDOC; Forense Universitário/FINEP, 1984) 1: 555-56.

<sup>2</sup> On "enemy," see *CELAM: Elementos para su historia* (Bogotá: CELAM, 1982), 68-71, 73; on monopoly, see Thales de Azevedo, *O Catolicismo no Brasil* (Rio de Janeiro: Ministério da Educação e Cultura, 1955), 24; on

the church's battle against Communism deepened as the Cold War progressed. Thus in the "pious 1950s" large devotional gatherings such as the national Rosary Crusade, pilgrimages of the image of Our Lady of Fatima, and local Eucharistic congresses became political arms for defending neo-Christendom. Brazil's most important religious event of the decade, the IEC stood as the last great exhibition of Brazilian Catholic hegemony.<sup>1</sup>

However, piety was just one option for the church. It also sought to adapt its conservative, Romanized Catholicism to meet other challenges of the modern world. Because Brazil's model of capitalist development failed to improve conditions in the countryside, vast numbers of people migrated to the cities, where many had to settle in *favelas* or shantytowns. Fully supportive of nationalist developmentalism yet committed to social justice, a small but influential group of clerics began to challenge the neo-Christendom model and to advocate structural changes such as agrarian reform. Backed by the Vatican, they also created new church organizations for reaching their goals.

The key reformer was Dom Hélder. A profoundly devout priest trained in the 1920s and 1930s by the Romanizing Vincentians and influenced by Franciscan spirituality, Father Hélder possessed a wide-ranging political biography. In the 1930s he worked in the Ministry of Education and then on the National Education Council. In both his home state of Ceará and Rio he acted as a leader of *Ação Integralista Brasileira* (AIB, Brazilian Integralist Action), a movement inspired by European

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subsidization, see Associação de Educação Católica, *Lei No. 1.493 de auxílios e subvenções (de 13 de dezembro de 1951)* (Rio de Janeiro: Edições da A.E.C. do Brasil, no date); on Protestant growth, see Antônio Gouvêa Mendonça, "Evolução histórica e configuração atual do protestantismo no Brasil" in *Introdução ao protestantismo no Brasil*, Antônio Gouvêa Mendonça and Prócoro Delasques, eds. (São Paulo: Edições Loyola, 1990), 11-59; on Umbanda, see Diana DeG. Brown, *Umbanda: Religion and Urban Politics in Brazil* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1995).

<sup>1</sup> On the 1950s, see Della Cava, "Catholicism and Society," 36, inc. note 51; Serbin, "Priests, Celibacy, and Social Conflict," chap. 3, part 5; and also Kselman and Steven Avella, "Marian Piety and the Cold War in the United States," *The Catholic Historical Review* 72 (3, July 1986): 403-24. On the IEC's importance, see Raimundo Caramuru de Barros, *Para entender a Igreja no Brasil: A caminhada que culminou no Vaticano II (1930-1968)* (Petrópolis: Vozes, 1994), 103-4.

fascism. Staunchly corporatist, AIB upheld the family, nation, and God and enjoyed enthusiastic support from the clergy. However, after the nondoctrinaire Vargas crushed *Integralismo* during the Estado Novo, Father Hélder disassociated himself from it.<sup>1</sup>

Like a number of former Integralistas who shared a strong desire for Brazil's development but not necessarily the movement's fascist image, Father Hélder gradually moved left. In 1947 he became national director of Ação Católica Brasileira (ACB, Brazilian Catholic Action). In the 1950s ACB gained inspiration from European progressive Catholics such as Jacques Maritain, the French humanist and lay theologian whose ideas entered Brazil by way of Alceu Amoroso Lima—the leading Catholic intellectual, a key influence on the first Vargas regime and a mentor of Father Hélder. Partly in response to Communism, Father Hélder helped revitalize this lay apostolate, which became active in student and worker politics in the 1950s and openly radical in the 1960s.

Named Dom Jaime's auxiliary bishop in 1952, Dom Hélder used the ACB model to form the Conferência Nacional dos Bispos do Brasil (CNBB), among the world's first conferences of bishops.<sup>2</sup> Shortly before the IEC he was promoted to archbishop, and immediately after it he joined other Latin American prelates gathered in Rio for the Congress to found the world's only continental episcopal group, the Conference of Latin American Bishops (CELAM). CELAM concentrated on traditional concerns such as the critical shortage of priests, but it also focused on Latin

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<sup>1</sup> Dom Hélder Câmara, "Minha passagem pela Ação Integralista Brasileira," CNBB, Instituto Nacional de Pastoral, document 02143; Margaret Todaro, "Pastors, Prophets and Politicians: A Study of the Brazilian Catholic Church, 1916-1945" (PhD diss., Columbia University, 1971), chap. 4; José de Broucker, *Dom Hélder Câmara: The Conversions of a Bishop*, translated by Hilary Davies (London: Collins, 1979), chaps. 5-7; Sebastião Antonio Ferrarini, *A imprensa e o arcebispo vermelho (1964-1984)* (São Paulo: Edições Paulinas, 1992), chap. 2; and "Câmara, Hélder," *Dicionário Histórico-Biográfico Brasileiro, 1930-1983* 1: 551. On *Integralismo*, see Hélgio Trindade, *Integralismo: A fascismo brasileiro na década de 30*, second edition (São Paulo: DIFEL, 1979), and Robert M. Levine, *The Vargas Regime: The Critical Years, 1934-1938* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1970).

<sup>2</sup> Gervásio Fernandes de Queiroga, *Conferência Nacional dos Bispos do Brasil: Comunhão e corresponsabilidade* (São Paulo: Edições Paulinas, 1977).

American underdevelopment.<sup>1</sup>

Central to these initiatives, Dom Hélder began to depart ideologically from his superior Dom Jaime and to eclipse him as the leader of the Brazilian church. Perhaps unwittingly, Dom Jaime himself sped his assistant's rise by making him the chief IEC planner, scheduled for Rio at the cardinal's behest. Despite an incipient rivalry, however, in 1954 and 1955 the two worked together for the success of the Congress.

### III. 2. "The Most Sincere and Complete Cooperation of All"

One of their first steps was to seek government assistance. According to Dom Hélder, when he and Dom Jaime approached Vargas, the president exclaimed, "But this is very important! People will come from all over the world!" Dom Hélder recollected:

I remember when Vargas [assumed] the presidency in 1951, he insisted on sending a personal representative...to ensure that all the state apparatus was made available to us in preparation for the International Eucharistic Congress of 1954-5. Every door was opened to us, every facility was made available. That was how we were able to get a huge esplanade built across the bay right in the heart of Rio—the project was already under way, and we got it speeded up.<sup>2</sup>

In addition, Vargas gathered his cabinet to study the public sector's role in the event.<sup>3</sup>

Dom Jaime punctuated Vargas's commitment by calling together government officials again on 22 May 1954. Dom Hélder, the mayor of Rio and the president of the city council, the presidents of the federal Senate and the Chamber of Deputies, Vargas's entire cabinet, and Vice-President

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<sup>1</sup> Marina Bandeira, "D. Hélder Câmara e o Vaticano II," *Revista de Cultura Vozes*, year 72, vol. 82 (December 1978), no. 10, 73-76; Barros, *Para entender a Igreja no Brasil*, 93-94. On the uniqueness and importance of CELAM in the Church Universal, see François Houtart, "CELAM: The Forgetting of Origins" in *Church and Politics in Latin America*, Dermot Keogh, ed. (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1990), 65-81; see also, in the same volume, Emile Poulat, "The Path of Latin American Catholicism," 3-24.

<sup>2</sup> Broucker, *Dom Hélder Câmara*, 88, 150.

<sup>3</sup> *BI*, no. 8, 1.



Café Filho attended.<sup>1</sup> The details of the meeting are unknown, but in a letter to Finance Minister Osvaldo Aranha Dom Jaime made the agenda clear. The IEC, Dom Jaime wrote,

can be of no little interest to the public powers...because of the exceptional occasion of tourism that may very well mark the decisive development of tourism as an authentic source of income for Brazil.

However, in order for the 36th IEC to assume its potential and just proportions, the most sincere and complete cooperation of all, and in particular that of the government, is indispensable.<sup>2</sup>

As the cardinal recognized, the church's religious strategy meshed neatly with state interests and the country's economic fortunes.

Public support for the IEC took many forms. As Dom Hélder noted, the church used its clout to obtain a site for the Praça do Congresso, which skirted the shore of Guanabara Bay at the southern end of Rio Branco Avenue. The Praça was essential for the large ceremonies. When the government of the Distrito Federal (Rio's designation as national capital) refused to cede the area in July of 1954, Dom Jaime criticized the city in his "Voice of the Pastor" radio broadcasts. He also dispatched Dom Hélder to Vargas, who in turn sent his Eucharistic envoy, Ambassador João Pizarro Gabizo de Coelho Lisboa, to Mayor Dulcídio do Espírito Santo Cardoso with orders to begin the plaza.<sup>3</sup> The founders of the future Modern Art Museum also wanted the prime real estate, but received it only after the Congress.<sup>4</sup> The Praça was the first section of the Aterro do Flamengo, an earthwork built into the bay to extend Rio's land area. The church scrutinized this public works project and combated rumors that it

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<sup>1</sup> *BI*, no. 7, 5.

<sup>2</sup> Dom Jaime de Barros Câmara to Osvaldo Aranha, Rio de Janeiro, 17 May 1954, CPDOC, Arquivo Osvaldo Aranha (hereafter cited as AOA), OA 54.05.17/2.

<sup>3</sup> Broucker, *Dom Hélder Câmara*, 150-51; Moreira and Junqueira, "Câmara, Jaime," 555; and "João Pizarro Gabizo de Coelho Lisboa," *Anuário 1956* (Ministério das Relações Exteriores): 163.

<sup>4</sup> Broucker, *Dom Hélder Câmara*, 150-51; interview with Marina Bandeira, Rio de Janeiro, 7 July 1994. A prominent laywoman and close associate of Dom Hélder, Bandeira worked on the bishop's IEC team. The Modern Art Museum now stands on the site of the Praça next to the Santos Dumont Airport.

**would not be done on time. To finish, the Federal District rushed to remove a third of the downtown Santo Antônio Hill to the Praça. In a year's time trucks transported 2,000,000 cubic meters of earth in 500,000 trips, giving Rio**

250,000 square meters of new space.<sup>1</sup> The church alone could not complete such a Herculean task, which transformed the face of Brazil's 'Cidade Maravilhosa,' the Marvelous City.

Rio's government did much more to support the IEC and improved its image in the process. Mayor Pedro Alim, appointed by Café Filho after Vargas's death, collaborated with the church to spruce up the city, cleaning, widening, and repairing streets, building 22 kilometers of tourist highways, and renovating the Cristo Redentor statue.<sup>2</sup> Moreover, at the church's urging Rio put in a third water main to end shortages that had forced some people to buy the precious liquid,<sup>3</sup> though afterwards parts of the city's lower-class North Zone still lacked it. "Everybody knows that the Water Department has deaf ears," the daily newspaper *Jornal do Brasil* opined. "The complaints continue as if Rio de Janeiro were the most backward African village." The commentary revealed the frustration many cariocas apparently had about the government, and, oriented as many were by European ideas, perhaps also the negative image they held of their country as it struggled to develop. During the IEC, however, church-state cooperation produced 'model organization' in Rio and at least temporarily reversed the norm of inefficiency in public service. Reporting Dom Hélder's announcement before the Associação Brasileira de Imprensa (ABI, or Brazilian Press Association) that the Praça was nearly completed, the paper praised the IEC for catalyzing the "realization of works in record time in a country where things take far too long, notably those that fall under the control of the public power."<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> *BI*, no. 8, 5; "O morro lançado ao mar," *Manchete*, special number (1955). At this point Rio's great earthwork was known as the "Aterro de Santa Luzia," presumably because it extended out from Santa Luzia beach and was near the intersection of Rio Branco Avenue and Santa Luzia Street; see, for example, "Congresso Eucarístico Internacional," *JB*, 7 July 1955, part 1, 6.

<sup>2</sup> Maurício Joppert da Silva, "Palmas ao prefeito," *JB*, 24 July 1955, part 1, 5; "XXXVI Congresso Eucarístico Internacional," *JB*, 13 July 1955, part 2, 1.

<sup>3</sup> "Realizações do Congresso Eucarístico," *JB*, 2 July 1955, part 1, 5; "XXXVI Congresso Eucarístico Internacional," *JB*, 13 July 1955, part 2, 1.

<sup>4</sup> "Coisas da cidade," *JB*, 8 July 1955, part 1, 6; "Realizações do Congresso Eucarístico"; on previous urban renewal and Rio's public spaces in the context of Eurocentric, anti-Afro-Brazilian ideas, see Needell, "Making the Carioca *Belle Epoque* Concrete: The Urban Reforms of Rio de Janeiro Under Pereira Passos," *Journal of Urban History* (10, August 1984):

In short, as journalist Damante observed, the IEC provided a “lively and opportune negation of Brazilians’ reputation for improvidence and improvisation.” During the IEC everything functioned “like a good Swiss watch.”<sup>1</sup>

Both the city and federal governments aided the IEC in other ways. Some of the most impressive public assistance came as direct subsidies. The 14 million cruzeiros granted by the National Congress with Vargas’s approval equaled approximately \$165,000 (1954/55 US \$), a hefty sum at the time. Another subsidy of 10 million cruzeiros, or approximately \$110,000, came from the mayor’s office. These funds provided 29 percent of the church’s official IEC budget of more than 74 million cruzeiros, which actually generated a ten-percent surplus.<sup>2</sup> Furthermore, another subsidy of 10 million cruzeiros went to finish the main building of the new campus of the Pontifícia Universidade Católica do Rio de Janeiro (PUC-RJ) in the Gávea district. A letter from the university to Osvaldo Aranha recommended “moving ahead” with disbursement of aid so that the structure could be inaugurated during the IEC.<sup>3</sup> The state’s many other contributions such as the Praça were unaccounted for in financial terms. The city and national governments opened lodging for 50,000 people in public buildings, for instance, and the Municipal Health Secretariat set up seven first-aid posts, each with two doctors and two ambulances.<sup>4</sup>

The virtuosos of state support were Brazil’s armed forces. The IEC

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383-422. For another perspective on urban life in Brazil, see James Holston, *The Modernist City: An Anthropological Critique of Brasília* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1989).

<sup>1</sup> Damante, “Lições e exemplos,” 572.

<sup>2</sup> *Relatório oficial*, 112.

<sup>3</sup> Alonso, *XXXVI Congresso Eucarístico Internacional*, 150; “Na Universidade Católica,” *O Seminário*, 30: 4 (September-October 1955), 216; PUC-RJ document, CPDOC, AOA, OA 53/54.00.00/7[?]. The PUC-RJ was one of Brazil’s first universities and also the first of a number of Catholic colleges to acquire generous state subsidies under the moral concordat. Starting classes in 1941, the PUC-RJ had received aid from Vargas at the behest of Jesuit Father Leonel Franca, the first rector and one of Brazil’s leading Catholic thinkers. See Serbin, “Igreja, estado e a ajuda financeira pública no Brasil,” and Luiz Gonzaga da Silveira D’Elboux, SJ, *O Padre Leonel Franca SJ* (Rio de Janeiro: Agir, 1953).

<sup>4</sup> *BI*, no. 10, 3; “Congresso Eucarístico Internacional,” *JB*, 8 July 1955, part 1, 9.

provided an example of the very significant history of cooperation between cross and sword absent in writings on modern Brazil. The military embellished the ceremonial aspects of the Congress by providing an honor guard and personal escort for Cardinal Massela. Martial bands played at religious observances, and soldiers marched in the opening procession, which included tributes to Brazil's men in uniform.<sup>1</sup> Such public display symbolized how well church and sword had reconciled themselves since estrangement during the First Republic. Additionally, it gave a religious hue to the armed forces' cherished role as the *povo fardado*, "the people in uniform."<sup>2</sup>

The military contributed further with material and logistical support. The Air Force, for example, transported packages and sign-up sheets for the Congress, while the Navy shone its spotlights on the Praça and exploded fireworks provided by the government.<sup>3</sup> Under Army Colonel Geraldo de Menezes Côrtes the military provided security and directed vehicle and pedestrian traffic. A graduate of United States military intelligence programs, Côrtes helped draft Brazil's national security policy and served as Rio's director of transit in the early 1950s. In 1954 Café Filho named him Rio's police chief. During the IEC Côrtes also stocked food in government warehouses ceded by Vargas, thus averting speculation and actually causing food prices to drop during the large influx of visitors.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> "XXXVI Congresso Eucarístico Internacional," *JB*, 1 July 1955, part 1, 9; "XXXVI Congresso Eucarístico Internacional," *JB*, 17 July 1955, part 1, 7; "Congresso Eucarístico Internacional," *JB*, 10 July 1955, part 1, 9; "No desfile da abertura," *JB*, 14 July 1955, part 1, 10; on church-military relations, see Serbin, "'Social Justice or Subversion?' The Secret Meetings of Brazil's Bishops and Military, 1970-1974," paper presented at the XIX International Congress of the Latin American Studies Association, Washington, DC, 28-30 September 1995.

<sup>2</sup> "O XXXVI Congresso Eucarístico e o exército brasileiro"; on the *povo fardado*, see José Murilo de Carvalho, *Os bestializados: O Rio de Janeiro e a república que não foi* (Rio de Janeiro: Companhia das Letras, 1987), 48-52 and Alfred Stepan, *The Military in Politics: Changing Patterns in Brazil* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1971), 43-44.

<sup>3</sup> *BI*, no. 6, 1, and no. 10, 3; "S. Beatitude Máximos VI, patriarca de Antioquia, Alexandria e Jerusalém, virá ao Rio de Janeiro," *JB*, 3 July 1955, part 6, 1.

<sup>4</sup> Côrtes was chief until arrested in November 1955 for conspiring against Kubitschek. He then entered politics, twice winning election to the National Congress on the ticket of the *União Democrática Nacional*

A wide variety of businesses further backed and benefited from the IEC. The church met initial expenditures thanks to loans from seven private banks. The Phillips do Brasil company provided lighting and a sound system for the immense Praça, while the merchant marine refurbished seven old ships into floating hotels. The Quintilha family lent its nearly completed apartment building as a hotel for bishops and priests, with suites furnished by private businesses and religious orders.<sup>1</sup> Dom Jaime recognized the Antártica brewing company for its “valuable donation” of 7,500 cubic meters of wood for the altar and benches of the Praça. In large newspaper ads the ten construction and engineering companies that helped build the esplanade thanked Mayor Pedro for undertaking the project and also welcomed IEC participants to Rio, while the RCA Victor company issued a phonograph record of the official Congress hymn. The Atlântica Companhia Nacional de Seguros insurance outfit commemorated the IEC by publicizing an 80-cruzeiro traffic accident insurance policy approved by the church. “Nobody is safe in a cosmopolitan city,” Atlântica warned.<sup>2</sup>

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(UDN, or National Democratic Union party) before his death in 1962. See “Côrtes, Geraldo de Menezes,” *Dicionário Histórico-Biográfico Brasileiro, 1930-1983*, 2: 955; Arquivo do Exército, Ministério da Guerra, Diretoria das Armas, “Caderneta de assentamentos” indicações XXI/22/31-A, XXI/22-31-B; and Antônio Carlos Muricy, *Antônio Carlos Muricy (depoimento, 1986)* (Rio de Janeiro: FGV/CPDOC-História Oral, 1993), 168, 247, 255, 261, 313, 218, 340, 343. Côrtes was also an expert on traffic management and shortly before the IEC published an article on the subject; see Geraldo de Menezes Côrtes, “Como o tráfego repercute no urbanismo,” *Estudos Municipais, Serviço de Documentação do DASP*, 8 (1954): 29-57. Information on Côrtes’s role also came from an interview with Marina Bandeira, Rio de Janeiro, 7 July 1994; “A Voz do Pastor: Policiamento e trânsito durante o Congresso Eucarístico,” *JB*, 9 July 1955, part 3, 1; “Os bancos do Congresso dão 96 quilômetros,” *Tribuna da Imprensa*, 1 July 1955, 2.

<sup>1</sup> *Relatório oficial*, 51, 54, 76, 112.

<sup>2</sup> On Antártica’s donation and the Atlântica policy, see XXXVI *Congresso Eucarístico Internacional* (Rio de Janeiro, no date); the advertisement “Sejam bem-vindos, congressistas” appeared in *Diário de Notícias*, 17 July 1955, part 1, 2; *Tribuna da Imprensa*, 16-17 July 1955, 5. On RCA, see *Relatório oficial*, 15.

### III. 3. Tourism

Business, government, and church interests merged in the IEC's prospects for generating tourism. Though materially dependent, the church had the organization, vision, and unifying ideology necessary for achieving this potential.

Rio de Janeiro's authorities had long recognized their city's promise as a draw for visitors, but tourism in Brazil remained "at best in its infancy," as one visitor put it in the 1940s.<sup>1</sup> Rivadavia Caetano da Silva, the treasurer of the Confederação Nacional do Comércio (CNC, the National Confederation of Commerce) and former president of the Rio de Janeiro state federation for tourism, blamed the lack of growth on the "pernicious" influence of government, which hampered foreigners with visa restrictions and did little to attract guests. The country had little tourist infrastructure, a situation sorely apparent during the IEC as a shortage of hotel space obliged many foreigners to stay in the hotel-ships and Brazilians in public accommodations. Brazil also lacked well-planned excursions, comfortable transportation into the interior, and publicity. Thus despite Brazil's drive for economic development, it failed to cut a slice of the growing international tourist pie. In 1954, Silva noted, US travelers had spent \$1.4 billion on foreign travel, with Europe absorbing \$550 million, Mexico \$250 million, and Japan \$60 million. "Of the \$70 million expended in South America, how much must have been Brazil's part?" he asked. Silva did not answer this rhetorically powerful question, suggesting that no one in Brazil knew the answer. Statistics of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) demonstrated that in the early 1950s Brazilians spent more on travel outside their country than did foreigners who visited Brazil.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> On Rio, see Michael L. Conniff, *Urban Politics in Brazil* (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1981), 20; on the 1940s, see Karl Loewenstein, *Brazil under Vargas* (New York: The MacMillan Company, 1942), 172-73, 239, 297-304. To my knowledge there is no study of the history of tourism in Brazil nor any mention of its role in the Brazilian economy by works focusing on economic development.

<sup>2</sup> "O turismo sem oportunidades no Brasil," *JB*, 9 July 1955, part 1, 6; *Balance of Payments Yearbook*, vol. 8 (1950-1954) (Washington, DC: IMF, 1957), 40.

In 1955 the church filled the organizational breach by setting up nearly two dozen commissions to coordinate different aspects of the Congress and to mobilize the city. The souvenir commission, for instance, encouraged industry to manufacture mementos of ‘good taste’ for the salvation of the people and the IEC’s coffers. Buyers could choose from 36 different kinds of items, including 40,000 copies of a Bible emblazoned with an IEC logo.<sup>1</sup> A decorations committee offered the populace guidelines for adorning the city so as to impress visitors. Its president, the Benedictine father Dom Gerardo Martins, stated that stores should not exhibit crosses, altars, chalices, or religious images because such items would harm the aesthetics of commercial displays; appropriate were large photos of picturesque scenes of Brazilian cities. Shop windows needed to convey to foreigners and Brazilians alike “our sensibility and the beauty and refinery of our national products,” Dom Gerardo said. Whatever cariocas did, it had to be uniquely Brazilian yet avoid all signs of provincialism such as festoons and streamers, which would detract from Rio’s native and architectural beauty.

“Ornamentation that befits Paris or London will certainly be a failure for us,” the priest stated. “Let us not forget that Brazil, and notably Rio, is the leading country in modern architecture.” Perhaps sensing that enthusiasm for captivating visitors was overshadowing the sacred, Dom Hélder cautioned Rio’s populace to “avoid the expression ‘tourists’: the right word is pilgrims.” In fact, IEC participants could be *both*.<sup>2</sup>

The church reinforced the link between religion and tourism by forming a Pilgrim Assistance Commission to train more than 500 guides, defined as “persons speaking foreign languages who are able to offer information about the Congress, Brazil, and Rio de Janeiro.”<sup>3</sup> A training course prescribed “The Ten Commandments of the Guide”:

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<sup>1</sup> *Relatório oficial*, 9-11, 58-59.

<sup>2</sup> “Congresso Eucarístico Internacional,” *JB*, 8 July 1955, part 1, 9; Dom Hélder Câmara, “Sede benvindos peregrinos,” *O Mundo Ilustrado*, no. 25 (20 July 1955): 25. Religious pilgrimages are one of the major forerunners of modern tourism, and the two have often become indistinguishable, giving rise to ‘pilgrim-tourists’; see Erik Cohen, “Pilgrimage and Tourism: Convergence and Divergence” in *Sacred Journeys: The Anthropology of Pilgrimage*, Alan Morinis, ed. (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1992), 47-61.

<sup>3</sup> *BI*, no. 3, 1-3; *Relatório oficial*, 51-53.



1. The guide sees Christ in the pilgrim.
2. The guide loves the pilgrim and helps in all ways.
3. The guide treats all pilgrims equally.
4. The guide fulfills his duties, even with sacrifice.
5. The guide wins over the pilgrim with a good example.
6. The guide is obedient and disciplined.
7. The guide confronts and solves all difficulties.
8. The guide does not criticize nor speak badly of anybody.
9. The guide is generous and unselfish.
10. The guide is courteous and gentlemanly.

The trainees visited Rio's Tijuca Forest and took classes on the city's sites and Brazilian history, politics, literature, and art. Other organizations supplemented these efforts. The Touring Club do Brasil, for example, placed guides at the Santos Dumont Airport and the central bus station to aid arriving visitors.<sup>1</sup>

The church's publicity campaign further demonstrated its commitment to tourism, though it spent "not one cent" on newspaper, radio, or television advertising. Instead, a publicity commission headed by Auxiliary Bishop Dom José Távora established a press office just blocks from the Praça at the São Joaquim Palace, the curial offices where reporters picked up releases on the IEC.<sup>2</sup> In the Praça the church set up broadcast booths and special seating for reporters, who had permission to circulate freely during the ceremonies. The resulting coverage filled the airwaves and Rio's dailies.<sup>3</sup> The emphasis on good press relations was new for a church wary of modernity, but not surprising in light of the reformers' efforts to adapt the institution to changing social and economic conditions. Dom Hélder in particular worked the press well and received credit from the ABI for "focusing the entire world on our capital." The archbishop in turn declared that the journalists' reports

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1 "Curso de orientadores do XXXVI Congresso Eucarístico Internacional," mimeographed document, Biblioteca Nacional, Rio de Janeiro, 1955, 1, 24-92; "Congresso Eucarístico Internacional," *JB*, 6 July 1955, part 1, 9; and "Touring Club do Brasil," *JB*, 8 July 1955, part 1, 8.

2 Interview with Marina Bandeira, Rio de Janeiro, 7 July 1994.

3 "XXXVI Congresso Eucarístico Internacional," *JB*, 12 July 1955, part 2, 1; News on the IEC was broadcast on the following radio stations: Mayrink Veigo, Nacional, Guanabara, Continental, Tamoio, Jornal do Brasil, Doz do Brasil, Vera Cruz, Roquette Pinto, and Tupi. See note 32 for examples of coverage in the print press.

**gave the IEC “magnitude and splendor.”<sup>1</sup>**

**The church’s own bulletin, the *Boletim Informativo*, expanded tourism-related publicity. One issue, for example, exhorted Brazilians to save for the trip to Rio: “Immediately get a piggy bank or open an account at a bank or at the Caixa Econômica [the federal savings bank], and start saving. If you have a little money left over, put some aside in order to help the pilgrims without funds. This same measure can be taken in religious associations.” Other numbers refuted rumors in the turmoil surrounding Vargas’s death that “revolution is going to break out during the Congress and nobody will be able to return home.” “These false reports,” the *Boletim* suggested, “must be repelled as promptly as possible whenever they arise.” After the suicide the bulletin assured readers that Vargas had always supported the IEC.<sup>2</sup>**

**More to the point, the bulletin focused on Brazil’s tourist attractions. Appearing in six languages, it described Rio as both a “modern” and “traditional” city. “Available two steps away from the urban agitation are its forests (without snakes!), which are a place of repose and an invitation to meditation; mountains cross our path and unforgettable beaches await us at each step.” In the same vein the *Boletim* voiced enthusiasm for nationalist-developmentalism. “Brazil is a young country in South America,” it announced.**

**The country has entered a phase of industrial growth (turning to good account the country’s enormous potential in waterfalls, hydroelectric plants are now being installed, as well as blast furnaces for its abundant iron; the country is reequipping its railroads, opening up highways, intensifying its civil aviation, which has the world’s third-largest amount of traffic).**

**Culturally, Brazil is beginning to assert itself, especially in the area of science (particularly physical and biological sciences), the arts (Brazil’s modern architecture is of international renown), and literature (the authors of novels and poetry have been worthy of translation).<sup>3</sup>**

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**1** “XXXVI Congresso Eucarístico Internacional,” *JB*, 13 July 1955, part 2, 1; on the church and the media, see Della Cava and Montero, ... *E o verbo se faz imagem*.

**2** *BI*, no. 3, 3, no. 7, 4-5, no. 8, 1.

**3** *BI*, no. 2, 1-2.

An IEC album published by a group of priests and a military officer expressed similar sentiments in its commercial and political advertisements. For example, one proclaimed the growth of the energy, transportation, and industrial sectors of Minas Gerais under then Governor Kubitschek. Likewise, a pilgrim handbook issued in five languages effused optimism about Brazil and repeated the common belief in its racial democracy.<sup>1</sup>

“Still so unknown” in the world, Brazil enjoyed unprecedented publicity from the IEC, declared João Vasconcellos, the CNC president. In churches “in the four corners of the world, from the most important cities to the most remote hamlets...posters speaking of our country were put up.” The IEC was an “excellent opportunity for advertising the country,” wrote journalist Alexandre José Barbosa Lima Sobrinho. “And publicity means new tourists in the future, when the pilgrims tell their compatriots all about our country.”<sup>2</sup>

#### III. 4. The IEC, the Workers, and the Fight against Communism

The IEC occurred at a poignant moment in the struggle against Communism. In May of 1954 Vargas had doubled the minimum wage, a move aimed at building working-class support but that ultimately stirred anti-Communist fear. Before its proscription the Brazilian Communist Party (PCB) had gained 200,000 members, making it the largest in Latin America and leading it to impressive electoral showings such as its plurality in the Rio city council. Though banned, the PCB remained an important political force in the 1950s. The Cold War came into sharp focus on the eve of the IEC as Hungary’s Communist government suspended the life sentence of Josef Cardinal Mindszenty, a Catholic cause célèbre after his imprisonment in 1949 for opposing the regime. Dom Jaime had protested the jailing and staged a procession of the Eucharist to show solidarity for the cardinal.

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<sup>1</sup> XXXVI Congresso Eucarístico Internacional; *Livro do peregrino* (Rio de Janeiro: XXXVI IEC, 1955).

<sup>2</sup> “Aspetos econômicos do 36o. C.E.I.,” *O Seminário* 30 (4, September-October 1955): 258-59; [Alexandre José] Barbosa Lima Sobrinho, “Comentários à margem do Congresso Eucarístico,” *JB*, 24 July 1955, part 1, 5.

The church hoped to promote social harmony by steering Brazil's working classes away from Communism. The Americas were the "favorite target" of the Communists, the *Jornal do Brasil* noted. Catholics formed a barrier against these "totalitarian agents," and the IEC infused the faithful with "new energies" for their "redemptive crusade." In a 1954 pastoral letter Dom Jaime evoked the social function of the Eucharistic congresses, likening them to the "table of the Father, which brings together sons perhaps separated by the force of antagonistic interests." In the Eucharist "bosses and laborers" once again became brothers. "It is there that the soldier kneels alongside the general, sharing in the same benefits," the cardinal wrote. "Governments cannot ignore the effect of that spiritual union." As Dom Jaime noted in calling for state support, the IEC could have a "profound repercussion among the masses in this confusing and agitated hour."<sup>1</sup> Indeed, the festival occasioned a truce by 150,000 maritime workers whose demand for higher wages threatened to disrupt the Congress.<sup>2</sup>

Catholic writer Humberto Bastos underscored the church's support for a corporatist development model that opposed Communist notions of class conflict. "The church remains the spiritual base par excellence," he wrote. "The campaigns for social assistance, for the recuperation of the worker, have no other meaning." Economic growth created a "climate of natural disquiet," and without the church the industrializing areas of Brazil would be "stirred up by political groups.... It would be pure and simple anarchy. The impact of social decomposition would bring the complete disarticulation of the labor market."<sup>3</sup>

In appealing to the masses, the church presented itself as an alternative to Communism. One example was the *feira do trabalhador*, a 'festival of the worker' organized by members of the Juventude Operária Católica (Catholic Worker Youth), one of the leading Catholic Action

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1 "O Congresso—instrumento de libertação," *JB*, 20 July 1955, part 1, 5; Dom Jaime de Barros Câmara, *Trigésimo sexto Congresso Eucarístico Internacional. Décima sétima carta pastoral de D. Jaime de Barros Câmara* (Petrópolis: Vozes, 1954), 5-11; Dom Jaime to Osvaldo Aranha, Rio de Janeiro, 17 May 1954, CPDOC, AOA, OA 54.05.17/2.

2 "XXXVI Congresso Eucarístico Internacional," *JB*, 15 July 1955, part 1, 7.

3 Humberto Bastos, "A Igreja e o desenvolvimento econômico," *Rio Magazine*, no. 249 (July 1955), special edition on the IEC.

**groups in Brazil. JOCistas canvassed Rio's factories, workshops, offices, stores, and banks to discuss the importance of the Congress with workers. Though opposed to class struggle, they believed that to experience the Eucharist fully laborers needed to obtain an equal share in society's benefits by organizing unions. During the festival in the huge Maracanã soccer stadium the JOCistas staged a play titled "The Worker and the Eucharist." It reflected on the church's desire that working people "liberate themselves/from their precarious situation.... It is shameful and inhuman/To use man as a pure instrument of profit." Dressed in laborers' clothing, young men and women carried bottles of wine, wheat, and flowers to an altar—the laborer's worktable—for Mass. Another group of men shouldered a large cross, signifying the sanctity of work and of collaboration with God in seeking social welfare. It also identified the workers as the Christ of national development: *they bore the***

cross—the quintessential sign of both suffering and hope in the Christian world—in the quest for Brazil’s progress.<sup>1</sup>

In contrast, behind the Iron Curtain there was no Christ and no salvation. The hundred million Catholics of the ‘silent church’ faced repression from atheistic governments. “Convert the Communists!” the people prayed. On one night bishops from fourteen Communist nations called attention to religious persecution by marching to the Praça altar. Four bishops’ thrones remained empty to symbolize the vacancy of sees in Communist countries. For a few moments the lights went off, revealing only the burning candles held by the clerics. The congress-goers said prayers for priests killed by the Communists and recited the stations of the cross for the salvation of Eastern Europe.<sup>2</sup>

#### IV. 5. The IEC and Dom Hélder’s Shift to the Poor

Overseeing this Catholic response to Communism was Dom Hélder. He was the paragon of the priest as administrator, public figure, and politician, orchestrating the ostentatious arrangements without questioning the church’s paternalistic views of the working class. Indeed, his leadership and organizational acumen won him national popularity and boosted his appeal among Brazil’s entrepreneurial and social elite. For instance, after the IEC Dom Hélder became the friend of the local president of Volkswagen, which began to make cars in Brazil during the Kubitschek presidency, and even knew his private telephone code. Rio’s bankers’ association made Dom Hélder an honorary member, and Varig airlines gave him a free pass.<sup>3</sup> Dom Hélder also became one of

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<sup>1</sup> Impressions of the *feita* and the JOCistas’ visits came in an interview with Tibor Sulik, Rio de Janeiro, 6 July 1995 (Sulik was a JOCista); the interpretation of the cross is mine and Sulik’s; for other details of the *feita*, see *Relatório oficial*, 97-100; Alonso, *XXXVI Congresso Eucarístico Internacional*, 272-73; on the JOCistas’ participation, see also Dalva de Magalhães, *Ao encontro de dois mundos: O morro e o asfalto* (Rio de Janeiro: Jotanesi Edições, 1995), 23.

<sup>2</sup> “Deixai vir a mim as criancinhas,” *JB*, 23 July 1955, part 1, 7-9; “A palavra eclesiástica,” *JB*, 23 July 1955, part 1, 8-9; and *Relatório oficial*, 96.

<sup>3</sup> Interview with Raimundo Caramuru de Barros, Brasília, 7 February 1990. A priest reduced to the lay state, Barros was one of Dom Hélder’s closest collaborators in the 1950s and 1960s.

**Kubitschek's principal advisors, nevertheless refusing offers to become Minister of Education and mayor of Rio.<sup>1</sup> When Juscelino invited Pope John XXIII for the inauguration of Brasília in 1960, he chose Dom Hélder to travel secretly to Rome to contact the Pontiff.<sup>2</sup>**

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**1** Broucker, *Dom Hélder Câmara*, chapter 13; Márcio Moreira Alves, *A Igreja e a política no Brasil*, 179.

**2** The Pope declined the invitation without citing a specific reason; see Broucker, *Dom Hélder Câmara*, 160-61.

Though basking in prestige, however, Dom Hélder increasingly concentrated on social reform in the late 1950s. He and other Catholics sought fresh approaches for meeting not only the Communist threat, but also the negative effects of economic development such as the burgeoning *favelas*. While some in Rio's middle class carried out charity in the shantytowns, others glossed over the substandard conditions and viewed them with curiosity, even creating the fad of visiting them to party. Though they had been festering for at least half a century, the *favelas* suddenly became a political challenge for church and state after the PCB's postwar electoral success. In 1947 the Catholics countered growing Communist influence in the slums by joining the federal government to provide them with social services—a substantial shift from the strategy, advocated by many, of eradicating them and returning *favelados* (shantytown-dwellers) to the countryside.<sup>1</sup>

Dom Hélder had witnessed this social blight since his arrival in Rio in the 1930s, but only during the IEC did he develop a profound interest in it. For example, one IEC committee was charged with constructing new housing for the poor, using the dismantled benches donated for the Praça do Congresso by the Antártica company.<sup>2</sup> Moreover, for Dom Hélder the IEC placed the church's efforts in favor of the corporatist development model in sharp relief, in part because the comments of a prominent visitor forced him to reflect on the social ramifications of his and the church's activities. The IEC allowed bishops such as Dom Hélder to meet their European counterparts. His friend Pierre Cardinal Gerlier, the archbishop of Lyon, visited Rio's *favelas* and was repelled by the contrast between their poverty and the IEC's splendor. Dom Gerlier sought out Dom Hélder

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<sup>1</sup> Rute Maria Monteiro Machado Rios, "Amando de modo especial os menos favorecidos, 1945-1954" in *Educação e favela*, Victor Vincent Dalla, ed. (Petrópolis: Uozes, 1986), 43-61; "A urbanização das favelas do Rio de Janeiro," *Revista Eclesiástica Brasileira* 15 (December 1955): 1040-41; on elite views of the *favelas*, see Zuenir Ventura, *Cidade partida* (São Paulo: Companhia das Letras, 1994), 18-20. On *favela* growth, see Julio Cesar Pino, "Family and *Favela*: The Reproduction of Poverty in Rio de Janeiro" (PhD diss., University of California, Los Angeles, 1991), 282. The poor and the oppressed, of course, were long conscious of their conditions and often sought to remedy them, beginning with the formation of runaway slave colonies during the colonial and imperial eras and urban revolts during the First Republic; see, for instance, Carvalho, *Os bestializados*.

<sup>2</sup> XXXVI Congresso Eucarístico Internacional; *Relatório oficial*, 9-11.



after the Congress and spoke of his shock:

**Brother Dom Hélder, why don't you use this organizing talent that the Lord has given you in the service of the poor? You must know that although Rio de Janeiro is one of the most beautiful cities in the world it is also one of the most hideous, because all these *favelas* in such a beautiful setting are an insult to the Lord.**

**"I was thrown to the ground like Saul on the road to Damascus," Dom Hélder later recalled.<sup>1</sup>**

**As a result, Dom Hélder dedicated himself "first and foremost" to work in the *favelas*.<sup>2</sup> Together with his IEC assistants he took the IEC's eight-million-cruzeiro surplus to found the Cruzada São Sebastião (Saint Sebastian Crusade), a housing program named for the patron saint of Rio de Janeiro. ("From the name alone you can see that we were still tied to the medieval attitudes of Christendom," Dom Hélder said in retrospect.) Going beyond earlier church strategies emphasizing merely education, the bishop implemented concepts of community development.<sup>3</sup> Like the IEC, the Cruzada received broad public and private support. The Café Filho government, for instance, donated 50,000 cruzeiros. Later Dom Hélder won approval from Juscelino to construct housing using money from sales of land reclaimed from the sea.<sup>4</sup> Thus began Dom Hélder's reputation as the bishop of the *favelados*.**

**In one of its major projects the Cruzada built flats for the residents of Praia do Pinto, a large *favela* located near the upper-class**

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**1** Barros, *Para entender a Igreja no Brasil*, 104-5; Broucker, *Dom Hélder Câmara*, 152.

**2** Broucker, *Dom Hélder Câmara*, 152-53; "Aspectos econômicos do 360. C.E.I."

**3** Rios, "O desenvolvimento e as favelas: Adaptar o favelado à vida urbana e nacional, 1955-1962" in *Educação e favela*, Victor Vincent Dalla, ed., 62-84; on the IEC surplus, see *Relatório oficial*, 112.

**4** Dom Hélder's comments and an overview of the Cruzada are in Broucker, *Dom Hélder Câmara*, 153-55; see also the key work of Pino, "Family and *Favela*," 193-94, which mentions the Café Filho donation. On support for the Cruzada, see also "Câmara, Hélder," 552; Geraldo de Menezes Côrtes, *Favelas* (Rio de Janeiro: Ministério da Educação e Cultura, 1959), 23. In 1957 Dom Hélder expanded his efforts in favor of shantytown-dwellers by organizing a congress of Rio *favelas*, and in 1959 he founded the Banco da Providência, a charitable and social-service entity financed by an annual fair.

neighborhood of Leblon. Some cariocas attacked the Cruzada for locating next to prime real estate, while more sympathetic critics such as IEC collaborator Colonel Côrtes, now a congressman and a student of the *favelas*, believed the slum-dwellers should be given resources for building their own homes.<sup>1</sup> The Cruzada ultimately failed because of interference from clientelistic politicians, land speculators, and an unsympathetic military regime. Like many *favelados*, the residents of Praia do Pinto were removed to public housing projects on the outskirts of Rio far from their jobs. Nevertheless, Dom Hélder believed that the Cruzada had at least succeeded in drawing the attention of authorities to the *favelas* for the first time.<sup>2</sup> Despite his and other Catholic activists' increasing awareness of the need to combat poverty, the most serious deficiency of the Cruzada was perhaps its inability to go beyond the paternalistic view of the poor that marked Brazilian neo-Christendom. Instead of focusing on social inequality, the Cruzada still emphasized such classic elements of neo-Christendom as anti-Communism, the Christian family, good moral behavior, and acceptance of the social order.<sup>3</sup>

#### IV. Conclusion

The centrality of economic factors in church-state reciprocity necessitates a more varied analysis of the link between religion and politics in modern Brazil. A shared corporatist ideology was a key element, but the palpable economic aspects of the collaboration provide an even clearer picture of how and why church and state cooperated. The economic perspective helps unlock the history of the link. The church is not only a political actor but a multidimensional organization acting in many spheres. Its search for resources is especially critical because the modern church neither taxes nor produces for profit. In this sense it is like other modern nonprofit institutions, such as universities and nongovernmental organizations, that must seek diverse funding sources.

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1 "Câmara, Hélder," 552; Côrtes, *Favelas*.

2 Pino, "Family and *Favela*"; Rios, "O desenvolvimento e as favelas"; for Dom Hélder's assessment, see Broucker, *Dom Hélder Câmara*, 153-55.

3 Pino, "Family and *Favela*."

As Dom Hélder later recalled about the IEC, the church needed “money, and we thought of all sorts of ways of getting it.”<sup>1</sup> Thus the Brazilian moral concordat involved the state’s material support in exchange for the church’s religious legitimation and the application of its many works and organizational skills in favor of social peace and economic development.

The symbiosis of the moral concordat made the church financially dependent on the state. In 1955 anthropologist Thales de Azevedo aptly observed that such reliance caused the faithful to lose “the habit of contributing directly for the necessities of their religious community.” The pattern continued even after the 1964 military coup brought attacks on the church and damaged the moral concordat. Former Congressman Márcio Moreira Alves noted that most Catholic charitable projects received public monies at all levels of government. Before the generals took over all federal spending, “the voting of the budget was annually preceded by a kind of siege. Hundreds of priests and nuns from the four corners of the country would grab the parliamentarians in the corridors in the hope of obtaining more money for their projects.”<sup>2</sup> Rather than a missionary organization, the church resembled a lobby.

The system recalled the royal patronage of the colonial and imperial eras and the church’s prominence as a provider of social aid.<sup>3</sup> But it also reflected the patron–client relationship of modern Brazilian politics in an era of increasing pluralism which eroded the Catholic religious monopoly. Thus the moral concordat both mirrored Brazilian society and linked the church with its past. In a broader light, the IEC tapped into the ancient Constantinian identity of religion with nation and power. The church was Romanized, but it was also patriotic. Tourism linked nationalism, economic progress, and religion. Church, state, and private sector merged interests, revealing a multiplicity of relationships and blurring the boundaries among different sectors. A decade later the universal conclave of bishops known as the Second Vatican Council (1962-65) abandoned triumphalism in favor of religious freedom and

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<sup>1</sup> Broucker, *Dom Hélder Câmara*, 150-51.

<sup>2</sup> Azevedo, *O Catolicismo no Brasil*, 24; Márcio Moreira Alves, *A Igreja e a política no Brasil*, 61.

<sup>3</sup> On the colonial era, see A.J.R. Russell-Wood, “Prestige, Power, and Piety in Colonial Brazil: The Third Orders of Salvador,” *HAHR* 69 (1, February 1989): 61-89.

ecumenism, once again creating a sharper division between church and state and forging a new identity for Catholicism. For an ecclesiastical leadership embattled by religious competition the IEC now evokes nostalgia for an era when the Brazilian church easily commanded the masses and government cooperation.<sup>1</sup>

Standing at the nexus of the church-state relationship, Dom Hélder questioned the stark contrast between publicly supported religious ostentation and the poverty of most Brazilians. During the developmentalist euphoria of the Kubitschek years the government displayed its alliance with the bishops to allay conservatives' fears about developmentalism, while Dom Hélder and the growing reformist wing of the church seized on progress as a way to social justice. Hélder used his prestige to focus politicians and business moguls on the need for change in the socioeconomic structure.<sup>2</sup> At Vatican II he and Cardinal Gerlier became leaders of the movement for a 'church of the poor.' However, Dom Hélder's new stance cost him popularity among Brazil's elite and sidetracked his career by prompting his transfer out of Rio in March of 1964. The military that had once been his gracious collaborators now vilified him as a Communist bishop, and one of its ambassadors to the Vatican allegedly boasted of blocking his nomination as cardinal.<sup>3</sup> Ultimately his story demonstrated the importance of the material in the spiritual but also the limits of the moral concordat. His fall from the

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<sup>1</sup> On the post-Vatican II Brazilian Church, see Mainwaring, *The Catholic Church and Politics*; for a present ecclesiastical perspective on the IEC, see Sales, "Fonte de bençãos." The church now faces a serious religious and political challenge from the wealthy and rapidly expanding Universal Church of the Kingdom of God, one of whose pastors stirred controversy in 1995 by smashing an image of Our Lady of Aparecida on television. Catholics responded by attacking Universal temples. In the long run, increased religious competition could rejuvenate Brazilian Catholicism; see Rodney Stark and James C. McCann, "Market Forces and Catholic Commitment: Exploring the New Paradigm," *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion* 32 (2, 1993): 111-24.

<sup>2</sup> On the Kubitschek years, see Pierucci, Souza, and Camargo, "Igreja Católica: 1945-1970," 359-60; on Dom Hélder and the elite, see Barros, *Para entender a Igreja no Brasil*, 126.

<sup>3</sup> Interview with Raimundo Caramuru de Barros, Brasília, 7 February 1990. On the church's concern over the contrast between its wealth and the poverty of the Brazilian populace, see Raimundo Caramuru de Barros, Joseph Romer, Bernardino Leers, and Jaime Snoek, *Bens temporais numa Igreja pobre* (Petrópolis: Uozes, 1968).

**pinnacle was a reminder that while the church frequently relied on power and wealth to influence society, it also needed to sacrifice them to rediscover the spiritual roots that nurtured its mission for justice.**