PSYCHO-SOCIAL THEOLOGY OF CONVERSION

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THE TITLE of this paper is tautologous: all conversion, and also its correlative, sin, is by definition psycho-social. At the same time, there are some who would challenge the existence of sin as a social reality; they would be inclined to question the social aspects of sin and conversion.[1] Against such a view, modern biblical insights and perspectives seem to stress the radically social nature of sin and conversion, especially in the prophetic tradition. Equally, there appears to be a correlation between the pauline principalities and powers and the social structures and dynamics presently dominating and alienating modern man.[2] Anthropology, sociology, psychology, as well as the phenomenological school of philosophy, all have their contribution to make to an understanding of the social aspects of sin and conversion.

To begin with, conversion is a 'contrast' term — with sin, that is. It might also be described by sociologists as an alternation from one 'plausibility' structure to another.[3] Conversion is thus a 'formally dynamic structure', involving a varied and complex set of phenomena.[4]

Our savage century has produced many conversions. For the most part these have not been religious in any sense. The whole of eastern Europe and China have undergone a massive conversion from one socio-political system to another. To a great extent the conversion has been as successful and lasting as any religious revival associated with the 'Bible Belt', the parish mission or retreat apostolate which we associate with the catholic Church.

The psychiatrists, too, like William Sargent and Joos Meerloo, have analysed the phenomenon of conversion. They have discovered that the human species under stress is very malleable. Building on the insights of Pavlov, they have presented a frightening picture of what man is capable of doing to his fellow-man. Pavlov found that the nervous system can take only so much stress. When a certain threshold of stimulation or sensory overload is reached, the organism, whether of man or animal, shifts into an altered state of consciousness. This he called the 'transmarginal state': an attempt by the organism to cope with the present stress-overload.[5] The organism's response becomes inhibited.

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1 For a discussion of this topic, cf for example Jacques Ellul's *The Technological Society*, and Heinrich Schlier's *Principalities and Powers in the New Testament*.

2 For a recent attempt at integrating the insights from these various disciplines, cf Patrick Keran's *Sinful Social Structures* (Toronto, 1974).

3 Berger, Peter and Luckmann, Thomas: *The Social Construction of Reality* (New York, 1967), pp 157-61.

4 Lonergan, Bernard: *Collection* (Montreal, 1966), p 223.

5 Sargent, William: *Battle for the Mind* (London, 1970), p 31.

If the stress continues, three phases of this altered state occur.[6] First, there is the 'equivalent' phase. At this stage the brain gives the same response to both strong and weak stimuli: defensive inhibitory reaction.[7] Secondly, there is a 'paradoxical' phase: so called because the brain responds more actively to weak stimuli than to strong.[8] Thirdly, there is an 'ultra-paradoxical' phase, in which the organism responds in an opposite way to its normal functioning and conditioning.[9] A person being tortured, for example, will come to love his or her tormentor and hate his Fatherland, Church etc.

Pavlov also discovered that beyond these phases there was a further degree of inhibitory activity. If this stress level was reached, then all previous conditioning was completely wiped out. In dogs, the previous conditioning could be re-implanted, but this took months of work.[10] Sargent suggests the obvious applications to political and religious conversions:

> Application of these findings about dogs to the mechanics of many types of religious and political conversion in human beings suggests that, for conversion to be effective, the subject may first have to have his emotions worked on until he reaches an abnormal condition of anger, fear or exaltation. If this condition is maintained or intensified by one means or another, hysteria may intervene, whereupon the subject can become more open to suggestions which in normal circumstances he would have summarily rejected. Alternatively, the equivalent or the paradoxical and ultra-paradoxical phases may occur. Or a sudden complete inhibitory collapse may bring about a suppression of previously held beliefs. All these happenings could be of help in bringing about new beliefs and behaviour patterns. The same phenomenon will be noted in many of the more successful modern psychiatric treatments. . . .[11]

These findings from psychology and psychiatry should lead us to wonder about and question many of the techniques used in popular religion. If conversion is to be authentic, it cannot supplant freedom. The old style catholic mission approach, the revival meeting of the Pentecostal, the retreat style of the Jesuit giving the first week of the Exercises, should all be suspect from this point of view; they can all by-pass human freedom.[12] One can, however, be too simplistic. The ignatian prayer, that fear of hell might keep us from serious sin if we cease to be motivated by love of God, is not to be scoffed at in a world where satiety of the senses is so much the order of the day that man's

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[6] *Ibid.*, p 31.
[7] *Ibid.*, p 31.
[8] *Ibid.*, p 31.
[9] *Ibid.*, p 31.
[10] *Ibid.*, p. 32.
[11] *Ibid.*, p 33.
[12] Cf James Joyce's *Portrait of an Artist as a Young Man*, for a description of the old first week approach to the Exercises.

freedom is severely compromised from the outset. We need to remember that man is an animated body, a physiological being, subject to the laws and limitations of materiality.

On the other hand, he is not simply or merely a physiological animal and organism. As *homo-duplex* he is subject to the dynamism of the group and to social processes. Whilst he may be induced or coerced under stress to move from one set of beliefs and behaviour to another, he may also be motivated to make the same changes by shifting from one 'plausibility' structure to another: the shift known to sociologists as 'alternation'.[13] Peter Berger describes it as follows:

> One of the fundamental propositions of the sociology of knowledge is that the plausibility, in the sense of what people actually find credible, of views of reality, depends upon the social support these receive. Put more simply, we obtain our notions about the world orginally from other human beings, and these notions continue to be plausible to us in a very large measure because others continue to affirm them. There are some exceptions to this — notions that derive directly and instantaneously from our own sense-experience — but even these can be integrated into meaningful views of reality only by virtue of social processes. It is, of course, possible to go against the social consensus that surrounds us, but there are powerful pressures (which manifest themselves as psychological pressures within our own consciousness) to conform to the views and beliefs of our fellow-men. It is in conversation, in the broadest sense of the word, that we build up and keep going our view of the world. It follows that this view will depend upon the continuity and consistency of such conversation, and that it will change as we change conversation partners.[14]

Berger goes on to analyse and isolate the main components of a 'plausibility structure':

> Each plausibility structure can be further analysed in terms of its constituent elements — the specific human beings that 'inhabit' it, the conversational network by which these 'inhabitants' keep the reality in question going, the therapeutic practices and rituals, and the legitimations that go with them. For example, the maintenance of the catholic faith in the consciousness of the individual requires that he maintain his relationship to the plausibility structure of catholicism. This is above all a community of Catholics in his social milieu who continually

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[13] Cf Berger and Luckmann, pp 157-61. Patty Hearst may have been brain-washed by behavioural techniques, but her dissonant behaviour seems to have been produced by exposure to a very strong re-socialization process and structure: the symbionese liberation group.

[14] Berger, Peter: *A Rumour of Angels* (London, 1973), p 50.

> support his faith. It will be useful if those who are of the greatest emotional significance to the individual (the ones whom George Herbert Mead called significant others) belong to this supportive community. It does not matter much if, say, the individual's dentist is a non-catholic, but his wife and his closest friends had better be. Within this supportive community there will then be an ongoing conversation that, explicitly and implicitly, keeps a catholic world going. Explicitly, there is affirmation, reiteration of catholic notions about reality. But there is also an implicit Catholicism in such a community. After all, in everyday life it is just as important that some things can silently be taken for granted as that some things are reaffirmed in so many words.[15]

In our time, the charismatic movement is an excellent and highly successful example of a 'plausibility structure' that produces alternation. Whether or not it produces authentic conversions is another question.[16] It follows then, that just as man's physical nature renders him vulnerable to stress and brain-washing, so his social dimension makes him susceptible to alternation.

On the other hand we must recognize that man needs 'plausibility structures' that are basically good. Religious conversion is in fact the typical case of alternation:

> It is only within the religious community, the *ecclesia*, that the conversion can be effectively maintained as plausible. This is not to deny that conversion may antedate affiliation with the community: Saul of Tarsus sought out the christian community after his 'Damascus experience'. But this is not the point. To have a conversion experience is nothing much. The real thing is to be able to keep on taking it seriously; to retain a sense of its plausibility. This is where the religious community comes in. It provides the indispensable plausibility structure for the new reality. In other words, Saul may have become Paul in the aloneness of religious ecstasy, but he could remain Paul only in the context of the christian community that recognized him as such and confirmed his 'new being' in which he now located his identity.[17]

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[15] *Ibid.*, p 52.

[16] My personal experience of the movement is on the whole positive. But I cannot help but note behavioural stress-inducing techniques being used during the life in the Spirit seminars and during some healing services. There is also a great emphasis on relating to a group of 'significant others' — the prayer group, the development of a significant conversational apparatus, and the use of therapeutic techniques (sharing sessions) which provide the base for a strong plausibility structure. Many people come to these groups in varying degrees and states of mental and physical stress — states of high receptivity for hypnotic suggestion and indoctrination. In some groups these high-needs of people have been taken advantage of by exploitative charismatic leaders. However, the vast majority of charismatic groups offer people a viable and valuable, spirituality and there is much authentic healing of spirit, mind, and body.

[17] Berger and Luckmann, p 158.

Over many thousands of years, men have been coerced or induced into religious beliefs and behaviours, and maintained in them through various kinds and degrees of 'plausibility structures'. These facts have been noted and the abuses condemned. Yet the question remains whether there are conversions in which man responds in freedom to God's communication of himself — what is called the grace of conversion. Taking into account the evidence from the social sciences, we might safely say and conclude that true religious conversion will be the exception rather than the rule. But since it is at the heart of the preaching of the good news, we need to clarify for ourselves, and for the sake of our ministry to others, what constitutes a specifically religious conversion.

In the language of the behavioural sciences, I believe that there exists a truly authentic religious form of conversion or alternation. This conversion process may well be gradual, and will involve stages of behavioural and sociological alternation. In our culture, these correspond to the normal, primary socialization of the plausibility structure which is the family.[18] The task of organized religion is to find ways of facilitating the truly religious phase of a dynamic alternation process. In other words, the Church must find and proclaim the appropriate outer word, in such always as to bring about that meeting of meaning and moment which is the foundation of an authentic religious encounter and conversion.[19] The typical example of this process is Paul's conversion.

In order to understand Paul's Damascus experience, we have to realize that Luke is not only recounting a vocation narrative; he is utilizing the story for his own purpose. In the Old Testament vocation narratives, five distinct but related phases or moments are involved.[20] First, there is the theophany, the basic encounter between God and man which is usually embodied in an inaugural vision; secondly, there is the sending of the person addressed and called forth in the commissioning; thirdly, there is the reluctance in the one being sent; fourthly, there is the re-commission and/or confirmation given by God; finally, there is the sign given to the person called forth to a life with and for God.

In the call of Jeremiah, phase one, the experience of the transcendent, is located in the phrase: 'now the word of the Lord came to me saying . . .' (1, 4); phase two is the consecration and appointment of the prophet Jeremiah: 'before you were born I consecrated you; I appointed you a prophet to the nations' (1, 5); Jeremiah's initial response: 'Ah Lord God! Behold I do not know how to speak, for I am only a youth' (1, 6), constitutes phase three. The Lord re-commissions Jeremiah, and so fulfils phase four by saying: 'Do not say, I am only a youth; for to all to whom I send you, you shall speak, and whatever I

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18 For a description of this developmental approach to conversion, cf Lawrence Kohlberg, 'Stages of Moral Development as a basis for Moral Education', in *Moral Education: Interdisciplinary Approaches*, ed. C. Beck, B. Crittenden, E. Sullivan (Toronto, 1971).

19 Cf Bernard Lonergan's *Method in Theology* for a discussion of this relationship between word and grace.

20 Habel, Norman C.: *Jeremiah/Lamentations* (London, 1968), pp 40-41.

command you, you shall speak. Be not afraid of them, for I am with you to deliver you' (1, 7-8); phase five is illustrated in this case by the action of the Lord: 'the Lord put forth his hand and touched my mouth; and the Lord said to me, behold I have put my words in your mouth' (1, 9). This basic pattern is used over and over again in various vocation scenes, especially in the prophetic books.

When we turn to the annunciation theme in Luke's gospel, we find substantially the same pattern. In the first place, we have the encounter between the transcendent (here represented by Gabriel) and the human: 'In the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent from God to a city of Galilee named Nazareth, to a virgin betrothed to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David, and the virgin's name was Mary, And he came to her and said, Hail full of grace, the Lord is with you' (1, 26-28). Mary is troubled but keeps silent; and then the angel brings her a commission — her vocation from the Lord: 'do not be afraid, Mary. For you have found favour with God. And behold you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus' (1, 30-32). The third phase, as we saw in the case of Jeremiah, is an objection. This we also find illustrated in a very practical way in the annunciation scene. Mary points out an obvious difficulty: 'How can this be, since I have no husband?' (1, 34). In the response of Gabriel we have what amounts to a re-commission or reconfirmation of the initial call of God: 'The holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the most high will overshadow you; therefore the one to be born will be called holy, and the Son of God' (1, 35). As with Jeremiah, a sign is given: 'And behold your cousin Elizabeth in her old age has also conceived a son; and this is the sixth month with her who was called barren. For with God nothing will be impossible' (1, 36-37).

More akin to First Isaiah (6, 8) than to Jeremiah, Mary responds with a full acceptance of her role in salvation history. An interesting side-light to these vocation experiences is that conversion here is more a call to an intensification of life with God than a turning away from a past sinful and alienated life.

Let us now bring this scheme to bear on the conversion experience of Paul (Acts 9, 1-17).

While the first moment — the encounter — is clearly evident in Luke's description, the difference is that with Paul's we are dealing not with a theophany but with a christophany. This is important for Paul's future status as apostle, priest and prophet. This first moment, unlike the gentle coming of Gabriel to Mary, is a violent confrontation between Christ and his persecutor. Luke describes it as 'a light from heaven' (9, 3). In addition, there is an aural component to the experience: 'he fell to the ground and heard a voice saying . . .' (9, 4). Paul is shocked. The element of inhibitory collapse should not be overlooked here. Sargent's remarks on this count can be utilized, provided we do not focus merely on the stress factor in the encounter. But the shock effect could easily account for the elimination of much previous religious and cultural conditioning, paving the way for new beliefs and behaviour.

The second moment is rather a continuation of the first than a commission. It is a clarification of the nature of the transcendent reality and person who is confronting Paul. However, Christ's identification of himself as and with his body the Church will become the plan of salvation history in Paul's later life and work.[21]

Paul's question to the Lord: 'Who are you?', can be said to constitute phase three of the call (9, 5). Phase four is Christ's response and commission: 'I am Jesus whom you are persecuting; but rise and enter the city and you will be told what you are to do' (9, 5-6). What is significant about this stage is that Paul's commission is not specific. It will have to be worked out within the ambit of the Church and by encountering much conflict. God works in and with plausibility structures, as Berger noted.

There is also a sign involved in this vocation narrative. First, as a result of the experience Paul is rendered sightless (9, 9). Secondly, he is healed within the context of the local church at Damascus by Ananias: 'And laying his hands on him he said, brother Saul, the Lord Jesus who appeared to you on the road by which you came, has sent me that you may regain your sight, and be filled with the holy Spirit' (9, 17).

Clearly, then, Luke is using the traditional vocation narrative in describing Paul's conversion experience. The further question now arises: for what purpose is it used? First, given the Old Testament background of the early christians, it makes good sense to articulate a religious experience in a familiar manner. Secondly, and more profoundly, for the author and for us in discussing religious conversion, the vocation narrative, phenomenologically speaking, is rooted in the real. It organizes in a short, simple and direct manner man's experience of transcendence and revelation. Revelation is not abstract and general. It comes to a definite person in his time, place and circumstances. So it is with Paul, and with ourselves as well.

For Paul it came as a shock, but one which frees him from a sinful and deluded past for a future in a 'plausibility structure', the Church, the Body of Christ. Here we see verified the process of alternation, wherein an individual experience of encounter with God was articulated in a past tradition and pointed towards a new life, within a new social structure, that would fulfil man's deepest social needs.

We can now turn to the examination of conversion as a 'social referent'. Matthew begins his gospel with John's kerygmatic proclamation: 'Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand' (Mt 3, 2).

Social sin and the kingdom

The kingdom of God theme is central both to the social gospel movement and to ignatian spirituality. For Walter Rauschenbush, the classical representative of the movement, 'this doctrine is the social gospel itself'.[22] For

[21] Cf Rom 8, 38.

[22] Rauschenbush, Walter: *A Theology for the Social Gospel* (New York, 1945), p 131.

St Ignatius, the kingdom theme is a focal meditation of the Spiritual Exercises. For both men it provides motivating force for and is the central project of the christian.

It is necessary first to 'unpack' the meaning of the kingdom for Ignatius and for Rauschenbush. (I use the language-analyst term 'unpack', because for both authors no clear-cut definition is given. It must be derived from the meaning of the term as used in a particular context.) Secondly, it will be useful to compare and contrast their positions. Finally, in light of this dialectic of thought and spiritual and pastoral experience, it will be possible to formulate some conclusions.

If it is true that the kingdom theme is the social gospel for Rauschenbush, then it follows that the meaning and orientation of that gospel will reveal the meaning of the kingdom and of salvation, on the social as well as on the individual level.[23] Historically, the social gospel movement was the response of the american protestant churches to the ethics and practices of capitalism following the american civil war. While industrialization brought great wealth for a few, it wrought great misery for many. The traditional evangelical practices of the churches proved deficient in reaching the many who formed the urban proletariat. Those who did attempt to reach the working class soon became aware that it is very difficult to have a 'saved soul in unsaved surroundings'. Consequently, a healthy rethinking of christian theology led many to a solidaristic conception of man and his salvation. Rauschenbush presents the sum and scope of this movement in the following passage:

> The new thing in the social gospel is the clearness and insistence with which it sets forth the necessity and the possibility of redeeming the historical life of humanity from the social wrongs which now pervade it, and which act as temptations and incitements to evil, and as forces of resistance to the powers of redemption. Its chief interest is concentrated on those manifestations of sin and redemption which lie beyond the individual soul. If our exposition of the superpersonal agents of sin and of the kingdom of evil is true, then evidently, a salvation confined to the soul and its personal interests is an imperfect and only partly effective salvation.[24]

First, what does Rauschenbush mean by superpersonal agents of sin? A superpersonal agent is any structure, society, community; it is called personal by analogy, because psychologists have discovered that groups, communities etc., manifest psychologies of their own which cannot be reduced to that of the individuals within the grouping.[25] These insights concerning the social nature of man have not been totally lacking to religion; the Church itself is a superpersonal agent. Thus positively, the social gospel movement wants to revitalize the Church for its mission of confronting evil superpersonal agents.[26] That such agents exist cannot be disputed, that they do exert a force for

[23] *Ibid.*, p 95. [24] *Ibid.*, p 95. [25] *Ibid.*, pp 69-76. [26] *Ibid.*, p 70.

good or evil is certain; but that they must be redeemed, converted, is not so verifiable. As Rahner points out, salvation must take place within history and institutions, but is itself not the same as these. Salvation ultimately consists in the vision of God face to face. Consequently, salvation both devalues and enhances the values of the historical process. It devalues it because salvation can take place amidst all the contradictions and reversals of human history, and despite the perversity of structures. Equally the value of history is enhanced because salvation does in fact take place within it.[27]

What has been said about superpersonal forces also holds for the kingdom of evil,[28] that is, the institutionalization of evil, which is linked with what Schoonenberg labels the 'sin of the world',[29] or (Lonergan) the 'social surd'.[30]

Vatican II's definition of the world as 'that spirit of vanity and malice which transforms into an instrument of sin those human energies intended for the service of God and man',[31] comes as close as may be to what Rauschenbush considers the kingdom of evil. It should also be pointed out that the notion of the kingdom of evil is Rauschenbush's attempt to demythologize the traditional belief in a satanic kingdom, a kingdom comprised of real personal beings who have alienated themselves from God and wish now to alienate man from God.[32]

While the kingdom of evil tries to subvert and win over all individual and superpersonal agents to itself, the 'kingdom of God is man organized according to the will of God'.[33] Equally, the kingdom of God is 'the christian transfiguration of the social order'.[34] In addition, it is both gift and task. It is gift because 'it is the energy of God realizing itself in human life'.[35] It is task because 'every human life is so placed that it can share with God in the creation of the kingdom, or can resist and retard its progress'.[36] The kingdom doctrine has certain ethical implications. It provides the 'teleology of the christian religion';[37] it also tends towards 'a social order which will best guarantee to all personalities their freest and highest development'.[38]

Concretely, for Rauschenbush the growth of the kingdom manifests itself in a spread of real democracy among governments, and a conversion to the law of service for professions and organizations.[39] Rheinhold Neibuhr would label this view of redemptive history 'soft utopianism'.[40] However, to be fair to Rauschenbush, we could counter with his profound grasp of evil in the world as well as his stress on the person of Christ as the initiator of the kingdom:

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27 Cf Rahner, Karl: 'History of the World and Salvation History', in *Theological Investigations*, vol V (Baltimore, 1966), p 112.

28 Rauschenbush, pp 77-94.

29 Schoonenberg, Piet: *Man and Sin* (University of Notre Dame, 1965).

30 *Insight*, pp 226 & ff.

31 *Gaudium et Spes*, 37.

32 Cf Rauschenbush, pp 88-90.

33 *Ibid.*, p 142. 34 *Ibid.*, p 145. 35 *Ibid.*, p 141. 36 *Ibid*, p 141.

37 *Ibid.*, p 140. 38 *Ibid.*, p 142. 39 *Ibid.*, p. 117.

40 Niebuhr, Rheinhold: *On Politics* (New York, 1960), p 22.

> The social gospel wants to see a personality able to win hearts, dominate situations, able to bind men in loyalty and make them think like himself, and to set revolutionary social forces in motion.[41]

From a christological perspective, 'the problem of the social gospel is how the divine life of Christ can get control of human society'.[42] In summary then, the kingdom of God is an integration of individual and social salvation initiated by Christ in collaboration with the christian community.

The kingdom meditation in the Spiritual Exercises of St Ignatius has been spoken of as the second foundation, as the practical realization of the principle and foundation. It is certainly this. But it is also the epitome of ignatian spirituality. For the Jesuit is called to imitate not this or that aspect of Christ's life, but his essential profile. And Christ's essential profile, for Ignatius, is given in this particular exercise.

How does Rauschenbush's concept of the kingdom theme compare and contrast with that of Ignatius as found in the Spiritual Exercises? To answer this, we need to consider the meditation on Two Standards as a necessary supplement to the Kingdom theme.

In the context of the Spiritual Exercises we do not find an essential definition. What strikes us immediately is that Ignatius does not even use the term kingdom of God. Instead he uses 'kingdom of Christ'. What is his intention in using this term? In the second part of the exercise we are given a clue. Here Christ addresses the exercitant: 'it is my will to conquer the whole world and all my enemies, and thus enter into the glory of my Father'.[43] For Ignatius, the kingdom is not so much a reality that has arrived but a future yet to be achieved in collaboration with Christ. The full achievement, the entering into the glory of the Father, would constitute the kingdom of God in the most strict sense. And there is a substantial biblical basis for this notion of an inaugurated yet non-consummated kingdom. However, the enterprise is in process. The kingdom in the person of Christ is already present. The definitive intervention has occurred. Thus the second prelude gives us access to the meaning of the kingdom now for Ignatius. The grace the exercitant is to ask for is to be 'prompt and diligent to accomplish his most holy will'.[44] Therefore, to the extent that one conforms one's will to the will of God, to that extent one is already in the kingdom of God. In summary, Ignatius's use of the term kingdom of Christ rather than kingdom of God is very scriptural and lends itself to a modern interpretation of the notion.[45]

The obvious difference between the conceptions of Ignatius and Rauschenbush is that Ignatius is concerned primarily with the personal relationship of the christian to Christ, while the latter is concerned with the social implications of such a relationship. Their positions are also similar in that

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[41] Rauschenbush, p 149. [42] *Ibid.*, p 148. [43] Exx 95. [44] Exx 91.
[45] See for example Karl Rahner, Herbert Vorgrimler, *Theological Dictionary*, p 251.

both see that the kingdom is at once gift and task, both here and yet to come. Both men are concerned with preaching a Christ able to win hearts, dominate situations, able to bind men in loyalty, and make them think like himself. Ignatius, however, is concerned to provide a set of spiritual experiences calculated to produce this result.

Another point of agreement is on the matter of opposition to the kingdom. Comparison here involves the consideration of Two Standards. Here, Ignatius presents us with a satanic kingdom, diametrically opposed to the kingdom of Christ, which is composed of personal spiritual beings led by Lucifer.[46] Rauschenbush, however, believes such a kingdom to be a myth, and replaces it with the kingdom of evil. Ignatius uses the religious world-view of his time to articulate his vision. Rauschenbush does the same. He employs the insights of sociology and expresses them in the concept of the kingdom of evil. Both are historically conditioned, but both surely contain valid insights. For while the origin of evil may differ in their views, the resulting sin of the world is the same. The two conceptions are complementary rather than contradictory interpretative schemata.

For both men, the kingdom needs collaborators: whilst a gift, it is still a task. The Spiritual Exercises in general and the Kingdom exercise in particular attest to this conviction on the part of Ignatius. However, the further question remains: how collaborate? For Ignatius, it is the attempt to bring men's minds, hearts and wills under the reign of Christ. For Rauschenbush it involves, in addition, a commitment to christianizing the social order.

Finally, for the social gospel movement, the social dimension is the core of the Kingdom theme: that is, the process of overcoming the kingdom of evil and supplanting it with a christian social order in which complete social justice is realized. Thus social justice is constitutive of the gospel message. In the Spiritual Exercises we do not find such an orientation. In fact Ignatius has been accused of creating anti-social beings by fostering a withdrawal of the individual from interaction with his fellow man.[47] Such a charge is absurd. The whole thrust of the Exercises is to produce an individual who will work with Christ for the salvation of souls within the Church. Thus we have a social impetus, a social aim, and a social context at the very heart of the Exercises.

At the same time the Exercises do lack the social dimension in the context of our times, in which the Church has come to a new understanding of her mission. We are faced now not only with the need for a conversion to the person of Christ, but also to a political conversion to christianizing the social order. Such is what the world requires, the Church teaches, and the kingdom demands:

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[46] Exx 141.

[47] Boyle, Patrick J.: *The Social Consciousness of the Spiritual Exercises* (PASE), p 127.

> All catholics are called to act. In the emerging nations, and in all other nations, the laity have their own special work. They must renew man's daily life. The bishops lay down principles. The laity must act, using their initiative, not waiting for instructions. The laity must take the christian spirit into the minds and hearts of men, into the morality and laws, into the structures of society. The laity must breathe the spirit of the gospel into the changes and reforms that have to come.[48]

Without this orientation, all spiritualities will simply result in a false consciousness and cause further alienation.

To counteract this false consciousness, it is imperative that we grasp and proclaim a social dimension of sin and conversion. The jesuit General, Pedro Arrupe, has summed up the situation for christians of our time:

> Perhaps we have distorted the biblical concept of sin, reducing it to disobedience to a positive law of the Church, or to sin of the flesh. For us the greatest sin is no longer, as it was in the eyes of the prophets and of Christ, 'iniquity'. The sins we generally accuse ourselves of in confession concern for the most part private or family life, and not public life as such. When people know of the inequalities among men, the obstructions often put in the way of justice, the oppressions which affect so many millions of men in so many countries of the world, it should not be surprising to hear people in confession accusing themselves of faults on some such grounds: I have more than what is necessary, and I do not give it away; the power I possess I employ only to keep in servitude the people who depend on me; I take no part in any of the collective activities to resolve the social problems of my country etc.[49]

We are rich because others are poor. Our standard of living directly depends on keeping others poor. This is a situation of social sin. Only a minority are aware of this and take responsibility for it. Thus there is need for a growing prophetic ministry in the Church to make us aware of our sinful state as a group and not merely as individuals. The very minimum that must be expected of christians who participate in sinful social structures is to support those who are trying to instil social justice in world relations. Thus we add a diaconic function to the previously mentioned *kerygmatic* mission of the Church. Both these functions are not ends in themselves, they are meant to build the human, to create that *koinonia* where man co-operates with God to bring about liberation from every sin, and to build a world which will reach the fulness of creation when it becomes the work of man for man.[50]

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[48] Paul VI, *Populorum Progressio* 81, trans. R. V. Bogan, *Catholic World* (August, 1968), p 39.

[49] Arrupe, Pedro: *The Social Commitment of the Society of Jesus* (Washington, 1971), pp 29-30.

[50] *Justice in the World*; the synodal document on Justice (1971), section IV.