

How the fundamentalist cults have multiplied in Central America

by Timothy Rush

The swarms of Protestant fundamentalist cults which have advanced across Central America in the past seven years are the "match" of the left Jesuit forces. A number of these cults are engaged in a "holy war" against the Theology of Liberation current in the Catholic Church. Their primary entrance point has been involvement in "relief" work, either in response to natural disasters (the 1976 Guatemalan earthquake) or to worsening conditions of civil war and insurrection (refugee centers across El Salvador, Honduras, and Guatemala). They preach acceptance of the "will of God" in the face of natural disaster or irrational killing, and obedience to civil authority of any kind, however brutal.

Over the past year, their U.S. parent groups have forged a tight alliance with the "**Greater Israel**" **Zionist fundamentalists** around former Israeli Defense Minister **Ariel Sharon**; his successor **Moshe Arens**; Minister of Science and Technology **Yuval Ne'eman**, and the terrorists of the **Jewish Defense League**, or **Kach**, as it is called in Israel, headed by **Meir Kahane**. The focus of this alliance in the Middle East is an attempt to rebuild the Temple of Solomon in Jerusalem on the site now occupied by the Dome of the Rock mosque, one of the holiest shrines in Islam. In Central America, the focus is the regime of "born again" Guatemalan ayatollah **Ríos Montt**.

The hallmark of the cults' theology is the belief that bloodshed and chaos are to be welcomed as a signal that the Second Coming of Christ is near. The line between proselytizing and participating in active military campaigns is particularly thin in Guatemala, where missionaries from Ríos Montt's Gospel Outreach group travel with the army and establish "relief work" as an integral part of the military operation.

Guatemala. 6,707 congregations or temples representing 110 distinct denominations. Direct membership is 335,000; the broader evangelical community is estimated at 1.5 million, over 20 percent of the population. Growth rates of up to 25 percent per year in some churches.

El Salvador. Estimated evangelical population is 500,000 out of a population of 4.5 million. The **Assemblies of God** (origin of the Jim Jones cult) claims 730 churches and a membership of 75,000. Membership of the sect grew 31

percent in each of the past two years; for the evangelical movement as a whole, the rate was 23 percent. The Central American Missions (CAM) reports growth in its ranks of 30 percent per year.

Nicaragua. Several dozen sects are active, including Ríos Montt's Gospel Outreach, despite expulsion of Mormons and Jehovah's Witnesses in mid-1982. Protestant missionaries have played a controlling role in the Miskitu communities of the Atlantic Coast since 1848. These missionaries, together with groups of anthropologists who have profiled every conceivable cultural and linguistic difference to be exploited in the situation, are among the most important "on the scene" controllers of the Miskitu tribe.

Honduras. Though overall figures of membership in fundamentalist churches are not available, expansion is notable. President **Roberto Suazo Córdoba's wife and daughter** belong to a fundamentalist sect called **El Cenáculo**.

Leading sects in Central America are:

1) **Unification Church** (Moonies). The Moonies first built a substantial presence in the region through activities of its front group, the World Anti-Communist League (WACL). WACL is linked to death squad activity in Guatemala, Honduras, and El Salvador. The Moonies recently split off a new front group, the **Confederation of Associations for the Unity of the Societies of the Americas**, (CAUSA), and have paid all expenses for conferences of up to 200 invited guests meeting in resorts across the Caribbean and into the United States. The most consolidated beachhead for the Moonies in the region is **Honduras**, where **Army Chief Gustavo Alvarez** is reputed to be a member of the cult. Moonie funds have flowed into Alvarez's front group, the **Pro Honduras Association**, and the Moonie group has arranged with Alvarez to hold seminars for Alvarez's officer corps. The Moonies also claim to have recruited one of the top officials of the **Francisco Marroquin University** in Guatemala City, which is a citadel of the von Hayek "free enterprise" cult, the **Mont Pelerin Society**.

In the United States, U.S. ambassador **Jeane Kirkpatrick** maintains direct liaison with the Moonies' CAUSA front, through an aide of ambassador rank operating out of her New York office. The Moonies, along with the AFL-

CIO, have been awarded a share of the State Department money for "education programs" against communism in Central and South America, under a program titled **Project Democracy**.

2) **World Vision** is the largest and most important "umbrella" coordinator of sects in Central America, and possibly in the world. The operation, based in Pasadena, California, works with an annual budget in excess of \$75 million. It ties into sections of U.S. Air Force Intelligence, the State Department, and the Episcopal/Anglican Church.

The group works at a much more sophisticated level than anything required for conventional missionary work. World Vision's Summer Institute of International Studies in Pasadena trains its missionary students in "anthropology and cross-cultural communication." A computer center is maintained in California to monitor fundamentalist missions internationally. Called **MARC**, for Missions Advanced Research and Communications Center, the computer center is headed by "born-again" Air Force Intelligence specialists mapping the anthropological profiles provided from the field. The group's connections in Washington work through board member (and **Scottish Rite Freemason** official) **Sen. Mark Hatfield**, and board chairman **Richard C. Halverson**, chaplain of the U.S. Senate.

World Vision's Latin American regional headquarters is in Guatemala. It has recently established itself in the Ayacucho area of Peru, where the bloody **Sendero Luminoso** cult is headquartered.

The literature of such groups as World Vision stresses that "Christian development" requires reversal of "technological, bureaucratic society" and recognition that the world has limited resources—exactly the argument behind the Malthusian doctrine of "population wars".

3) **Summer Institute of Linguistics (SIL)**. The SIL, which shares some training facilities with World Vision, deploys over 4,000 fundamentalist missionaries into remote Third World areas to translate the Bible and proselytize, under cover of "linguistic research." It is also known as Wycliffe Bible Translators. It began operations in Mexico and Central America in the 1930s. Steps were taken to throw SIL out of Mexico in March 1983, but it remains entrenched in Guatemala, Nicaragua, and Panama. Its role in running drugs and arms through remote jungle enclaves has been documented by several intelligence services.

4) **Central American Missions (CAM)**. The CAM group of fundamentalist missionaries, based in Texas and active since 1890, explicitly directs its proselytizing to counter Theology of Liberation currents in Catholic and liberal Protestant churches. CAM maintains 94 missionaries in Guatemala, by far the largest number of any U.S. missionary group. It claims to be growing 30 percent per year in El Salvador.

5) **Gospel Outreach** is a Eureka, California offshoot of the **Assemblies of God**. It established itself in Guatemala as **Church of the Word**, or **Verbo**, in 1976, on the coattails of a World Vision housing project for earthquake victims. Cur-

rent Guatemalan President **Efraín Ríos Montt** became a member in 1978. It claims a membership of 1,500 in Guatemala City. Through its affiliate, **International Love Lift**, it participates in Ríos Montt's scorched-earth campaigns to reconcentrate rural populations in strategic hamlets; airlifts in relief supplies; and proselytizes among the traumatized population. It is active in Nicaragua, where it evinces perfect accordance with the Sandinista government.

Key individuals include:

Ríos Montt, 57 years old. He received military training at Saint Cyr, Fort Bragg, and the U.S. Canal Zone. He has declared a policy of "permanent war" against rural populations felt to be harboring guerrillas. A minimum of 5,000 civilians, largely Indians, have been killed since his March, 1982 coup; 250,000 people displaced from their homes; and 75,000 sent fleeing over borders to Mexico or Honduras. The Guatemalan army under his command has committed acts of cannibalism, according to **Le Monde** (February 1983). He declares that he rules "as an instrument of God." Ríos Montt refused a papal plea for clemency for six condemned men just before the Pope's visit on March 7, 1983.

Ríos Montt was "born again" as a member of Gospel Outreach after a period working with the Jesuit-directed Catholic schismatic group, the **Charismatics**, in Spain. A Gospel Outreach biography of Ríos Montt, to be released later this year, is being printed by a Charismatic publishing house in Michigan called **Servant Books**.

Ríos Montt has brought elders from the Gospel Outreach sect into his government. **Francisco Bianchi** is public relations director and liaison man to fundamentalist circuits in Washington, D.C. **Alvaro Contreras** is Ríos Montt's private secretary. **James DeGoyler**, former hippie from Haight-Ashbury, is the chief liaison between Gospel Outreach in California and Ríos Montt, making frequent trips back and forth. DeGoyler declared on television March 7 that the executions of condemned men by Ríos Montt March 3 was justified despite the papal plea for clemency; they were the same methods used by the Church itself "during the functioning of the **Inquisition**."

Tens of millions of dollars of support for the "Ríos Montt model" have flowed into the country from large-scale U.S. fundamentalist organizations, including the **Moral Majority** and the **700 Club** of **Pat Robertson**.

Douglas Krieger. Krieger is the chief aide to U.S. "Temple Mount" financial angel **Terry Risenhoover**. Along with Risenhoover, he runs an interlocking series of agencies which include the **Jerusalem Temple Foundation** and **Tav Evangelical Ministries**. Krieger stated in a December 1982 interview: "I'm very much involved with Ríos Montt. The Israelis, of course, are training the Guatemalan army. There's a really nice little tie-in going on in Guatemala. Gospel Outreach is headed up by **Jim Durkin**, who is a very, very good friend of mine. Jim Durkin and Tav, we have been involved with the State Department in what has been happening in Guatemala."

'Success of sects due to Catholic centralization'

In the following comments made in late April, one of the most powerful architects of the "Theology of Liberation," François Houtart S.J. of Louvain University, outlined his preparations to split the Catholic Church.

Q: I understand you will be sponsoring a conference some time in May on Nicaragua.

A: What we are planning to do is a rather private gathering with theologians from Latin America and Europe, in the light of the events in Nicaragua when the Pope was there. The meeting is in response to a request by the Nicaraguans. We want to be able to react. . . .

Q: You said reflect?

A: Well, also—but I said react. We are bringing people who carry some weight within Christian institutions—theologians and sociologists. I spoke last night with Managua, and we are almost totally in agreement with what we are planning to do. We will do it in two parts. First, the meeting here in Louvain with theologians from Mexico, Brazil, and Nicaragua; then, from here we will all go together to the closing of the Consilium congress where we will meet other theologians who will be in Tubingen from May 23 to 29.

Q: Was there anything positive in the Pope's visit to Central America?

A: No. The whole thing was disgusting. The Pope's behavior was rather lamentable. He has not understood the political situation of Central America at all. I was with the Pope during the entire tour.

Q: Is it possible to make him understand?

A: No. Not at all.

Q: What are you going to do about it?

A: We must work with those who understand the situation. We must continue our work with the communities. We cannot change the way of thinking of either the Vatican or the Nicaraguan church hierarchy.

Q: Does [Alfonso] López Trujillo [the former head of the Conference of Latin American Bishops, CELAM, and now the archbishop of Colombia] represent a support?

A: Yes, a negative support. He is more closed than anybody. He is the number-one enemy. Let us not have any illusions about him, unless you agree with the Americans. Lopez Trujillo is an agent of the Americans. He is the one that wrote all the Pope's speeches in Central America.

Q: But the right wing has attacked him.

A: Yes, but look at which right wing. The feudal rightwing. He is, along with CELAM, an agent of modern capitalism against the people's power.

Q: Are you aware of the recent emergence of fundamentalist cults in Central America?

A: Yes. I think the problem must be seen from two different standpoints. First, when you have a society like the Latin American societies, where people live in constant uncertainty, it is easy for these sects to attract people who seek certain psychological and social security. But the conditions for the success of the fundamentalist sects is to be found in the totally centralized and closed structure of the Catholic Church. This is the first thing.

The second aspect is the way certain institutions utilize sects as a conduit to get their way into the Central America countries in particular. These are two type of institutions: religious and political ones, like the CIA. This is bad for us because it leads to the apolitization of the population. Once people have found this type of religious ideology, they become very closed-minded and reluctant to join social movements. This is why the CIA is currently promoting the proliferation of sects in Central America.

Q: How are you planning to counter them?

A: The only way to fight against sects is not by doing it directly. This is useless. The priority is the continuation of the revolutionary project. That is, to change the situation in which people currently live. To do this, we must fight for a more open and less conservative Church. This would be the



only efficient way to fight the sects. Of course, one must denounce the political use of sects.

Q: What are the possibilities of a real schism within the Church between your tendency and the conservatives?

A: This is a big problem. It is true that the communities [*comunidades de base*] do not want the schism. What they want is to be recognized by the Holy See as genuinely ecclesiastic. In Nicaragua, for instance, the communities say that the problem with the bishops is not so much a religious or moral split. We are not breaking with them on issues of faith or Christianity, but on political issues. The problem is not religion but a political problem. So, to prevent a break, we must be able to find political options within the Catholic Church, political options that are based on the particular social class each one of us belongs to.

Q: How do you see the Church in Latin America?

A: It depends. In Mexico it is very conservative due to the selection of bishops. There are a few who are really extraordinary but they do not carry very much weight. It is not like the Church in Brazil where there are big numbers of very open-minded bishops.

Q: Do you think the phenomenon of Camilo Torres [Colombian guerrilla-priest killed in 1969, student of Houtart] will be reproduced?

A: A historical phenomenon does not reproduce itself. His life and death, as a personal testimony, reproduces itself almost every day in Latin America. How many priests have been killed in Central America? But every time there are different circumstances. Whether the political commitment should be an armed commitment or not really depends on the circumstances. The political commitment to fight for the oppressed people by priests and nuns will increase and radicalize. This tendency will tend to strengthen within the Catholic Church.

Q: You knew him [Camilo] at Louvain?

A: Of course. He had a very appealing personality, he was very charismatic, very pleasant.

Q: Why did Camilo take to arms?

A: Because he had used every other means before taking to arms. He participated in every single reform movement, he tried to work with the government in agriculture reform. He was left with no option. The opposition against him was so strong that he could not continue moving from one side to another fearing that he could get shot. At the end, he could not sleep in one single place for more than one night.

Q: I just don't see how you can do this without splitting from the Vatican.

A: It is a crucial problem. We are faced with a paradox. If the official Church takes the side of the party of oppression, even if it is not badly intended, no one should be surprised if—as it happened in Europe—the popular classes increasingly take over the Church. Then, the official Church will remain as the Church of the middle classes. What we will see is the emergence of new type of political regimes and social organizations. I'm sure this will mean the progressive abandonment by the official Church of the masses. This would take one or two generations, but there is no doubt that it will happen. But I have to go now to the south of Belgium for an anti-missiles demonstration.

Q: I have heard that the Soviets have offered the Nicaraguans the installation of missiles.

A: It would very good if it actually happened, it would make the Americans reflect a little. By the way, the missiles the Soviets are talking about are not like the one the Americans want to put in Europe. The Soviet ones are air-missiles, defensive arms in case the Nicaraguans are attacked.

'Four points address roots of Central America conflict'

The following interview with Luis Yanéz, president of the Ibero-American Cooperation Institute of Spain, was conducted in Madrid on April 20 by Paris bureau chief Katherine Kanter and Elisabeth Hellenbroich.

EIR: Recently, Lyndon LaRouche, head of a faction of the Democratic Party, the National Democratic Policy Advisory Committee, made a proposal to solve the Central American crisis that includes the following points: freeze all arms shipments into the area; establish an international mediating commission under the leadership of [Colombian] President Belisario Betancur, which could be the Contadora group; cut off U.S. aid to Israel, which is supplying weapons to both sides; and promote great enterprises for the region, including the construction of a new Panama Canal. What do you think of this proposal from Mr. LaRouche?

Yané: Well, I believe that these are constructive suggestions. The comment that could be made about what makes the proposal as a whole constructive—rather than to comment on the specific points, which, in any case should be left to the governments of the region, or to those governments seeking to bring peace to the area—is that it addresses the roots of the problem; these are problems that are historic in nature, about social inequalities, about the absence of re-

forms during the last 50 years, about conditions that are almost prehistoric in the countries of the region. I believe the spirit of these proposals is being made concrete by the Contadora group, by the five countries that are seeking a negotiated solution, and which, of course with the support of other European countries such as Spain, we believe can be a way to solve the problem.

But, in fact, these initiatives must overcome the rigidity and intransigence not only of the United States or Reagan, let us be fair, but also that of the government of Nicaragua, which does not accept the withdrawal of the military advisors, of the military assistance it receives from Cuba and the Soviets. But I hope and believe, that if there were, if ways could be developed, to guarantee to the parties that certain accords would not be violated, I believe that there is still time to reach a peaceful and negotiated solution in the region.

'The CFR crowd is using conflict to oust Reagan'

The following is an April 22 interview made available to EIR with an expert on Ibero-American affairs, who has extensive contacts in the Reagan administration and in Central American governments:

Q: What is behind the furor over Central America?

A: There is a basic agreement between Henry Kissinger and associates at the Council on Foreign Relations [CFR], and the Soviets that the main objective of their deployments in Central America is not control of this or that country but the ouster of Ronald Reagan from the White House by the 1984 elections or sooner. Reagan is thus far performing according to profile. He is being drawn into a deeper involvement without the possible backing of the American people. Once Reagan takes the plunge, he will find himself politically isolated. The country will be polarized and his administration will be paralyzed. The CFR establishment plans to then pull the plug on his administration.

Q: How is the administration dealing with the CFR?

A: Reagan and his closest advisers suffer from the delusion that they can work around the CFR crowd, that they can make deals with them. They think that by being clever, they can force the CFR crowd to go along with their policy on Central America. The CFR crowd is letting them believe that, but once they get Reagan out on a limb, they will cut him to shreds.

Q: Where is this CFR policy laid out?

A: The recent meeting of the Trilateral Commission in Rome discussed this strategy to collapse the administration. This meeting was informed by discussion at strategy sessions of the Socialist International which reportedly bemoaned the problems in the United States of mobilizing large numbers of people against the administration, especially the failure of the so-called peace movement.

shirts to wave, and they need something like a Vietnam to touch off explosions on the campuses. This is scheduled to happen in the fall, around the slogan of "Reagan is a warmonger."

Q: What is the strategy, once Reagan is out?

A: The next government, most likely a government like the Carter administration, will work out a negotiated settlement with the Soviets, using the Socialist International as intermediaries.

Q: What is your assessment of the administration?

A: The administration is beset by traitors and fools. The State Department, especially George Shultz, [Undersecretary] Lawrence Eagleburger, and [Assistant Secretary] Thomas Enders are playing a treacherous role, waiting for Reagan to stick his head in the noose. In the meantime, they are letting a confrontationist grouping around the President gain the upper hand and push the policy toward a crisis point. They will then use the crisis to stage a palace coup against the President, with the help of the media and congressional networks.

Q: What alternatives does the administration have?

A: The problem is that I guess we have no policy options because we are stuck in the anti-communist profile. If Reagan goes for a confrontation, as it looks like he is doing, I am afraid that his government is finished. The structure for this war is in place already in places like Mexico. It is just waiting to be ignited. The political damage will be immense. The CFR and Kissinger are just licking their chops at the prospects. It's a hell of a mess.

Q: What are the prospects for Central America?

A: A process has been set in motion that will lead to 20 years of butchery, of tens of millions of dead. Even if things are stopped in El Salvador and Nicaragua, they will start up again somewhere else. The fighting will continue, because the Soviets want it. Kissinger and his friends recognize this. They don't care. It gives them something to crisis-manage. . . .

What I am afraid that we will learn is that the Soviets have a better profile of the American population than the President of the United States. We are about to polarize the country, to have a Vietnam-like explosion. We can have a "Bay of Pigs" disaster without even going ahead with an invasion.