

of its evangelizers, *to bear a special role and responsibility in this task.*

. . . We already see on the horizon the future *Synod of the Americas* to which I referred in my Apostolic Letter on the Jubilee of the Year 2000. It will be an *evangelizing event* to take on the challenges which, at the end of this century, will face the Latin American churches, which will be getting ready to enter the third millennium of the Christian era.

4. CELAM, with its program "to serve and integrate" in *communion and faith* with the Holy See, has an important role to play in this *hopeful but difficult* moment. . . .

'Latin America: Rise and walk'

The following are excerpts from the Message of the XXV Ordinary Assembly of CELAM to the Churches and Peoples of Latin America and the Caribbean, entitled "Latin America: Rise and Walk," held in Mexico City on May 1-7, 1995.

Signs of death

5. But also present in our thoughts and in our prayers have been the undeserved sufferings of the great majority of brothers and sisters who day in and day out fight to survive in this world, so lacking in solidarity.

6. We want to say it out loud: We cannot remain indifferent to such signs of death that appear everywhere: extreme poverty, growing unemployment, uncontrollable violence and such forms of corruption and impunity that millions of families are sinking in anguish and pain. In their desperation, many opt to emigrate in search of new horizons but all too frequently find only rejection and frustration.

7. The origin of these evils is doubtless to be found in the heart of man and in the unjust systems which emerge from sin. We denounce, as one of the principal causes of such inequality, "economism," that is, the reification of the forces of the market and of the power of money, forgetting that the economy should be at the service of man, and not the reverse. . . .

Toward the Third Millennium

11. During these days of profound communion in work and prayer, we have heard about the state of affairs of all of our churches; we have reviewed the project and the structure of CELAM, approving reforms to its statutes; we have prepared recommendations and programs for its immediate future; and we have chosen the bishops who, with generous spirit of service, will lead this body of ecclesiastical communion. . . .

13. Two other initiatives of the Vicar of Christ should encourage our apostolic passion on the dawn of the Third Millennium: his convocation of the *Great Jubilee of the Year 2000* and the *Synod of the Americas*, which in the near future will gather, under the presidency of the pope, all the bishops of North, Central, and South America and the Caribbean. . . .

A step forward in the Brazilian church

by Silvia Palacios

The May 15 election to the presidency of the Brazilian National Bishops Conference (CNBB) of the cardinal primate of Brazil, Don Lucas Moreira Neves, has opened up a new phase in the history of the Catholic Church, not only in Brazil but throughout Ibero-America. Upon assuming his new post, Cardinal Moreira Neves stated that he intends to "be an artisan of unity" within the church.

Although Pope John Paul II's recent nominations for bishop have been deliberately undermining the church's more radical Theology of Liberation faction, the election of Moreira Neves was a surprise for many, and a harsh blow to the radicals. As one respected student of the Brazilian Catholic Church said to *EIR*, "It was so unexpected that it can only be considered an act of the Holy Spirit." As for its universal significance, he added, "this will mean for our continent what the election of Karol Wojtyla to the papacy meant for the former communist nations."

This is quite true. Cardinal Moreira Neves is a very prominent figure in the Vatican and, according to reliable sources, is close to the pope and to Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger. In advocating a more just international economic order and defense of cultural values, he has stood out as a leader on behalf of humanity's most important causes.

War against satanism

A few years ago, the cardinal declared war on the media for disseminating the "New Age" counterculture. In January 1993, he took on Brazilian television magnate Roberto Marinho, owner of the *O Globo* media empire, over coverage of the ritual satanic murder of Brazilian soap opera actress Daniela Pérez. At the time, the cardinal issued his famous *J'Accuse*, a virtual manifesto that detailed, step by step, the nature of the poison put out on television that turns citizens into "idiots." At the same time, in an interview published in the Jan. 24, 1993 *Jornal do Brasil*, the cardinal reported, "I've visited more than 60 countries and in none of them have I seen television programming as destructive as Brazil's."

Similarly, in his own diocese of El Salvador, Cardinal Moreira Neves has confronted the syncretic "religion" of the Afro-Brazilian cults. After participating in the Special Assembly of the Synod of African Bishops in April 1994, he commented that Christianity should celebrate its second millennium with a worthy act such as pardoning the debts of the poorest Third World nations.

The election of the cardinal to the CNBB presidency, which includes the greatest number of Catholic bishops in the world after that of the United States, and the election of Bishop Raimundo Damasceno to the post of secretary general, is a major setback to the plans of the Theology of Liberation faction of the Catholic Church to force the resignation of the pope, part of an effort to seize control of the papacy for itself. This strategy was clearly expressed by Brazilian Cardinal Aloisio Lorscheider, a leading "liberationist," who in a "slip of the tongue" claimed that Pope John Paul II was gravely ill with irreversible cancer; at the time, it was Cardinal Moreira Neves who categorically denied it.

That episode was perhaps the beginning of the end for the Brazilian liberationists, who were overconfident of being able to continue their control over the CNBB that they had exercised for the past 24 years. However, as can be seen in the violent reactions against Cardinal Moreira Neves's election to the presidency of the CNBB, the battle is by no means over.

On the day the CNBB's new president was chosen, then-president Bishop Luciano Mendez de Almeida, recently defeated in his bid for the presidency of the Latin American Bishops Council (CELAM), prohibited circulation among the gathered bishops of the day's newspapers, because the majority of the media was already nervously predicting Cardinal Moreira Neves's election. When his election was

indeed confirmed, newspapers such as *Folha de São Paulo* were openly appalled at the fact that the Brazilian church would have an ally of Pope John Paul II as its spokesman. Also stunned was Bishop Pedro Casaldaliga, a Marxist fanatic and ally of both Fidel Castro and of the "Red Bishop" of Chiapas, Mexico, Samuel Ruiz, who protested that "Don Lucas has personal relations with the pope and Don Damasceno was chosen by the papal nuncio."

Such is the arrogance of the liberationists that one of theirs, Bishop of Volta Redonda Waldir Calheiros, a known sponsor of the Workers Party and its affiliated labor federation CUT, had the nerve to publicly comment that "they may have changed the body of the car, but the motor remains the same." His reference to the "motor" has to do with the liberationists' eagerness to control the Pastoral Bishops Commission within the CNBB. In fact, they have already managed to impose Bishop Marcelo Carnevali in the post dealing with laymen. The bishop is one of the oldest allies of Mexican Bishop Samuel Ruiz, since the 1970s, when they met in New York under the protection of the Maryknoll order.

With Cardinal Moreira Neves at the helm of the CNBB, it can be expected that the most fanatic leaders of Brazil's Theology of Liberation will undertake more radical actions, drawing on the pastoral "base communities" under their control as well as on elements of the Workers Party and pro-terrorist Landless Movement.

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