

Title: Lay Movements and Politics in Peru

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Abstract: This project aims to describe and analyze the relation between some Catholic associations and movements and their political orientation, with particular emphasis on the relation between their doctrinal teachings and political conduct.

Research Project Description

This project aims to examine the relation between lay movements and politics in Peru. From *Christifideles Laici*, which invites the laity to have a mature presence in public life, to *Aparecida* which expressly maps out ways to overcome the crisis of Catholic identity in politics, a key theme is the importance of understanding this call for the social and political engagement of Christians and to overcome a dualistic mentality. This mentality conceives of the human person as divided within itself and which sees the world in terms of opposite poles: church-world, body-soul, prayer-action, spirituality-commitment, etc. This in turn has given rise to a false spirituality that takes refuge in the sacred and which avoids commitments and ethical demands in the temporal. Concretely, there is no articulation between faith and political commitment.

There are some movements within the church which aim to legitimize an apolitical worldview. The Aparecida meeting rejected this attempt to privatize faith which comes down to an attempt to reduce the dynamics of faith to the intimacy of the individual conscience. Aparecida spoke very clearly about the presence of the laity in the world and its mission to transform reality from the perspective of the Gospel. It spoke of the laity as partners in implementing the values of the Kingdom and who are called upon to “participate in the discernment, decision making, planning and execution” of the mission to bring about the Kingdom (Aparecida Document, 385).

This project will examine the different roles which lay movements are assuming or are likely to assume in the current political situation in Peru (in the wake of the Truth and Reconciliation report, the Bagua crisis which involved a clash between the police and native Amazonian groups, and election year politics). We will examine the cases of the Sodalitium Christianae Vitae (Sodality of Christian Life), founded in Peru, the Christian Life Community (associated with the Jesuits, also in Peru), and Equipos Docentes (a

movement of educators) born in France at the end of the Second World War, and in Peru for some time.

Methodology

A review will be made of the current literature and interviews with knowledgeable observers will be conducted.

Anticipated Results

An article for an academic journal.

Academic Contribution

To analyze the impact of a Christian formation in this movements as regards their participation in the public sphere (civic participation, politics, etc.). This is a relatively unexplored theme.

Publication Outlets:

Academic Journals

Listening: Journal of Religion and Culture

Publications geared for a broader non-academic audience:

Páginas (Peru)

Testimonios (Peru)

Criterio (Argentina)