

REFORM, HISTORICAL CONSCIOUSNESS, AND VATICAN II'S AGGIORNAMENTO

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THE TURBULENCE into which Vatican II threw the Catholic Church was due not only to the abruptness with which its reform was thrust upon us. It was due as well to the fact that in our consciousness no paradigms of reform were operative which were appropriate to the reality we began to experience.¹ Despite the incalculably great impact the idea of reform has had on the thought and practice of the Western Church, theological reflection upon it has been minimal and its history has never been fully written.² The practical repercussions of this situation have not been happy. An almost despairing confusion has hallmarked Catholicism since Vatican II's *aggiornamento* got under way. Religious life, for instance, seemed to explode in our faces as religious orders attempted to fulfil the Council's directive to update the authentic spirit

¹ Even today little serious literature explicitly treats the idea of *aggiornamento*. Bernard J. F. Lonergan, S.J., makes some perceptive observations in his brief "Existenz and Aggiornamento," in *Collection: Papers by Bernard Lonergan, S.J.* (ed. F. F. Crowe, S.J.; New York, 1967) pp. 240-51. See also the lecture by Christopher Butler, O.S.B., "The Aggiornamento of Vatican II," in *Vatican II: An Interfaith Appraisal* (ed. John H. Miller, C.S.C.; Notre Dame, Ind., 1966) pp. 3-13.

² In recent years, however, some important studies have appeared. The work of Gerhart B. Ladner deserves special mention: *The Idea of Reform: Its Impact on Christian Thought and Action in the Age of the Fathers* (Cambridge, Mass., 1959); "Die mittelalterliche Reform-Idee und ihr Verhältnis zur Idee der Renaissance," *Mitteilungen des Instituts für österreichische Geschichtsforschung* 60 (1952) 31-59; "Two Gregorian Letters: On the Sources and Nature of Gregory VII's Reform Ideology," *Studi gregoriani* 5 (1956) 221-42; "Vegetation Symbolism and the Concept of Renaissance," in *De artibus opuscula XL: Essays in Honor of Erwin Panofsky* 1 (ed. Millard Meiss; New York, 1961) 303-22; "Religious Renewal and Ethnic-Social Pressures as Forms of Life in Christian History," in *Theology of Renewal 2: Renewal of Religious Structures* (ed. L. K. Shook, C.S.B.; Montreal, 1968) 328-57; "Reformatio," in *Ecumenical Dialogue at Harvard* (eds. Samuel H. Miller and G. Ernest Wright; Cambridge, Mass., 1964) pp. 172-90. In the same *Harvard Dialogue*, see the article by Martin A. Schmidt, "Who Reforms the Church?" pp. 191-206, and the report by Giles Constable, "Seminar III: Reformatio," pp. 330-43. See also Yves M.-J. Congar, O.P., *Vraie et fausse réforme dans l'église* (Paris, 1950); Jeffrey Burton Russell, *Dissent and Reform in the Early Middle Ages* (Los Angeles, 1965); Nelson H. Minnich, S.J., "Concepts of Reform Proposed at the Fifth Lateran Council," *Archivum historiae pontificiae* 7 (1969) 163-251; Robert E. McNally, S.J., "Pope Adrian VI (1522-23) and Church Reform," *ibid.*, pp. 253-86. I myself have tried to explore various aspects of the problem as these were illustrated in the thought of a single individual: Giles of Viterbo on *Church and Reform: A Study in Renaissance Thought* (Leiden, 1968).

of their founders. What the Council failed to tell religious was *how* that authentic spirit was to be discovered, verified, and then updated or applied to "the times." The great "Council of *Aggiornamento*" did not possess or try to formulate a system of categories which was adequate to its *aggiornamento* and which would have helped us cope with the radical problematic the Council was about to ignite.

At the time of the Council we did not think to ask from it any consistent theoretical foundation for *aggiornamento*, because most of us were not even aware of the importance of having one. In view of the lack of sufficient previous academic reflection upon reform, the request would have been futile. Moreover, the news media made us cognizant of the fact that the Council's decrees were committee documents, full of compromise and deliberate ambiguity. For good reasons the decrees often eschewed technical theological language, and they did this with a realization that this procedure entailed a loss of precision and system. The Council's pastoral concerns meant that its documents were often constructed more with the hope of appealing to the affective priorities of men of good will than with the intention of satisfying any need for theory, even granted that providing theory was within the Council's competence.

Of all the affective needs felt by Catholics at the time the Council opened in 1962, few were more urgent among Europeans and Americans than the recognition that the Catholic cultural ghetto had to be terminated and a new attitude towards the "world" had to be assumed. The Council tried to respond to this need. Perhaps the most striking characteristic of Vatican II is the scope of its concerns. The Council wished to speak "to all men," as the Constitution on the Church in the Modern World succinctly informs us.³ In a word, Vatican II took greater note of the world around it than any previous council, and it assumed as one of its principal tasks "colloquies" and conversation with that world.⁴ Its pastoral concerns were thus broadened far beyond the confines of the Catholic Church to a universal, cosmic horizon.⁵ The Council was fully aware, therefore, that the Church was *in* the world, and it wanted the Church to act in accordance with the consequences of that awareness.

The Council registered its awareness of the world in at least four ways, none of them developed by any previous council. First, the Council in general evaluated the "world" positively and with some optimism.⁶

³AAS 58 (1966) 1026. See also *ibid.* 54 (1962) 8, as well as Paul VI's allocution to the Council, Sept. 29, 1963, *ibid.* 55 (1963) 847, 854-58. Except where otherwise indicated, all translations are my own.

⁴See AAS 58 (1966) 1010, 1058.

⁵See AAS 54 (1962) 794; 58 (1966) 947.

⁶It speaks repeatedly, for instance, of the world's social, scientific, technological, and educational "progress": AAS 58 (1966) 728, 729-30, 837, 848, 854, 1078-79. The Council's optimism about "the world," however, is not unqualified: *ibid.* 58 (1966) 704, 843, 1017, 1022, 1032, 1036, 1054-55.

Second, this positive attitude towards the world is explained by the Council's desire to see the Church be of spiritual service to the world and even to help it to its temporal fulfilment; the Church wanted to make itself an effective presence in secular society for the upbuilding of the city of man as well as for the upbuilding of the city of God.⁷ Third, the Council was aware that the Church-world relationship was not unidirectional in its influence; the Church is profoundly affected by the cultures in which it finds itself.⁸ Fourth, the Council appropriated John XXIII's judgment that human society was "on the edge of a new era"; the Council wanted the Church to prepare itself to be a vitally formative influence in the "new era."⁹

From such an awareness of the world it was an easy step to the decision to make some changes in the Church in order to put it into a more effective relationship with the world. This awareness, indeed, was the psychological matrix capable of producing the idea of *aggiornamento*. Consequently, we easily accepted the idea and felt no need to probe deeply into its implications. We failed to grasp the profound shift from previous Catholic thinking on reform which was implied by Vatican II's decision to take "accommodation to the times" as the fundamental axiom of its reform.

Given the incomplete state of studies on the idea of reform, it is precarious to generalize. Nevertheless, two distinguished historians of religious reform, Hubert Jedin and the late Delio Cantimori, have independently ventured the opinion that the perennial spirit of Catholic reform was accurately epitomized by a prior general of the Augustinian order, Giles of Viterbo (1469-1532), in his inaugural address at the Fifth Lateran Council: "Men must be changed by religion, not religion by men."¹⁰ What Vatican II's *aggiornamento* called for was precisely the opposite. It determined that religion should be changed by men, in order to meet the needs of men. Today, some years after the close of the Council, a minimalist interpretation of Vatican II's "accommodation to

⁷ See AAS 57 (1965) 38, 42, 47; 58 (1966) 729, 732, 735, 739, 842-44, 862, 1060.

⁸ See AAS 57 (1965) 17; 58 (1966) 732, 968, 973-74, 1030, 1057, 1059, 1064-65, 1079.

⁹ John makes this statement in his Apostolic Constitution "Humanae salutis" convoking the Council, Dec. 25, 1961, AAS 54 (1962) 6; tr. *The Documents of Vatican II* (ed. Walter M. Abbott, S.J.; New York, 1966) p. 703 (henceforth referred to simply as *Documents*). The Decree on the Bishops quotes the Pope verbatim, AAS 58 (1966) 674. See also *ibid.*, pp. 13-14, 17, 1027, 1075, as well as 54 (1962) 789.

¹⁰ H. Jedin, *A History of the Council of Trent* 1 (New York, 1957) 169; D. Cantimori, *Eretici italiani del Cinquecento* (Florence, 1939) p. 6; Mansi 32, 669: "homines per sacra immutari fas est, non sacra per homines." See also Adriano Prosperi, *Tra evangelismo e controriforma* (Rome, 1969) p. 181, and my *Giles of Viterbo*, esp. pp. 179-91.

the times" no longer seems possible, no matter what the intentions of the Council fathers were. In the breadth of its applications and in the depth of its implications, *aggiornamento* was a revolution in the history of the idea of reform.

The profound implications of *aggiornamento* cannot be understood apart from the problem of contemporary historical consciousness. As in every species of the idea of reform, the *aggiornamento* of Vatican II had to deal with the question of the relationship between the past and the present. Such a relationship is implied in the very word *aggiornamento*. At every critical juncture in the Council this relationship was alluded to, usually in the form of an assurance that no substantial change was being made in the patrimony of the past.

Vatican II consistently described *aggiornamento* in terms of adjustment or accommodation. It took its cue from John XXIII's delimitation of the Council's task in his allocution opening the first session, Oct. 11, 1962, as that of introducing "appropriate emendations" into the Church.¹¹ On the question of doctrine, the Pope's often quoted description of the permissibility, and even necessity, of dressing up the old truths in new words indicates the mentality which was operative.¹² The conservative intent of the Pope's words is more than suggested by the fact that they seem to allude to the Dogmatic Constitution on the Catholic Faith of Vatican I.¹³ What the Council attempted to do, and what it urged others to do after it, was to "return to the sources" of Christian life.¹⁴ The purpose of this return was to see to it that in making pastoral accommodations to the modern world, even to the extent of introducing "new forms" and "innovations" and of making generous allowance for variety, only that would be changed from the past which was properly subject to change.¹⁵ But events have shown how impossible it was to contain the dynamism of *aggiornamento* within what now seem to be the modest, perhaps even minimalist, bounds the Pope and the Council generally seemed to intend.

This brings us to the heart of the problem of Vatican II and, indeed, of any Christian reform. How are we to know what from the past can be changed? How is the present to deal with the past, and what legitimate hold does the past have on the present? What is historical authenticity,

¹¹ AAS 54 (1962) 788.

¹² AAS 54 (1962) 792. The Constitution on the Church in the Modern World quotes the Pope, *ibid.* 58 (1966) 1083. See n. 71 below.

¹³ *Conciliorum oecumenicorum decreta* (eds. Giuseppe Alberigo *et al.*; 2nd ed.; Rome, 1962) p. 785 (henceforth cited simply as *ConOecDecr.*)

¹⁴ AAS 58 (1966) 703.

¹⁵ See AAS 54 (1962) 9; 56 (1964) 97, 105-6, 110, 114; 58 (1966) 706, 713, 720, etc.

and what bearing does it have on the present? Later in this article we hope to propose some partial answers to these questions. But before we arrive at that point, it is essential to our understanding of Vatican II and to our appreciation of the problem which modern historical consciousness has thrust upon us that we try to disclose how the Council itself thought about the past. What forms of historical thinking were operative in the Council's proposed *aggiornamento*? Perhaps a helpful first step in trying to understand these forms in Vatican II would be a review of the idea of reform as it emerges in broad outline from the documents of the twenty ecumenical councils which preceded it.

THE EARLY COUNCILS

In the interest of brevity we shall consider the early councils from Nicaea (325) to Constantinople IV (869-70) synoptically. The basic justification for such a grouping is that they all occurred in the context of the culture of Late Antiquity, and a gap of almost two and a half centuries separates Constantinople IV from Lateran I (1123), the first of the Western and medieval councils.

Constantinople I speaks of the need of some churches for "emendation," and Chalcedon speaks of the need for "correction" in certain provinces. The former instance seems to refer to a restoration to doctrinal health of those areas touched by heresy;¹⁶ the latter refers to disciplinary correction, required because of a failure to hold regular episcopal synods.¹⁷ Even Nicaea speaks of the need to "amputate" and "cut off" certain unjustified customs which have sprung up.¹⁸ In Constantinople IV, moreover, we have several allusions to the Church as "the Lord's field" from which scandal and weeds must be uprooted.¹⁹

What these councils are particularly conscious of is their continuity with previous Christian belief and practice and of their solemn obligation to preserve these unchanged. Subsequent councils, for instance, are careful to affirm their adherence to the faith of earlier ones.²⁰ In disciplinary matters they call for the implementation of the *antiqua lex*, *antiqua consuetudo*, and *canonica traditio*.²¹ When Chalcedon decides to invest the city of Constantinople with an ecclesiastical primacy, it justifies its action with the argument that it is following the precedent set by the "ancient fathers" in establishing the primacy of the "great Rome."²² In more general terms, the present follows the example of the

¹⁶ *ConOecDecr*, p. 22.

¹⁷ *ConOecDecr*, p. 72.

¹⁸ *ConOecDecr*, pp. 12, 14.

¹⁹ *ConOecDecr*, pp. 136, 140, 151. Cf. Mt 13:24-25.

²⁰ See *ConOecDecr*, e.g., pp. 60, 63, 84, 98, 100, 103.

²¹ See *ConOecDecr*, e.g., pp. 8, 11, 28, 66, 67, 73, 153, 155.

²² *ConOecDecr*, p. 76. See also *ibid.*, p. 28.

past.²³ No more accurate and succinct summary can be found of what these councils felt they were about than the statement of Nicaea II concerning its teaching on images: "We subtract nothing; we add nothing; we simply preserve unsullied all that the Catholic Church holds."²⁴

Upon what presuppositions are these decisions and affirmations based? In general, they can be said to betray certain attitudes towards the past and be best understood in the context of these attitudes. First, past doctrine is normative and irreformable. Cyril's letter to Nestorius, approved by Ephesus, speaks of it as *irreprehensibilis*,²⁵ and Chalcedon speaks of the *inerrabilis patrum fides*.²⁶ Second, the councils are keenly aware of their own doctrinal and disciplinary continuity, and even identification, with earlier Christian teaching and practice. Apart from heretics or local bad custom, there is no suggestion of discontinuity or discrepancy between past and present.²⁷ Novelty is expressly rejected.²⁸ Third, the only change recognized is a change for the worse localized in particular individuals or areas, but not found in the Church as a whole. Fourth, the remedy for this individual or local deviation is removal or excision of the sick members or bad practice. Thus we have the image of the Lord's field, from which the weeds of bad doctrine or bad custom must be uprooted while leaving the good plants to grow unhindered. Fifth, in both Constantinople I and Constantinople IV we have the suggestion that the healing of disease and the removal of weeds will restore the Church to a condition of purity which she earlier had enjoyed—*prisca sanitas* and *puritas antiqua*.²⁹ Sixth, the past provides us with examples of how we are to conduct ourselves in the present, as in the case of trying to determine what is appropriate ecclesiastical dress.³⁰

THE MEDIEVAL COUNCILS

As we move to the medieval councils between the period of the Gregorian Reform and the Great Western Schism, viz., from Lateran I (1123) to Vienne (1311–12), it is more difficult to detect the attitudes towards the past which were operative. However, there are indications that the sense of continuity was strong, as in Lyons I (1245), where Pope Innocent IV identifies himself with St. Peter and his prerogatives.³¹ Such an attitude tallies perfectly with what we know from elsewhere about historical

²³ See *ConOecDecr*, e.g., p. 84 (Constantinople II): "antiquis exemplis utentes."

²⁴ *ConOecDecr*, p. 110: "nihil adimimus, nihil addimus, sed omnia quae catholicae sunt ecclesiae immaculata servamus . . ."

²⁵ *ConOecDecr*, p. 36. ²⁶ *ConOecDecr*, p. 59.

²⁷ See *ConOecDecr*, e.g., pp. 27, 38–39, 47, 55, 56, 83–84, etc.

²⁸ See *ConOecDecr*, p. 113. ²⁹ See *ConOecDecr*, pp. 22, 136.

See *ConOecDecr*, p. 127. See also *ibid.*, p. 84. ³¹ *ConOecDecr*, pp. 256, 275.

thought during this period.³² From such knowledge we are led, moreover, to interpret Constitution 14 from Lyons I as suggesting a theory of moral decline in history, *hominum succrescens malitia*.³³

What is more significant is that the word *reformare* appears for the first time in conciliar vocabulary during this period, and beginning with Lateran IV (1215) it becomes an insistent repetition. Such development was a consequence of the Gregorian Reform movement, with the awareness it produced that an improvement of morals and a return to a more ancient legal discipline was incumbent upon the whole Church. What the Gregorian Reform suggested for the first time was that not just a few isolated individuals or localities had deviated from the norm, but that moral and legal abuses were widespread, almost universal.³⁴

In these councils reform was directed against bad morals and bad custom or discipline.³⁵ The same metaphors of weeds and sickness are employed as in the earlier councils.³⁶ What is distinctive of these councils, however, is the belief that certain abuses were common to almost the whole Church. As Lyons I says in Constitution 14: "Because this particular sickness is almost general, we thought it appropriate to apply a general remedy."³⁷ Thus the Gregorian idea that the Church as a whole might be subject to reform emerged in conciliar documents.

Furthermore, in Constitution 50 of Lateran IV we have the first unmistakably clear conciliar statement that a change in discipline (*statuta humana*) may be required by a change in "the times."³⁸ This statement is remarkable not only for its bald affirmation of the necessity of adjustment to different conditions, and therefore its suggestion of historical differentiation, but also because it provides an extremely helpful criterion for deciding when a change in discipline should be effected: when required by *urgens necessitas vel evidens utilitas*.³⁹ Moreover, Lateran makes it clear that uniformity of rite and custom is by no means required of all Western Christians, and that bishops must make suitable provision for the

³² See, e.g., Eva M. Sanford, "The Study of Ancient History in the Middle Ages," *Journal of the History of Ideas* 5 (1944) 21-43, and Peter Burke, *The Renaissance Sense of the Past* (New York, 1969) pp. 1-20.

³³ *ConOecDecr*, p. 264. See, e.g., Ladner, "Reformatio," pp. 182-83.

³⁴ See, e.g., Ladner, "Reformatio," pp. 172-73.

³⁵ See *ConOecDecr*, e.g., pp. 174, 190, 191, 212, 217, 218, 225, 266, 285, 290, 332.

³⁶ See *ConOecDecr*, e.g., pp. 187, 225, 264, 266, 319.

³⁷ *ConOecDecr*, p. 264: "Proinde quia morbus iste quasi communis irrepsit, dignum duximus communem adhibere medelam."

³⁸ *ConOecDecr*, p. 233: "Non debet reprehensibile iudicari, si secundum varietatem temporum statuta quandoque varientur humana, praesertim cum urgens necessitas vel evidens utilitas id exposcit, quoniam ipse Deus ex his quae in veteri testamento statuerat, nonnulla mutavit in novo." See also *ibid.* (Vienne) p. 319.

³⁹ See also canon 16 of Lateran III (1179), *ConOecDecr*, pp. 195-96.

fact that *sub una fide* there will exist *varii ritus et mores*.⁴⁰ The authentic Christian spirit, therefore, is capable of being expressed in more than one way.

Medieval conciliar reform thought climaxed in intensity at the Councils of Constance (1414–18) and Basel (1431–37). At Constance the seemingly all-inclusive formula emerged in the call for “reform of the Church in faith and morals, in head and members.”⁴¹ This reform was only imperfectly distinct from the question of ending the Schism and, as regards doctrinal reform, even less distinct from the question of the condemnation of Wyclif and Hus. Basel also issued the call for a reform “in head and members.”⁴² This same idea was expressed equally clearly when Basel called for a “general” or a “complete” reformation.⁴³ Thus the idea of a reform of the whole Church reached full expression. The process of reform was still described in terms of healing disease and uprooting weeds from the field of the Lord.⁴⁴ Even though the practice of Communion under only one species was recognized as at variance with what took place at the Last Supper and with the practice of the primitive Church, Constance justifies it with the significant statement that it was introduced “for a good reason” (*rationabiliter*) and therefore would be retained.⁴⁵ Fidelity to primitive practice is thus not a norm for reform which was absolute.

The Council of Ferrara–Florence–Rome (1438–45) was principally concerned with the reunion with the “Greeks” and with securing Eugene IV’s position over the latter phase of the Council of Basel. For these reasons, as well perhaps as for their by now potentially conciliarist ring, the bold phrases “general reformation” and “reform in head and members” do not appear in the Council’s documents. The high tide of medieval conciliar reform had passed. However, the reunion with the Eastern Church can reasonably be considered a reform undertaking. In such a light, the principle which the Council employed to allow each Church to retain its traditional phraseology for describing the relationship of the Father and the Son to the Holy Spirit is important: under different formulas the same truth is expressed.⁴⁶ Avery Dulles finds this statement significant in the

⁴⁰ *ConOecDecr*, p. 215: “Quoniam in plerisque partibus intra eandem civitatem atque dioecesim permixti sunt populi diversarum linguarum, habentes sub una fide varios ritus et mores, districte praecipimus ut pontifices huiusmodi civitatum sive dioecesum, provideant viros idoneos. . . .”

⁴¹ *ConOecDecr*, p. 383: “. . . ecclesia sit reformata in fide et in moribus, in capite et in membris.” See also *ibid.*, pp. 384, 385, 392.

⁴² See *ConOecDecr*, p. 433.

⁴³ See *ConOecDecr*, pp. 403, 414, 432, 449.

⁴⁴ See *ConOecDecr*, pp. 440, 443, 445.

⁴⁵ *ConOecDecr*, p. 395.

⁴⁶ *ConOecDecr*, pp. 501–2: “. . . et ad eandem intelligentiam aspicientibus omnibus sub diversis vocabulis. . . . Et cum ex his omnibus unus idem eliciatur veritatis sensus,

question of doctrinal reform, and he feels it implies a "principle of dogmatic pluralism" which was later lost sight of during the Counter Reformation.⁴⁷

Lateran V (1512-17) spoke often of the need for a reform of morals, for a general reform, and for a reform "even of the Curia"; it also published several reform bulls.⁴⁸ But there is nothing new in its images and terminology to suggest a difference in presuppositions from preceding councils. Perhaps the most telling observation we can make concerning the Council's documents is that the cautious reform proposals and their even more cautious implementation sit ill with its seemingly clear awareness that the "times" were particularly bad and had fallen into decline.⁴⁹

THE COUNCIL OF TRENT

This awareness of living in evil times appears in a significantly intensified form in the documents of the Council of Trent (1545-63). On at least three occasions the Council speaks of its age as calamitous and elsewhere in unmistakable terms alludes to its particularly trying circumstances.⁵⁰ From the context of such statements we are forced to infer that the Council fathers felt a considerable decline had occurred from a better, more tranquil past when morals were purer and truth under less severe attack.

The Council, therefore, called for reform, which along with the publication of its doctrinal decrees was to be its program for settling the disturbed ecclesiastical situation. The reform it called for, we must note, was not a reform of doctrine or even a reform of the Church, but a reform of the morals "of the clergy and Christian people."⁵¹ In other words, it was to be a reform of morals *in* the Church.⁵² This reform was to be effected principally by a restoration of discipline. The idea of "restoration" (*res-tituere, revocare, innovare*) appears often in the Council documents, and in context it must be interpreted in the sense of revitalizing the discipline or canons of an earlier age in the hope of reproducing once again the pre-

tandem in infrascriptam sanctam et Deo amabilem eodem sensu eademque mente unionem unanimiter concordarunt et consenserunt." See AAS 57 (1965) 103.

⁴⁷ "Dogma as an Ecumenical Problem," THEOLOGICAL STUDIES 29 (1968) 409-10.

⁴⁸ See *ConOecDecr*, pp. 571, 574, 585, 628.

⁴⁹ See *ConOecDecr*, pp. 578, 581, 583, 590, 610-11. On the question of the widespread conviction in this period that the times were worse than they had ever been, see my "Historical Thought and the Reform Crisis of the Early Sixteenth Century," THEOLOGICAL STUDIES 28 (1967) 531-48.

⁵⁰ See *ConOecDecr*, pp. 669, 761, 774, as well as pp. 641, 647, 712, 730.

⁵¹ *ConOecDecr*, p. 636: "ad reformationem cleri et populi christiani"; p. 657: "depravatosque in clero et populo christiano mores emendandos."

⁵² *ConOecDecr*, p. 640: "et instaurandis in ecclesia moribus"; p. 658: "et reformandis in ecclesia moribus."

sumably better morals of that age.⁵³ Even in the critical question of episcopal residence, the Council affirms in Session 6 that it is renewing the "ancient canons, which have fallen into almost total desuetude due to injury suffered from men and the times."⁵⁴

On questions of doctrine and sacramental practice no previous council ever insisted so forcefully as Trent on the identification of the present with the apostolic age or on the unchanging nature of the intervening tradition. When Trent in effect affirmed that in the Catholic Church "the ancient, absolute, and in every respect perfect (*omni ex parte perfecta*) faith and doctrine" of the Eucharist had been retained, it was only making fully explicit for one aspect of its teaching what underlies all its doctrinal pronouncements.⁵⁵ There was no question of a reform of doctrine. Though the Council "reforms morals," it only "confirms dogmas."⁵⁶ The Canon of the Church's Mass is "pure of all error," and its sacramental rites are from apostolic times.⁵⁷ The Council is careful to reject the view that the anointing of the sick or the secret and integral sacramental confession of sins might be mere human inventions.⁵⁸ What Christ and the apostles handed on, the Church retains and has always retained unchanged.⁵⁹ Before Trent the text from John's Gospel concerning the Spirit's ongoing teaching mission (14:26) was used on occasion to explain a growth or increase of understanding of truth in the Church; Trent quotes it in favor of the Church's faithful conservation of apostolic teaching.⁶⁰

Trent's insistence on the identification of its teaching with that of Christ and the apostles and its corresponding insistence that the intervening tradition was undeviating is not adventitious. Sometime during the period between the Gregorian Reform and the outbreak of the Protestant Reformation there began to develop a historical sense which recognized discontinuity with the past.⁶¹ Hence the need was felt for a "renaissance," for a rebirth of something which once was but existed no longer. This need was felt in many areas of life and culture. Petrarch, for instance, gave

⁵³ See *ConOecDecr*, e.g., pp. 658, 663, 665, 698, 699, 712, 726, 760.

⁵⁴ *ConOecDecr*, p. 658: "antiquos canones (qui temporum atque hominum iniuria paene in dissuetudinem abierunt) . . . innovare."

⁵⁵ *ConOecDecr*, p. 708: "ut vetus, absoluta atque omni ex parte perfecta de magno eucharistiae mysterio in sancta catholica ecclesia fides atque doctrina retineatur."

⁵⁶ *ConOecDecr*, p. 640: "in confirmandis dogmatibus et in instaurandis in ecclesia moribus."

⁵⁷ *ConOecDecr*, p. 710, and see also, e.g., pp. 660, 679, 688, 689, 710, 730.

⁵⁸ See *ConOecDecr*, pp. 681, 683, 687.

⁵⁹ See *ConOecDecr*, e.g., pp. 640, 647, 657, 669, 711, 718.

⁶⁰ *ConOecDecr*, p. 669. See *ibid.*, p. 792, for a similar idea in Vatican I. See also my "Giles of Viterbo: A Sixteenth-Century Text on Doctrinal Development," *Traditio* 22 (1966) 445-50.

⁶¹ See, e.g., Ladner, "Reformatio," pp. 173, 176-77.

classic expression to it in the area of literature, and he is thereby credited with being the first person to achieve a sense of anachronism. Thus germinated the modest beginnings of modern historical consciousness.⁶²

By the time the Reformation broke out, many men in Western Europe had enough information and a sufficiently developed sense of history to think they could recognize serious discrepancies between the belief and practice of the New Testament and what they saw in the Church of their own day. In the Reformation controversies, as is clear from the famous epistolary debate between Calvin and Sadoletto, the Protestants found it to their advantage to press these real or apparent discrepancies, while the Catholics felt compelled to defend their unbroken and authentic conservation of the apostolic past.⁶³ Trent may occasionally soften its language, as when referring to the origins of indulgences, the doctrine on purgatory, and the practice of venerating saints,⁶⁴ or like Constance it may defend the administration of the Eucharist under only one species despite an acknowledged discrepancy with the practice of the early Church,⁶⁵ but it never swerves from the principle that the Church teaches and has always taught the apostolic truth, the whole apostolic truth, and nothing but the apostolic truth.

What Trent attempted was a moral reform of the Christian people and a reaffirmation of the Church. Constance and Basel repeatedly spoke of a "reform of the Church," but Trent never once uses the phrase.⁶⁶ The documents of Trent imply an operative distinction between the Church and the members of the Church. Individual members were subject to heresy, and according to the documents almost the whole membership seems to have been in need of serious moral regeneration. But the Church itself was as pure in its moral teaching, disciplinary practice, and sacramental rites as it was in its dogma. Individual Christians might defect and almost the whole body of Christians might suffer moral breakdown, but the Church, in an existence somehow and somewhere independent of its members, was imperturbably stable in doctrine, discipline, and rite.

VATICAN I

In Vatican I explicit mention of reform occurs only twice. The first in-

⁶² See Myron P. Gilmore, *Humanists and Jurists* (Cambridge, Mass., 1963) pp. 5-19; Jaroslav Pelikan, *Historical Theology* (New York, 1971) pp. 33-43; Donald R. Kelley, *Foundations of Modern Historical Scholarship: Language, Law, and History in the French Renaissance* (New York, 1970); and Burke, *op. cit.*

⁶³ See John Calvin and Jacopo Sadoletto, *A Reformation Debate* (ed. John C. Olin; New York, 1966), and William J. Bouwsma, "Three Types of Historiography in Post-Renaissance Italy," *History and Theory* 4 (1964-65) 303-14, esp. 306-9.

⁶⁴ See, e.g., *ConOecDecr*, pp. 750, 772.

⁶⁵ See *ConOecDecr*, pp. 702-3.

⁶⁶ *ConOecDecr*, pp. 383, 384, 385, 420, 445, etc.

stance is in the formal decree opening the Council, which repeats almost verbatim the formula for the opening of Trent and hence speaks of "reform of the clergy and Christian people" as a purpose of the Council.⁶⁷ The second instance is in the negative sense in the Dogmatic Constitution on the Church. The definitions of the Roman pontiff are declared irrefutable.⁶⁸ Vatican I merits a place among the least reform-minded councils we have surveyed.

The Council is adamant in its conviction that apostolic doctrine has been faithfully transmitted in the Church and adamant in its sense of continuity with the past, even to the point of finding the doctrine of papal infallibility there.⁶⁹ At the same time the Council does admit, with all sorts of cautious safeguards, that "growth" and "progress" in understanding dogma are possible.⁷⁰ In the context of an age fascinated by the idea of organic biological evolution and of the historical progress of the human race, and twenty-five years after the first edition of Newman's *An Essay on the Development of Christian Doctrine*, an ecumenical council for the first time admits that, in some minimal sense, doctrinal development or progress is a possibility. Change, even doctrinal change, might therefore in some form or other legitimately take place.⁷¹

VATICAN II

Vatican II takes more explicit notice of history than any council before it. The Constitution on the Church, though it never loses sight of the transcendent aspect of the Church, insists that the Church truly enters the history of men.⁷² With Christ described as "the key, center, and end of all human history," we discern that the Council is attempting to treat of religious truth in its historical dimension with as much earnestness as had traditionally been applied to its metaphysical dimension.⁷³

As in the case of the twenty ecumenical councils which preceded it, Vatican II evidences a strong sense of continuity with the past and a desire to remain true to it. Continuity of faith, spiritual gift, and evangelical tradition from the primitive Church to the present day are often as-

⁶⁷ *ConOecDecr*, p. 778. See *ibid.* (Trent) p. 636.

⁶⁸ *ConOecDecr*, p. 792.

⁶⁹ See *ConOecDecr*, e.g., pp. 782, 788, 789, 791-92.

⁷⁰ See *ConOecDecr*, e.g., pp. 785, 787, 792.

⁷¹ *ConOecDecr*, p. 785: "Crescat igitur et multum vehementerque proficiat, tam singulorum, quam omnium, tam unius hominis, quam totius ecclesiae, aetatum ac saeculorum gradibus, intelligentia, scientia, sapientia: sed in suo dumtaxat genere, in eodem scilicet dogmate, eodem sensu, eademque sententia." See nn. 12 and 13 above.

⁷² AAS 57 (1965) 14; see also Avery Dulles' observations, *Documents*, p. 11, as well as M.-D. Chenu, O.P., "The History of Salvation and the Historicity of Man in the Renewal of Theology," in *Theology of Renewal 1: Renewal of Religious Thought*, 153-66.

⁷³ AAS 58 (1966) 1033. See also *ibid.*, p. 1066.

served.⁷⁴ This is a continuity which even stretches back to Israel and will continue until the end of time.⁷⁵ The undeviating nature of the tradition which intervened between the time of the New Testament and the present is confirmed by Vatican II's repeated affirmation of its continuity with previous councils, especially with Trent and Vatican I.⁷⁶

The Council on several occasions makes explicit that the course of the Church's history is under the guidance of providence.⁷⁷ More specifically, the Council employs the Eusebian description of the historical process as a "preparation for the gospel," as an unfolding of a carefully prepared divine plan which presumably enjoys the continuity of beginning, middle, and end.⁷⁸ This providential care for the history of the Church in the form of "preparation for the gospel" in the history of Israel climaxed when the gospel was born. The Council recognizes the lifetime of Christ and the period of the apostolic Church as a special moment in its history, and it is to the New Testament, as to the pre-eminent monument of that moment, that recourse must ever be had. It is not without significance that the Council often speaks of antiquity as "venerable."⁷⁹

At any rate, along with turning to the past for the content and norm of its present belief and practice, Vatican II invokes "examples" from the past to serve as patterns for the present. History provides material for edification and compelling precedent for present patterns of behavior. Thus, the faithful are to perform the ancient devotional practices in honor of Mary, and the faithful of the Eastern Churches are urged to recite Lauds, *exempla maiorum secuti*.⁸⁰ The pre-eminent "example" history provides, of course, is that of Christ Himself, and the Council accordingly encourages the faithful to the "following of Christ."⁸¹

More than any previous council, Vatican II was aware of change in the world, aware of how the conditions of modern life differed from what went before. There is in the Council a sense of change and a perspective on the temporal order which expressed itself in the forward-looking term "progress." The Council applied this same term to the Church, so that for the first time growth, progress, and development become major conciliar themes. The continuity with the past of which Vatican II was aware was in

⁷⁴ See AAS 57 (1965) 12, 24-25, 27, 39, 44, 55, 58; 58 (1966) 702, 706, 845, 952, etc.

⁷⁵ See AAS 57 (1965) 6, 7-8; 58 (1966) 742, 825.

⁷⁶ See AAS 54 (1962) 8; 57 (1965) 5, 22, 57; 58 (1966) 727, 817.

⁷⁷ AAS 56 (1964) 112; 57 (1965) 28; 58 (1966) 702.

⁷⁸ See AAS 57 (1965) 59; 58 (1966) 818, 824, 825. See also *ibid.* 57 (1965) 20; 58 (1966) 948, 950, 1059, as well as *Commentary on the Documents of Vatican II* 3 (ed. Herbert Vorgrimler; New York, 1968) 248-49.

⁷⁹ See AAS, e.g., 57 (1965) 28, 76, 78; 58 (1966) 706.

⁸⁰ AAS 57 (1965) 66, 83. See also *ibid.*, pp. 28, 46, 48, 79; 58 (1966) 692, 709, 1021.

⁸¹ See AAS 57 (1965) 45; 58 (1966) 708, 841.

many instances a developmental continuity, as the Council's appropriation of Eusebius suggests.

The immediate inspiration for the idea of progress is not hard to find. John XXIII's optimistic view of history, which he expounded for the Council on two distinct occasions, could not have failed of effect.⁸² More fundamentally, especially over the course of the last century, men have learned to think in patterns of progress, evolution, and development, as the Constitution on the Church in the Modern World itself points out.⁸³ We should not be surprised, therefore, if such patterns are applied to the Church to help explain the phenomenon of change of which the Church had become increasingly aware.

This "progress of the People of God" is sometimes spoken of in just such general terms.⁸⁴ At other times it is applied to something as specific as liturgical changes or growth in devotion to Mary.⁸⁵ But the area to which it is most frequently applied is that of doctrine. Alongside Vatican II's repeated allusions to a progress, evolution, maturation, or growing understanding of doctrine, Vatican I's few lines on the subject seem grudging indeed.⁸⁶

Although "development of doctrine" is a recurring theme of the Council, and although John Courtney Murray once described it as "*the* issue underlying all issues" at Vatican II, the Council gives us very little help in understanding *how* "development" takes place.⁸⁷ The old conciliar figure of the Church as the Lord's field practically disappears from the pages of Vatican II, and it is replaced especially by "People of God" and "Mystical Body of Christ." In conjunction with this latter term, we often find the words "increase" and "augment" in the Council's documents, but it is not always easy to specify just what is increasing or augmenting.⁸⁸ In the context of the body metaphor, at any rate, the model of organic growth is suggested, and the Council occasionally refers explicitly to the organic nature of the Church's life and constitution.⁸⁹ However, the Council never explicitly associates doctrinal development with a model of organic growth.

Vatican II is just as vague concerning the process by which the general "progress" of the Church takes place as it is concerning the "development of doctrine." As a matter of fact, the term "progress" is less frequently used to describe what is happening in the Church than are the tra-

⁸² AAS 54 (1962) 6, 789.

⁸³ AAS 58 (1966) 1029, 1076.

⁸⁴ AAS 58 (1966) 731. See also *ibid.* 57 (1965) 65.

⁸⁵ AAS 56 (1964) 106; 57 (1965) 65.

⁸⁶ See AAS 57 (1965) 13, 16, 59, 107; 58 (1966) 738, 821, 862, 930, 935, 938-39, 1085.

⁸⁷ "This Matter of Religious Freedom," *America* 112 (Jan. 9, 1965) 43 (his italics).

⁸⁸ See AAS, e.g., 57 (1965) 11; 58 (1966) 690, 707.

⁸⁹ See AAS 57 (1965) 26-27; 58 (1966) 674, 684, 855.

ditional descriptions of "renewal," "renovation," and "rejuvenation" (*renovare, instaurare, iuvenescere*).⁹⁰ These terms in themselves suggest cyclic or repetitive patterns of history rather than linear progress.

The one traditional term which is practically absent from the Council's documents is the word "reform" or "reformation." It occurs only once in connection with the Church.⁹¹ We can only speculate as to the reasons for the avoidance of this term. Its association with Protestantism would possibly be a factor. But perhaps a deeper reason is that, in contrast with the other terms, it connotes a process whereby something is corrected which was wrong. Precisely such an admission the Council makes great effort to avoid, as was dramatically clear in its refusal to admit a real reversal in the Church's teaching on religious liberty and in its well-publicized hesitation to admit guilt in the persecution of the Jews. When the Declaration on Non-Christian Religions asks the Christians and Moslems to heal their dissensions by "forgetting the past," the cynic might well see in this exhortation a convenient solution which the Church is ready to apply to all too many situations.⁹² It would seem that however "renovation" or "progress" is to take place, it is not by means of a critical review of past teaching and practice which would clear the way for the future by frankly admitting faults and mistakes.

But such a harsh judgment would not be fully verified in every instance. In the Decree on Religious Life we can find prescriptions for a critical revision (*recognoscere*) of rules, etc.,⁹³ and in the Constitution on the Liturgy we find similar prescriptions for a revision of the liturgical books in the light of "accurate historical, theological, and pastoral" investigations.⁹⁴ It is the Decree on Ecumenism, however, that comes closest to providing for a change *in melius* through recognition of past and present failures. While speaking of faults committed against unity, it on two occasions admits in a generic way that Catholics have to bear their share of the blame.⁹⁵ And on two further occasions it calls for "reform." In the first instance "reform" is made synonymous with "renovation," and in

⁹⁰ See AAS 56 (1964) 97, 104, 105; 57 (1965) 7, 14, 81, 95; 58 (1966) 703, 704, 713, 739, 1010, etc.

⁹¹ AAS 57 (1965) 97. The word "reformation" is used several times in the Council documents with reference to the temporal order: *ibid.* 58 (1966) 1085, 1087, 1094, 1105. The Council also repeats the *irreformabilis* of Vatican I concerning papal ex-cathedra pronouncements: *ibid.* 57 (1965) 30. On this problem see Carl E. Braaten, "The Second Vatican Council's Constitution on the Church," *Dialog* 4 (1965) 136-39, esp. 138.

⁹² AAS 58 (1966) 742. See the acute observations, esp. on the question of religious liberty, by Lukas Vischer, "The Question of Contradiction and Continuity," *Dialog* 5 (1966) 201-8.

⁹³ AAS 58 (1966) 704, 705.

⁹⁴ AAS 56 (1964) 98, 107, 114, and esp. 106. See also *ibid.* 57 (1965) 57.

⁹⁵ AAS 57 (1965) 92-93, 97. See also *ibid.*, p. 95, as well as 58 (1966) 938.

context it seems to refer especially to the personal reform of the individual Christian.⁹⁶ The second instance, however, for the first time in a conciliar document since the Council of Basel, clearly speaks of "reform of the Church." It deserves quotation in full:

Christ summons the Church, as she goes her pilgrim way, to that continual reformation of which she always has need, insofar as she is an institution of men here on earth. Therefore, if the influence of events or of the times has led to deficiencies [*quae minus accurate servata fuerint*] in conduct, in Church discipline, or even in the formulation of doctrine (which must be carefully distinguished from the deposit itself of faith), these should be appropriately rectified at the proper moment.⁹⁷

Several comments are in order concerning the above statement. (1) It is the Church which is to be reformed, not the Christian people. (2) It is a reforming which is ongoing, "continual," so that we can infer that there will never be a time when "conduct, discipline, and doctrine" will arrive at a condition of perfection which will render them "irreformable."⁹⁸ (3) Although the phrase *quae minus accurate servata fuerint* is not an overwhelmingly abject admission of fault or mistake, it does form a remarkable contrast with Trent's description of its doctrine of the Eucharist as *omni ex parte perfecta*. (4) The very description of the Church as in pilgrimage suggests the lowly, precarious, and human character of its strivings and hence suggests its need for reform.

This description of the Church as in pilgrimage is closely related to the Council's description of the Church as the "People of God."⁹⁹ This is the favorite and characteristic description of the Church in the Dogmatic Constitution on the Church, and it has been interpreted as signifying a breakdown of the old dichotomy between the Church and the Christian people which allowed the Church to be without fault and untouched by history while the Christian people sin and are subject to the "injury of time."¹⁰⁰ The Church truly accepts its historicity and tries to bring its ecclesiology

⁹⁶ AAS 57 (1965) 94.

⁹⁷ *Documents*, p. 350; AAS 57 (1965) 96-97: "Ecclesia in via peregrinans vocatur a Christo ad hanc perennem reformationem qua ipsa, qua humanum terrenumque institutum, perpetuo indiget; ita ut si quae, pro rerum temporumque adiunctis, sive in moribus, sive in ecclesiastica disciplina, sive etiam in doctrinae enuntiandae modo—qui ab ipso deposito fidei sedulo distingui debet—minus accurate servata fuerint, opportuno tempore recte debiteque instaurentur." See also *ibid.*, p. 95, and *Commentary on Vatican II 2*, 95-98.

⁹⁸ See also AAS 57 (1965) 12, Constitution on the Church: "... Ecclesia in proprio sinu peccatores complectens, sancta simul et semper purificanda, poenitentiam et renovationem continuo prosequitur." See Richard P. McBrien, *Do We Need the Church?* (New York, 1969) pp. 145-48.

⁹⁹ See, e.g., AAS 57 (1965) 94; 58 (1966) 938, 1065.

¹⁰⁰ See, e.g., Manfred Hoffmann, "Church and History in Vatican II's Constitution

into closer accord with its anthropology. Such an interpretation has a great deal to be said for it, and it contains profound implications for the idea of reform. But the Council nowhere explicitly ratifies such an interpretation, nor does it effectively relate the "People of God" concept to reform of the Church in doctrine and discipline.¹⁰¹

AGGIORNAMENTO AND HISTORICAL CONSCIOUSNESS

How can we, therefore, briefly describe Vatican II's *aggiornamento*? We can say that the desire to bring the Church up to date and to make it effective in the contemporary world was the pervasive theme of the Council. Such a desire argues a greater alertness to historical and cultural differences than any previous council had shown. In its pervasiveness and implications *aggiornamento* marked a revolutionary shift in reform thinking as religion was changed by and for men in order to accommodate these new historical and cultural differences. In this respect Vatican II stands in marked discontinuity with the councils which preceded it. The fact that the Council fathers spoke of their experience in terms of a new Pentecost suggests some awareness among them that the Council had radical implications.¹⁰² What the Council documents insist upon, however, is that the accommodations which the Council wanted to effect did not change the venerable patrimony of the Christian past, nor did they break the stream of faithful continuity with the apostolic age.

Despite the fact that the Council on several occasions recognized that the world was undergoing dramatic social and cultural transformations, it speaks of its own changes in the reassuring language of adjustment. The very purpose of the changes should be reassuring: they are pastoral in nature, putting the Church at the more effective spiritual and temporal service of the world. Even more reassuring should be the fact that these changes were effected under the providential guidance of the Church's history and as part of the upbuilding and renewal of the Body of Christ or reform of the pilgrim People of God.

The problem with *aggiornamento* as we have just described it is that it fails to provide a solution to the fundamental question which the very word implies: the relationship of the past to the present. Or better, since we do not normally expect a council to provide us with a full-blown theory, we should simply be aware of the fact that Vatican II's *aggiornamento*

on the Church: A Protestant Perspective," THEOLOGICAL STUDIES 29 (1968) 191-214, esp. 199-201.

¹⁰¹ The closest the Council comes is a statement in the Declaration on Religious Liberty, AAS 58 (1966) 938 (Article 12), but the distinction between "People of God" and "Church" is still operative in it.

¹⁰² See, e.g., Butler, "Aggiornamento," p. 6, as well as AAS 54 (1962) 13.

did not grow out of an understanding of the relationship of past to present which was common to all the fathers of the Council, nor did it project its changes onto a Church which had such a common understanding. The results were cataclysmic. Catholicism as we knew it is not simply adjusting to the present. It is being transformed into something different, even while clinging to the soft word *aggiornamento*.

The documents of Vatican II make it perfectly clear that a number of different styles of historical consciousness were operative in the Council, styles not always easily reconcilable with one another. Moreover, the Council failed to take adequate account of what is most characteristic of contemporary historical thinking, such as the emphasis on discontinuity with the past and the subjectivism resulting from an awareness of the historical conditioning of the historian himself. Thus the relationship of past to present was never resolved. In fact, it was never even raised in a manner to satisfy contemporary thinking on the nature of history. Yet, in this question of the idea of reform, the relationship of past to present is crucial. In the absence of a consistent understanding of it, the Council's fundamental injunction to remain faithful to the authentic past while adjusting to contemporary needs was transformed from a practical norm for reform into an explosive problematic.

At any rate, the basic problem raised by *aggiornamento* will be better understood if we now try to see it as part of a larger pattern. We shall try to describe various styles of reform as they relate to various styles of historical thought or philosophies of history which were operative in the councils and, finally, try to suggest the style of reform thinking which is required by our contemporary historical consciousness.

The first style of historical thinking which we encountered wanted to see the Church as immune to process or to change in doctrine and discipline. The Church moves through history unaffected by history. This style of thinking is sometimes described as "classicism."¹⁰³ R. G. Collingwood described it even more aptly as "substantialism" and saw it as the chief defect of Greco-Roman historiography.¹⁰⁴ What it is intent upon is celebrating the voyage through history of some enduring sub-

¹⁰³ See, e.g., Lonergan, "Existenz," pp. 247-48, and John Courtney Murray, S.J., "The Problem of Religious Freedom," *THEOLOGICAL STUDIES* 25 (1964) 560. Practically the same thing is meant by the "two-story" or the "ontocratic" view of the universe. See, e.g., George A. Lindbeck, "A Protestant Point of View [on *Lumen gentium*]," in *Vatican II* (n. 1 above) pp. 220-21, and Josef Smolik and the Concilium General Secretariat, "Revolution and Desacralization," *Concilium* 47 (1969) 175-76.

¹⁰⁴ *The Idea of History* (New York, 1956) pp. 42-45. For a more detailed study of historical thinking in antiquity, which emphasizes its variety and especially the awareness of progress, change, and discontinuity in many sources, see Ludwig Edelstein, *The Idea of Progress in Classical Antiquity* (Baltimore, 1967).

stance which is really untouched by history. Rome, for instance, was such a substance for Livy. In conciliar terms, the unchanging substance of the Church is clearly distinguished from the contingencies which affect at least some of its members. This style does not admit that change exists except in the form of certain external challenges to the existence of the substance. These challenges could conceivably destroy the substance, but they cannot intrinsically modify or change it.

In the case of the Church, heretics or evil custom have been such challenges. The Church's duty in these cases is to excise or "uproot" them, so that the Church can continue its course through history. The purpose of such doctrinal and moral reform is not change, but to preserve from change a substance which really should not be subject to change in the first place. If the Church is conceived principally as a doctrinal society, doctrine is the primary object of such protection. This style of historical thinking can perhaps best be described as metaphysical, i.e., not historical at all.

In the early Christian era substantialistic historical thinking itself underwent a significant change when it confronted the idea of a providential guidance of the course of events.¹⁰⁵ Eusebius' *Praeparatio evangelica* would be an example of this style. Although the idea of a providence guiding history tolerated and perhaps even suggested the idea of development and stages or periods in a master plan, it had a large dose of substantialism in it as it was actually practiced, especially as substantialistic thinking related to the enduring character of Christian dogma, moral teaching, and the structure of ecclesiastical government.

What was characteristic of this providentialism in the Middle Ages was that it made God the principal agent in history.¹⁰⁶ Man proposed but God disposed. Thus what happened in the past was endowed with a superhuman and even sacred quality. If the earlier substantialistic historical thinking was incapable of recognizing change, providential thinking made legitimate change the work of God alone. Any change introduced by man was sacrilegious. True reform, therefore, consisted in removing threats to the sacred. Men were to be changed by religion, not religion by men. Whatever human element was recognized in the past tended to be identified with what was strictly accidental. It was an appendage, an external dressing, which could be modified or adjusted in the case of *urgens necessitas vel evidens utilitas*. What was permissible was "emendation," to use the word of Constantinople I and of John XXIII. This emendation could take the form of modification of something already in existence, or even

¹⁰⁵ See Collingwood, *Idea of History*, pp. 46-56. See also, e.g., Pelikan, *Historical Theology*, p. 7, on the "progress in religion," i.e., growth without change, in Vincent of Lerins.

¹⁰⁶ See Collingwood, *Idea of History*, pp. 48, 55.

the introduction of something new, e.g., a new regulation or penalty, especially if thereby an old custom or discipline would be reinforced. But the sacred patrimony was to be kept untouched. Metaphysical thinking now combined with metahistorical thinking.

Sacred metahistory could easily incorporate into itself the Roman idea, notably revived in the Renaissance, that history was nothing else than philosophy teaching by example, especially moral example.¹⁰⁷ History in this view has an ethical, edifying, or exhortatory purpose. The record of the past was viewed as a storehouse of *exempla* from which one drew prescriptive patterns of action which were directly transferable to the present situation. If the lives of illustrious orators and statesmen were examples to be imitated, how much more worthy of imitation were the examples of the saints and especially of the Saint of saints! The behavioral patterns of the sacred past were under the special guidance of providence and therefore provided models of behavior which were beyond criticism.

What is common to all three styles of historical thinking we have been describing is their minimal awareness of change, especially of change in the sense of the "new." This does not mean that change had not taken place. It simply means that men did not have the perspectives to recognize it as having taken place. The result was that the past was seen, not on its own terms, but exclusively according to the realities of the present. That is why medieval Englishmen, Frenchmen, and Germans thought they were Romans.¹⁰⁸ No change, therefore, was desirable or necessary in the present, for none had taken place in the past.

There was another style of antique thinking which did recognize change, but it was change in the form of decline from an earlier and better state or condition. This style is generally described as "primitivism."¹⁰⁹ The idea of such a decline or fall was expressed in the story of Adam and Eve as well as in Hesiod's myth of the golden age. Conciliar documents

¹⁰⁷ See Gilmore, *Humanists and Jurists*, pp. 14-37, and esp. George H. Nadel, "Philosophy of History before Historicism," in *Studies in the Philosophy of History* (ed. George H. Nadel; New York, 1965) pp. 49-73.

¹⁰⁸ See Burke, *Renaissance Sense of the Past*, esp. 6, 18-20, and J. M. Wallace-Hadrill, *The Barbarian West: The Early Middle Ages* (New York, 1962) p. 146. See also Edmund Schlink, "A Protestant View of the Vatican Council Schema *De ecclesia*," *Dialog* 3 (1964) 140.

¹⁰⁹ See Arthur O. Lovejoy and George Boas, *Primitivism and Related Ideas in Antiquity* (New York, 1965) esp. pp. 1-102, as well as, e.g., George Boas, *Essays on Primitivism and Related Ideas in the Middle Ages* (Baltimore, 1948); Mircea Eliade, *Cosmos and History: The Myth of the Eternal Return* (New York, 1959) esp. pp. 112-30; Jürgen Moltmann, *Religion, Revolution, and the Future* (New York, 1969) esp. pp. 21-25; Harry Levin, *The Myth of the Golden Age in the Renaissance* (Bloomington, Ind., 1969); and my article, "Fulfillment of the Christian Golden Age under Pope Julius II," *Traditio* 25 (1969) 265-338.

suggest an earlier period of Christianity as the golden age, which by its presumed purity stands as a norm, model, and ideal for all that follows. Reform is effected by a return to it. Despite what we might think at first glance, primitivism can be reconciled with the other forms of historical thinking we have described. The decline can be restricted to just one aspect of reality, such as morals, or it can be applied to "men" as distinct from the divine society to which they belong. As applied to Christianity in the later Middle Ages, it was precisely these adaptations which at times primitivism underwent.¹¹⁰

The style of reform which is appropriate to primitivism is "rejuvenation," "revival," "rebirth," and even "reform" itself. This style of historical thinking recognizes change for the worse, a decline from an earlier and presumably normative state or condition. It was in the context of a secularized application of this style that the idea of a "renaissance" of arts and literature was born in Italy in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. Reform consists, therefore, in breathing new life into what has wilted, in healing what is sick, in reconstructing what has disappeared. The pattern of history, if it is not to be utterly pessimistic, is cyclic or repetitive, and it looks to the past for its substance and norms.¹¹¹

What distinguishes decline-history from the others we have seen is that it takes account of change. It realizes that the present is different from the past. Thus it has a sense of distance from the past and a perspective on it. The late Erwin Panofsky noted how the sense of historical perspective influenced painting and sculpture during the Renaissance: medieval artists who worked from literary sources dressed ancient gods or heroes in medieval costumes, whereas the Renaissance recognized that such a procedure was not "historically true."¹¹² Between the times of the Romans and the present there was an intervening something, a "middle age," which was different. To recover the Roman past, Renaissance men realized they had to leap over what had intervened. In other words, what was gradually dawning was a sense of discontinuity in history.

As was mentioned earlier, the first Protestants exploited this discovery of discontinuity to the disadvantage of their Catholic counterparts. The Catholics were often willing to acknowledge a discontinuity in the standard of moral behavior in the Church, but not in its enduring substance. Both parties, in any case, looked backwards to the early Church as to a

¹¹⁰ See, e.g., my *Giles of Viterbo*, esp. pp. 108, 179-91, and Bouwsma, "Three Types of Historiography," pp. 306-9.

¹¹¹ See Burke, *Renaissance Sense of the Past*, pp. 87-89.

¹¹² *Renaissance and Renaissances in Western Art* (New York, 1969) esp. pp. 42-113. See also Gilmore, *Humanists and Jurists*, pp. 9-10.

period of special purity in doctrine and morals.¹¹³ What especially distinguished Catholics from Protestants was their belief that the intervening tradition was continuous, homogeneous, undeviating, and therefore just as "venerable" as the early Church itself.

The Enlightenment threw history's goal into the future and gave nineteenth-century historiography its orientation towards "progress."¹¹⁴ The philosophers and historians of this period accepted the idea of change, of discernible and coherent pattern, and of golden age. They transformed these ideas by secularizing them and by turning them around to make them forward-looking. In searching for models to explain progress, they easily turned in the nineteenth century to ideas of evolution and organic growth.¹¹⁵ They were thus able to explain both change and continuity. The present was still found in the past. The present was the best explanation of the past, for it showed where the past was naturally tending all the time.

The most distinguished and sophisticated Catholic work of the nineteenth century which shows the influence of this style of thinking was Newman's *Essay on the Development of Christian Doctrine*. Present reality is the term towards which earlier reality naturally tended. According to at least one critic of Newman, entelechy is the key to his system: "a thing's true nature is best revealed in its later history and final state: in becoming a butterfly the chrysalis becomes itself."¹¹⁶ Authentic change is never by way of reversal, but only by way of further development of the already existing.¹¹⁷ Doctrinal reform is by way of growth or accretion, never by way of rejection of what has gone before. In the early years of the present century such thinking had a natural affinity for the conception of the Church as the Mystical Body of Christ, which was then gaining prominence and which continued to dominate Catholic thinking on the nature of the Church until the very eve of Vatican II.¹¹⁸

In summary, we can say that we have seen a number of styles of histor-

¹¹³ See, e.g., Calvin and Sadoletto, *Reformation Debate*; John P. Dolan, *History of the Reformation* (New York, 1967) esp. p. 26; John M. Headley, *Luther's View of Church History* (New Haven, 1963) esp. pp. 162-94.

¹¹⁴ See John Edward Sullivan, *Prophets of the West* (New York, 1970) pp. 21-87.

¹¹⁵ See e.g., Sullivan, *Prophets*, pp. 79, 86, and Willson H. Coates and Hayden V. White, *An Intellectual History of Western Europe 2: The Ordeal of Liberal Humanism* (New York, 1970) 133-68.

¹¹⁶ Anthony A. Stephenson, S.J., "Cardinal Newman and the Development of Doctrine," *Journal of Ecumenical Studies* 3 (1966) 467. See John Henry Newman, *An Essay on the Development of Christian Doctrine* (Garden City, N.Y., 1960) pp., e.g., 121, 135, 164.

¹¹⁷ See Jaroslav Pelikan, *Development of Christian Doctrine: Some Historical Prolegomena* (New Haven, 1969) p. 145. See also Butler, "Aggiornamento," p. 11.

¹¹⁸ See Hoffmann, "Church and History," pp. 195-98.

ical thought which have conditioned the idea of reform as we have known it in the past. These styles all appear or are suggested in the documents of Vatican II. What all these "philosophies of history" have in common is that they are traditional or conservative as regards the past. We can list, for instance, five reform procedures which such styles of thinking allow: (1) reform by excision or suppression (keep what you have by removing threats to it); (2) reform by addition or accretion (keep what you have untouched, but add new things alongside it); (3) reform by revival (keep what you have by breathing new life into it); (4) reform by accommodation (keep what you have by making adjustments for differences in times and places); (5) reform by development (keep what you have, but let it expand and mature to its final perfection). What is notably absent from this listing, of course, is reform by transformation or even by revolution, for both of these imply at least a partial rejection of the past in the hope of creating something new. In practice, Vatican II's *aggiornamento* has been just such a transformational or revolutionary reform. But much of our present confusion concerning it is due to the fact that we have not as yet explicitly related this transformational or revolutionary practice to an adequate contemporary philosophy of history.

CONTEMPORARY HISTORICAL CONSCIOUSNESS

The possibility of the "new" has been opened up by modern historical consciousness.¹¹⁹ This is the style of historical thinking which has its remote origins in the Renaissance discovery of discontinuity, but whose implications are being worked out only in our own day. Its immediate academic history, therefore, stretches from von Ranke or Dilthey to the present. Hence it is associated with the elusive problematic known as historicism, even though it is by no means identified with it.¹²⁰ There has, of course, been considerable disagreement even among historians about the implications of modern historical method and historical consciousness. Today, however, perhaps enough convergence of views has taken place to allow us to speak of some of them compositely as a "contemporary philosophy of history." Since some understanding of this philosophy is essential to our topic, I shall attempt a brief description of what

¹¹⁹ See, e.g., Giulio Girardi, S.D.B., "The Philosophy of Revolution and Atheism," *Concilium* 36 (1968) 109-22, esp. 118.

¹²⁰ On historicism see Sullivan, *Prophets*, pp. 89-162; H. P. Rickman's "General Introduction" to Wilhelm Dilthey, *Pattern and Meaning in History* (ed. H. P. Rickman; New York, 1961) pp. 11-63; Hajo Holborn, "Wilhelm Dilthey and the Critique of Historical Reason," in *European Intellectual History since Darwin and Marx* (ed. W. Warren Wagar; New York, 1966) pp. 56-88; Arnaldo Momigliano, *Studies in Historiography* (New York, 1966) pp. 105-11, 221-38; John Cobb, "Towards a Displacement of Historicism and Positivism," *Concilium* 57 (1970) 33-41.

seems to me characteristic of it.¹²¹

Contemporary philosophy of history is based upon one fundamental presupposition: history as a *human* phenomenon. By history is meant both past reality as it actually happened and the reconstruction or understanding of that reality as it takes place in the historian's mind and imagination. Contemporary philosophy of history labors to explore the implications of this fundamental presupposition.

What are some of these implications? First, the scope of the historian's inquiry, insofar as he is a historian, is the past *as human*, i.e., the past as it resulted from human passions, decisions, and actions. This means that for the historian the past is radically contingent and particular. Just as each person is different from every other, so is each event, each culture. In this sense history can never repeat itself, for the same contingent concatenation of human factors can never be reassembled. Each word, document, event is historically and culturally conditioned, radically individualized, and understandable as history only insofar as it is unique and the result of man's more or less free action and decision.

The result of this approach to the past is that it is desacralized. Events are seen as the result of human and contingent causes, not as the result of divine interventions. If you will, the past is "deprovidentialized," as every effort is made to explain it as the result of human and earthly factors. God may have hardened Pharaoh's heart, but the historian is interested only in the contingent social, economic, and psychological factors which were at work on Pharaoh. These factors, as the results of human passion and decision, inject discontinuity into history; for man is capable of reversing himself, of changing direction, and thus of being discontinuous with himself.

The historian, accordingly, becomes deeply aware of the discontinuity in the past, and he is forced to remove from his consideration any overarching divine plan. Indeed, historicism was born out of disillusionment with attempts to discover and expose such plans either in their sacral or secularized forms.¹²² The past is human. This means it is to be under-

¹²¹The description is my own synthesis of what I believe the best contemporary thinkers are saying about history and method, as this is verified in my personal experience and reflections as a historian. I refer the reader especially to Hans-Georg Gadamer, *Le problème de la conscience historique* (Louvain-Paris, 1963); H. Stuart Hughes, *History as Art and Science* (New York, 1964); Wolfhart Pannenberg, "Hermeneutics and Universal History," in Wolfhart Pannenberg *et al.*, *History and Hermeneutic* (New York, 1967) pp. 122-52; Richard E. Palmer, *Hermeneutics: Interpretation Theory in Schleiermacher, Dilthey, Heidegger, and Gadamer* (Evanston, Ill., 1969), as well as Collingwood, *Idea of History*, and Leon J. Goldstein, "Collingwood's Theory of Historical Knowing." *History and Theory* 9 (1970) 3-36.

¹²²See, e.g., Rickman's "General Introduction" to Dilthey's *Pattern and Meaning*, pp. 25-26.

stood in terms of man, who is free and contingent and who has not masterminded a coherent pattern for the history of his race. Biological models for man's course through time are just as inappropriate as elaborate metaphysical ones. They imply that whatever is new in the present is simply the natural unfolding of the potential of the past. They make inadequate allowance for human freedom. In philosophy of history as well as ecclesiology, we must bring our theory into agreement with our anthropology. Evolutionary progress is an inappropriate postulate; for it hypostasizes history apart from man, who is capable of reversing himself.

What modern historical method enables us to understand more clearly than was ever understood before, therefore, is that every person, event, and document of the past is the product of very specific and unrepeatable contingencies. These persons, events, and documents are thus contained within very definite historical limits. By refusing to consider them as products of providence or as inevitable links in a preordained chain of historical progress, decline, or development, we deprive them of all absolute character. We relativize them.

The importance of such relativization is clear when we consider the alternative. If a reality of the past is not culturally relative, it is culturally absolute. It is sacred and humanly unconditioned. There is no possibility of a critical review of it which will release the present from its authoritative grasp. Contemporary philosophy of history relativizes the past and thus neutralizes it.

What this means is that we are freed from the past. We are free to appropriate what we find helpful and to reject what we find harmful. We realize, perhaps to our dismay, that we cannot simply repeat the answers of the past, for the whole situation is different. The question is different. We are different.

The historian's realization that he is different from previous generations is simply a further ramification of his realization of man's radical historicity. What the contemporary historian is very much aware of is that he himself is *in* history and cannot step outside it as he searches the past. He himself is culturally conditioned. He does not bring pure intellect to his research. He brings a mind filled with questions, methods, prejudices, and personal quirks which are the result of his own personal cultural and psychological history. History in the sense of man's understanding of his past is thus further relativized—relativized by the contingency of the historian's own understanding.

The contemporary historian, therefore, cannot subscribe to the crude objectivism of his predecessors, as expressed, for instance, by von Ranke. *Wie es eigentlich gewesen* is beyond his grasp. This means that the definition of what an "authentic" interpretation of the past is must be considerably relativized too. To speak of it as something that intelligence and

good will can capture in its entirety and articulate once and for all is to remove authenticity from the realm of human capabilities. A further element of discontinuity is thereby injected into our understanding of the past. Not only has the past been removed from some superplan, but it also is now subject to the discontinuity of insight which will be operative between one historian and another or between one generation and another. Thus we can with truth speak of a "changing" or even a "new" past.

Finally, the great cultural repercussion of contemporary historical thinking is the realization that, if the past imposes no pattern upon us, we are free to try to create the future. Our freedom is, of course, limited. The fact still remains, however, that if we are freed from the past in the sense of not expecting it to tell us what to do, we are free to make our own decisions for the future. Indeed, we have no escape from such freedom, fraught as it is with dreadful burdens.

HISTORICAL CONSCIOUSNESS AND REFORM

What remains to be done is to examine what "contemporary historical consciousness," i.e., the realization of man's radical historicity, means for the problem of reform. In the first place, if we are to think rationally about reform, we must "demythologize" our style of historical thinking. Our consciousness must be purified of "substantialism," "primitivism," etc. When I say we should purify our understanding, I do not mean we should jettison the truth which these forms of historical thinking tried to express but could do so only in an unhistorical way. For instance, what is common to all these earlier approaches to history is their emphasis on historical continuity. The fact is that there *is* a strong continuity in history, whether we are speaking of history as past human reality itself or as historians' understanding of the past reality. As regards the latter, there are at least three sources for continuity: (1) continuity of the documentary evidence, e.g., the primary documents for any Christian reform, the Word of God as contained in the canonical Scriptures, are now textually verified and major textual changes seem most unlikely; the hard core of data in these documents acts upon the scholar and thereby imposes limits upon "interpretation," i.e., upon discontinuity; (2) continuity deriving from the fact that the basic operations of the human mind do not radically change from culture to culture; (3) continuity of "tradition," i.e., the historians are produced by an earlier generation of historians and hence are culturally linked to them; this is the other side of the fact that the historian himself cannot step outside of history. What is to be corrected in Catholic reform thought, therefore, is the exclusiveness of its emphasis on continuity.¹²³ With such an exaggerated emphasis as we have had

¹²³ This particularly Catholic tendency to refuse to recognize the discontinuities in

until now, we have been inhibited from undertaking a really critical review of the past so that a new break for the future could logically be opened up.¹²⁴

A critical review of the past implies at least the possibility of rejecting the past, i.e., of acknowledging that there were certain realities *quae minus accurate servata fuerint*. It seems to me that such an acknowledgement is permissible if we correctly make use of contemporary philosophy of history. In the first place, this philosophy denies entelechy as a reliable principle of interpretation. An institution or an idea could have developed otherwise, for it is the product of human and contingent causes. To reply that providence ordained such a development simply removes the institution or idea from the area of human examination and hence silences both the historian and the theologian. If some given historical reality *could* have developed otherwise, and if we are still human agents operating in *human* history, we are free to change and even to reverse the direction of that reality if we so choose. What I am talking about, of course, is revolution, a term which historians use to describe certain phenomena which have occurred in the Church but which ecclesiastical documents never employ except in a pejorative sense.

In the second place, the contemporary historian realizes that data is subject to many "interpretations." That is, different scholars and different ages will have different questions encased in different presuppositions to address to the data. Therefore, they will evoke from the data different answers. What we are doing, obviously, is divesting the very concept of "authenticity" of a rigidly objective character. When Vatican II enjoined upon religious orders that they should follow the "mind of the founder," the supposition seemed to be that there was one authentic expression of that mind which could be discovered once and for all and then be adjusted to today's needs.¹²⁵ Such an approach to authenticity needs to be tempered by at least two considerations. First, although we hope for an ever more accurate understanding of the past as we labor for it in research and discussion, we realize we shall never fully appropriate any

history is being increasingly criticized. See Vischer, "Contradiction and Continuity;" Hoffmann, "Church and History"; and Francis Oakley, *Council over Pope* (New York, 1969), where the refusal to admit radical discontinuities in history is described as "a classic Catholic stratagem," p. 134. Bernard J. F. Lonergan, S.J., ascribes much of the blame for "the present [unsatisfactory] situation in the Church" to the Catholic "classicist" mentality: "The Response of the Jesuit, as Priest and Apostle, in the Modern World," Vol. 2, no. 3 of *Studies in the Spirituality of Jesuits* (St. Louis, 1970) 105. In this connection see AAS 58 (1966) 1077, Decree on the Church in the Modern World.

¹²⁴ See, e.g., Leonard Swidler, "What Can History Do for the Church?" *Journal of Ecumenical Studies* 4 (1967) 128-32, and F. Houtart and F. Hambye, "The Socio-Political Implications of Vatican Council II," *Concilium* 36 (1968) esp. 91-92.

¹²⁵ See AAS 58 (1966) 988, as well as 703, 711, etc.

past reality in its totality and on its own terms. No insight will perfectly exhaust the data's intelligibility, most especially if the "data" is God's self-communication in revelation. Any authenticity, therefore, is at least somewhat partial and incomplete. Unlike Trent, we realize that our authenticity will not be *omni ex parte perfecta*. Secondly, we realize that authenticity is not perfectly distinct from relevancy. The only meaningful questions we can ask the past are ones which are somehow relevant to our own needs and interests, and these needs and interests vary with different individuals, generations, and cultures.¹²⁶ As Michel de Certeau observed a few years ago, "En changeant, nous changeons le passé."¹²⁷

We are thus brought to the final implication that contemporary philosophy of history has for reform. It teaches us that we must create the future.¹²⁸ In other words, it forces upon us the realization that, in the case of Christian reform, understanding of the past, howsoever authentic it might be, is not enough. Reform is also a practical matter. It requires not only understanding but also a translation of understanding into reality through our powers of imagination and creativity.

Imagination and creativity must enter every reform if it is not to be utterly irrelevant and dreary beyond human endurance. As a matter of fact, creativity has been at the heart of every successful reform and renaissance, even when men sincerely believed that they were doing nothing else than transposing the past into the present.¹²⁹ Creativity, which is radically opposed to slavish imitation, implies both utilization of the past and rejection of the past. The outcome of creativity, in any case, is something *new*.

We have seen that we have to allow for a considerable difference of emphasis in our "authentic" insights into the past. Even greater variety will surface when it comes to the question of translating insight into action, i.e., of producing that creative transformation which is genuine reform. At this juncture what is required is decision. What is required is to choose one or other practical course of action, after respective merits have been reviewed. What is not required is further reflection provoked by the misapprehension that, because a variety of options is offered as "authentic," "the true mind" has not as yet been discovered.

¹²⁶ The Council itself touched on this question, *AAS* 57 (1965) 103; 58 (1966) 823-24.

¹²⁷ "L'Épreuve du temps," *Christus* 13 (July, 1966) 314.

¹²⁸ Man's power over the future and his responsibility towards it is pivotal, for instance, in Teilhard de Chardin's understanding of history. See Piet Smulders, S.J., "Teilhard and the Future of Faith," *Theology Digest* 27 (1969) 327-37, esp. 330-31.

¹²⁹ Examples of such a misapprehension on the part of reformers are not hard to find. One of the best in ecclesiastical history is certainly the case of Pope Gregory VII, whose reform began the transformation of the papacy into the centralized monarchy which has perdured to our own day. See, e.g., Brian Tierney, *The Crisis of Church and State, 1050-1300* (Englewood Cliffs, N.J., 1964) esp. pp. 47-48.

The *aggiornamento* of Vatican II was our starting point. What I have tried to show is that, in the context of the philosophies of history upon which it seems to have rested, it is an inadequate expression of what is required today and, indeed, of what is actually happening today. We are not experiencing a "reform" as that term is traditionally understood as a correction, or revival, or development, or even updating. We are experiencing a transformation, even a revolution.

As we are all keenly aware, such a transformation or revolution raises immense practical and theoretical questions. This article certainly did not intend to satisfy these questions except by helping to clarify one aspect of the relationship of past to present and future. What we tried to do was to put the question of Christian reform into the context of various philosophies of history which have conditioned it in the past, and then to suggest how the problematic changes if reform is put into the context of contemporary philosophy of history. Such philosophy helps us to interpret more accurately what is happening. At least it should disabuse us of the illusion that the past will tell us what to do and that we do not have to be as decisive and creative as our Christian predecessors were. In fact, we should be even more decisive and creative. To a degree inconceivable to previous generations of Catholics, we realize that such a decision and creativity, with its heavy responsibilities, is required. We have a new understanding of what we are, beings of radical historicity. This new understanding of ourselves imposes upon us a new way of thinking and acting about "reform."