COLOMBIAN EDUCATION: STRUGGLE FOR RENEWAL

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ABSTRACT

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by

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Colombian schools at all levels in both the public and private sectors have traditionally offered strictly academic courses of study which have no relevance to the needs of the nation's developing economy. Colombian universities, for example, have been turning out large numbers of lawyers when there is a critical need for engineers, economists, physicists and agrarian experts.

However, Colombia is today endeavoring to update its educational system. It has created various mechanisms through which it hopes to refurbish the educational sector and transform it into a useful tool for national development. At all levels there is an attempt to democratize education in Colombia, making it available to a larger number of people, and to introduce into it a more comprehensive program of instruction, with an accent on what Colombians choose to call educación técnica (technical education). The key word in Colombian educational circles is "reform" and the major thrust of government programs is toward vocational, technical, and scientific education.

At all levels, but especially at the elementary where the most pressing needs lie, efforts are being made to combat the three major problems of Colombian education: 1) shortage of facilities, 2) out-moded curricula, and 3) lack of qualified teachers. Certainly there

is an awareness of educational problems, and plans have been devised for solving them.

The task of reforming an outdated educational system is an enormous one, given the centuries of educational neglect that have gone before, the high annual rate of population growth, the nation's faltering economy and many other factors which tend to retard progress. There are also traditional forces which oppose the movement toward reform and updating of the nation's outmoded educational system. There is, in effect, a constant tension between the progressive and retrograde traditional elements of Colombian society.

The Colombian struggle for educational renewal is not new. One of the major purposes of this dissertation is to depict Colombia's frustrating struggle since colonial times to update itself educationally. Colombia seems to be fighting an uphill battle in its attempt to modernize its educational sector. It has made some progress, but the monumental problems it faces continually weigh it down and prevent it from moving at a faster pace toward modernization.

This dissertation is a descriptive and evaluative study of Colombian education both public and private. Particular attention is paid to the struggle for renewal referred to above.

Since much of Colombian education is private, an entire chapter is devoted to a study and analysis of the private educational sector (Chapter IV). In view of the fact that Protestantism has made great gains in Colombia, a chapter is devoted to a consideration of Protestant educational endeavors in the country (Chapter V). The writer hopes that both of these chapters will serve as a stimulus for further investigation.

This study reveals that despite all attempts at reform, the problems facing Colombian education have by no means been solved. It will take years to implement the current legislation calling for educational reform. The traditional, aristocratic view of education, which is in great part responsible for the current Colombian educational crisis, is deeply rooted. There is a long-standing disinclination to engage in manual labor on the part of Colombians which has resulted in a certain negativism toward education in technical fields and trades. This attitudinal bias toward vocational education poses one of the greatest challenges to those who wish to reform education in Colombia. Educational reform will be a long, protracted process in that country.

The study bears out that in both public and private schools (the Protestant schools being no exception) the accent continues to be on the more prestigious general or academic curriculum which is irrelevant to the needs of Colombia's developing economy. Since most private schools are located in urban areas where they cater to the educational needs of the upper classes, private education is shown to be as guilty of rural neglect as its public counterpart.

In his conclusion, the author insists that there is one outstanding fact that Colombian educators and national leaders must face squarely, namely that true educational reform cannot be carried out without a change in the social order. Colombia's politico-ecclesiastical oligarchic tradition is well known to students of Latin-American affairs. It remains to be seen whether or not the traditional social order in Colombia will be changed in order that Colombia may attain those characteristics which are productive of qualitative change and growth toward good life in all dimensions for all of the people.

The methodology employed in the production of this study consisted essentially of 1) on-the-spot visitation and observation made possible by a special dissertation allowance from the Ford Foundation, and 2) reference to published works, both Colombian and American, containing pertinent data on the educational system of the country.

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A DISSERTATION

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DEDICATION

I dedicate this dissertation to my wife Daisy and my children Debbi and Doug who experienced so much neglect while I wrote it, yet were patient, prayed for my success, and supported me all the way.

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My wife and children are most deserving of my heartfelt thanks for their patient understanding and their prayers on my behalf. Though deprived of my companionship while I prepared this dissertation, they stood by me and supported me all the way.

Finally, thanks are also due the Ford Foundation. It was my privilege to be a Ford Foundation Fellow during the years 1972-75. A special dissertation allowance in 1974 made it possible for me to spend six weeks in Colombia, South America, as part of my preparation for this study.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Statement of the Problem

The educational system of Colombia has long been outmoded and incapable of providing the trained manpower required by that nation's developing economy. This study is an attempt to acquaint the reader with the structure of that system, taking into account both its public and private sectors, to describe the cultural milieu within which it exists, and to consider current attempts at reform.

Need for the Study

During the 1970's serious attempts to reform the educational system of Colombia at all academic levels have been made. Certain changes have been made at the administrative level also. The purpose of the current reform movement is to gear education in the direction of national development. Attempts at reform are described in Chapter III. Educational leaders are cognizant of the fact that Colombian education for too long has been irrelevant to the needs of the nation's economic development. Universities, for example, have been turning out thousands of lawyers when there is a critical need for engineers, economists, physicists and agrarian experts.

The task of reforming an outdated educational system is an enormous one, given the centuries of educational neglect, the high annual rate of population growth, the nation's faltering economy and

many factors which tend to retard progress. There are also traditional forces which oppose the movement toward reform and updating of the nation's outmoded educational system. There is, in effect, a constant tension between the progressive and retrograde, traditional elements in Colombian society.

A number of books and articles on Colombian education have been published, but most of them are not recent enough to include the major aspects of the reform. Hence the need for this study.

Also considered in this study are private education and Protestant education in Colombia, both of which are usually just briefly mentioned in most other studies. Because of the general neglect of these two important areas, they are assigned two separate chapters in this study. Thus it is felt that an important gap in the study of Colombian education has been at least partially filled.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is twofold: 1) To describe the historical development of Colombian education and 2) To examine its nature and structure, giving special consideration to the current attempts at reform.

Procedure

For three years the writer was a Ford Foundation Fellow. A special dissertation allowance for the year 1974 made it possible for him to travel to Colombia where he worked six weeks.

Three main urban areas were visited: Medellín, Bogotá and Cali. Visits were made to kindergartens, elementary schools, secondary schools, universities, and Protestant seminaries. Interviews were

conducted with administrators at both the departmental (provincial) and national levels as well as with principals of schools and students.

A number of books, pamphlets, newspapers and mimeographed reports dealing with the many and varied aspects of Colombian education were obtained by the researcher from schools, administrative offices, and private individuals.

Certain other published materials not in the Michigan State University Library were obtained through the Interlibrary Loan Service.

The study was greatly facilitated by the writer's knowledge of the Spanish language. His ability to communicate freely in the native language with all persons interviewed made the task of studying and understanding the different aspects of Colombian education that much easier.

In brief, then, the methodology employed in the production of this study consisted essentially of 1) personal visitation and observation, and 2) reference to published works, both Colombian and American, containing pertinent data on the educational system of the country.

Delimitations of the Study

In a recent letter to the author, the Rev. Dr. Jaime Rodríguez, a Catholic priest and sociologist and author of several books on Colombian education, observes that in Colombia statistical data is somewhat scarce and limited in scope. The writer concurs with this opinion. Statistical research is in its infancy in Colombia and not too many Colombians are trained to do it. Nevertheless, there are sufficient data available from the Colombian Ministry of Education and other sources to provide a foundation for a study of Colombian education.

At times the data available may not be the most recent. Writers such as Dr. Rodríguez acknowledge the fact that the most useful data is that gathered in the educational census of 1968. However, this information is supplemented by separate studies on different aspects of education done since that time. Needed items of information have been culled from these, as well as from recent periodical publications put out by the Association of Colombian Universities (ASCUN) and the National Confederation of Teaching Centers (CONACED). The latter is a Catholic organization which looks after the interests of the private educational sector, which is mainly Catholic. Though providing more recent data, its publications tend to be of a propagandistic hue. Sociologist Felipe Londoño's Situación de la Educación en Colombia (State of Colombian Education) published in 1971 was most helpful as was also the National Administrative Department of Statistics' Boletín Mensual de Estadística (Monthly Statistical Bulletin) published in 1972. The writer was assured that the latter contained the latest information available.

To the best of the writer's knowledge, much of the latest information available on Protestantism and Protestant educational efforts in Colombia seems to be the one compiled by James E. Goff in 1966 in his Censo de la Obra Evangélica en Colombia (Census of Evangelical Work in Colombia). Goff's comprehensive study of Protestant activities, a most useful document, was published under the auspices of the Evangelical Confederation. Also useful, though slightly older, were Prudencio Damboriena's El Protestantismo en la América Latina (Protestantism in Latin America) and Rycroft and Clemmer's A Factual Study of Latin America, both published in 1963. More recent information was

obtained from books and journal articles containing references to the growth of Protestantism and its activities in Latin America. Most helpful in providing a basis for certain assumptions made in this study regarding Protestant education was Dr. Werner Vhymeister's 1973 study of Seventh-day Adventist education in Latin America. There is a need for more in-depth studies on Protestant education such as Vhymeister's.

The writer worked to the best of his ability with the data available to him and made every effort to present as accurate an account as possible for Colombian education.

Overview

Nowhere in the world does education exist in a cultural vaccuum. There are a number of cultural factors that determine and shape an educational system. One must look behind the official statement of aims and the systems of schools to discover the fundamental principles and forces that have inspired them. Some of the factors affecting education are language, geography, racial traits, religion, politics and economics. In order to understand the educational system of another country one must become well acquainted with that country's ethos or "national mentality" and character. Ethos has been defined as the collective face of a nation, the idiosyncrasies of peoples and their culture.

In Chapter II the writer attempts to acquaint the reader with Colombia's national cultural setting, a knowledge of which is a prerequisite for the understanding of that country's educational system. The areas covered in the second chapter are geography, ethnic composition

and racial relations, church-state relations, history, economy, health and education. As stated in the introduction to that chapter, the areas chosen for discussion are indispensable for obtaining at least a partial grasp of the peculiar Colombian ethos.

In Chapter III more is attempted than a mere recital of facts concerning the history of Colombian education, educational policy and administration, and the structure and organization of the school system. These areas are covered, but the overriding purpose in the third chapter is to depict Colombia's frustrating struggle since colonial times to update its educational program.

A significant portion of the total educational enterprise in Colombia is private and Catholic. In Chapter IV the writer gives a broad sketch of the private educational sector in Colombia. The fourth chapter has been divided into three main headings: the historical antecedents of private education, a general view of the private educational sector, and government supervision and control of private schools.

In Chapter V the writer examines the impact of Protestantism in Latin America, its history, and its educational activities. Special attention is given to Protestant educational efforts in Colombia.

However, none of the aspects of Colombian education covered in the different chapters outlined above will be adequately understood without a prior assimilation of the subject matter of the second chapter, which is a foundation chapter in every sense of the word.

CHAPTER II

THE NATIONAL CULTURAL SETTING

Introduction

The national cultural setting within which education occurs in Colombia is the major concern of this chapter. The areas covered are geography, ethnic composition and racial relations, church-state relations, history, economy, health and education.

The treatment is not intended to be exhaustive; however, the areas chosen for discussion seemed to the writer to be indispensable for obtaining at least a partial grasp of the peculiar Colombian ethos. An attempt is made not only to describe but also to evaluate the facts presented. Particular attention has been given to the great value ascribed to education by Colombians, both as a means of upward mobility and as a tool for modernization.

A consideration of whether or not Colombia's educational system is adequately meeting the nation's developmental needs is the central point toward which this second chapter moves.

Geography

Colombia is a country of 23.7 million inhabitants located in the northwest corner of South America. It covers an area of 456,535 square miles, roughly equivalent to one-eighth the size of the United States, and ranks as the third largest country in South America.

With Brazil and Venezuela bordering on the east and northeast,

Perú and Ecuador on the south, and with Panamá dividing its western border, Colombia has approximately 1,800 miles of coastline on the west and north giving it the distinction of being the only South American country with both Pacific and Caribbean seaports. Colombia rightfully has been called the "Gateway to South America."

In reality, there are two Colombias. Historian Herbert Herring describes them as follows:

> There are two Colombias: a grim wilderness of plains, forest, and jungle, whose waters drain into the Orinoco and the Amazon, occupying almost two-thirds of the national domain but containing scarcely 2 percent of the population; and the towering Andean region, little more than one-third of the country, which is the effective Colombia. The cordillera of the Andes unknots itself on the southern borders and spreads out three finger-ranges toward the north. Between the eastern and the central ranges flows the 1,000-mile Magdalena River, and between the central and western spurs the Cauca winds, joining the Magdalena on its way to the Caribbean. These mountain ranges, valleys and plateaus, together with the narrow coastal belt, contain the farms, factories, mines, and business of the Colombian people.[1]

The three "finger-ranges" of the Andes Mountains to which Herring refers are the Western, Central and Eastern cordilleras--the outstanding topographic characteristic of the country.

As Herring has well said, the Andean region, which comprises a little more than a third of the country, is the "effective Colombia." "The rest of Colombia," explains geographer Preston E. James, "is mostly outside the effective national territory."

> The very high Sierra Nevada de Santa Marta, the summits of which reach 19,000 feet, stands as an isolated block of mountains on the margin of the Caribbean. Beyond it is the Guajira Peninsula, composed of a platform of crystalline rocks with a few knobby hills standing above it. East of the Cordillera Oriental the northeastern part of Colombia

> includes a continuation of the Llanos de Orinoco. Between the Llanos and the Plains of the Amazon, a westward projection of the Guiana highlands reaches the base of the Andes south of Villavicencio. All those regions are thinly populated, in some cases by Indian tribes which are independent of any political control by the Colombians.[2]

Nearly 99 percent of Colombians live in the western 45 percent of the country, and the rest are scattered throughout the remaining 55 percent.

"Colombia's politics, economy, and culture have been shaped by her awkward geography," writes historian Hubert Herring.

> Jungles and high mountain passes have blocked the normal passage of men, goods, and ideas from the capital city to the other centers of population. Bogotá's access to the sea and the outer world was long dependent upon the clumsy boats which ride the Magadelena. The building of highways and railroads has scarcely begun. Exaggerated regionalism has been the inevitable result. An excellent network of airlines, begun in 1920, has finally brought quick communication among the scattered cities.[3]

Ethnic Composition and Racial Relations

Colombians are of European, Indian and African ancestry. Recent estimates of the ethnic composition of the country vary considerably. Preston E. James warns that estimates of the proportions of the different racial ingredients are "little more than informed guesses." James cites sociologist T. Lynn Smith's estimates of the ethnic composition of the country: Whites, 25 percent; Indians, 5 percent; Negroes, 8 percent; Mestizos (mixed White and Indian), 42 percent; Mulattoes, 20 percent. Nevertheless, James cautions that "even these informed estimates can be quite misleading for within the three chief racial groups there are many strongly contrasted varieties, and the racial proportions differ widely from one part of the country to another."[4]

The Area Handbook for Colombia (1970)[5] gives the following estimate:

Indians	1 to 5%
Negroes	4 to 6%
Mulattoes and Zamboes (Mixed Indian and Negro)	17 to 24%
Mestizos	47 to 58%
Whites	20 to 25%

The Statesman's Yearbook (1974-75) states that the population is divided broadly into 68 percent Mestizo; 20 percent White; 7 percent Indian and 5 percent Negro.[6]

The AID Economic Data Book (1973) indicates the racial composition as 72 percent Mestizo; 20 percent White; 2 percent Indian; 6 percent Negro.[7]

The discrepancies between all of these estimates are obvious. Some of the estimates cited, such as those given by the Statesman's Yearbook and the AID Economic Data Book do not take into account the Mulatto and Zambo elements. In most, if not all, estimates of racial composition in Latin America the Orientals and the immigrants from the Middle East, referred to simply as "Turcos" (Turks) are also forgotten. Despite the disagreements, however, two important facts do emerge from the foregoing data on Colombian population: 1) the Mestizo or mixed Indian and White type is preponderant, and 2) the pure Indian type is experiencing a gradual but steady disappearance. On these two salient points, at least, demographers seem to be in complete agreement.

White Power

Educator Richard R. Renner reports that in Colombia "a small predominantly urban group of whites controls the wealth. . .and

exercises the national power."[8] Below the elite albinocracy, Renner explains, "lie the vast majority of Colombians, usually of mixed racial ancestry."[9] What Luis Mercier Vega observes concerning the ruling classes in Latin America as a whole, holds true for Colombia also: "The psychological characteristics of the old Spanish elite survive in the ruling groups. They correspond to an admired ideal, no matter what the nature of the organizations of the men who are ruled."[10] He adds that even today, despite the fact that Latin American societies have become differentiated, "there still exists an instinctive mistrust of any modifications which are naturally attributed to foreign inspiration."[11] In Colombia, 2 percent of the population control 80 percent of the national economy. According to Colombian sociologist Orlando Fals Borda, the control of most of the wealth by a powerful minority lies at the root of Latin America's social crisis.[12]

The White elite classes take a great deal of pride in their Spanish ancestry. Although they may marry foreign Whites, they rarely marry Colombians of lower social status. Of course, most Colombians of lower social status are at the same time of mixed racial ancestry. The doctrine of White supremacy is by no means absent in Colombia, even though it must be borne in mind that "White" in Colombia may not necessarily mean "lily White" in all cases. There is evidence that an Indian strain runs through a good share of the population considered as White. Regarding this issue, T. Lynn Smith observes:

> It is true that some of the upper class families have carefully guarded the purity of their white heritage. It is not at all unusual to find one of the members who will stoutly insist that race prejudice is lacking in Colombia, and that the three races are blending harmoniously into new combinations. This same person, however, will be rudely shocked

> shocked by any questions designed to discover if any of his ancestors, however remote, might have had a strain of Indian blood. But the fact remains that a great many persons of mixed blood have in the past been accepted as part of the white community.[13]

Regardless of the degree of whiteness, the old Spanish concepts of orgullo de raza (pride of race) and limpieza de sangre (purity of blood) are present. Miscegenation may be rather common generally in Colombia, but there still remains a small nucleus who zealously guards its European ancestry and controls the wealth of the country.

The Displaced Races: Indians and Negroes

Racial succession, defined as the process whereby the members of one race are pushed out of the territory they have been occupying and supplanted by those of another, affected both Indians and Negroes in Colombia. The Indians were crowded out of the rich fertile valleys by the Spanish conquerors and forced to go high up the mountain slopes in order to make their modest plantings of corn, potatoes, and barley.[14] Hundreds of thousands of Indians were exterminated in the process. Today's Indians are characterized by backwardness and alienation and they are illiterate and disease-ridden. They live outside the money economy and outside of government control. While the Indian population is rather small compared to that of other countries such as Ecuador and Bolivia, the indigenous inhabitants are nonetheless an important human resource which no program of national development can afford to ignore. Admittedly, the task of Indian education and rehabilitation all over Latin America, and no less in Colombia, is a very complex one. The variety of Indian languages, family-kinship systems, primitive technologies, folkways, mores and traditions, as well as geographic isolation are some of the obstacles to be met.

If the Colombian Indian lives outside the money economy altogether, the case of the Negro is economic marginality.

Uprooted from his African homeland by English, French, Dutch, Spanish and Portuguese slave traders, the Black man was transported to the New World and put to work in mines and plantations. The existence of a heavy slave trade in the city of Cartagena, Colombia, is attested by original documentary sources.[15] Norman E. Whitten, Jr. and John Szwed observe that for nearly four hundred years African Negroes were brought to the New World to work in what was to become the least developed area of a developing society. "In various ways and by various mechanisms," state Whitten and Szwed, "Negroes have been excluded from full participation in the nations and territories to which they were brought."[16] As regards the Negro, the picture today is "one of multiple cultures and subcultures existing in various environments and participating in multiple ways in the socio-economic lives of their respective societies."[17]

The economic marginality of the Negro is a direct result of his exclusion from direct access to capital resources. His access to cash is usually controlled by people classed ethnically as non-Negro. No matter where Negroes are situated geographically, the crucial element in the environment is the White man who dominates the economic resources that they must adapt to. Today, anthropologists do not study the social-cultural characteristics of the Negro in the New World in terms of his African roots, but rather in terms of his adaptation to existing economic, social, and political conditions.[18] Thomas G. Sanders' study on the Negroes of Colombia's Department (Province) of

the Chocó is in reality a study of the Black man's adaptation to the White-controlled socio-economic environment of that country.

Blacks constitute 80 percent of the Chocó's total population of 200,000. The rest of the population is 10 percent Mulatto, 6 percent Indian and 4 percent White and Mestizo. Colombia has the second largest Negro population in Latin America. Brazil has the largest. "The Pacific littoral, especially the Department of the Chocó, is the homeland of the Blacks," writes Sanders. He adds that this little-known region "offers a context for examining the culture and problems of a Black population which is a majority locally but a minority nationally."[19]

Of fundamental importance are Sanders' findings concerning the nature of racial discrimination in Colombia. His conclusion is that education is "the basic source. . .of the assets ('culture,' middle class way of life, professional status, and job stability) by which a Black can achieve respect not only among Whites in the Chocó, but also if he must make a living in the predominantly White world outside."[20] Education is the pivotal factor in the Black man's adaptation to the predominantly White environment. "If he is educated and 'professional'", writes Sanders, "he is ordinarily judged as such, rather than by the racial stereotypes."[21]

The Blacks of Colombia, however, do not have access to positions of real power. Sanders found that while in Quibdó, the capital of the Chocó, Blacks predominate in party politics and public administration, the Whites continue in control of commerce, governmental power, the Church and the police. He also found that most of the major politicians,

including Chocoan senators and representatives in Bogotá are Black, as well as the teachers and local officials, but he is quick to point out that Black access in these areas has been permitted because they represent "jobs and not power." Real power, observes Sanders, is in the hands of Whites many of whom, while not discriminating openly, have a condescending view of Blacks. Economic power is in the hands of Whites "despite the ostensible Black participation in politics and civil service."[22]

In his field study among the coastal Negroes of Colombia, Thomas Price discovered certain important facts relative to their self-concept. He found that they are by and large ashamed of their African heritage and that any discussion of it is likely to make them uncomfortable. Folklore about slavery appears to have been lost through shame and disuse. Although aware of his lowly social position, the Colombian Negro verbally blames the cultural differences on ignorance, poverty, and the lack of education. Price observes that if they view their way of life as a matter of racial determinism on the part of Colombian whites, the belief is not articulated. For the Colombian Negro de facto segregation, quality of schooling, and the like are economic, not racial matters.[23] Thomas G. Sanders' findings in the Chocó tally with those of Price. Sanders found that while some of the Chocó's Blacks believe that they experience discrimination, on the whole they tend to believe that the low level of their existence is more rooted in the underdevelopment and generalized poverty of their country than in their race.[24] Despite these findings, however, the question remains whether or not this apparent lack of Black awareness is a genuine

self-view or rather a sort of nonviolent tactic or self-protective, adaptive mechanism assumed in the face of suppression on the part of the powers-that-be. Sanders reports that the authorities in Quibdó, the capital of the Chocó, are very sensitive about any discussion of Black problems and needs. While there, he was detained by the police and interrogated for an entire afternoon about his objective and contacts in the community. He was later informed that "certain people" had complained that he was asking questions about race relations and had suggested the he might represent Black Power groups in the United States.[25]

Whatever the case, it is undeniable that Colombian Blacks value education and view it as the most effective means for upward mobility. The high value ascribed to education is evidenced in the fact that the Chocó has the lowest rate of illiteracy in the country (15 percent), and this chiefly in the older generation and in isolated rural areas. Ironically, it also has one of the lowest rates of population increase in the nation. This is due to the heavy emigration of its educated youth. Between 1951 and 1964 nearly 20,000 Chocoans, one-tenth of the population of the department, emigrated, and it is estimated that the number is much higher today.[26] They leave because their education is both impractical and irrelevant to regional developmental needs. "Not only does it teach them nothing about mining, fishing, agriculture, or lumbering," writes Sanders, "but, as in the rest of Latin America, it also conveys to them a deprecating attitude toward these activities." He says further: "The man of 'culture' does not involve himself in machines, manual work or practical activities. Nor does the almost

pre-capitalist culture of the Chocó provide what the Antioquians derive from theirs: a capacity for organization, saving, and economic achievement."[27] The implications for the Chocó are obvious. As Sanders puts it, the move to the urban centers on the part of the most ambitious and best-educated provincial youth represents "a tragic loss to the regions from which the migrants come, postponing indefinitely their own possibilities of development."[28] As far as the Chocó is concerned, "schooling has an overwhelmingly negative effect on the possibilities of development."[29]

The Chocoan case study has been dwelt upon at considerable length not only because it sheds light on the subject of race relations in Colombia, but also because of what it says concerning education in general in that country. The negative effect of education on development is by no means limited to the Chocó. Colombian education on the whole tends to be formal and bookish, with heavy stress on rote memory, and does not provide the student with the practical skills needed to stimulate economic development. It instills "culture" in the learner, but at the same time it conveys to him a disdain for practical pursuits. Perhaps a letter received recently by the author from a White Colombian high-school student in the city of Medellín sums it up best: "I hate school. All you do is sit there and copy what the teacher says or reads and I assure you that is boring." As in the Chocoan case, this kind of education will lower the rate of illiteracy, but will not contribute in any practical way to the economic development of the country.

The Miscegenated

In their study on racial relations in Cartagena,[30] Colombia, Mauricio Solaún and Sidney Kronus state that it is virtually impossible for a Negro to enter into the social elite realm and that Negroid characteristics can be a critical factor to block the access of newcomers into these circles. "To be Black," conclude Solaún and Kronus, "is a definite handicap in Cartagena."[31] They report that discriminatory practices against Blacks seeking to penetrate "the exclusivist socioeconomic elite sectors" definitely exist.[32] By and large, Negroes are segregated from White society.

In Cartagena there exists what Solaún and Kronus call "an infused racial system" which is neither open nor closed. It is a system characteristic of areas that have substantial segments of racial stocks: Whites, Blacks and miscegenated individuals. Because of his high visibility, the Negro falls victim to the White stereotype of him as an inferior being, yet, as has been shown, he is able to gain a certain degree of respect and acceptance in White social circles if he is educated and cultured. Solaún and Kronus argue that because of a traditional Iberian tolerance toward miscegenation, a significant number of miscegenated individuals have been able to gain access into exclusivist, predominantly White, circles. They also point out that since the "apex of the social class pyramid is white, the majority of miscegenated persons underplay their negroid ancestry and prefer to employ terms that do not connotate black ancestry."[33] We have already noted the findings of Thomas Price to the effect the coastal Negroes of Colombia themselves are ashamed of their African ancestry and are

made uncomfortable by any discussion of it. They have even accepted White standards of beauty.[34] Such is the adaptation of the Negroes and miscegenated persons of Colombia that White values are for them normative in every respect, or so the findings seem to indicate.

The studies cited also seem to bear out that, for the purpose of social climbing, it is more advantageous to be a "miscegenated individual" than a Negro in Colombia today. But even in the miscegenated individual, Negro ancestry enjoys less of a preference than Indian or any other ancestry for that matter, thus the observation by Solaún and Kronus that Negro ancestry is underplayed. Black is not altogether beautiful in Colombia. And this in a country where, by some estimates at least, Negroes and mulattoes make up 40 percent of the total population. But they are politically powerless.

For both the Negro and the miscegenated, education is indispensable for upward mobility. Nevertheless, the greater advantages and rewards seem to be reserved for those who are both miscegenated and educated.

Church-State Relations

The Colombian Constitution contains the following provisions regarding the matter of religion and church-state relations: 1) Freedom of conscience is guaranteed by the state; 2) No one shall be unduly disturbed because of his religious convictions, nor compelled to profess beliefs or to observe practices contrary to his personal convictions; 3) Freedom is guaranteed to all religions which adhere to Christian morality and abide by the law; 4) When the exercise of religion involves acts which run contrary to Christian morality or

cause public disturbances, such acts remain subject to civil law; 5) The government is free to work out agreements with the Holy See for the regulation, on grounds of mutual deference and respect, of the relations between the state and the Catholic Church.

The Constitution further declares that Catholicism is the official religion of the country, a fact deemed essential for the preservation of national unity. Public authorities are enjoined to protect it and cause it to be respected as an essential element of the social order. The Catholic Church is accorded the position of guardian of public morality.

Historian Hubert Herring recalls that, traditionally, there have been two major subjects of dispute in Colombian politics: 1) the continuing rivalry between partisans of strong central government and the defenders of the sovereign rights of the several departments or states, and 2) the status of the Roman Catholic Church. Concerning the latter point, Herring says:

> Religion has been a prime source of discord between Conservatives and Liberals. The Conservatives, self-appointed custodians of order, have stood for highly centralized government and the perpetuation of traditional class and clerical privileges, and they have opposed extension of the voting rights of the people. The Liberals have stressed states' rights, universal suffrage, and complete separation of Church and state. In no other Latin American republic except Mexico has the Church-state imbroglio been more angry and obstinate.[35]

Herring sketches the history of the Liberal-Conservative conflict which has always revolved around the Church-state issue:

> From 1830 to 1849, there was inconclusive sparring between the two factions. After 1849 the Liberals held power most of the time until the 1880's. From the 1880's until 1930, the Conservatives were in command. From 1930 until 1946, the Liberals

> again had their turn. In 1946, the Conservatives returned to vindicate their principles of order, with the Church again in the foreground. By 1967 anticlericalism had lost much of its fury, especially in the cities. In the isolated villages there were still angry clashes between clerical Conservatives and anticlerical Liberals.[36]

The traditional Colombian churchmen are characterized by Herring as "spiritually more akin to their colleagues in Spain than those of any other Latin American republic."[37] They have labored under the conviction that "Colombia was and must continue to be dedicated to the service of the true faith, and that all unbelievers and heretics are enemies of the nation."[38] The Colombian clerics, adds Herring, "have revealed the tenacity of a Jiménez de Cisneros or an Ignatius Loyola."[39] By the same token, "the Liberals have shown no less ardor in defense of their principles, which took on the aura of a new religious faith--although they looked to Voltaire, Rousseau, and Montesquieu rather than to the apostles, prophets and saints."[40]

The religious undertones of the Conservative-Liberal conflict in Colombia were quite evident in the actions of Conservative Laureano Gómez (1950-53), who was president of the republic during the worst period of violence that it ever experienced:

> Censors moved into newspaper offices and ruined a genuine tradition of a free press. Irritated by Protestant missionaries, who had long worked in the Colombian backlands, Gómez encouraged attacks on their persons by patriots or fanatics. The missionaries reacted by becoming notably tactless and defiant, and further persecutions, some of a shocking nature, resulted. From the national palace the president preached, as he long had done in his newspaper, that 'Anglo-Saxonism' was almost as odious as Communism, that it was a deadly threat to Latin and Catholic culture.[41]

The traditional intimate alliance between the Colombian Church

and the Conservative Party has recently been questioned by the Vatican and by certain distinguished members of the clergy.[42] Moreover, the wave of change and reform brought about by Vatican II and the ensuing ecumenical spirit has had an impact even upon the traditionally ultra-conservative clergy of Colombia.

During his 1974 trip to Colombia, the writer became aware of the evidences of change. Dialog between Roman Catholic and Protestant leaders is taking place throughout the country.

Further evidence of change is the new attitude on the part of Latin-American bishops--those of Colombia being no exception--towards the question of birth control and family planning. On that issue, there is no consensus among members of the Catholic clergy. According to Thomas G. Sanders, the bishops are of course aware of Pope Paul VI's encyclical Humanae Vitae in which the traditional Catholic stand on birth control is maintained. They may disagree with aspects of the papal encyclical, but carefully avoid criticizing it publicly. While they are opposed to artificial means of contraception in theory, in actual practice the problem of contraception is no longer a cause for agitation among the bishops themselves, their priests, or the laity at large. In his recent American Universities Field Staff Study on the question of family planning in Latin America, Sanders observes: "I have yet to discuss the matter with a priest in Latin America who did not in counselling leave the contraceptive method up to the individual conscience."[43] Even in Colombia, prominent Jesuits have agreed to remain "open" on the question of birth control methods. Sanders argues that "Catholicism as a set of values and the Catholic Church as an institution do not represent a monolith impeding progress

in Latin America."[44] He adds that ". . .the specter of a church galvanizing millions of Latin American Catholics against family planning lacks theological or sociological reality."[45] However, Sanders expresses deep regret over the ambivalence of the Church's position which prevents it from taking a major role in the promotion of family planning in Latin America, but lauds it for turning its attention quietly to "other graver problems, like doing something about the unstable and tragic family life of the people."[46]

Further evidence of change within the Catholic Church is its involvement in social activism. According to sociologist Julius Rivera, in recent years the Church--itself a major landholder in Latin America--has "not only blessed programs of agrarian reform, but has rendered landholdings to the government in contribution to these programs."[47] Rivera adds: "Textile industries have not only organized housing cooperatives for workers, but added educational programs in collaboration with the Church that had stimulated the economic reforms in the first place."[48] He also says that Catholicism is aware of the danger of remaining the Church of the privileged minorities and is therefore "pushing its way to the masses through political action."[49]

But it would be hasty to assume that all church-state problems have been resolved as a result of the Catholic Church's new social orientation.

There has been much controversy recently over the proposed revision of the 1887 Concordat with the Holy See. The 1887 agreement benefited the Catholic Church in several ways. It was given official recognition by the State and guaranteed support from public funds. It was also granted absolute control of education at all levels and given

a voice in all official government decisions. Though never ratified by the Colombian Congress, the Concordat was put into effect. Unjustifiably so, claims the Colombian Association of Religious Liberty.[50] Critics of the proposed revision say that it does not in any way alter the basic agreement of 1887, leaving intact all of the provisions favorable to the Catholic Church. They further claim that the revision does not take into account the more liberal ideas expressed by the Second Vatican Council. It is a threat, they say, to the religious liberty guaranteed by the Colombian Constitution and the very sovereignty of the State. Both proponents and defenders have put out an extensive literature on the subject of the new revision of the Concordat.[51]

What perhaps makes the debate over the revision of the 1887 Concordat a bit confusing to the outside observer is the fact that in 1936 Liberal President López is supposed to have "disestablished" the Church and taken away its control over education. In 1942 another Liberal, Eduardo Santos, purportedly negotiated a new Vatican agreement which is said to have modified the Concordat of 1887. The picture is further complicated by another fact, namely that, despite these modifications, in 1957 the Colombian government revised the preamble of its Constitution to read that the Catholic Church is the official religion of the state and that as such it enjoyed a unique position of prestige and power in the country. Somehow the Church in Colombia has managed to remain politically influential. The "church-state imbroglio," as historian Hubert Herring referred to it, continues to be "angry and obstinate" and shows no signs of abating.

The fact remains that the old, conservative spirit of the Roman Catholic Church in Colombia is by no means dead. There still remains

an undercurrent of antagonism between leaders of the Liberal political faction and Church representatives, many of whom are still politically of a Conservative persuasion.

A complete separation of Church and State is unlikely in Colombia.

History

Needless to say, an exhaustive history of Colombia does not fall within the scope of this work.

It is evident from what has already been said about the country that Colombia has gone through the same major phases as the rest of the Latin-American republics: 1) the period of Spanish conquest; 2) the process of racial succession as the Spaniards clashed with the indigenous inhabitants; 3) settlement by the Spanish conquerors; 4) a struggle for independence from Spain.

Like all of the other republics, Colombia gained its independence from Spain during the nineteenth century. At that time it formed part of the Vice-royalty of New Granada which on December 17, 1819, was officially constituted as the State of Gran Colombia, which included the present territories of Panamá, Venezuela and Ecuador, an arrangement which lasted for about twelve years. In 1830 it split up into Venezuela, Ecuador and the Republic of New Granada. The Constitution of May 22, 1858, changed New Granada into a confederation of eight states, under the name of Confereación Granadina (Granadine Confederation). However, under the Constitution of May 8, 1863 the country was renamed Estados Unidos de Colombia (United States of Colombia) which were nine in number. A further change came as a result of the Revolution of 1885 which led the National Council of Bogotá, composed

of two delegates from each state, to promulgate the Constitution of August 5, 1886, forming the Republic of Colombia. The sovereignty of the states was abolished, converting them into departamentos (departments or provinces), with governors appointed by the president of the republic, though they retained some of their old rights, such as managing their own finances. The rights of the states to borrow abroad without the sanction of the central government was abolished by a decree of May, 1928.

Since independence, Colombian politics has been beset by two conflicting viewpoints: the centralist or conservative, and the federalist or liberal. The conservatives have always been advocates of a strong central government and of active church participation in government and education. The liberals, on the other hand, have traditionally wished autonomy for the individual states, complete separation of church and state, and social and fiscal reforms. The country's historical parties, the Conservatives and the Liberals, grew out of these two opposing factions. Concerning the struggle between the two parties, to which some reference has already been made above, Richard R. Renner observes that:

> Each party was in power alternately for the first 30 years after 1830. Between 1863 and 1884 the Liberals were in control of the National Government, but the revolution of 1885 led to a Liberal defeat and marked the end of the federal system. The country fell into such a state of financial difficulty and attendant demoralization that its leaders decided to put its welfare above partisanship; they therefore formed a national party. A reform movement headed by President Rafael Núñez resulted in the Constitution of 1886, which today remains the Republic's basic document.[52]

The signing of the Concordat of 1887, to which we have alluded,

brought about a resumption of the Liberal-Conservative struggle. The conflict between the two opposing factions culminated in 1902 with the end of the War of a Thousand Days. This was followed by a relatively peaceful half-century, but in 1948 erupted one of the most sanguinary periods of the country's history, known as la violencia (violence) during which thousands of persons perished. Renner observes that "civil violence grew until 1958 when responsible leaders of both Liberal and Conservative parties established the National Front."[53]

In effect to this day, the National Front is a system whereby the two traditional parties alternate in the presidency. All other elective and appointed offices are alternated between the two parties. The difficulty with this arrangement is that "open elections and internal factions have resulted in a government which at times had difficulty raising a majority for any effective action."[54] Furthermore, "it exists constantly under the threat of an elected majority opposed to the National Front concept."[55] Some observers claim that the National Front "has brought no grand new national visions, but only apathy."[56]

The Economic Situation

It has already been stated that the Andean region, which comprises a little more than a third of the country, is the effective Colombia, the Colombia of hillside farms, of oil and orchids, of textile mills and cities. Nearly all of Colombia's population and economic activities are concentrated in the western part which embraces three north-south Andean ranges with fertile valleys and good climate. The Cauca and Magdalena Rivers flow between these ranges almost the full

length of the country from south to north emptying into the Caribbean sea at Barranquilla. Transportation in the east-west direction is complicated by the mountainous terrain. The sparsely settled eastern plains and lowlands are separated from the rest of the country by mountains.

Agriculture

The economy of Colombia is based primarily on agriculture. Of its economically active population, 45.2 percent is engaged in agriculture.[57] Twenty percent of its total land area is agricultural land--2.4 acres per capita. Half of the country's total land area consists of malaria-infested lowlands and forests and about one-fourth of grazing lands. Most of the best farmland is hilly with a soil best suited for growing coffee, which is Colombia's most important crop. Six million bags of coffee are grown annually to account for one-fifth of the world's coffee production and 80 percent of Colombia's foreign revenue.[58] Bananas, like coffee, are grown chiefly for export, whereas corn, meat, milk, potatoes, rice and sugar are grown for domestic consumption. Cattle raising is important.

Reliance on coffee exports as the principal source of the foreign exchange needed to purchase capital goods for industrial expansion in effect means that Colombia's economy is controlled by weather patterns and world market variables which inevitably result in fluctuating capital for expansion:

> Because of Colombia's dependence on coffee exports, a change of 1¢ a pound in the world market price means a gain or loss of more than $8 million a year to Colombia--an increase or decrease of more than 1 percent in its total annual earnings of foreign exchange. Since the price of a

> pound of coffee has fluctuated as much as 15 cents in a single recent year, Colombia's export earnings are highly vulnerable to conditions in the coffee market. For this reason Colombia is a party to and a strong supporter of the International Coffee Agreement, signed in September 1962, which has sought to modify price fluctuations.[59]

Further criticism that may be levelled at Colombian agriculture is that despite the laudable efforts of INCORA (The Colombian Institute for Agrarian Reform) in various parts of the country, productivity remains low in most Colombian farms. Apart from coffee, the country does not have a notable surplus of agricultural products. As pointed out above, very little arable land is available and farms are small. There is also a lack of irrigation systems. Mechanization is still rudimentary. The chief tools of most of the agricultural workers are the horse, donkey or mule, the mattock and the machete. Modern, exemplary farms are few in number.

Petroleum

Petroleum is Colombia's second most important product and the country ranks fourth among the Latin American countries producing crude petroleum. The six principal oil-bearing zones within the country are the Caribbean area, the Upper and Lower Magdalena Valleys, the Pacific zone, and the Catatumbo basin near the Venezuelan frontier in Norte de Santander. Crude petroleum comprises 6 percent of all exports and is the base for a substantial petroleum products industry. While petroleum output has been in excess of needs, permitting exports, it is reportedly declining, while consumption continues to rise. Forecasts indicate that imports may soon be necessary.

Minerals

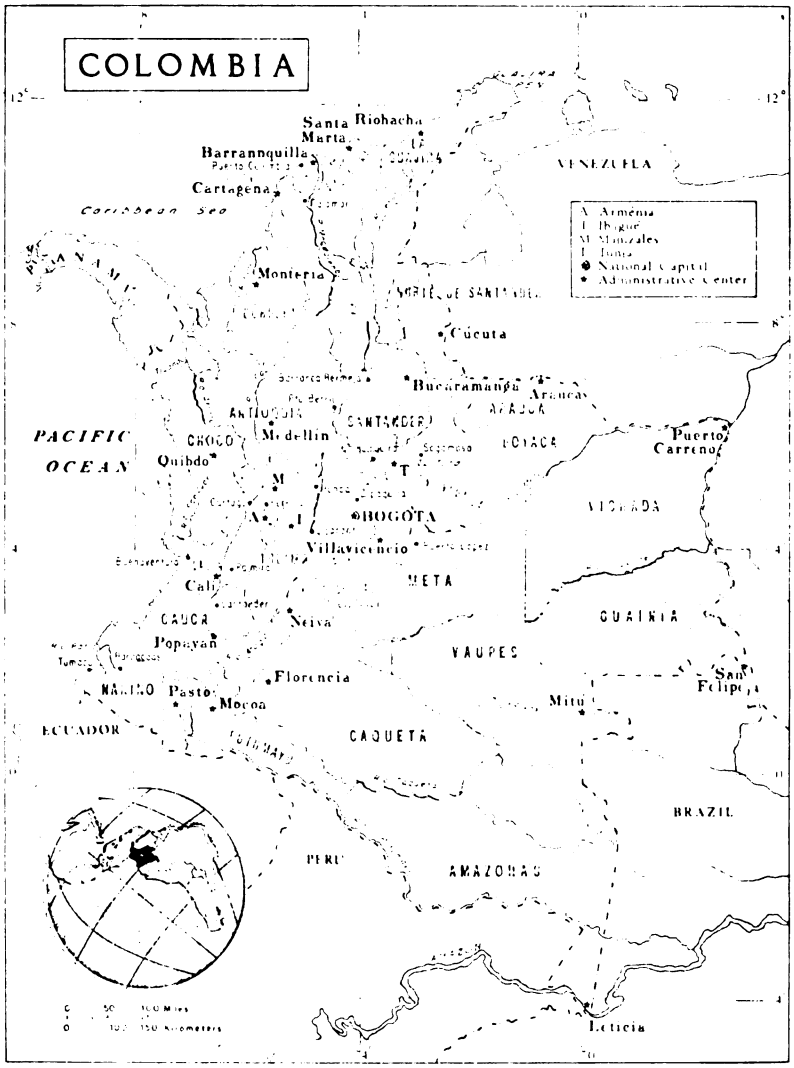
Coal reserves are large in Colombia. The country is also rich in iron ore, nickel, copper, bauxite, gold, silver, platinum, lead, mercury and sulphur. The world-famous emerald mines are located at Muzo in the eastern Andes. Abundant salt deposits provide the basis for an alkali industry.

River Resources

Colombia's river resources are important to its economy. The Cauca and Magadalena rivers are navigable, the latter for approximately 900 miles. Steamers ascend on the Magdalena to La Dorada, 592 miles from Barranquilla. It is estimated that, in 1972, they carried 15,362 passengers and 2,709,585 metric tons of cargo.[60] But important is the country's potential for hydroelectric power. Although power production has increased substantially, it is still considerably below requirements, per capita output being roughly half that of Argentina or of Chile and about equal to that of Brazil. Power development is a major objective of the Colombian government.

Underdeveloped Areas

Tropical jungles inhabited by a few scattered tribal Indians who continue to resist civilization make up a large part of the eastern area of Colombia. It is an underdeveloped area with limited resources. Its exploration is handicapped by the difficulties of providing transportation over the eastern range of the Andes. In the northeast, foreign companies are conducting oil explorations. The poorest area by far is the southeast, which comprises the Amazon rain forest and has few


COLOMBIA
Santa Marta
Riohacha
Barranquilla
Cartagena
Caribbean Sea
VENEZUELA
A Armenia
I Ibague
M Manizales
T Tunja
National Capital
Administrative Center
Monteria
Cucuta
Bucaramanga
Arauca
ARAUCA
ANTIOQUIA
CHOCO
Medellin
CASANARE
Puerto Carreno
PACIFIC OCEAN
Quibdo
BOGOTA
VICHADA
Villavicencio
META
Cali
CAUCA
Neiva
GUAINIA
Popayan
VAUPES
Florencia
Pasto
Mocoa
Mitu
San Felipe
ECUADOR
CAQUETA
BRAZIL
PERU
AMAZONAS
Leticia

Map 1.

tree species presently of commercial value. As far as the eastern llanos or plains are concerned, the fertility of their soil and the quality of their forage has not yet been determined.[61]

Transportation

Colombia's mountainous and rugged terrain has hindered the development of an adequate transportation system. The advent of air service to the country was not altogether a blessing, as Lewis Hanke notes: "Much cargo that would move by land in other countries goes by air in Colombia; ironically her superior air service has delayed the development of an adequate overland transport system."[62] For example, a lack of good roads hinders development of the northern coastal areas. A lack of adequate transportation facilities is reported to be a major contributing factor in the economic underdevelopment of the economy in the Chocó.[63] As of 1971, Colombia had a total of 25,580 miles of roads, of which only 3,730 miles were paved.[64] The country also has 2,100 miles of railroads, but the railway system is said to be inefficient, beset by poor maintenance and frequent breakdowns.[65]

Manufacturing

Industrial activities in Colombia are dominated by the consumer industries. It is reported that in recent years output has advanced slowly. Heavy industrial products include cement, petroleum products, natural gas, steel, chemicals, fertilizers, aluminum products, and some industrial machinery. How inadequate transportation facilities affect the steel manufacturing industry in Colombia is illustrated in the following example given by Lewis Hanke:

> The new Paz del Río blast furnace and steel mill (capacity 122,000 tons) dramatically illustrate Colombia's basic transportation problem. Built in isolated highlands at an elevation of almost 9,000 feet 150 miles north of Bogotá and even farther from other large consuming centers, it is ideally located for raw materials, since iron ore, coal, and limestone are in ample supply nearby. But Paz del Río steel delivered in Colombia is sometimes more costly than imported steel because of transportation and manufacturing costs. Only a high protective tariff, at the expense of the Colombian consumer, can make the project 'economic'. Yet it has a symbolic role in Colombia, eager to demonstrate its maturity by industrialization. 'For those who believe that a national steel industry is justifiable at any price, Paz del Río is indeed a new El Dorado; for others, perhaps, the ailing steel mill. . .is a grotesque and costly monument to misguided nationalism.'[66]

The Labor Force

As of 1970, Colombia's labor force was 6,472,000 or 30 percent of the total population. The distribution of the labor force was as follows:[67]

Agriculture	45%
Mining	2%
Manufacturing	14%
Construction	5%
Transport, communications and utilities	4%
Trade and finance	11%
Other	19%

Unemployment is reported to be heavy, averaging 10.7 percent, in 1972, in seven large cities,[68] and undoubtedly much higher now in view of the present worldwide economic crisis. Salaries are low in all sectors. In the largest sector of the economy, the agricultural, farm wages in 1969 (more recent figures not available to the writer) amounted to 19 pesos per day for men and 14.35 pesos for women, or less than a dollar a day for both men and women.[69] As of 1973, the per capita gross national product for Colombia was US $340,[70] one of the lowest in the world.

Health and Education

Health

In 1971, the Colombian government designated 9.3 percent of its total national budget for public health expenditures.[71] Figures for the year 1970 reveal that there is one physician per 2,220 persons, as compared to one per 670 persons in the United States. The same figures reveal a ratio of one hospital bed per 420 persons, as compared to one per 120 persons in the United States. According to 1971 data, the life expectancy of Colombians is 60 years, eleven years below that of Americans. Figures for 1970 reveal an infant mortality rate of 76 deaths per 1,000 live births, as compared to only 19 per 1,000 live births in the United States. As far as diet is concerned, data available for 1970 points to a consumption of 2,140 calories per capita daily, as compared to 3,300 in the United States.[72] Concerning the Colombian diet W. O. Galbraith observes:

> Although 60 to 80 percent of the family budget of the majority of Colombians is spent on food, malnutrition is characteristic of a large proportion of the people, as is shown by short stature, low weight, and other abnormal physical characteristics and measurements, reduced capacity for work, and the presence of certain clinical symptoms. The chief cause is a diet which is too low proportionately in protein, fats, vitamins, and essential minerals. The Colombian agricultural worker, for example, still consumes insufficient calories a day for manual labour. Partly from habit and partly for economic reasons, the labourer's diet is ill-balanced, and is made up of much too high a proportion of carbohydrates. Nutritional goitre (in some departments 80 percent of the people are sufferers), anaemia, scurvy, and pellagra are of high incidence, and children are particularly affected. Even the official figures attribute 2.7 percent of deaths to 'lack of vitamins and other deficiency diseases.'[73]

Malaria, respiratory and venereal diseases are quite common in Colombia. It is a known fact that contaminated food and water supplies

give rise to intestinal disorders and infections, and serious typhoid epidemics in some of the larger cities.[74]

Education

A detailed study of Colombian education is reserved for the chapters that follow. However, in the section dealing with the Negroes of the Chocó, the link between the economy, education and emigration was noted, the Chocoan case study serving as a springboard for a discussion on the general nature of Colombian education.

Already a major criticism of that country's education has been advanced: it is impractical and irrelevant to the development needs of the nation. The fact that Colombian education on the whole tends to be formal and bookish, with heavy stress on rote memory, has already been noted. Also mentioned was the fact that while formal schooling instills "culture" in the learner, it also conveys to him a disdain for practical pursuits. So much for the qualitative aspect of Colombian education.

Quantitatively it is also deficient. Official estimates place the illiteracy rate of the population 15 years of age and older at roughly 30 percent, but there is reason to believe that it is much higher than that. Primary schools are incapable of absorbing all of the eligible children, which means that a large number of them are totally deprived of a primary school education. Some experts say that if the rate of population growth in Colombia were to remain static and schools were able to absorb an additional 4 percent yearly of the eligible children, by 1980 there would still be a total of 4.2 million youngsters between the ages of 5 and 14 unenrolled in any type of school.

At the secondary level, a bottleneck occurs. Not all that desire to attend a secondary school can afford to do so. Most secondary schools are private, so that entrance into them is governed by socio-economic factors. In addition, the overwhelming majority of secondary school enrollees prefer the classical or academic baccalaureate because they consider it to be the most direct route to the university. Non-academic programs simply do not enjoy as much prestige as the academic stream and they consequently experience a low enrollment, despite the efforts of the National Institute of Middle Education.[75]

At the university level, space is at a premium and career opportunities are limited. Curiously, only about 25 percent of all doctoral students complete the required thesis and comprehensive examination for the full-fledged doctorate. The rest emerge from the university with the pseudo-title of egresado, which means that "the student has met the course requirements of his faculty but has failed to meet one or both of the other two conditions for the doctorate."[76] Interestingly enough, many universities hire egresados as professors. Universities are plagued with the problem of part-time, underpaid, absentee professors. Salaries are woefully inadequate and it is officially estimated that "more than 80 percent of the teaching staff of Colombian universities are part-time, devoting perhaps one hour to this after a day occupied in professional pursuits which are by far the most important sources of their income."[77]

Other problems of Colombian education include a high dropout rate, a high incidence of grade repetition, a large number of unqualified teachers, very little new school construction, and a lack of support and adequate upkeep of existing school facilities.

Summary

Colombia is a land of diversity both from the point of view of its physical geography and of the varied human types contained within its borders. It was not until the advent of air transport that any degree of national cohesion was achieved. Today it enjoys a certain amount of unity in its diversity, but this is at best tenuous. It was not very long ago that the country emerged from a long period of violent civil strife begun in 1948 and which took thousands of lives and dealt a hard blow to the nation's already faltering economy.

The potential for disruption lies just beneath the surface. Reference has already been made to the fact that 2 percent of the population controls 80 percent of the nation's wealth. The masses are, by and large, existing under the most adverse living conditions. The agriculturally-based economy of the country continues to falter. Economic progress is hindered by a lack of adequate transportation facilities. Modern technology is not widely available. It was noted that the horse, donkey, or mule, the mattock and the machete are still the chief tools of most agricultural workers. Health services are grossly inadequate and a large percentage of the people are undernourished and feeble.

Education fares no better. Although the national government expends 14.7 percent (1971) of its total budget towards education, there is little evidence of real progress. It has been pointed out that at all levels Colombian education is both qualitatively and quantitatively deficient. Surely it is not providing all of the technicians, nurses and doctors and other key personnel that the country sorely needs.

But, in all fairness, the fact must never be lost sight of that Colombia has one of the highest annual rates of population growth in the world--3.2 percent. Education within such a framework is a mammoth task by any standard.

FOOTNOTES

[1]Hubert Herring, A History of Latin America (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1968), p. 536.

[2]Preston E. James, Latin America, (New York: The Odyssey Press, 1969), p. 400.

[3]Hubert Herring, A History of Latin America, p. 536.

[4]Preston E. James, Latin America, pp. 392-93. Sociologist Julius Rivera agrees with James. In his book Latin America: A Sociocultural Interpretation, p. 11, Rivera states: "Exact figures are impossible to gather: censuses are very unreliable, the judgments of experts are contradictory, and the measures of ethnic variation too elastic. Thus, one has to approach the subject with great care." Rivera insists that it is impossible to establish "clear boundaries between races."

[5]Area Handbook for Colombia (1970), p. 83.

[6]The Statesman's Yearbook (1974-75), p. 831.

[7]AID Economic Data Book. Latin America (December 1973), p. F-3.

[8]Richard R. Renner, Education for a New Colombia, (Washington: U. S. Government Printing Office, 1971), p. 2.

[9]Ibid., p. 3.

[10]Luis Mercier Vega, Roads to Power in Latin America, (London: Pall Mall Press, 1969), p. 187.

[11]Ibid.

[12]Orlando Fals Borda, "Subversion and Development," NEWSTATEments, Vol. I, No. 2 (1971).

[13]T. Lynn Smith, "The Racial Composition of the Population of Colombia," Journal of Inter-American Studies, Vol. 8, No. 2 (April 1966), p. 223.

[14]Ibid., p. 234.

[15]Ibid., pp. 228-31. Smith cites these original documentary sources.

[16]Norman E. Whitten, Jr., and John Szwed, "Negroes in the New World," Trans-Action (July-August, 1968), p. 49.

[17]Ibid.

[18]Ibid., pp. 51-4.

[19]Thomas G. Sanders, "The Blacks of Colombia's Chocó," American Universities Field Staff Report, West Coast South America Series, Volume XVII, No. 2 (TGS-1-'70), p. 1.

[20]Ibid., p. 9.

[21]Ibid.

[22]Ibid., p. 5.

[23]Thomas Price, "How Three Negro Cultures View Their African Heritage," Trans-Action, (July-August, 1968), p. 73.

[24]Thomas G. Sanders, "The Blacks of Colombia's Chocó," American Universities Field Staff Report, West Coast South America Series, Volume XVII, No. 2 (TGS-8-'70), p. 9.

[25]Ibid., pp. 6-7.

[26]Thomas G. Sanders," Economy, Education, and Emigration in the Chocó," American Universities Field Staff Report, West Coast South America Series, Vol. XVII, No. 9 (TGS-8-'70), p. 9.

[27]Ibid., pp. 11-12.

[28]Ibid., p. 12.

[29]Ibid.

[30]Mauricio Solaún and Sidney Kronus, Discrimination Without Violence (New York: John Wiley and Sons, 1973).

[31]Ibid., p. 23.

[32]Ibid., p. 36.

[33]Ibid., pp. 36-37.

[34]Thomas Price, "How Three Negro Cultures View Their African Heritage," Trans-Action (July-August, 1968), p. 73.

[35]Huber Herring, A History of Latin America, p. 539 (Emphasis provided).

[36]Ibid.

[37]Ibid.

[38]Ibid.

[39]Ibid.

[40]Ibid.

[41]Fagg, John Edwin, Latin America: A General History, (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1963), p. 839.

[42]Julius Rivera, Latin America: A Sociological Interpretation, (New York: Appleton-Centruy Crofts, 1971), p. 106.

[43]Thomas G. Sanders, "The Relationship Between Population Planning, and Belief Systems: The Catholic Church in Latin America," American Universities Field Staff Report, West Coast South America Series, Vol. XVII, No. 7 (TGS-5-'70), p. 7.

[44]Ibid., p. 10.

[45]Ibid.

[46]Ibid.

[47]Julius Rivera, Latin America: A Sociological Interpretation, p. 109.

[48]Ibid.

[49]Ibid., pp. 109,110.

[50]Pardo Suárez, Raymundo. "El Pueblo Colombiano Rechaza el Concordato." Leaflet. Bogotá: Asociación Colombiana de Libertad Religiosa, 1974.

[51]Restrepo, Liborio, El Concordato Ayer-Hoy. This is a careful exposition of the Catholic view in favor of the proposed revision of the 1887 concordat.

[52]Richard R. Renner, Education for a New Colombia, p. 7.

[53]Ibid., p. 9.

[54]Ibid., p. 8.

[55]Ibid.

[56]Lewis Hanke, Contemporary Latin America: A Short History, (New Jersey: D. Van Nostrand Company, Inc., 1968), p. 100.

[57]Statistical Abstract of Latin America, 1972, p. 218.

[58]Lewis Hanke, Contemporary Latin America: A Short History, p. 91.

[59]U.S. Department of State. Republic of Colombia, Background Notes, December 1972, p. 5.

[60]The Statesman's Yearbook, 1974-75, p. 835.

[61]AID Economic Data Book. Latin America, p. F-2.

[62]Lewis Hanke, Contemporary Latin America: A Short History, p. 94.

[63]Thomas G. Sanders, "Economy, Education, and Emigration in the Chocó," p. 4.

[64]AID Economic Data Book. Latin America, p. F-4.

[65]W. O. Galbraith, Colombia: A General Survey, p. 84.

[66]Lewis Hanke, Contemporary Latin America: A Short History, pp. 92-94.

[67]AID Economic Data Book. Latin America, p. F-4.

[68]Ibid.

[69]UN Production Yearbook, 1972, p. 399.

[70]World Population Data Sheet, 1973.

[71]Statistical Abstract of Latin America, 1972, p. 131.

[72]AID Economic Data Book. Latin America, p. F-4

[73]W. O. Galbraith, Colombia: A General Survey, pp. 27-8.

[74]AID Economic Data Book. Latin America, p. F-4.

[75]See Wilson Velandia and Emily V. Adams, Proyecto de Investigación No-Formal en Colombia, (Bogotá: CEDEN, 1973), pp. 3-4.

[76]John M. Hunter, Emerging Colombia, (Washington, D. C.: Public Affairs Press, 1962), p. 55.

[77]W. O. Galbraith, Colombia: A General Survey, p. 61.

CHAPTER III

EDUCATION IN COLOMBIA: AN OVERVIEW

Introduction

More is attempted in this chapter than a mere recital of facts concerning the history of Colombian education, educational policy and administration, and the structure of the school system.

The central purpose of this chapter is rather to depict Colombia's frustrating struggle since colonial times to update itself educationally. The struggle was, and shall continue to be, between retrograde conservative forces on the one hand, and progressive liberal forces on the other.

Colombia today is endeavoring to update its educational system. It has created various mechanisms through which it hopes to refurbish the educational sector and transform it into a useful tool for national development. At all levels there is an attempt to democratize education, making it available to a larger number of people, and to introduce into it a more comprehensive program of instruction, with emphasis on what Colombians choose to call educación técnica (technical education).

The thrust of government programs toward vocational, technical and scientific education is being severely criticized by the conservative educators as an aping of "Yankee educational practices."

Colombia, a country economically deficient and with one of the highest annual rates of population growth in the world, seems to be fighting an uphill battle in its attempt to modernize its educational

sector. It has made some progress, but the monumental problems it faces continually weigh it down and prevent it from making the rapid progress that must be made in order to push itself further into the twentieth century.

Highlights of the Historical Development of Colombian Education

The Colonial Period (16th, 17th and 18th Centuries)

The first schools in Colombia were established by religious orders during the early 1500's and were designed principally to convert Indians to Roman Catholicism. Instruction tended to be rather informal in nature. By 1556, the schools expanded their curriculum to include reading, writing, arithmetic, and singing. The children of Spanish settlers were taught language, religion and the arts in special schools established for them. The early schools were exclusively for boys. Education for women did not receive any attention in Colombia until the latter part of the eighteenth century.

Higher learning had its beginnings in the establishment of the colegios mayores. The two most prominent ones were San Bartolomé, founded in 1605 by the Jesuits, and the Colegio de Nuestra Señora del Rosario, founded in 1653 by the Dominicans. The curriculum at these schools consisted of divine knowledge (theology, canon law) and human knowledge (philosophy, arts, jurisprudence, literature, and sometimes medicine). Latin was the language of instruction. The lecture method prevailed and learning was by rote. For example, as far as the study of law was concerned, the stress was on memorization of facts such as "the compilations of Castile and Indies and the endless and complicated royal cedulary, which in practice came to be the legal text."[1] These

institutions were by nature elitist. Only the sons of Spanish settlers and government officials were allowed to study in them. Both schools have had a long history and are still functioning today. "From the halls of San Bartolomé and El Rosario," write Colombian historians Jesús María Henao and Gerardo Arrubla, "Have come most of the sages and patriots who honor our annals as well as the heroes and martyrs of our independence."[2]

There were progressive minds in colonial Colombia which challenged the classical curriculum and proposed innovations.

It was not until the latter part of the eighteenth century, however, that a concrete new plan of education was drawn up. The suggested new plan was an attempt to "adapt education to local conditions" and to "remedy existing evils." It was the brainchild of the learned José Celestino Mutis who arrived in Bogotá from Cádiz, Spain, in 1762, and lectured on mathematics and astronomy in the College of Rosario. He taught Copernican astronomy, which caused quite a furor in the capital city of Bogotá.

Nevertheless, the controversy merely served to stimulate interest on the part of many in the teachings of Mutis. The innovative teacher fortunately gained the support of Viceroy Messía de la Cerda and later of his successor Viceroy Manuel Guirior, both of whom were enlightened gentlemen and favored educational reform.

As stated above, the purpose of the new plan was to adapt education to local conditions and to correct the deficiencies of the school system then in existence. Viceroy Guirior ordered an attorney named Antonio Francisco Moreno to draw up the new plan of studies, the primary aim of which was to teach students "useful sciences and good taste in

literature." Historians Henao and Arrubla report that Moreno "performed his mission brilliantly and the new plan was put into operation despite the opposition of the partisans of the old system."[3] It was reported that young men were making commendable progress in arithmetic, algebra, geometry and trigonometry, as well as in jurisprudence and theology.[4]

Notwithstanding the efforts of Mutis and his supporters to make colonial education more practical, the new plan failed because the Spanish Crown did not give its approval and Colombia reverted back to the old system. Sporadic efforts in the direction of reform continued to be made, but most ended in failure mainly because "old instructors came to look on the new teachings with disgust and suspicion."[5]

Despite the setback experienced by the proponents of a more progressive and practical educational system, the influence of the learned Jose Celestino Mutis and his enlightened circle continued to be felt in colonial Colombia. Archbishop-Viceroy Dr. Antonio Caballero y Góngora put him in charge of the famous Botanical Expedition ordered by the Spanish Court.

The purported aim of the Expedition was "to study the plants of northern South America from the equator to the Caribbean Sea, make and record astronomical, physical, and geographical observations, and draw a map of the regions explored."[6] Historians Henao and Arrubla comment: "The lack of sufficient experts prevented the completions of these plans, but the merits of the work done are not lessened by this fact."[7] Investigations were carried out by members of the Expedition in different regions of the country and in 1791 permanent laboratories were established in Bogotá where the Expedition took on the

character of an institute of scientific studies. The institute's collection was impressive:

> . . .many manuscripts on plants, meteorology, and mines; a herbarium of twenty thousand plants; thousands of pictures of the vegetable species of the country; a nursery; collections of woods, shells, minerals and hides; and a series of oil paintings of the most important animals of the country in their natural colors.[8]

After the death of Mutis "the work was continued without steadiness or enthusiasm."[9] Henao and Arrubla describe the fate of the institute in the following manner:

> The political disturbances that followed interrupted the expeditions and although some patriots thought of reviving them, the Spanish reconquest made this impossible. In 1817, the Spanish government ordered everything belonging to the enterprise to be taken to Madrid where the greater part of the collection reposes in the botanical garden of that city. A portion of the documents is preserved in the national archives at Bogotá.[10]

Another event which had an effect on education in colonial times was the expulsion of the Jesuits in 1767 by order of Charles III:

> Education received a tremendous setback. The Jesuits had fourteen colleges in which there were about five thousand students, all of which were now abandoned. . .But the gravest and most irreparable evil was the abandonment of the missions established by the zealous fathers who had founded towns and civilized the regions of the Meta and Orinoco after more than a century of labor and sacrifice.[11]

The Jesuits are described as being "unrivaled in learning and in the consecration with which they devoted themselves to the conversion of the Indians."[12]

Most other events during the colonial period having any bearing on Colombian education were, with few exceptions, minor, or even trivial.

Perhaps one exception was the founding in the late 1700's of "an institution for the education of the ladies of the capital and the daughters of the people" by a rich woman named Doña María Clemencia de Caycedo.[13] This educational institution for women marked the beginning of the Monastery of Enseñanza, considered to be "the only important and serious school for women which existed in the colony."[14] The importance of this act will be better understood in the light of this explanation by Henao and Arrubla regarding the education of women during the colonial period in Colombia:

> The education of woman was almost totally forgotten in the colony; rare were the young ladies of the aristocracy who knew how to read and write, and it will be understood that among the daughters of the common people ignorance was crass. The educational plants which existed were designed solely for men, and the pious work of Doña María Clemencia de Caycedo will readily be appreciated.[15]

That schooling was primarily for men at that time is nothing unusual as the same situation prevailed throughout Europe. Nevertheless, it is worthy of note that a Colombian lady struck out boldly in a new direction against formidable odds. Yet, even this courageous woman did not proceed with her task without first having obtained her husband's permission, as was proper for the times. Women were far from liberated then.

The educational picture of colonial Colombia thus becomes clear. Attempts at reform by a few of the enlightened minds of the period came to naught. The opinion of the more conservative elements prevailed and education continued to be classical in nature. Latin continued to be the language of instruction and a prerequisite for admission

to the schools. Laboratory equipment, such as was available in those times, was virtually nonexistent. The religious orders were in full control of education. Such as it was then, the best education was available in the better schools, such as San Bartolomé and El Rosario. Schooling was by and large reserved for the upper classes. The plebeians were left in ignorance.

The National Period (19th Century)

Like the other Latin-American republics, Colombia gained its independence from Spain during the nineteenth century. After independence, a few important changes were effected in the area of education.

Henao and Arrubla claim that during the national period the old plan of study was "relegated to oblivion."[16] This claim is somewhat hyperbolic since education continued to be plagued with many of the same problems it faced during the colonial period. Nevertheless, it is undeniable that a few progressive steps were taken.

A law passed on May 18, 1826 established a general office of public instruction, a national literary academy, primary schools, and institutions of secondary education.

Central universities were estabished in Bogotá, Quito and Caracas (Colombia was until 1830 part of the State of Gran Colombia, which included Ecuador, Venezuela and Panamá). These universities were to have "a public library, a cabinet of natural history, a botanical garden, a chemical laboratory, and even a printing press."[17] However, the universities "did not go beyond a laudable patriotic desire for the republic could not meet such heavy expenses."[18] The plan for the establishment of these central universities was extremely ambitious.

Henao and Arrubla comment as follows on the plan: "Very wide was the field of the various university professorships which appeared to include all knowledge. The new plan of studies revealed a notable advance in intellecutal culture. . ."[19]

The new universities were of a somewhat liberal bent. Henao and Arrubla observe that ". . .the government did not consider it inadvisable to countenance books of sensualistic morality, like those of the English jurisconsult Jeremy Bentham, notwithstanding the justifiable opposition to such teachings by both heads of families and the ecclesiastical authorities."[20] The Roman Catholic Church was then and continues to be now the watchdog of Colombian education. Yet Henao and Arrubla refer to this period as a "renaissance period." In a sense it was since, as they point out themselves, "teaching was conducted in Spanish, instead of Latin according to the old style,"[21] a truly noteworthy advance. Another innovation was the introduction of public examinations. The curriculum included subjects such as arithmetic, algebra, geometry, logic, geography, astronomy, all of them perhaps rather poorly taught in view of the fact that the government did not have the wherewithal to provide the schools with competent staff and adequate equipment.

Mention was made earlier of the expulsion of the Jesuits in 1767 by order of Charles III. This monarch's action was reversed by Ferdinand VII who in 1815 "opened the doors of Spain and its possessions to the Jesuits."[22] In April, 1842 a law was passed providing for the foundation of colleges of missions and by presidential decree the Society of Jesus was selected "to take charge of the missions and of the education of youth."[23] Diplomatic arrangements were made for the

return of the Jesuits, the first of whom arrived in Bogotá in 1844. "Thus the religious who had been banished from the country in 1767 now returned, much to the satisfaction of many parents who longed to give their children a substantial Christian education,"[24] observe Henao and Arrubla. The hold of the Roman Catholic Church on education was strengthened.

The first public university, the University of Antioquia, was established in 1803. This was followed by the founding of the University of Cartagena in 1824, and of the University of the Cauca Valley in 1827. Law 66 passed in 1867 authorized the establishment of a university in Bogotá to be known as the National University of the United States of Colombia, with schools of law, medicine, natural sciences, engineering, arts and crafts, literature and philosophy. It provided free tuition and scholarships for eight students from each state.[25]

A highpoint of this period was the signing of a concordat with the Holy See in Rome on December 31, 1887 by which the symbiotic relationship of the Catholic Church with the Colombian State was officially recognized. The Constitution of 1886 had already recognized the Roman Catholic religion as "that of the nation" and provided that public education be organized and directed in accordance with the Catholic religion. The concordat of 1887 concerned important provisions concerning education:

> Religious teaching is made compulsory in the universities, colleges, schools, and other centers of learning. Education is to be organized and directed in accordance with the dogmas and moral code of the Catholic Church. In these institutions, church officials have the right to inspect and revise texts

> dealing with religion and morals. The Archbishop of Bogotá has the right to choose the texts for the study of religion and morals in the universities and to prescribe texts on the same subjects in other official institutions.[26]

It has already been pointed out that despite claims that in 1936 the Roman Catholic Church was "disestablished" and its control over education "taken away", and that in 1942 the Concordat of 1887 was supposedly "modified", the Church continues to wield enormous political power in Colombia. It has a powerful voice in public education and has a firm grip on secondary education, which is mostly private and Catholic. A representative of the Church is included as an official member of the Consejo Superior Universitario (University High Council) of every university of Colombia and that a member of the clergy is included in all official school inspection teams. The Church is a persistent "presence" in Colombian educational circles.

Educationally, Colombia moved into the modern era with at least two major handicaps: 1) an apparently unresolvable feud between liberal and conservative elements, with a powerful ecclesiastical structure lending its weight and influence on behalf of the conservative faction, a situation which has had a deleterious effect on education; and 2) an elitist school system, ill-equipped to provide any significant assistance to programs of modernization. Socially, politically and educationally, Colombia is a house divided against itself. Too many factions with too many vested interests prevent it from making much significant educational progress.

Richard R. Renner sums up the educational happenings of the national period in the following pointed statement: "During the nineteenth century, official Government policy had been to extend

education, although the persistence of oligarchial social traditions and political unrest had prevented the Government from implementing that policy."[27]

The Twentieth Century

The following is an accurate and useful resume of official Colombian government action in the field of education during the early part of the twentieth century:

> The most important development in education during the early twentieth century was the passage in 1903 of Law No. 39, the so-called Organic Law on Public Education. This law, and one elaborating its provisions passed in 1904, established the system of national inspection and the combined financial responsibility for education of national, departmental, and municipal governments. The first provisions for compulsory education were made by Law No. 56, passed in 1927, according to which parents or guardians are obligated to see that the children for whom they are responsible receive a minimum education either in public or private schools.
>
> During the 1930's the activities of Agustín Nieto Caballero, national inspector of education under President Enrique Olaya Herrera (1930-34), provided a powerful stimulus to development in education. Viewed by many as the outstanding figure in modern Colombian education, he called for the introduction of modern teaching methods to replace rote learning and for emphasis on practical subjects.[28]

Between 1930 and 1950, a number of important steps were taken by the Colombian government in the field of education. For instance, it established national supervision of education; it founded many elementary and secondary schools; it expanded private secondary education and agricultural and technical education; it developed normal schools designed specifically to prepare teachers who could deal with rural problems, and took the first steps toward granting autonomy to the National University.

From 1950 onward, the government formulated a series of five-year plans that helped direct national efforts more rationally. In 1960, it began to help departments and municipal districts meet the cost of elementary education more effectively. Secondary education was divided into two cycles--basic and advanced--in order to discourage student dropout and to encourage effective specialization in practical fields such as agriculture, business, industry and teaching. The government rapidly expanded night schools which primarily serve working people. Technical education and apprenticeship programs greatly benefitted from the creation in 1952 of the Colombian Institute for Educational Loans and Acvanced Training Abroad (ICETEX)* to develop professional leadership and the establishment in 1957 of the National Apprenticeship Service (SENA) to develop skilled workers.

A main thrust of current educational policy in Colombia is towards a more practical curriculum. Students are being encouraged to specialize in practical fields such as agriculture, business, and industry.

Scholarships and low-interest loans are today available to students through the services of ICETEX. Financial support is offered to university students for study at home and abroad. Awards are based exclusively on need and academic records and preference is given to students in the fields of education, engineering and agriculture. It is estimated that as of June 1969, loans were granted to 9,000 students

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*The original name of this organization was Colombian Institute for Technical Specialization Abroad (Instituto Colombiano de Especialización Técnica en el Exterior), but in 1968 it was reorganized to include a loan service for needy university students and the name was changed to the Colombian Institute for Educational Loans and Advanced Training Abroad.

for study within the country, and to 960 for study abroad.[29] The aim of ICETEX is "to guarantee equal opportunities for equal talent."[30] The organization receives assistance from the United Nations, foreign governments and universities, and foreign philanthropic organizations. Two American agencies which lend support to ICETEX are the Agency for International Development (AID) and the Ford Foundation. The heaviest support by far comes from the United States.

The scientific and technological development of the country is a goal ever before the government officials in Colombia. In 1968, the Colombian Fund for Scientific Investigations and Special Projects (COLCIENCIAS) was created. Its functions are the promotion of scientific and technological research in both public and private institutions of learning and the planning and coordination of all such research throughout the country. A budget is assigned to COLCIENCIAS by the government which is supplemented by substantial assistance from international agencies and foreign governments. Scientific experts from other countries assist COLCIENCIAS with its development projects.

Also worthy of mention is the National Apprenticeship Service (SENA) which has been called "Colombia's most unique contribution to industrial and vocational education."[31] The following are some of SENA's accomplishments:

> From 1958 to the end of 1966, it trained 180,928 workers, of whom 25,811 were apprentices and 155,117 were adult employees. In 1966, the organization had 884 full-time and 308 part-time instructors and 722 units (classrooms and shops) with facilities for 13,000 students. Nearly 6,000 apprentices and 41,000 adults were enrolled. SENA has also trained 115 instructors and 25 leaders and promoters in the areas of industrial and vocational training for 13 other Latin American countries.

> In agriculture, SENA has (1) made training agreements with FAO and Massey-Ferguson concerning farm machinery utilization; (2) worked with the National Federation of Coffee Growers to provide courses in more effective land utilization; (3) offered courses to farm credit supervisors and irrigation district supervisors for INCORA*: (4) conducted courses for farm women in domestic science and in labor specialties suited to women; and (5) received and administered technical assistance from the United Kingdom for sheep raising. Many other foreign countries also have made technical contributions which SENA has administered.[32]

The work of SENA is financed with income derived from a tax levied on industries:

> According to Law 58 enacted in 1963, all private businesses and public corporations whose capital is more than 50,000 pesos, or who have more than 10 permanent employees, must contributed to SENA. These organizations are taxed 6 percent of their monthly payrolls, 4 percent of which goes to family subsidies and 2 percent to SENA. Official organizations also contributed 0.5 percent. Twenty percent of this money goes to the organization's national office, which has responsibility for advising, supervising, and planning SENA programs.[33]

Vocational training in Colombia is beset by a number of weaknesses as may be ascertained from the following criticisms advanced against it:[34]

1. Industrial education programs do not correspond to the needs of the industry.
2. The mileu of the schools does not develop the fundamental attitudes or personal values necessary for effective practice of a trade or profession. Students are said often to lack judgment and ability in adapting to varying circumstances.
3. Many agricultural, commercial, and industrial schools have programs so different in their vocational aspects, that transfer from one specialty to another is impeded. It has been suggested that these programs be reoriented so that they more effectively complement the work of SENA. Some effort has already been made to accept SENA in public secondary schools. This move is considered important because the limited number of places in secondary vocational schools has often forced a student to enroll in traditional academic secondary school programs although his interest is really vocational.

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*Instituto Colombiano de Reforma Agraria (Colombian Agrarian Reform Institute).

One of the major problems facing vocational training in Colombia is simply the fact that it is still not highly valued by a majority of Colombians. While it is true that the exclusive character of academic secondary education has diminished as a result of the establishment during the 1950's of a number of government-operated secondary schools and the growth of vocational and technical schooling, during the 1960's most of the secondary school students chose to enroll in the academic track, and continue to do so through the 1970's. Thus vocational training is left largely to vocational and adult education programs.

It appears that despite all efforts to promote technical and vocational education, the classical or academic track, with its broad liberal arts programs, continues to be the first choice among Colombia's young people.

Yet, a push toward a more practical curriculum at all levels remains the hallmark of official Colombian educational policy in the twentieth century, particularly during the 1960's and 1970's.

In Colombia, "A long-standing general disinclination to engage in manual labor continues to result in a certain negativism toward education in technical fields and trades. . ."[35] This traditional attitude is the chief enemy of educational reform in Colombia.

Official Educational Aims and Policy

Article 41 of the Colombian constitution, adopted February 16, 1945 states that:

> Liberty of education is guaranteed. The State shall have, however, the supreme inspection and care of institutions of learning, public and private, in order to assure the fulfillment

> of the social purposes of culture and the best intellectual, moral, and physical development of the students. Primary education shall be free in the State schools, and compulsory to grade determined by law.

The broad national aims of education, which in effect constitute Colombia's official philosophy of education, have been summarized as follows:

> Education in Colombia is organized and directed in the tradition of the Catholic religion. In association with the moral training this implies, education is regarded as the essential means for achieveing the equality of Colombian citizens and as the fundamental basis for effective individual liberty. Other major aims are: to provide training related to the performance of remunerative and socially useful occupations; to encourage a critical approach and readiness to accept civil responsibilities.[36]

In order to implement these broad aims, the following general policies have been established by the Ministry of Education:

1. Maximum access to education at all levels for students from low-income families and the elimination of any discriminatory practices which might hamper such access.
2. Conversion of the national education system into a basic instrument for social change and integral national development.
3. Improvement in the quality of education and increased yields at each educational level.
4. Stimulation and co-ordination of initiatives and participation by private, provincial and municipal bodies in order to attain the aforementioned goals.[37]

It is evident that the democratization of education and improvement of its quality are the primary aims of the current policies of the national government.

Top priority has been given to primary education for which national standards were set during the 1960's. This concentration on the primary level, however, left secondary education largely in the

hands of private administrators. This, of course, makes the cost of secondary education prohibitive for a large percentage of students. Nevertheless, the government is endeavoring to reduce financial barriers to secondary education through a number of means, for instance: 1) a more intensified use of available facilities, 2) the creation of "cooperative secondary schools" to which private institutions lend space and equipment, and 3) through various subsidies. As a result of these actions, enrollment in the public secondary schools of the country is said to have doubled between 1961 and 1965, although it has always been small in comparison with private high school enrollment. As in the case of primary education, the government has intervened to set nationwide "rigid standards" at the secondary level also.[38]

There is no doubt that in Colombia today the stated purpose of all educational planning is the "conversion of the national education system into a basic instrument for social change and integral national development," as quoted above. Already mentioned in the previous section were the government's efforts to promote vocational and technical education throughtout the country in all academic levels. There has been "a rapid growth in the provision of educational facilities geared to national manpower needs, or, from another point of view, to specific vocational aspirations."[39] For example, in 1941, upon the recommendation of a mission from Puerto Rico, a system of vocational agricultural schools was set up. The number of enrollments in vocational secondary schools, both public and private, is reported to have doubled between 1957 and 1965.[40] The number of public vocational agricultural schools grew from 37 in 1965 to 81 in 1968 (65 public, 16 private).[41] The relatively successful work of the National

Apprenticeship Service (SENA) has already been described. Also mentioned was the work of the Colombian Institute for Educational Loans and Advanced Training Abroad (ICETEX) and of the Colombian Fund for Scientific Investigations and Special Projects (COLCIENCIAS). All of these organizations exist for the sole purpose of facilitating vocational, technical and scientific training through special programs, financial aid, and opportunities for study abroad, particularly in the United States.

The government has assumed an active role in the promotion of adult literacy campaigns, in programs for the improvement of teacher training and expansion of in-service teaching, and is working hard to upgrade and standardize teacher qualifications. Universities have been strengthened with major contributions from the national budget.

Efforts are being made to make instruction more student-centered with due consideration being given to individual differences and learning styles. The adoption of modern teaching methods and materials is being encouraged at all levels by the Ministry of Education. The aim is that each student be seen as an active participant in the learning process rather than as the traditional "passive recipient."[42]

In a word, there is now a profound awareness of educational problems in Colombia on the part of leaders in both government and education and serious efforts are being made to solve them. The thrust of modern educational reform is in the direction of a more practical and useful curriculum for the nation's schools, with a major emphasis on education for development.

The question is whether or not class-conscious, economically deficient Colombia, with one of the fastest annual rates of population

growth in the world, will be able to implement all of its grandiose educational goals and policies.

Already there are signs that it may be fighting a losing battle.

Educational Administration

Decree No. 3157, issued December 1968, reorganized the National Ministry of Education. The full Spanish text of the decree may be found in Octavio Arizmendi Posada's La Transformación Educativa Nacional, pp. 145-64. Arizmendi Posada was at that time Colombia's Minister of Education, and the work cited was his annual report to the National Congress delivered before the National Congress in September, 1969. No attempt is made here to describe in detail the intricate organizational web of the nation's educational sector. Only a few salient points are dealt with.

The national government has primary responsibility in education. It is responsible for the over-all supervision, policy planning and programming of education. Power to direct and control public instruction is invested upon the President of the Republic by the Constitution. He, in turn, delegates responsibility to the Minister of Education, who is assisted by: 1) a Vice-Minister in charge of legal matters, school inspection, evaluation, personnel, general services, and budgetary matters; 2) a Directorate General for Educational Services, which administers divisions of scholastic welfare, teacher training, educational radio and television, adult education, and special education.

Input is received by the Ministry of Education from the following advisory bodies: Higher Council of Education; National Cultural Council; National Coucil of science and technology; National Council of Youth and

Sport; National Educational Advisory Board; National Commission of UNESCO; Internal Commissions for Coordination and Consultation; Special Commissions.

At the time of the restructuring of the Ministry of Education in 1968, the educational sector of the national administration included five national universities and nine autonomous agencies. Among the public entities of the educational sector were included two to which reference has already been made: the Colombian Fund for Scientific Investigations and Special Projects (COLCIENCIAS) and the National Apprenticeship Service (SENA).

An inspectorate consisting of national and departmental (provincial) inspectors is in charge of the supervision of all schools, including private ones which are also required to follow the official curriculum. At the local level, there is a secretariat of education which handles the fiscal and administrative aspect of education. Cities with a population of 100,000 have their own secretariats of education. The activities of the local educational authorities come under the jurisdiction of the inspectors. The general supervision of the teaching staff, the handling of complaints regarding teacher performance and the distribution of study materials are some of the duties of the inspectors.

The administration of the system is a complex, multi-level operation:

> Most of the school facilities are maintained and owned or rented by the municipalities, although departments and the national government own some schools. Similarly, the responsibility for naming and paying teachers is divided among the three administrative levels, the departmental governments

> playing the most important role in this instance. Curricula are generally determined at the national level and are subject to some modification at the departmental level to meet local needs.[43]

The object of the 1968 reform was decentralization:

> Early in 1969 the system was being decentralized in order to give departmental secretariats greater authority with respect to day-to-day administration, particularly in the naming, paying, and promotion of the primary- and secondary-school teaching staffs. The minister of education had announced that the decentralization would be carried out on the basis of degree administrative efficiency displayed by the departmental secretaries.[44]

Notwithstanding the new policy to decentralize to the departmental level actual responsibility for day-to-day operations, the central government continues to exercise the greater share of responsibility and control.

Structure of the Educational System

The educational system of Colombia consists of the following levels: 1) kindergarten (referred to also as preschool), 2) primary or elementary, 3) secondary, and 4) higher education.

Preschool or Kindergarten

Preschool has not yet become an important element in the Colombian educational system. The nation's school code expresses the following sentiment regarding preschool education in general: "Preschool education is deemed to be a desirable phase, but it is not a prerequisite for entrance to the primary level."[45] For administrative convenience, the preschool level is classified under primary or elementary education.

All kindergartens must be registered with the departmental

(provincial) secretariat of education, which issues all licenses for their operation. Kindergarten directors are required to be credentialed teachers with several years of teaching experience at the preschool level. However, this is not rigorously adhered to, since allowance is made for noncredentialed teachers to obtain licenses to operate kindergarten establishments so long as they have at least completed the basic cycle of secondary education (the first four years of the required six) and have three years' teaching experience at the preschool level. The fact is that Colombia has many noncredentialed teachers at all levels. The Division of Teacher Development is in charge of formulating training programs for teachers at the preschool level. An institution that offers teacher-training programs for the preschool level is required by law to have a kindergarten operating on its premises.

Most Colombian kindergartens are private and located in major cities, particularly in Bogotá, the capital. One-third of the total kindergarten enrollment is in Bogotá. It is reported that nine out of ten kindergarteners attend private institutions which cater to the urban upper class. That is to say, even at the kindergarten level education in Colombia is only for those who can really afford it. In 1968 there were 3,119 private kindergartens in the country, as opposed to only 258 public ones. Private enrollment was 94,192; public, 16,302.[46] Some kindergartens may be strictly for boys or girls, others are co-educational. Efforts are being made in the city of Medellín to provide preschool education for underprivileged children through the Carla Cristina Educational Foundation, but this is by no means a widespread program.

The writer had the opportunity to visit many kindergartens during his 1974 trip to Colombia, particularly in the city of Medellín. The names given the kindergarten establishments are amusing, to say the least, for example: Jardín Infantil Be-Be (Baby Kindergarten); Jardín Infantil Disneylandia (Disneyland Kingergarten); Kinder Pinocho (Pinocchio Kindergarten); Kinder Jardín Infantil Pinguino (Penguin Kindergarten). Other names are a bit more academic, for example, Kinder Jean Piaget.

Since they are private institutions and cater to children in the higher socio-economic bracket, most kindergartens are well-endowed and fairly well equipped. They provide bus service and lunches for the children. An example of a good kindergarten is La Casa de Su Niño (Your Child's Home), located in one of the finest residential sections of the city of Medellín. The curriculum includes reading, writing, and computational skills, the latter taught mainly through the use of beautifully-colored wooden geometric figures. The director of the kindergarten prides herself in having been schooled in the "Froebelian method". No attempt is made to formally teach subjects such as geography, history and science, although the children are given some exposure to them in an informal manner. The purported aim of the kindergarten, as expressed by the lady who heads it, is "self-discipline through work" (autodisciplina por trabajo). The main stress is on character development. The student is expected to develop self-confidence, to speak the truth at all times, to think independently, to respect the property of others, to relate courteously and understandingly with his peers, and to develop the ability to solve his own problems.

Children at La Casa de Su Niño range in age anywhere from 3 to 6 years. Careful records are kept on each child. The student file contains a record of the required interview with parents before admittance, family history, and a photograph of the child. Psychological tests are duly administered to each child upon entrance by a trained psychologist and the results are used for guidance purposes.

In 1974 the kindergarten had an enrollment of 300 children served by a staff of 11 teachers, all of whom, according to the director, were properly certified. Cost per pupil was 360 pesos per month, or the equivalent of approximatley US$14.00.

Primary or Elementary

Article 14 of Legislative Act No. 10 of 1936 reads: "Primary education shall be free in the state schools and compulsory up to the grade determined by law." Compulsory schooling comprises five years of study, which can be completed in primary schools to which children are admitted after they have reached the age of 7. In actual practice, however, the large majority of school-age children do not enroll until they are 8, 9, 10, or 11 years of age.

Parents or guardians are obligated under law to see to it that the children under their care receive the minimum required education by sending them to a public or private school or by arranging for tutoring in their own home. There are sanctions against parents or guardians who fail in their obligation toward their children as regards education:

> Parents who do not ensure that their children receive the minimum of education must pay a fine of 2 pesos, convertible into arrest, for each month in which the child, without good reason, fails to receive schooling. Under Article 6 of Law No. 56 of 10 November 1972, parents of children of under 14

> are forbidden to have them employed by outside persons or organizations in any form of work, unless the children have reached 11 years of age and present a certificate that they have received the established minimum of education.[47]

The law stipulates, however, that where there are no free schools within a distance of two and one-half kilometers from the child's home, the official provisions regarding minimum education do not apply.[48]

A test to determine whether or not minimum educational requirements have been met is given the child no later than his thirteenth birthday, and no earlier than his eleventh. Upon passing the examination, an official certificate of elementary school completion is awarded.[49]

In theory, at least, elementary education is said to be uniform throughout the nation; that is, essentially the same in both urban and rural areas: ". . .the difference between schooling in an urban setting and schooling in a rural setting shall not be one of essence, but rather of adaptation of the programs and practices to the needs and characteristics of the environment."[50] In actual practice, however, the rural sectors are the most deprived educationally, and 40.7 percent of the country's population is rural.[51] Most illiterates are to be found in the rural areas. In 1964 the illiteracy rate in rural areas was 41.1 percent as compared to only 14.9 percent in the urban sectors.[52]

The following are the officially-recommended areas of study for the primary level:[53]

> RELIGIOUS AND MORAL EDUCATION
>
> Religion and Sacred History
>
> SPANISH
>
> Reading and writing, vocabulary, oral and written composition, grammar and spelling.

MATHEMATICS

Arithmetic and principles of geometry.

SOCIAL STUDIES

History, geography, civics, etiquette, group activities.

NATURAL SCIENCES

Introduction to the natural sciences and their practical applications.

ESTHETIC EDUCATION AND MANUAL TRAINING

Music, singing, arts and crafts, home economics.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

Dancing, gymnastics, and educational games.

Religious and moral education in the elementary schools takes place under the guidance of the Roman Catholic Church, specifically of the "Venerable Episcopal Conference of Colombia" which acts through the Episcopal Commission for Catechism (Comisión Episcopal de Catequesis). The National Ministry of Education publishes a curriculum guide for each of the five grades of elementary school. In each of these guides appears an explanation of what constitutes proper religious and moral training. The official requirements of the Roman Catholic Church are carefully stipulated. The strong influence of the Church in all levels of Colombian education has already been touched upon.

Some of the problems of primary education in Colombia were alluded to in the previous chapter. Mention was made of the fact that primary schools are incapable of absorbing all of the eligible children, which means that a large number of them are totally deprived of a primary school education. Also referred to was the opinion of some experts to the effect that even if the rate of population growth in Colombia were to remain static and the schools were able to absorb an additional 4 percent yearly of the eligible children, still by 1980 there would

be a total of 4.2 million between the ages of 5 and 14 not enrolled in any type of school. Mentioned above was the additional problem of rural educational neglect. It is a fact that in rural localities in particular, few of the schools offer the full-five-year course of study. For example, in 1965 some 13.7 percent of the urban and 64.6 percent of the rural institutions offered only one or two years and 59.7 percent of the urban and 4.8 percent of the rural schools offered the full five years.[54] Though the situation is better in urban areas, the overall national situation is not good. A lack of schools is one of the reasons why many Colombian children do not get an education. In fact, this lack of educational facilities, as well as incomplete elementary cycles in many of the existing schools, and not academic failure, may be signalled out as the most important reasons for the high attrition rate in Colombian schools.[55] Students who fail year-end examinations are permitted to repeat grades. During the 1960's about one-fifth of the student body was made up of repeaters.[56] Following is a statement which focuses on the major reasons for premature school leaving:

> Reasons for prematurely leaving school are generally similar in urban and rural localities, although voluntary dropouts have been much higher in the countryside: change of domicile has consistently ranked first by a substantial margin and lack of parental interest second; illness of the student has been third, followed by distance from school. Other major reasons for dropping out are domestic, agricultural, industrial or commercial employment, bad roads, and dilapidation of school buildings.[57]

During the 1960's school construction is reported to have increased substantially, the 1967 rate having more than tripled that of 1966.[58] While the rate remained high for 1968, a shortage of buildings and

equipment continued. During the early part of 1969, there was an adequate supply of buildings in the capital and major cities, but during the same period many rural localities lacked school facilities. The general situation pertaining to school facilities is described as follows:

> Nearly half of the schools have been in buildings erected for some other purposes. Classes have frequently been held outdoors and, largely as a consequence of lack of facilities, an emergency intensive-teaching system was put into effect in many primary schools in 1967. It involved measures such as simultaneous teaching of several grades, division of the enrollment into separate morning and afternoon shifts, and combining poorly attended and small schools.[59]

In summary, the most pressing problems of elementary schooling in Colombia are: 1) the limited course offerings in rural schools; 2) the high dropout rate; 3) the large proportion of over-aged children; 4) crowded school rooms (due to lack of facilities), and 5) the poor quality of the education offered.[60]

The aforementioned problems have been forthrightly described as "the consequence of a traditional, aristocratic view of education."[61]

Secondary

It may be that the most important educational event during 1974 was the reforma del bachillerato or reform of the baccalaureate, that is, of secondary education. It is called bachillerato after the French baccalaureat. Bachiller (bachelor) is the title awarded to a person when he or she finishes high school. The reform came about as a result of the issuance of Law No. 080, dated January 22, 1974, which stipulated that the structure of middle or secondary education would consist of two cycles:

A. A basic cycle of four years comprised of two periods:

1. Vocational exploration, first two years, and
2. Vocational initiation, third and fourth years.

B. A vocational cycle of two years offering the following options:

1. Academic baccalaureate.
2. Pedagogical or teacher-training baccalaureate.
3. Industrial baccalaureate.
4. Commercial baccalaureate.
5. Agricultural baccalaureate.
6. Social Work baccalaureate.

Previously, secondary education was divided into 1) general secondary or bachillerato, 2) vocational or technical secondary, and 3) normal education. It may be clearly seen from the above outline that the 1974 reform expanded and diversified the options for the baccalaureate candidates. Since 1962, secondary education has been divided into two cycles: the basic cycle of four years, which offered general education, and the advanced vocational cycle (ciclo profesional) of two years, which offered specialization in a variety of areas. The 1974 reform retained the basic four-year cycle, but divided it into two specific periods: 1) vocational exploration during the first two years, and 2) vocational initiation during the third and fourth years. The advanced or vocational cycle of two years remains, but with a larger number of options open to the student.

Article 4 of Law 080 recommends the following Basic Minimal Plan for Secondary Education:[62]

Article 5 of the same law defines vocational and technical "activities" or training to be those such as shorthand, home economics, first aid, exploitation of marine resources, techniques for the conservation of natural resources, and others. Article 6 explains that

Subjects	Year of Study and Weekly Class Hours Required					
	I	II	III	IV	V	VI
Ethical, Moral and Religious Education	3	3	3	2	1	1
Philosophy	-	-	-	-	3	3
History	2	2	2	3	-	-
Geography	2	2	2	3	-	-
Conduct and Health	-	-	-	-	2	2
Spanish	4	4	4	4	4	4
Foreign Language (Elective)	3	3	3	3	3	3
Natural Sciences	3	3	3	3	-	-
Chemistry	-	-	-	-	3	3
Physics	-	-	-	-	3	3
Mathematics	5	5	5	5	3	3
Physical Education	2	2	2	2	2	2
Esthetics	2	2	2	2	2	2
Vocational and Technical Training	4	4	4	4	5	5
Concentrations (Optional)	5	5	5	4	4	4
	35	35	35	35	35	35

the hours allowed for optional concentrations are to be dedicated by the institutions to "intensify subjects of their choosing." It simply means that a student may take more hours in a subject or subjects of his choice according to his inclinations and capabilities. As explained by Mr. Luis Florez, rector or principal of the Instituto Colombo-Venezolano (Colombia-Venezuela Institute) in Medellín through 1974, the purpose of the new program is to allow the schools greater freedom in structuring their own programs and to make provision for a greater stress on vocational and technical training. Mr. Florez stated during an interview that the ultimate objective was that the student, upon completion of the bachillerato, would be in possession of a marketable skill and be immediately employable, or have the needed training to pursue advanced studies at a university.

The basic idea of the 1974 reform is to diversify the baccalaureate and to encourage students to choose racks other than the strictly academic. Simply put, the reform seeks to convert the Colombian secondary school into a comprehensive high school after the American pattern.

Incidentally, the reform was no more than a restatement and adoption of the system of secondary education already in effect in Colombia through the National Institutes of Middle Education (INEM), the first of which was inaugurated in Ciudad Kennedy, Bogotá, in March 1970. Concerning the INEM schools, Richard R. Renner wrote in 1971:

> The National Institutes of Middle Education are designed to place students from a wide variety of social backgrounds into a single coeducational institution. They emphasize helping a student explore his interests more fully so that he can choose from a larger number of curriculums, with the aid of a school guidance counselor. They also seek to provide a kind of education which makes it easier, both psychologically and vocationally, to enter directly into dignified practical employment.[63]

The same year Renner pointed to certain of the problems of the INEM system of education:

> Because vocational education lacks prestige and because plans call for placing the institutes in relatively poor districts (where lack of secondary education is most glaring), they may be unable to attract many able students from other social classes. They would then fail to accomplish the desired social integration with other classes. Also, the small number of students who have graduated from vocational courses in the past make it seem unlikely that there will be enough students in the advanced cycle to offer a wide variety of vocational courses. And since in the past very few vocational students have gone beyond the 4th year of secondary school, it seems unlikely that entry into vocational education can be successfully postponed until the second cycle--the 5th and 6th years.[64]

Despite these problems, however, it appears that the INEM system of education was sufficiently successful to merit official approbation

and adoption. What was at first an experimental plan of education has now become the official secondary system of education.

Following the tradition established during the colonial period, secondary schools are largely private, the majority being maintained by religious orders of the Catholic Church. The Ministry of Education maintains an official list of private secondary schools approved for the granting of the bachillerato.

The cost of attending a private secondary school is prohibitive for a large number of students, particularly those in the rural areas. There is very little secondary education in rural areas to begin with, since most secondary schools are situated in large urban centers. Over 30 percent of the country's high schools are located in the capital city of Bogotá, and another 50 percent in other departmental (provincial) capitals.[65]

Other problems of secondary education in Colombia are outlined in the following statement:

> In analyzing the secondary-system's problems in 1968, a Ministry of Education official cited the most pressing problem to be the predominance of the college preparatory track over the technical tracks, coupled with the consequent high rate of unemployment and underemployment of the many academic track students who failed to find a place for themselves in the universities. Other problems cited were the lack of provision for transferring from one type of secondary education to another; the large number of courses required of the student; the limited primary-school preparation of young people entering secondary school; scanty enrollment in the vocational schools that provided much needed industrial and agricultural training; the limited degree of preparation of the teaching staff; and the shortage of audiovisual and other teaching aids.[66]

The writer was able to confirm during his 1974 trip to Colombia that the majority of these problems still exist. Many rectores or

high school principals complained during interviews that the 1974 reform of secondary education which calls for a comprehensive and diversified curriculum in the direction of vocational education thrusts upon them a burden which they cannot bear at this time. They refer to the lack of facilities and equipment needed to implement the new curriculum. This is a valid complaint. Visitation of Colombian secondary institutions by the writer confirmed that most of the schools at that level lack not only the space and equipment necessary to offer vocational, industrial and technical training, but the trained staff as well. In most of the schools visited, nothing but the most rudimentary vocational instruction was being offered, in many instances with obsolete equipment. Some high school principals complained that the new vocational emphasis is an encroachment of "Yankee methods of education." Many of the educators visited expressed strong, anti-American views and indeed saw the trend toward vocational training as nothing more than an attempt to transplant an American concept that in their opinion will not take root on Colombian soil.

The 1974 reform, scheduled to be implemented gradually, will continue to be hotly debated for many years to come, to the further detriment of education, no doubt. A new plan has been introduced, but traditional attitudes have not vanished.

It was mentioned earlier that a long-standing disinclination to engage in manual labor continues to result in a certain negativism toward vocational training. The classical or academic baccalaureate will continue to be the most popular for a long time to come. Many Colombian educators will see to that.

Higher Education

Richard R. Renner notes that the recent history of Colombian higher education is one of rapid expansion:

> At the end of the 18th century, there were three Colombian institutions of higher learning; a century later there were only six; by 1946 there were 14 institutions enrolling 7,337 students; and by 1957 there were about 30 (not including religious seminaries and military schools) enrolling more than 15,000 students. In 1970 there were 34 approved universities and many others using that name. University enrollment increased 997 percent between 1938 and 1962, and by 1970 had reached a total of almost 79,000 students in approved institutions.[67]

There are three sub-levels in higher education: 1) intermediate or nonuniversity higher education, 2) university higher education, and 3) post-university higher education.

Intermediate or Non-University Higher Education

Non-university higher education began to develop in 1937 with the opening of the nurses' school of the national Red Cross. Later, in 1949, schools for the training of laboratory technicians, librarians and draftsmen were opened at the Colegio Mayor de Antioquia, and schools offering training in laboratory work, ceramics and commercial studies at the Colegio Mayor de Cundinamarca. Since 1950, a large number of new non-university schools and courses at the higher level have been established. Renner observes that standards for non-university higher education are "usually at a slightly lower level than those of full-status universities, although many do offer work of university quality."[68] In 1965, education at this level offered two, three and four year programs leading to various mid-level careers, such as forestry, topography, electronics, nursing, architectural drawing, languages, general culture and translation.[69]

Intermediate or non-university higher education is described in detail by Richard R. Renner, author of one of the most recent studies on Colombian education:

> An institution offering nonuniversity education may admit a student who has attended a secondary school for either 4 or 6 years or has passed an entrance examination. It offers postsecondary specialized programs and grants three diplomas--técnico (after 3 years), experto (after 2 years), and perito (after 1 year). Students receiving these diplomas may later transfer to a university. . .
>
> Nonuniversity institutions include (1) agricultural normal schools, (2) higher schools of women's education and culture, (3) higher technical institutes of business, and (4) the Industrial Normal School. Some approved universities also have special programs for nonuniversity students. This vast assortment of programs is now the administrative responsibility of the Colombian Insitute for the Development of Higher Education (ICFES). . .[70]

University Higher Education

The objective of university training is "to prepare high-level professionals, to initiate them in scientific investigation, and to prepare the cadres of leaders needed in the country."[71] Prerequisite for entrance at this level is the completion of the six years of secondary education (bachillerato), although some universities will accept a student with only four years of education to particular courses. Only universities are authorized to grant degrees.

The following are some of the specialized areas of study offered at the university level: a one-year program in civil aeronautics; two year programs in industrial relations, international law and diplomacy; three-year programs in bacteriology, dietetics, library science and journalism; four-year programs in sociology, accounting, administrative science and geography; five-year programs in veterinary

medicine, natural sciences, geology and physics, engineering, pharmacy, law and theology; a six-year program in medicine.[72]

Post-University Higher Education

Specialization and up-dating are the principal objectives of post-graduate training. Opportunities for post-graduate training were considered to be "very limited" as late as 1965, when also the need for a more elaborate and extensive plan to remedy the situation was expressed.[73]

Through recent times most Colombian universities were inadequately equipped and staffed and therefore unable to offer worthwhile graduate programs, especially in the scientific fields. There has traditionally been no planning and coordination between faculties in the different universities offering studies in the same field, a situation which has forced Colombian students to go abroad for further preparation and specialization. Foreign study is made possible through scholarships extended by the Colombian Institute for Educational Loans and Advanced Training Abroad (ICETEX), whose work has already been described.

The development of graduate programs within Colombia is currently being fostered by the Association of Colombian Universities (ASCUN) with the assistance of such American organizations as the Agency for International Development and the Ford Foundation. For example, in 1970 an agreement calling for the vast expansion of graduate programs in Colombian universities was signed between AID, the National Academy of Sciences, COLCIENCIAS (Colombian Fund for Scientific Investigations and Special Projects) and ICFES (Colombian Institute for the Development of Higher Education). There may have been as many as 90 graduate-study

programs in operation in Colombian universities in 1972. Science and technology are receiving the major emphasis. Since the programs are relatively new, it is difficult at present to render an accurate judgment regarding their quality. The development of graduate programs in Colombian institutions of higher learning is a subject that demands further study.

Expansion of Higher Education

Renner's statement cited at the beginning of this section to the effect that the recent history of Colombian higher education is one of expansion is further confirmed by the fact that several universities were founded during the 1940's: the University of the Cauca Valley (1945), the Industrial University of Santander (1947), and the University of the Andes (1948). In 1948, Law No. 143, dealing with the organization of technical education, was passed. This piece of legislation greatly benefitted the universities. Shortly after the law was passed, the Director of Technical Education in the National Ministry of Education expressed the hope that "within a very short period of time technical education would occupy its rightful place on a national scale, since all the departments (provinces) of the country aspire to have technical faculties that would serve their own economic interests."[74]

In 1950 further progress was made when various facultades or colleges of the National University were modernized under the guidance of the Rockefeller Mission. The creation of the Colombian Institute for Educational Loans and Advanced Training Abroad (ICETEX) in 1952 completed the program of modernization by making it possible for Colombian university students to make loans and pursue postgraduate

studies abroad in technical fields. During the 1950's several other universities were founded, such as the National Pedagogical University for Women (1951) and the Pedagogical Technological University of Colombia (1953). A number of other teacher-training institutions were established even more recently.

The Colombian government and Ministry of Education are attempting to make the university a catalyst for national development. Aiding in this effort are a number of foreign governments and international agencies. The United States is the major contributor to the Colombian development process.

The influence of international agencies, and of the United States, on Colombian education began to be felt during the years 1945-50. In 1949, over fifty scholarships were awarded by foreign entities, twenty-nine of which came from the United States, thirteen from European governments (England, France and Spain) and eight from several Latin-American governments (Argentina, Brazil and Chile). It is estimated that 167 out of 293 foreign scholarships provided for Colombians between 1940 and 1949 came from the United States. With the encouragement of Colombian national educational planners, American influence increased significantly during the 1950's.[75]

In 1954, the National University Fund (FUN--Fondo Universitario National) was created. Its aim was to supervise and guide university expansion programs and to administer the distribution of public funds. Part of its responsibility was also to secure specialized teachers from other countries, to organize postgraduate programs, and sign agreements with foreign universities and organizations.

In 1958, the National University Fund was merged with the Association of Colombian Universities (ACU--Asociación Colombiana de Universidades), a private organization which sought to improve higher education.[76] Headed by the National Council of University Rectors, the National Fund became the working arm of the Association of Colombian Universities. The merger lasted until 1968 when the two organizations separated and the National University Fund became the Colombian Institute for the Development of Higher Education (ICFES).

It was while the Association of Colombian Universities and the National Fund were merged that they jointly developed the so-called basic plan for higher education (1966-67). An advisory committee from the University of California at Berkeley, headed by George C. Feliz, cooperated in the development of the plan. The project was financed by the US Agency for International Development.

In 1968, the National University Fund emerged as the Colombian Institute for the Development of Higher Education (ICFES), which is today the central planning organization for all higher education in Colombia.

Law No. 3156 of December 26, 1968, stipulated that ICFES was to serve as an auxiliary organization of the National Ministry of Education in charge of inspection and supervision of higher education. It was charged with the responsibility of facilitating technical, economic and administrative assistance to the universities and to render any other services necessary for their "quantitative and qualitative" improvement. In harmony with the recommendations of the basic plan for higher education, the following other responsibilities were assigned to ICFES:[77]

1. Educational planning for higher education in cooperation with the National Ministry of Education and the Department of Planning.
2. Recommend to the government norms and guidelines for the accreditation of institutions of higher learning as well as for the courses of study offered therein.
3. Recommend to the government programs for the financing of higher education and for the apportionment of government funds.
4. Take charge of the distribution of funds assigned to universities and supervise the expenditure of such funds in order to insure that they are utilized for their intended purpose.

In effect, present policy regarding higher education is one of centralization and tighter government control. The emergence of ICFES "has tended to place higher education more clearly under the Ministry of National Education."[78]

The approval of the Association of Colombian Universities is required for the establishment of new institutions, and it is responsible for supervision of improvement of academic standards. It provides service as a clearinghouse among universities for exchange of information concerning successful innovations.

As stated above, the objective of the government is to make the university a catalyst for national development. Already the stress on technical education at the university level has yielded some encouraging results:

> During the 1960's there was a pronounced shift on the part of university students toward the acquisition of skills needed by the nation's economy. Whereas in the past as many as two-thirds studied law or medicine, in 1968 the greatest concentration of enrollment was in engineering studies, and registrations in the schools of agriculture and economics were growing at a much more rapid rate than the overall average.[79]

Another good sign is that increasing numbers of students at the university level come from families of scanty means.

The overwhelming majority of university students, however, continue to come from upper and middle class families. Also, university education, despite all efforts to make it available for larger numbers of young people, is still the privilege of a tiny minority. As of 1970, only 1.8 percent of Colombia's total population had a university education.

Summary

At all levels Colombian education has traditionally been plagued with three major problems: 1) shortage of facilities, 2) outmoded curricula, and 3) lack of qualified teachers. Today, however, there is a concentrated effort on the part of the government to correct these deficiencies.

The present campaign for the updating of curricula is meeting with a modicum of success as may be evidenced by the increased enrollments in vocational and technical fields. The provision of scholarships and low-interest loans through ICETEX, as well as opportunities for study abroad, have helped to increase the interest in technical education. A negative attitude persists on the part of many students toward this type of education, but authorities are hopeful that gradually this attitudinal bias will be overcome.

But a traditional negative attitude toward practical educational pursuits is not the only thing against which a relentless warfare must be waged. There is also the problem, already alluded to, of a high annual rate of population growth which dwarfs all efforts to bring education up to par with the needs of a developing economy. And in Colombia today, more than ever before, education is seen as a tool for development.

A most glaring problem is rural educational neglect. In the rural areas, the highest rates of illiteracy prevail because of a lack of school facilities. Most school construction continues to take place in the major urban centers.

There is an alarming dropout rate. Figures released by the National Ministry of Education in 1968 indicate that there is a dropout rate of 85 percent at the primary level, of 73 percent at the high school level, and of 53 percent at the university level.[80] It was brought out earlier that a lack of educational facilities and deficient school programs are the main causes for dropout, not academic failure on the part of the students.

Nevertheless, despite all of the obstacles, the government continues to carry out an aggressive program of reform. The restructuring of the Ministry of Education, the reform of the baccalaureate, the creation of the Colombian Institute for Educational Loans and Advanced Training Abroad (ICETEX) and of the Colombian Institute for the Development of Higher Education (ICFES), are a few of the steps recently taken to help pull Colombia into the twentieth century.

FOOTNOTES

[1]Jesús María Henao and Gerardo Arrubla, History of Colombia, (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1938), p. 157.

[2]Ibid., p. 119.

[3]Ibid., p. 157.

[4]Ibid.

[5]Ibid.

[6]Ibid., p. 174.

[7]Ibid.

[8]Ibid., p. 176.

[9]Ibid.

[10]Ibid., p. 177.

[11]Ibid., p. 145.

[12]Ibid.

[13]Ibid., p. 156.

[14]Ibid.

[15]Ibid.

[16]Ibid., p. 386

[17]Ibid.

[18]Ibid.

[19]Ibid.

[20]Ibid.

[21]Ibid.

[22]Ibid., p. 145.

[23]Ibid., p. 449.

[24]Ibid.

[25]Ibid., p. 493.

[26]Ibid., p. 508.

[27]Richard R. Renner, Education for a New Colombia, p. 23.

[28]Area Handbook for Colombia, pp. 177-78. (Emphasis provided).

[29]Octavio Arizmendi Posada, La Transformación Educativa Nacional (Bogotá: Imprenta Patriótica, 1969), p. 13.

[30]Ibid., p. 93.

[31]Richard R. Renner, Education for a New Colombia, p. 93.

[32]Ibid., p. 95.

[33]Ibid., p. 94.

[34]Ibid., p. 97.

[35]Area Handbook for Colombia, p. 179.

[36]World Survey of Education, Vol. II. Educational Policy, Legislation and Administration (1971), p. 321.

[37]Ibid.

[38]Ibid.

[39]Ibid.

[40]Ibid.

[41]Richard R. Renner, Education for a New Colombia, p. 88.

[42]Octavio Arizmendi Posada, La Transformación Educativa Nacional, pp. 36-37.

[43]Area Handbook for Colombia, p. 181.

[44]Ibid.

[45]Luis Alejandro Guerra, Legislación Escolar Colombiana, (Bogotá: Libreria Voluntad, 1971), p. 403.

[46]Richard R. Renner, Education for a New Colombia, p. 51.

[47]World Survey of Education, Vol. II (Primary Education), p. 260.

[48]Luis Alejandro Guerra, Legislación Escolar Colombiana, p. 399.

[49]Ibid., p. 400.

[50]Ibid., p. 402.

[51]Statistical estimates of Colombian population vary according to the source consulted. The 40.7 percent rural estimate is for 1970 and is given in The New Encyclopedia Britannica, Micropaedia, Vol. III, p. 13.

[52]Departamento Administrativo Nacional de Estadística, Boletín Mensual de Estadistica, No. 249, April, 1972, Table C-4, p. 172.

[53]Luis Alejandro Guerra, Legislación Escolar Colombiana, p. 403.

[54]Area Handbook for Colombia, p. 184.

[55]Ibid.

[56]Ibid.

[57]Ibid.

[58]Ibid., p. 186.

[59]Ibid.

[60]Ivon Lebot, "Elementos Para la Historia de la Educación en Colombia en el Siglo XX," in Departamento Administrativo Nacional de Estadística, Boletín Mensual de Estadística, No. 249, April, 1972, p. 138.

[61]Ibid.

[62]La Reforma del Bachillerato. Decreto 080/74. Bogotá: Colombiana de Prestaciones, 1974.

[63]Richard R. Renner, Education for a New Colombia, p. 82.

[64]Ibid., p. 83.

[65]Dale W. Adams, "Leadership, Education, and Agricultural Development Programs in Colombia," Inter-American Economic Affairs, Vol. 22, No. 1 (Summer, 1968), p. 89.

[66]Area Handbook for Colombia, p. 187.

[67]Richard R. Renner, Education for a New Colombia, p. 100.

[68]Ibid.

[69]Alejandro Bernal Escobar, et. al., La Educación en Colombia, (Bogotá: Oficina de Investigaciones de FERES, 1965), p. 79.

[70]Richard R. Renner, Education for a New Colombia, p. 100. One of the better-known nonuniversity institutions of higher learning is the Higher School of Public Administration, which has been described as follows:

> "Among the university establishments of higher learning, the largest is the Higher School of Public Administration (Escuela Superior de Administración Pública--ESAP), which was established in 1958 concurrently with a reform of the civil service system. It is made up of a Faculty of Political and Administrative Science; Institutes of International Studies, General Administration, Social Administration, and Governmental Planning; and an Investigations Center. Its students enrolled at the undergraduate university level, in preparation for middle-level public employment; at the graduate level in preparation for public employment at a higher level; and at both levels may take inservice training courses. The heaviest enrollment is for inservice training in general administration. ESAP has received technical or financial assistance from many foreign entities, including the United States and French governments, the Ford Foundation, United Nations agencies and the Organization of American States."

Area Handbook for Colombia, p. 197.

[71]Alejandro Bernal Escobar, et. al., La Educación en Colombia, p. 80.

[72]Ibid.

[73]Ibid., p. 81.

[74]Ivon Lebot, "Elementos Para la Historia de la Educación en Colombia en el Siglo XX," p. 135.

[75]Ibid., pp. 135-136.

[76]"In 1958 the National University Fund was reorganized so that its activities could be coordinated with those of the Colombian Association of Universities.

> Under a 1961 statute the National University Fund was to be financed by the national government and by the Departments and municipal districts interested in higher education. This support is based on (1) 1 percent of the entire Ministry of National Education budget; (2) 2 1/2 percent of the National support granted to affiliated public and private institutions, not to exceed 300,000 pesos per university; (3) not less than 10 percent of the Ministry of National Education budget allotted for the support of Departmental universities; and (4) not less than 2 percent of the budget designated for private universities."

Richard R. Renner, Education for a New Colombia, p. 101.

[77]See the book Operación Cacique (Bogotá: Ediciones "Camilo", 1972), pp. 19-29.

[78]Richard R. Renner, Education for a New Colombia, p. 102.

[79]Area Handbook for Colombia, p. 176.

[80]Octavio Arizmendi Posada, La Transformación Educativa Nacional, p. 41.

CHAPTER IV

THE PRIVATE EDUCATIONAL SECTOR

Introduction

In Colombia, a significant portion of the total educational enterprise is private. Most private schools at all levels are owned and operated by the Roman Catholic Church. The first colonial schools were founded by the Jesuits, Dominicans, and Franciscans. To this day, the Church continues to play a major role in Colombian education.

A broad sketch of the private educational sector in Colombia is given in this chapter, which consists of three general headings: Historical Antecedents of Private Education, General View of the Private Educational Sector, and Government Supervision and Control of private schools.

Facts and figures concerning private education are not cited in isolation but are in all instances accompanied by corresponding data on the public sector for purposes of comparison.

Historical Antecedents of Private Education

The first schools founded on Colombian territory were private schools. It was pointed out in the previous chapter that the Roman Catholic religious orders, particularly the Jesuits and Dominicans (the Franciscans were also active), were the initiators of formal education which was private in its entirety. Even to this day the Church runs most of the private educational establishments from the

kindergarten to the university level. By and large, then, private education means Catholic education. However, this is not to say that the ecclesiastical influence is circumscribed to the private sector. It has already been said that there is a Catholic "presence" in all levels of public education as well. The Concordat of 1887, also alluded to in the previous chapter, allowed the Church to exert a powerful influence on all aspects of Colombian education, both public and private. Reference was also made to the "church-state imbroglio" which to this day has not been satisfactorily settled. There is a constant tension between church and state in Colombia. Spokesmen of Catholic private education continually call for additional state financial support and complain that the aid extended at present by the government to the private sector is woefully inadequate.

Richard R. Renner, who in his recent book on Colombian education devotes a whole chapter to private education, keenly observes: "The educational activities of church and state in Colombia are interdependent."[1] His observations on this very important point are a propos:

> Private schools may receive subsidies from public funds, public schools may meet in church buildings, Roman Catholic nuns and priests may teach in public schools, officials of the Roman Catholic hierarchy are guaranteed positions on boards of public educational institutions, the public curriculum is imposed upon private elementary and secondary schools, and Roman Catholic religious teaching is required in public schools.[2]

In reality, there is no separation of church and state in Colombia. There is a considerable overlapping of the functions of both sectors politically and educationally. Nevertheless, as Renner is quick to point out, "in important respects public and private educational objectives differ significantly."[3]

Since colonial times, the private sector has played a significant role in Colombian education. It was through the initiative of the Roman Catholic religious orders that secondary and higher education got their start in the country. The National Ministry of Education acknowledges that fact:

> The Jesuits, Dominicans and Franciscans played the most important role. Thus appeared the Colegio Mayor de San Bartolomé, the Colegio Mayor de Nuestra Señora del Rosario, the Universidad Tomística, the Universidad Javeriana, and a number of secondary schools in Santa Fe, Tunja, Cartagena, Mompós, Pamplona, Antioquia, and Popayán. Some seminaries were famous for the high quality of their curriculum.[4]

Because of its active educational role in early Colombian history, the Roman Catholic Church today has a virtual monopoly on private education and a powerful voice in the public educational sector.

Protestants established schools in Colombia as early as the 1870's, but Protestant educational activities will be dealt with in the next chapter.

General View of the Private Educational Sector

Colombians have a preference for private education. Richard R. Renner observes that in Colombia public schools "are generally avoided by all those who can afford to do so." He refers to the great emphasis placed on education by middle-class parents and their preference for private institutions of learning:

> The middle class family places great emphasis on education and makes considerable sacrifice in order that at least some of its children may attend a private institution. Parents frequently feel that the best education is to be found in a private school where they hope their offspring will develop better social class associations which they feel contribute to the quality of their educational experience. Both uban and rural students show a tendency to enroll in private institutions as family finances permit.[5]

Enrollment--All Levels

Private education is strongest at the preschool, secondary and university levels. It is weakest at the primary level where the largest enrollment, particularly in the rural areas, is in the public schools.

Percentagewise, enrollment was distributed as follows at levels in 1968:[6]

	Public	Private
Preschool	7.6%	92.4%
Primary	81	19
Secondary	46	54
Higher Education	54	46

Most of the preschool enrollment is in private schools. Regarding the other levels, the following summary is accurate and is in consonance with the figures just cited: "most of the primary school enrollment is public, but a majority of the secondary school enrollment is in private schools--most of themoperated by Catholic religious orders--and nearly half of the university enrollment is in private institutions."[7] In passing, it should also be noted that: "At all levels of instruction, many members of the teaching staffs in private schools and some teachers in the public school systems were members of religious orders."[8]

Preschool

Preschool education is given in the kindergarten schools, most of which are run by private groups and individuals. Government efforts in the direction of preschool education are negligible, although its value is officially recognized.

As stated in the previous chapter, in 1968 there were a total of 3,367 preschool establishments in Colombia. Of these 3,119 were private. Of the total enrollment of 110,494 children that year, 94,192 were enrolled in private institutions. In the city of Bogotá alone that same year there were 615 private preschool establishments as against only 44 in the public sector.[9] As far as teaching staff was concerned, there were 16,302 public and 94,192 private kindergarten teachers.[10]

The Colombian kindergarten was described in detail in the previous chapter. It will suffice here simply to reiterate that preschool education in Colombia is overwhelmingly a private venture.

Elementary

Some experts have predicted that within a few years all elementary education will be government sponsored.[11] However, during the years 1952-1967 it was the private elementary schools which experienced the greatest gains in enrollment. The most dramatic increase occurred between 1952 and 1955 when private urban elementary enrollment jumped from 77,000 to 177,000. During the same period public urban elementary enrollment rose from 418,768 to 528,944, a comparable increase. During the 1950's it was the private educational sector which absorbed most of the increases in elementary school enrollment in the urban areas of the country. On the other hand, from 1955 on the urban public elementary enrollment increased considerably.[12] Whether or not all elementary education will be public within a few years, as sociologist Felipe Londoño has predicted, remains to be seen. So far the prediction has not come true. It remains true, however, that it is at the elementary

level where private schooling is the weakest. Nevertheless, its defenders claim that it is qualitatively superior.[13]

Official figures for 1968 revealed a total public elementary school enrollment of 2,213,405 as against a private enrollment of only 520,027.[14] That same year it was reported that there were a total of 21,492 public and 5,869 private elementary schools. Of the 21,492 public elementary schools, 4,927 were urban and 16,565 were rural. It is clear that in the country as a whole, there were more public than private elementary schools, the differential being greater in the rural areas. As far as the number of establishments was concerned, the private educational sector was competing quite well with the public in urban areas. Urban private elementary school enrollment was 458,984, as compared with 1,275,679 in the public urban schools. The public elementary school sector also had larger enrollments and a greater number of establishments in the rural areas.[15]

It was stated in the previous chapter that one of the deficiencies of elementary education in Colombia is that many of the schools do not offer full five-year programs. The situation was as follows in 1967:[16]

1. Of the 5,213 public urban schools, 3,331 offered the full five years.
2. Of the 2,633 private urban schools, 1,899 offered the full five years.
3. Of the 16,577 public rural schools, 1052 offered the full five years.
4. Of the 187 private rural schools, 98 offered the full five years.

As far as the number of years of elementary schooling offered was concerned, the private schools exhibited the same deficiencies as the public schools despite their greater prestige. It will be observed that for both the public and private sectors the situation was better in the urban areas.

Secondary

At the secondary level, the private schools, most of which are owned and operated by the Roman Catholic Church, have the largest enrollment. Data for 1968 showed a total secondary enrollment of 586,704 distributed as follows: 272,794 in public schools and 313,910 in private establishments.[17] The great majority of the students were enrolled in the academic or classical bachillerato track, 228,229 (56.24 percent) in private and 177,554 (43.24 percent) in public general secondary schools.[18] The preference of Colombian students for the general academic or classical bachillerato was discussed in the previous chapter, as were also some of the problems facing secondary education generally, such as the high dropout rate. It has been estimated that only 27 percent of the students who enroll in the first year of secondary school finish the full six-year program.[19]

According to National Ministry of Education figures, in 1968 there were 3,664 secondary school buildings in the nation, of which 1,314 were public and 2,350 were private.[20] Of the 1,314 public secondary schools, 1,778 were urban and 136 rural. Of the 2,350 private secondary schools, 2,219 were urban and 131 rural. The public secondary schools had a total of 21,491 teachers, and the private ones 36,601. Of the 21,491 public school teachers, 20,344 were in urban areas and only 1,147 in rural areas. Of the 36,601 private secondary school teachers, 35,321 were in urban centers and only 1,280 in rural areas.[21] It becomes evident once again that rural educational neglect is a fact in Colombia and that both the public and private educational sectors are equally negligent.

Why well-to-do families prefer to send their children to private

secondary schools is explained in the following statement:

> Because of the smaller number of public schools and the concentration of the best-staffed and best-equipped private institutions in Bogotá and other major urban centers, well-to-do families in both urban and rural areas have tended to send their children to the larger urban private institutions, many of which offer boarding facilities. Since the annual costs in these establishments for tuition and boarding often are equal to nearly half of the entire income of the middle-class family, the number who can afford these institutions is limited. The bachillerato, however, represents the only practical avenue of access to the sought-after university. In 1963 the number of primary-school graduates who were turned down by general secondary schools, because of a lack of sufficient number of vacancies, amounted to more than half the number of successful matriculants.[22]

Secondary education has been criticized by the Ministry of Education itself as "an accentuator of social differences rather than as an instrument for vertical mobility."[23] Richard R. Renner summarizes the Ministry's opinion:

> While poor families need their children's labor for income and cannot provide the cost of sending them to school, the well-to-do can afford to support their children longer in school and thus the children are able to retain their higher social status. The few secondary schools to which the poor have the easiest access, such as agricultural, industrial, and other vocational schools, tend to function in such a way as to discourage upward mobility. For most students the principal reason for finishing secondary or higher studies is the social status conferred by the resultant diploma or degree.[24]

The question may be raised, Is private secondary schooling superior to that offered in the public secondary schools? Thsoe who favor private schooling are fond of saying that it is superior in quality if for no other reason than that the private institutions are generally somewhat better equipped, especially their laboratories. Nevertheless, the private educational enterprise, like its public

counterpart, has been attacked for its irrelevance to the needs of the nation's developing economy. The general secondary or academic curriculum, where the majority of the enrollment is, does not offer the student a specific skill but instead simply prepares him to begin a university career. The large number who for whatever reasons do not go on to higher education are not employable precisely because they lack a marketable skill. The 1974 reform of secondary education discussed in the previous chapter is aimed at correcting this unfortunate situation although, as pointed out earlier, it has encountered heavy opposition. Colombia is a country where agriculture, cattle raising, development of natural resources and the establishment of small industries should be given top priority, but the secondary school system--public and private--is not geared to meeting these pressing needs. The majority of students flock to the general secondary schools, not because it is the practical thing to do but the most prestigious.[25] Education for education's sake seems to be the Colombian student's motto. Acquiring a general culture, as is true to a great extent in France, is the primary aim. The practical needs of their developing economy are not yet a serious concern for the majority of the secondary school student population.

In 1968 enrollments were relatively low at the secondary level in areas other than the general or academic as the following figures will show. The general secondary enrollment figures are included for the sake of comparison.[26] Not included in the below listing are the following categories of secondary education: complementaria (complementary) and religiosa (religious).

Colombian 1968 School Enrollments

General Secondary (Academic)	
Public	177,554
Private	228,224
Industrial	
Public	22,819
Private	4,989
Agricultural	
Public	6,179
Private	1,751
Commercial	
Public	16,270
Private	52,963
Nursing	
Public	847
Private	725
Art	
Public	4,122
Private	4,559
Normal	
Public	38,588
Private	15,610

Next in popularity after the academic general secondary schools are the commerical or business training schools. The largest enrollment in 1968 in this type of school was in the private sector. The majority of those enrolled in commercial schools were women (79.25 percent). A total of 82.8 percent of all commercial school teachers taught in private schools. The private sector owned 89.2 percent of all commercial school buildings.[27]

Private and public commercial schools are generally overcrowded. They lack adequate teaching materials and a large percentage of the teachers are unqualified. Many of the schools are unaccredited.

Several years ago, the Institute for Educational Loans and Advanced Training Abroad (ICETEX) estimated that by 1975 Colombia would need 25,000 técnicos (technicians) in agriculture, 27,000 in business, 6,086 in construction, 5,477 in electrical engineering, 9,919 in mechanics and 3,254 in chemistry.[28] It was announced that these needs would be met by 1978 through the National Institutes of Secondary Education (INEM) and the Agricultural Technical Institutes (ITAS).

Sociologist Felipe Londoño points out that in 1969 there were only 60 agricultural secondary school graduate in Colombia, whereas the country can easily absorb 3,600 such graduate annually.[29] Furthermore, in secondary agricultural schools only 25.5 percent of the teachers had met the teaching qualifications required by law.[30] Colombia is dependent on technical assistance from abroad. It simply does not have a sufficient number of trained persons to provide competent technical and vocational programs.

Even officials in the private sector are quick to admit that secondary schooling, as it presently exists, fails to meet the needs of the country's developing industrial sector.[31]

The normal schools, most of which are private, provide another example of educational inadequacy:

> During recent years production from these institutions. . . has not been sufficient to meet demand; and in the mid-1960's their graduates represented less than half of the primary staffs. Most of the remainder had fewer years of education or had education in schools with curricula not specifically designed for primary teaching, and in 1964 more

> than one in five of the rural primary teachers had undergone fewer than six years of formal education. In private schools, women teachers were in many cases members of the upper classes who had bachillerato certificates and who did not make a career of teaching.[32]

Unfortunately, the teaching profession is not held in high esteem in Colombia. It is often referred to as "the refuge of the frustrated." It has been observed that: "Low salaries, frequently unattractive working conditions, and insecurity with regard to tenure, promotion, and placement have combined to limit the degree of prestige accorded to a teaching career." In 1960 "no more than 30 percent of the new graduates were dedicating themselves to the teaching profession."[33]

The curriculum in the normal schools is unimaginative and is said to suffer from the same "rigidity" as the academic secondary track. Teaching methods need to be updated. There is a scarcity of teaching materials. Audio-visual equipment is virtually nonexistent. Yet, there are those that claim that despite all of these deficiencies and drawbacks, private teacher-training institutions are "qualitatively superior." Therefore, they assert, "it is necessary to start discouraging the further creation of public normal schools and to pay more attention to the betterment of the private normal schools which are providing good quality training, despite the scarcity of teaching materials."[34]

Higher Education

There were 38 accredited universities in 1968, five of which were national and the remainder private or operated by provincial governments. Between 1955 and 1968 there was a sharp increase in the proportion of students in private institutions attributable to the establishment of

new private universities. Most of the private schools were Catholic and the heaviest concentration of the university population was in Bogotá (51.7 percent) and in Medellín (18.6 percent).[35]

According to sociologist Felipe Londoño, in 1970 there were 101 institutions of higher learning in Colombia, 31 of which were "legally approved" or accredited[36] and therefore members of the Colombian Association of Universities (Asociación Colombiana de Universidades--ASCUN). Richard R. Renner explains that the remaining unaccredited institutions "may use the name university but are not authorized to award university degrees; they may award diplomas such as técnico, experto, and perito." "Several other institutions," adds Renner, "have only parts of their programs recognized by law."[37] However, they still come under the supervision of ASCUN.

In 1974 ASCUN reported a membership roster of 30 universities. The institutions listed were the following:

Colegio Mayor de Nuestra Señora del Rosario - Bogotá
Fundación Universidad de América - Bogotá
Fundación Universidad de Bogotá Jorge Tadeo Lozano - Bogotá
Universidad de Antioquia - Medellín
Universidad del Atlántico - Barranquilla
Universidad de los Andes - Bogotá
Universidad de Caldas - Manizales
Universidad de Cartagena - Cartagena
Universidad del Cauca - Popayán
Universidad de Medellín - Medellín
Universidad de Nariño - Pasto
Universidad del Tolima - Ibagué
Universidad del Valle - Cali
Universidad Distrital Francisco José de Caldas - Bogotá
Universidad Externado de Colombia - Bogotá
Universidad Industrial de Santander - Bucaramanga
Universidad la Gran Colombia - Bogotá
Universidad Libre de Colombia - Bogotá
Universidad Nacional de Colombia - Bogotá
Universidad Pedagógica Nacional - Bogotá
Universidad Pedagógica y Tecnológica de Colombia - Tunja
Pontificia Universidad Javeriana - Bogotá
Universidad Pontificia Bolivariana - Medellín

Universidad Santiago de Cali - Cali
Universidad Tecnológica de Pereira - Pereira
Universidad de Córdoba - Montería
Universidad Tecnológica de Magdalena - Santa Marta
Universidad de Quindío - Armenia
Universidad Social Católica de La Salle - Bogotá
Universidad de Santo Tomás - Bogotá

In 1970 there was a total enrollment of 80,215 at the accredited universities, distributed as follows:[38]

In public universities. 45,412

In private universities 34,803

Londoño points out that if the nonaccredited institutions were taken into account, the enrollment in private universities would exceed that of the public by 10,788. Londoño predicts that enrollment in the private higher education sector will continue to grow at a more rapid pace than the public. In his opinion, the main reason for this is that the public universities are unable to expand sufficiently to accommodate all of the students who yearly seek entrance to institutions of higher learning.[39] He cites as an example the fact that in 1969 a total of 65,544 students sought entrance to public universities and there were only 32,950 vacancies.[40]

It was brought out in the previous chapter that the objective of the Colombian government is to make the university a catalyst for national development, thus the present stress on technical and scientific education. Though traditionally opposed to the teaching of "empirical subjects", the Roman Catholic Church is said to have changed its attitude somewhat:

> The Catholic hierarchy has come to adopt a more flexible attitude toward the teaching of empirical subjects, notably the natural and social sciences. Javeriana University

> added a department of sociology in 1969, and modern science is represented on the faculties of many Catholic universities. The effort of various ministers of education to increase the number of scientific and practical subjects offered has not encountered any opposition from the Church, but such opposition occurs on the part of some conservative teachers. The church has, moreover, emerged in the vanguard of the fight against illiteracy.[41]

Adult Literacy Programs

As far as adult education is concerned, ". . .the principal effort has been by voluntary private groups and by public apprenticeship and vocational training programs unrelated to the regular school system."[42] The armed forces, business, religious and welfare institutions, and private citizens also contribute to the operation of literacy centers throughout the country.

It is widely recognized that the most outstanding work in the area of adult education is being done by ACPO--Acción Cultural Popular (People's Cultural Action), a Roman Catholic welfare organization which in essence is--

> . . .a system of private educational radio programs designed to promote literacy and basic education, and to give guidance in such matters as home building and improvement, sanitation, and soil conservation. The program receive contributions from private sources and regular government support.[43]

ACPO and its radioescuelas de Sutatenza (radioschools of Sutatenza) has achieved worldwide notoriety and is easily one of the most studied adult literacy programs in Latin America. Much research has been done on this successful organization by scholars and graduate students from a number of American universities. A brief description of the ACPO program follows:

> From Sutatenza, a small town in the Department of Boyacá a powerful transmitter broadcasts classes in reading, writing, arithmetic, religious talks, and lectures on hygiene, home economics, and agriculture. These broadcasts are directed toward rural people of all ages, gathered in groups of 10 to 20 around inexpensive single-band radios that are provided by the Ministry of Agriculture or sold at moderate prices by a sponsoring organization, which provides blackboards and reading and writing materials free of charge. Each organized group of radio listeners is guided by a trained auxiliary teacher (auxiliar inmediato) who transcribes on a blackboard the reading, writing, and arithmetic exercises in accordance with the instruction of the radio voice. Chosen by the parish priest on the basis of reputation and intelligence, the auxiliary is sent for 3 or 4 months of training to the Church-operated Campesino Institute of Sutatenza before returning to his village. Where this is not possible, the auxiliary is given some instruction by the parish priest.
>
> Established in 1948, the Sutatenza program had an enrollment of more than 225,000 in 1963, a 50 percent increase over 1958. About 98 percent were rural dwellers, 56 percent were over 14 years of age, and male and female enrollees were about equal in number. About half were illiterate on enrolling and, of these, half acquired minimal literacy during the year. The programs reach many who are not formally enrolled in the courses, and in the mid-1960's. . .as many as a half million people were benefiting from them to some degree.[44]

The principal aim of ACPO is "to reduce illiteracy and raise economic and social standards among rural peasants."[45] The program "has recognized the fact that some 8,500,000 largely neglected peasants represent a social, productive, and consumer force that should be incorporated into the national economy."[46] ACPO endeavors to change peasant attitudes and to create an awareness of their own problems:

> Acción Cultural Popular (ACPO) seeks to change the mental outlook of the rural peasant still living on the fringe of society. It wants him not only to accept but to seek educational improvement. Its program is based on the premise that lasting improvement of the masses is impossible unless they develop self-respect, an awareness of their own problems, and a desire to do something about them on their own initiative.[47]

Government Supervision and Control of Private Schools

There does not exist in the Colombian Ministry of Education any department or division especially charged with the supervision and control of the private educational sector. Supervision of all schools is carried out by the National Office of Inspection and Evaluation. Private schools are subject to state supervision along with the public schools and are required to follow a minimum official curriculum. This is in conformity with Article 41 of the national constitution which stipulates that "the state shall exercise general supervision of institutions of learning both public and private." National inspectors make periodic visits to public and private schools throughout the country. Private schools seeking official approval or accreditation of their diplomas and courses must comply with national regulations.

The matter of government supervision of private schools has been summarized as follows:

> Government supervision also extends to private schools, to a large extent owned and operated by religious orders. Under the law, special recognition is given to the Catholic Church for its historic role in the country. The state acknowledges the utility of the private system that it supports through direct subventions and long-term credit for such projects as purchase of buildings and equipment. It also encourages parents to establish cooperative private schools and makes technical assistance and some funds available for this purpose.
>
> Private schools enjoy considerable administrative autonomy. They are authorized to choose their teachers, to draft and administer most of their examinations, and to organize their curricula. The government, on the other hand, may inspect private schools to ensure the furfillment of certain pre-requisites for accreditation or to determine the presence or absence of irregularities. The government, moreover, establishes the standards for the curricula, the passing of examinations, and grading system.[48]

In actual practice, "the government shares control over the administration and content of education with the Church."[49] As pointed out previously, most private schools are Catholic and members of the Catholic clergy form part of inspection teams and are members of a number of regulatory bodies at all levels.

There are a number of unofficial organizations which seek to provide a voice for the private educational sector in Colombia, two of which are ANDERCOP--Asociación Nacional de Rectores de Colegios Privados (National Association of Private School Rectors) and CONACED--Confederación Nacional de Centros Docentes (National Confederation of Teaching Centers). Organizations such as these are calling for the creation of a National Division for the Coordination of Private Education which would be headed by a knowledgeable representative from the private educational sector elected by the Minister of Education in consultation with spokesmen from the private sector.[50]

The requirements for the establishment of a private primary school described below provide an example of how the government exercises its supervisory powers in the private sector:

> Among the indispensable requirements for the operation of a private primary school, the following may be noted: (a) quarters and furnishings hygienically and academically suitable for teaching work must be available, with proof thereof in the form of certificates from the public health authority and the competent school authorities; (b) there must be as many teachers as are necessary for satisfactory educational progress in each of the grades or groups into which the school is divided, and this according to the judgement of the competent school authorities; (c) the primary school curriculum prepared by the Ministry of Education must be followed; (d) the teachers must be paid at least the minimum salary established by law, and must be given paid holidays; (e) governmental inspection must be submitted to, the Government having the right to close the school, at discretion, for noncompliance with the above requirements.[51]

Only schools located in "the sparsely populated hinterlands" of Colombia are exempted from the ordinary inspection procedures:

> One area in which the usual inspection procedures do not apply is that of education centres in the sparsely populated hinterlands that comprises just over half the total land area of Colombia. Education in these regions, inhabited by scattered Indian communities, is governed by an Agreement on Missions, signed by the Central Government and the Holy See in 1953. This agreement empowers Catholic mission administrators to create educational centres, to appoint their teachers and to direct their operations--in so far as the designated 'Mission Territory' is concerned--until 1978, with recurrent expenditures to be provided by the Ministry of Education, subject to review every five years.[52]

In 1965 the Colombian government set up a school textbooks and materials committee which prescribes textbooks for use in all schools and maintains a register of textbooks for use by private schools. No school, whether public or private, may adopt a textbook not listed by this committee.[53]

Private schools receive financial assistance from the government. The reason for this is given in the following statement:

> Since the Government, on account of its limited financial resources, is unable to carry out the constitutional provisions regarding education, it gives various forms of assistance to private bodies whose collaboration is essential in raising the cultural level in Colombia.[54]

The Ministry of Education extends grants to both provincially and privately administered schools. Financial assistance is also given them for construction projects. Their current expenditures are covered by private grants and donations and tuition fees. Tuition fees must be authorized by national and provincial boards of review.[55]

By law, no less than 10 percent of the national budget and 25 percent of provincial budgets must be allocated to education. Private education is one of the beneficiaries of these allocations.[56]

Government control has extended even into the private business sector. In 1971 it was reported that--

> In the private sector, all firms whose capitalization is 800,000 pesos or more must establish primary schools for their workers' children aged between 6 and 16 and pay one teacher for every 40 children. They are also required to finance specialized training in their own particular line if they employ 250 or more workers.[57]

Mention was made in the previous chapter of the highly successful National Apprenticeship Service (SENA), which is supported in part by contributions from private business firms.

Summary

The Roman Catholic Church is the mother of private education in Colombia and the important role it plays in all educational endeavors is duly recognized by the government which shows its appreciation by extending financial aid to Catholic schools.

It was the Catholic Church who founded the early colonial schools which provided training for the sons of the wealthy families. Today, an overwhelming majority of Colombian private schools, particularly at the secondary and university levels, are owned and operated by the Church. As in colonial days, private education today is within the reach only of people in the higher socioeconomic brackets. Thus private education, as stated earlier, is an accentuator of social differences rather than an instrument of vertical mobility.

Despite the claim that private schools are qualitatively superior, it was found that they are no less deficient than public institutions in that the accent is on the more prestigious general or academic curriculum, which is irrelevant to the needs of Colombia's developing economy. Most private schools are located in urban areas. Private education is no less guilty of rural neglect than its public counterpart.

The more enlightened educators in the private sector are cognizant of these facts and are pressing for reforms. Of course, there is always the conservative faction which appears to be threatened by educational reform and updating and which strives to maintain the status quo.

Private education will better serve the country if it moves boldly in the direction of reform and relevance.

FOOTNOTES

[1]Richard R. Renner, Education for a New Colombia, p. 152.

[2]Ibid.

[3]Ibid.

[4]Raúl Rivas Dorado, Diagnóstico de la Educación Privada (Bogotá: Confederación Nacional de Centros Docentes--CONACED, 1971), p. 23.

[5]Richard R. Renner, Education for a New Colombia, p. 152.

[6]Raúl Rivas Dorado, Diagnóstico de la Educación Privada, p. 28. See also: Octavio Arizmendi Posada, La Transformación Educativa Nacional, p. 61.

[7]Area Handbook for Colombia, p. 175.

[8]Ibid., p. 198.

[9]Felipe Londoño, Situación de la Educación en Colombia (Bogotá: Centro de Investigación y Acción Social--CIAS, 1971), p. 41.

[10]Raúl Rivas Dorado, Diagnóstico de la Educación Privada, p. 28.

[11]Felipe Londoño, Situación de la Educación en Colombia, p. 49.

[12]Ivon Lebot, "Elementos Para la Historia de la Educación en Colombia en el Siglo XX," p. 144.

[13]Raúl Rivas Dorado, Diagnóstico de la Educación Privada, p. 30.

[14]Octavio Arizmendi Posada, La Transformación Educativa Nacional, p. 61.

[15]Departamento Administrativo Nacional de Estadística, Boletín Menusal de Estadística, No. 249, April, 1972, pp. 178-179.

[16]Ibid., p. 179. (Incidentally, when the 1967 figures are compared with those for 1968, it will be noticed that the public sector experienced a loss of 298 schools while the private sector gained 3,049.)

[17]Departamento Administrativo Nacional de Estadística, Boletín Mensual de Estadística, p. 182.

[18]Felipe Londoño, Situación de la Educación en Colombia, p. 59.

[19]Ibid.

[20]Octavio Arizmendi Posada, La Transformación Educativa Nacional, pp. 112-13. These figures include all of the following types of secondary schools: general secondary, industrial, commercial, agricultural, normal, vocational, nursing, and art schools. They do not include Catholic religious schools (secondary-level seminaries), special education, or the category listed as "other".

In his 1971 study of Colombian education, sociologist Felipe Londoño of the Research and Social Action Center (Centro de Investigación y Acción Social) of Bogotá estimated that there were 31,504 secondary school buildings in the country, of which 28,481 were public and 3,023 private (Situación de la Educación en Colombia, pp. 55-56). It seems doubtful that there could have been such a large increase in the number of public secondary schools in a matter of three years (an increase of 27,167 over 1968). Londoño does not cite a source for his figures.

[21]Ibid., pp. 114-17.

[22]Area Handbook for Colombia, p. 189.

[23]Richard R. Renner, Education for a New Colombia, p. 79.

[24]Ibid.

[25]Raúl Rivas Dorado, Diagnóstico de la Educación Privada, pp. 42-43.

[26]Departamento Administrativo Nacional de Estadística, Boletín Mensual de Estadística, p. 183.

[27]Raúl Rivas Dorado, Diagnóstico de la Educación Privada, pp. 57-59.

[28]Felipe Londoño, Situación de la Educación en Colombia, p. 63.

[29]Ibid., p. 68.

[30]Raúl Rivas Dorado, Diagnóstico de la Educación Privada, p. 55.

[31]Ibid., p. 42.

[32]Area Handbook for Colombia, p. 198.

[33]Ibid.

[34]Raúl Rivas Dorado, Diagnóstico de la Educación Privada, p. 49.

[35]Area Handbook for Colombia, p. 192.

[36]Felipe Londoño, Situación de la Educación en Colombia, p. 72.

[37]Richard R. Renner, Education for a New Colombia, p. 101.

[38]Felipe Londoño, Situación de la Educación en Colombia, p. 75.

[39]Ibid.

[40]Ibid., p. 76.

[41]Area Handbook for Colombia, p. 180.

[42]Ibid., p. 200.

[43]Ibid., p. 201.

[44]Ibid. See Juan Ricardo Braun, "Communication, Non-Formal Education and National Development: The Colombian Radio Schools" (Unpublished Ph.D. Dissertation, College of Education, Michigan State University, 1975). Braun reports that while the radio schools are a good medium to help the poor peasants to improve their livelihood, dropouts are a major problem for ACPO.

[45]Richard R. Renner, Education for a New Colombia, p. 157.

[46]Ibid.

[47]Ibid.

[48]Area Handbook for Colombia, pp. 181-82.

[49]Ibid., pp. 179-80.

[50]Raúl Rivas Dorado, Diagnóstico de la Educación Privada, pp. 92-3.

[51]World Survey of Education, Vol. II: Primary Education (1958), p. 262.

[52]World Survey of Education, Vol. V: Educational Policy, Legislation and Administration (1971), p. 326.

[53]Ibid.

[54]World Survey of Education, Vol. III: Secondary Education (1961), p. 372.

[55]World Survey of Education, Vol. V, pp. 325-26.

[56]For a complete breakdown for national and provincial government expenditures on education, see Departamento Administrativo Nacional de Estadística, Boletín Mensual de Estadística, pp. 198-202. A study of the financial aspects of private education may be found in Raúl Rivas Dorado, Diagnóstico de la Educación Privada, pp. 70-87.

[57]World Survey of Education, Vol. V, p. 325.

CHAPTER V

PROTESTANT EDUCATION

Introduction

Protestants have been active in Latin America since the 1830's although what has been called the "tidal wave of Protestantism" in the Spanish-speaking countries is a relatively recent phenomenon.

In this chapter the writer examines the impact of Protestantism in Latin America, its history, and its educational activities. Special attention is given to Protestant educational efforts in Colombia.

Finally, an evaluation of Protestant education is made. Although the data available on the subject of Protestant education in Latin America are at best fragmentary, there are enough to provide a basis for some assumptions concerning its present state and its likely future.

It is clear that the Protestant schools of Latin America are facing an unprecedented crisis. This is surmised from a recent detailed study of Seventh-day Adventist education by a leading educator of that church body, which is one of the most active in Latin America.

The Impact of Protestantism in Latin America

Concerning Protestant growth in Latin America generally, historian Lewis Hanke wrote in 1968:

> In addition to the papal influence, the growth of Protestantism has had a noticeable effect. The Jesuit Prudencio Damboriena has publicly stated that the Catholic Church 'has lost more people to Protestantism in twentieth-century Latin America than it did in Europe during the Reformation.'

> Moreover, the Belgian Jesuit with many years of experience in Latin America, Roger E. Vekemans, has written that 'unless the Catholic Church can undergo a cultural mutation that will cause it to begin to stress the capitalistic virtues commonly associated with the Protestant Ethic, then there may be no possibility of a non-Marxist solution for the problems of Latin America.[1]

It has been estimated that from 1937 to 1961 the number of Protestants in Latin America rose from 632,000 to 8,000,000 or from .5 to 5 percent of the total population. In 1949 there were 10,971 ministers, 40 percent of them foreign; in 1961 of 41,089 ministers 15 percent were foreign.[2] Today there are upwards of 10 million Protestants in Latin America.

Notwithstanding the fact that Colombia has traditionally been the seat of the most rabid Catholicism and that during the decade of 1948-58 Protestants were bitterly persecuted,[3] Protestantism even in that country has had a powerful influence. Data concerning Protestant population in Colombia are presented in the next section.

In 1933, Jesuit P. Camilo Crivelli published his 714-page Directorio Protestante de la América Latina (Protestant Directory for Latin America)[4] for the express purpose of combating el peligro protestante (the Protestant peril). In his prologue Crivelli explained that the purpose of the work was to make known the Protestant peril "by means of data rather than platitudes." In his doctoral dissertation on the persecution of Protestants in Colombia, James E. Goff argues that Crivelli's inflammatory writings were a contributing factor to the violent campaign against Protestants in which the Jesuit order is said to have played a major role.[5] In 1944 appeared Father Eugenio Restrepo Uribe's book El Protestantismo en Colombia (Protestantism in

Colombia) which called for the suppression of Protestantism and described a plan to accomplish it.[6]

The argument that Protestantism is uncongenial to Latin American life, culture and mentality continues to be advanced today.[7] The counter-argument, supported by careful sociological studies, is that in Latin America there prevails a popular or cultural, folkloric and fetishistic type of religion which is opposed to normative Catholicism, though retaining its symbolism, and that Catholicism itself has failed to become an internalized ethical system in the lives of most Latin Americans, who do not equate religion with morality. Protestantism, on the other hand, stands for ethical principles as against ceremonial rules. In effect--so the argument goes--it fills the ethical void left in the minds and hearts of people by culture Catholicism despite the latter's centuries-old presence in the Latin-American world. It is said that many Latin Americans seek freedom and democracy, principles which Protestantism staunchly defends and which are opposed to the authoritarianism and heavy-handed clericalism which are part and parcel of Catholicism, especially in tradition-bound countries like Colombia. The alliance of the Roman Catholic Church with the Conservative Party in that country and its results have already been noted in the second chapter.[8]

The phenomenal growth of Protestantism in Latin America is cited as evidence that it has struck a responsive cord in the lives of millions of people south of the border. W. Stanley Rycroft sees the development of the Protestant churches of Latin America as "one of the great new facts of our time." He adds:

> Lacking in resources for the task before them, and in some cases a struggling minority. . .these churches hold the promise of a new day in Latin America, for they have vigor and vitality.[9]

Concerning the vigor and vitality of some of the Protestant groups active in Latin America, Julius Rivera has noted:

> To no one's surprise, the most successful groups have been those burning with the 'Pentecostal fire' such as the Seventh-day Adventists, the Baptists, the Assemblies of God, and kindred sects. Reasons for their success have been not only that they have ministered to the poor (70 million in Latin America), but that they have given a feeling of belonging to men and women marginal in their own societies and have brought in fluid religious structures in which the opportunities for leadership are wide open. It is precisely here, in the latter point, where the Roman Catholic Church has failed.[10]

The heated polemics of the past have happily ended and been substituted with the spirit of ecumenism and interfaith dialog. The current emphasis is on rapprochement between Catholics and Protestants. The adaptive capabilities of Catholicism in the face of social change have been amply documented.[11] Julius Rivera observes: "At present. . . Protestants and Catholics have come not only to an understanding, but to actual cooperation in attacking major common problems.[12] The battle scars are plainly visible yet there is hope for continued betterment of Protestant-Catholic relations. Protestantism has firmly taken root on Latin-American soil and has become a powerful social force in all of the republics.

Historical Sketch of Latin-American Protestantism

No one single comprehensive history of Protestantism in Latin America has ever been written, but a number of books have been published from which much valuable historical information may be gleaned.[13]

W. Stanley Rycroft divides the religious history of Latin America into three broad periods: 1) the pre-Colombian religions of the Mayas, Aztecs and Incas; 2) Roman Catholicism as the dominant religion; and 3) the advent of Evangelical Christianity.[14]

John J. Considine, following Prudencio Damboriena, divides the Protestant advance into four stages: 1) From the period of Latin-American independence to the Mexican Reforma (1860); 2) Entrance and official establishment of the Protestant churches; 3) Unification of forces, preparation of programs, fixing of objectives, 1916-1938; 4) Period of massive, systematic effort, 1938 to the present.[15]

What Considine, Damboriena and others cover so well in their studies will not be reproduced in detail; however, a few salient points will be mentioned.

During the first period, Protestantism was more preoccupied with mission in the Far East than in Latin America. It was primarily a period of exploration for Protestants. Protestants who Damboriena characterizes as "half-missionaries and half-explorers" arrived in South America to study the possibilities for evangelism and report back to their central organizations. There was, however, a modest beginning of Protestant work during this early period. The Methodists, who had estabished themselves in Haiti in 1807, entered Argentina in 1836 and Uruguay in 1839. The Presbyterians arrived in Chile in 1846 and in Colombia in 1856.

During the second period, the Protestant churches sought legal recognition in Latin America. This was made possible by a number of political changes which altered the traditional union between church and state in a number of republics. Considine explains:

> The change from this position began with the Mexican constitution of 1857. Various changes in other countries followed. In 1925 Chile. . .relinquished its concordat with the Holy See and declared separation of Church and state. . . currently nine of the twenty republics have established the principle of separation between the spiritual and temporal powers. Three are in South America--Chile, Uruguay and Brazil. The remaining six are in Middle America--Mexico, Nicaragua, Honduras, Panama, Puerto Rico and Cuba. In the remaining countries a major or minor degree of superiority of position is granted to the Catholic Church but freedom of worship is accorded to Protestants.[16]

Colombia is one of those countries that has granted a major degree of superiority to the Roman Catholic Church. Church-state relations in Colombia were discussed at some length in the second chapter.

The third period may be called the period of organization. The main highlight of this period was the Congress on Christian Work in Latin America held in Panamá during the month of February, 1916.[17] It was at this congress that "the appellation 'Evangelical' was adopted as possessing a more positive connotation for Latin America than Protestant."[18] Also: "Here took place the first continental planning that henceforth was to mark the common efforts of most of the organizations, today numbering nearly a hundred, that work in Latin America."[19] The following were a few of the specific actions taken at the Panamá Congress:

> Surveys were made and fields were searched out that could be described as most abandoned by the Catholics. Work among the Indians was determined upon as a specialization. A systematic development of well-placed secondary schools was proposed. Medical work was discussed as well as plans for Biblical institutes and theological seminaries.[20]

Other conferences similar to that of Panamá were held in Montevideo, Uruguay in 1925 and in Havana, Cuba in 1929.

Having organized themselves thoroughly, Protestants began their massive systematic program of evangelization in Latin America. Julius Rivera has written a succinct commentary on what he calls the "tidal wave of Protestant penetration" in Latin America:

> Although instances of individual Protestants living in Latin America have occurred for a long time, the tidal wave of Protestant penetration in the continent is not yet 30 years old. Some experts maintain that the turning point was the closing of many missions in the Orient (especially China) and the signpost the International Missionary Congress at Madras, India, in 1938. However, prior to this date some Protestant Churches had long been officially established, even at the invitation of Latin American governments and politicians seeking in this way to curb the powers of the Roman Catholic Church. The first group to enter Latin America was the Presbyterians (Argentina, 1836; Brazil, 1859; Mexico, 1872; Guatemala, 1882), followed by the Methodists (Mexico, 1871; Brazil, 1886) and the Baptists (Brazil 1881; Argentina, 1886; Chile, 1888). Other groups swelled the missionary wave at the turn of the century. By 1916 there were close to 70 organizations and 206 missionaries with a total of over 170,000 faithful scattered throughout the whole continent and the Caribbean. These figures had grown large by 1961, when almost 8 million Protestants were ministered by 6,541 foreign and 34,547 native missionaries in 42,420 places of worship. By the end of 1967 every Protestant denomination had settled in Latin America and the figures continued to well to astonishing size. To no one's surprise, the largest number of Protestants (over 8 million) is found in Brazil. Mexico has close to a million and so does Chile; these are countries where religious freedom has existed for over one hundred years.[21]

Protestant Population in Colombia

In 1966 there were 37 Protestant churches active in Colombia with a total membership of 63,810, an increase of 30,654 members over 1960.[22] The main source of information is the 1966 census of evangelical Christianity in Colombia taken by the Evangelical Confederation of Colombia (Confederación Evangélica de Colombia--CEDEC) with headquarters in the capital city of Bogotá. In passing, it should be noted that as

of 1966 not all Protestant or "evangelical" churches were affiliated with the Evangelical Confederation. Of the 37 churches included in the 1966 census, only 17 formed part of the Confederation.

The four largest Protestant denominations in Colombia in 1966 were the Seventh-day Adventist Church, the United Pentecostal Church, the Colombian Baptist Convention, and the Foursquare Gospel Church. The membership figures for each of these four churches were as follows:[23]

The Seventh-day Adventist Church. 19,213

The United Pentecostal Church 15,352

Colombian Bapitst Convention 4,021

Foursquare Gospel Church. 3,620

The Protestant churches of Colombia have experienced considerable growth. In 1948, the year that marked the beginning of that shattering social upheaval known as la violencia or period of violence, there were 7,908 Protestants in the whole country. By 1953 the number had increased to 11,958. The number of communicants rose to 33,156 in 1960. As stated at the beginning of this section, when the census of Protestants was taken by the Evangelical Confederation 1966, church membership was 63,810.

The departments or provinces with the greatest Protestant concentrations in 1966 were Valle del Cauca (10,627); Santander (7,177); Cundimarca (6,626); Caldas (4,157), and El Tolima (3,771).

The areas where Protestant membership comprised the largest percentage of the population in 1966 were the comisarías (commissaryships) of Guainía and Vichada, the intendencias (intendencies) of San Andrés and Providencia, the department or province of Meta and the comisaría of Vaupés:

	1966 Population	Protestant Membership	Percentage of Population
Guainía	3,956	1,500	37.92
Vichada	9,833	820	8.34
San Andrés and Providencia	19,713	1,619	8.21
Meta	189,664	2,846	1.50
Vaupés	14,720	200	1.36

Protestant Educational Efforts in Colombia

According to the Evangelical Confederation, there are two major reasons for the establishment of Protestant schools in Colombia. First of all, the public schools are incapable of absorbing the total number of school-age children. Secondly, Protestant children who attend the public schools are discriminated against and harassed on account of their religious beliefs. Because of the pronouncements of Vatican II and the emergence of the ecumenical spirit, this situation may have been altered somewhat. Nonetheless, the position of Protestantism is at best tenuous especially in Colombia where the Catholic hierarchy views the rapid expansion of Protestantism with apprehension and alarm.

In 1966 there were 445 Protestant schools with a total enrollment of 20,734 and 934 teachers. The breakdown of the 445 schools as to categories was as follows: 1 vocational; 3 commercial; 2 strictly secondary; 26 with combined primary and secondary curriculum; 413 primary only. The Seventh-day Adventist Church ran the largest number of primary and secondary schools--187, with an enrollment of 2,930 pupils. However, the Presbyterian Church of Colombia, which only ran 46 primary and secondary schools in 1966, had the largest enrollment by far: 6,976.

It appears that there are no separate Protestant institutions of higher learning in Colombia. Whatever university-level training exists is offered through the regular institutos (institutes) and colegios which may offer a licenciatura (the rough equivalent of an American bachelor's degree) in a few selected fields. Such is the case of the Instituto Colombo-Venezolano in Medellín, a Seventh-day Adventist institution which has an elementary-secondary school, but also offers the equivalent of a two-year college course in business administration and music and a four-year theological course leading to the licenciatura.

The seminaries, of course, offer studies in theology and their principal aim is to prepare preachers of the gospel. As mentioned above, the Instituto Colombo-Venezolano offers college-level courses in theology. It does this through a facultad or faculty of theology. The same is offered by the Seminario Bíblico Unido, also located in Medellín. At least one seminary, the International Baptist Theological Seminary in Cali, is offering both undergraduate and graduate studies in theology leading to the degrees of Bachelor of Divinity (B.D.)--now changed to Master of Divinity (M.Div.) in most theological schools in the United States--and the Masters in Religious Education (M.R.E.).[24] This is an exception, however. By and large, the term seminario (seminary) as used in Colombia and elsewhere in Latin America is a misnomer because in most of them post-baccalaureate studies in theology are not offered. None of them offers a doctorate. They are limited by a lack of equipment, adequate libraries and qualified personnel. It would not be unfair to say that the national Protestant clergy are, by American standards, ill-trained. Yet, they have a zeal that their

American counterparts often lack mostly because they have tasted persecution and have learned to work under the most adverse circumstances.

Aside from formal schooling, Protestant groups in Colombia have other forms of outreach, such as medical work, a number of bookstores located in the major cities, publishing houses, magazines and periodicals, Bible distribution and radio broadcasts.[25] The activities of the largest Protestant group in Colombia, the Seventh-day Adventists, especially captivated the attention of Jesuit author Prodencio Damboriena who devoted an entire chapter to them in his work El Protestantismo en América Latina.[26]

Protestant education is then mainly elementary and secondary, although college-level studies may be offered in selected fields through the institutos and colegios. At least one Colombian seminary offers graduate-level studies in theology.

There is a need for more evaluative studies on Protestant education. In 1973, Dr. Werner Vhymeister published an excellent critique of Seventh-day Adventist education in South America in which he candidly discusses major problems and makes recommendations for improvements.

What is the quality of education in the Protestant schools of Latin America? This is a question that deserves careful attention. If the facts cited above are correct, formal Protestant education in Colombia is weak not only in the general secondary or academic level, but in the vocational and commerical areas as well. Is it enough for Protestant schools to place their major emphasis on the training of preachers and other Christian workers, or should they also provide vocational and technical training? What are the Protestant schools doing

to meet the needs of Colombia's developing economy? How much Protestant schooling is available in the needy rural areas and of what type is it? These should be the major concerns of future educational planning in Protestant schools. It would appear that the weaknesses of Colombia's public and private educational systems pointed out in previous chapters may also be those of the private Protestant system. There is definitely a need for diversification in Protestant education if it is to be relevant to the needs of today's Colombia.

It must be recognized, however, that Protestants have made some significant contributions in the area of agricultural education, both formally and informally. In 1956 James G. Maddox reported that Protestant groups in the United States were spending $8 to $10 million annually on technical assistance activities in Latin America.[28] In 1963, W. Stanley Rycroft and Myrtle M. Clemmer reported that Protestant churches that year listed eighty-one missionaries and national workers in Latin America who were qualified in agricultural and rural economics and were endeavoring to raise the living standards of the people. Three of these workers were in Colombia.[29] Rycroft and Clemmer wrote as follows concerning the beginnings of organized Protestant agricultural mission work:

> Organized agricultural mission work began in 1908 with the founding of Lavras Agricultural Co-lege in Brazil by missionary Benjamin H. Hunicutt. Several years later, in 1919, the Methodist agricultural school and experimental farm was established at El Vergel, Chile. These church-sponsored institutions were among the pioneers of agricultural education, which has now become a major enterprise of almost every country in Latin America.[30]

The authors gave examples of the agricultural work being done by Protestant churches in Latin America. One of the examples was in Colombia:

> In the states of Córdoba and Antioquia, local Protestant congregations sponsor multipurpose cooperatives. An agricultural missionary and a volunteer economist serve as advisers. Services include rice hulling, use of tractors and marketing.[31]

According to Rycroft and Clemmer, three outstanding areas of rural mission activity in Latin America in which Protestant missionaries have been most active are 1) extension services; 2) land reform and resettlement, and 3) service through cooperatives.[32] Protestants have also been active in literacy programs:

> Protestant groups in several countries in Latin America have sponsored literacy programs for a number of years with funds from the Committee on World Literacy and Christian Literature of the National Council of Churches of Christ in the U.S.A. The local councils of churches of different countries have taken an active part in organizing such programs. The Ministry of Education of the Brazilian Government adopted the primer prepared by the Evangelical Confederation of Churches and printed four million copies for use throughout the country. The aim of the Confederation is that each local church be a center for literacy work. The Protestant agency known as ALFALIT, with headquarters in Costa Rica, is providing valuable leadership and assistance in a number of countries, particularly the Caribbean area.[33]

Protestants also have an interest in medical work. In 1963, there were several Protestant hospitals in Colombia, for example: the Southern Baptist Hospital with 100 beds, in Barranquilla; the Presbyterian Clinic in Nazaret; the Crusade Hospital in Bogotá. The Presbyterian Church had "a nursing program with nurses working in pairs in relation to local churches."[34]

There is much emphasis today on so-called nonformal education, that which occurs outside the traditional, formal classroom situation. Those educators who have an interest in this area would do well to take into account the many Protestant programs presently in operation

in Latin America. The world headquarters for each denomination could supply much needed information. Since a number of Protestant churches have gone ecumenical, the World Council of Churches would be a good source of information. At the national level, such organizations as the Evangelical Confederation of Colombia could provide useful data. Protestant nonformal educational activities have been neglected in the literature, either because of the personal religious biases of the authors, or because of sheer ignorance on the subject. The time has come to look a bit more closely at what Protestant organizations are presently doing in the area of nonformal education. The publication of a comprehensive study on the subject would be an important contribution to the field.

In a word, both the formal and nonformal Protestant educational activities need to be carefully studied and evaluated at this time. A definitive study on both subjects awaits publication.

The 1973 Vhymeister Study on Adventist Education in South America

Since it is one of the most recent and perhaps the only detailed study of a particular Protestant system of education in Latin America, highlights of Dr. Werner Vhymeister's analysis of Seventh-day Adventist education in South America will be presented here. Until very recently, Dr. Vhymeister was the Educational Secretary of the South American Division of the Seventh-day Adventist Church, which includes all of the countries of the South American continent except Colombia and Venezuela: The latter two belong to the Inter-American Division, which also includes Mexico, Central America and the Caribbean countries. Although Vhymeister's study does not deal specifically with Adventist

education in Colombia, it may nevertheless shed some light on our understanding of the total Protestant educational picture in Latin America, including that of Colombia where the Adventists are one of the most active groups. Indeed, Vhymeister deals with problems which are by no means unique to one geographical area or country. They are universal in scope, hence their usefulness toward a general understanding of the Protestant educational enterprise in Latin America. The writer can attest, on the basis of personal observations, that the problems being faced by Adventist schools in other Latin-American countries are also plaguing the same schools in Colombia where the Seventh-day Adventist church has experienced substantial growth to the point of becoming that country's single largest Protestant body. And according to figures cited earlier, that church also operates more schools than any other Protestant group in the country.

To begin with, Vhymeister admits that the Seventh-day Adventist Church is facing a monumental educational crisis which he attributes, in part, to a lack of adequate planning:

> For decades--perhaps since its very inception in South America Adventist education has grown without adequate planning. We can no longer leave such an important matter up to the initiative of each local congregation. Each conference and mission should study. . .the future location of its primary schools and then proceed to prepare the minds of members of each local church so that the plan may become a reality within a determined period of time. The future of our secondary and higher education should likewise be planned with extreme care.[35]

Concretely, Vhymeister notes the following problems afflicting the Seventh-day Adventist educational system in South America:

1. A decrease in the number of elementary schools. There were

792 in 1966, but the number decreased to 465 in 1972. Some of the reasons for the decline: elimination of the escuelas de hogar (home schools) in Peru which accounted for a good share of the total enrollment; consolidation of some schools; government demands for better buildings and upgrading of the teaching staff; the competition of free and better-equipped public schools.

2. A consequent decrease in the number of Seventh-day Adventist pupils. The enrollment dropped from 18,793 in 1970 to 13,616 in 1972. Vhymeister considers this an alarming process in view of the fact that within the last 19 years the church membership has doubled. In 1963 there were 12.7 primary school pupils for every 100 church members. The ratio dropped to 4.7 per 100 members in 1972. Vhymeister warns that if this pattern continues denominational elementary schools will cease to be a significant factor in the nurture of the church's children.

3. More than half (56.7 percent) of the children attending Seventh-day Adventist primary schools in 1972 were non-Adventists. Vhymeister recognizes that financial need may partially explain the acceptance into Seventh-day Adventist schools of such large numbers of non-Adventist pupils but stresses that such a procedure militates against the very essence of the Seventh-day Adventist philosophy of education.

4. Vhymeister notes that at the secondary level, the number of Seventh-day Adventist students is disproportionately low, though the problem is not as accute as at the primary level. The rapid increase in church membership is not accompanied by a proportional increase in the Seventh-day Adventist secondary school population. During 1966 and 1967 there was a ration of 2 secondary-school pupils per 100

baptized church members. This dropped to 1.5 in 1972. Vhymeister observes that ideally the ration should be 4 or 5 secondary-school pupils per 100 baptized members. In 1972 a total of 40.4 percent of the students attending Seventh-day Adventist schools were non-Adventists.

5. There is a scarcity of secondary schools. Vhymeister observes that during the past 22 years the Seventh-day Adventist Church established only two secondary boarding schools, one of which was eventually shut down. Two other small secondary-level boarding institutions were founded in 1963 and 1968, respectively, but soon thereafter were converted into primary schools. During the same 22-year period, the church established 9 colegios secundarios de externado (secondary day schools). Of these, one was shut down. Another has already been turned into a 9-grade school and it is probable that two others will suffer the same fate. Of the remaining five, only two offer the full secondary-level curriculum.

6. In Seventh-day Adventist higher-education programs, the ratio of Adventist students per 100 baptized church mememberss has for the past nine years fluctuated between 0.3 and 0.4 percent. Writes Vhymeister:

> The mere mention of this low figure underscores one of our greatest needs. We should offer a greater variety of specializations at the higher level in order to attract a larger number of Seventh-day Adventist young men and women who are presently forced to seek a specialization in the public universities.

Vhymeister estimates that a total of 2,000 Seventh-day Adventists are enrolled in the public universities.

Several factors make expansion and diversification of Seventh-day Adventist higher education difficult, according to Vhymeister. In

the first place, it is not easy to obtain government approval or accreditation for university-level programs of study. In certain countries, says Vhymeister, it is virtually impossible to obtain accreditation of any specializations. Secondly, in many countries there are stiff legal requirements for the practice of certain professions abroad. This hinders the satisfactory coordination of the specializations that may be offered in Seventh-day Adventist schools of higher learning throughout South America. Finally, the high cost of education makes it difficult to offer new specializations that do not attract a sufficient number of students. Despite all of these handicaps, Vhymeister remains optimistic:

> . . .we believe that every effort should be made to explore the possibilities for an increase in the number of specializations and their rational distribution among our schools of higher learning. A plan should be devised whereby closer attention may be paid to and provision made for the needs of the more than 2,000 Seventh-day Adventist students currently enrolled in public institutions.[37]

The Presbyterian Colegio Americano in Bogotá

The Presbyterian Colegio Americano of Bogotá faces an enrollment situation similar to that of the Seventh-day Adventist schools studied by Vhymeister. This school was founded in 1869 by the Presbyterians and offers what its ex-principal, Dr. Abel Sierra Izquierdo, refers to as educación pluralista (pluralistic education). According to Sierra, about 50 percent of the student body "claims to be Catholic". The other half are of diverse religious persuasions including, of course, Presbyterians. The school is reputedly one of the best in the nation. A number of outstanding Colombian personalities claim

the Colegio Americano as their alma mater, among them Enrique Olaya Herrera, ex-president of Colombia; Agustín Nieto Caballero, a prominent educator; Hernando Currea Cubides, Minister of Defense (1974); Dr. Crispín Villazón de Armas, ex-Minister of Labor, and Luis Carlos Galán, ex-Minister of Education and Ambassador to Italy (1974).

Although owned and operated by the United Presbyterian Church, the 104-year old Colegio Americano of Bogotá does not offer an education which is in any way distinctively sectarian in character. It is a liberal institution offering elementary and secondary education to thousands of Colombian young people regardless of their religious persuasion. The education it provides is of course based on a broad Protestant ethic.

However, the Colegio Americano of Bogotá does have its problems. Last year the rector, Dr. Abel Sierra Izquierdo, backed by the school board, students and parents, formally petitioned the Ministry of Justice to grant his Colegio Americano the status of a private foundation (Fundación Colegio Americano) with full legal rights. The Presbyterian Synod of Colombia opposed the move and a heated legal battle ensued details of which are regularly reported in several of Bogotá's newspapers.[38] The Central Presbytery, designated by the Synod as the governing body of the school, filed its own appeal before the Ministry of Justice requesting that the Ministry of Justice turn down Sierra's petition. Legal ownership of the institution is in the hands of the Presbyterian Christian Properties Corporation, an entity duly recognized in Colombia. At that time it appeared unlikely that the maverick rector and his supporters would win the case.

The writer has not followed up the controversy and does not know the final outcome. However, before his departure from Bogotá towards the end of August, 1974, he learned that the Presbyterian Synod of Colombia had voted to remove the controversial rector and replace him with Cuban-born educator Mr. Liberato J. Vega. Supporters of Sierra and his policies then petitioned the United Presbyterian world headquarters in New York City demanding that a special committee be appointed and sent to Bogotá to review the case.

The case of the embattled Colegio Americano of Bogotá deserves further study. A careful analysis of the situation which has developed in this fine institution could yield valuable insights into the present state of Protestant education in Colombia.

Summary

The impact of Protestantism in Latin America generally and in Colombia particularly has been touched upon above. In his foreward to W. Stanley Rycroft's Religion and Faith in Latin America, Alberto Rembao wrote enthusiastically about the Protestant influence in Latin America:

> The visible sociological phenomenon is that a new community has been born in the midst of the old one. The Reformation has appeared in Hispanic dress; there has been a new birth of religious consciousness affecting the daily life of millions of people. The spirtual élan that four centuries ago was suffocated at the stake in Valladolid and Seville emerges now triumphant in the 'American Spains'. . .Hispanic Protestantism has reached such stages of vitality and potency that even the spokesmen of the established church are calling upon their faithful not to attack, nor to refute, nor to stop the Protestant wave, but rather to excel or outdo it.[39]

The Protestant advance and the fear of Communism are the two major factors responsible for the Roman Catholic Church's determination to

involve itself in social action programs. It seeks to improve the negative image it has for centuries projected upon the Latin-American scenario. Vatican II notwithstanding, the Catholic Church still officially regards Protestantism as heresy. The other enemy, Communism, it sees as a competitive autocratic system which threatens the very existence of the Church. Nevertheless, Rome's instinct for self-preservation and survival leads it to seek a modus vivendi with any form of government or religion, no matter how threatening they might seem. Reference has already been made to the adaptive capabilities of the Roman Catholic Church.[40]

Although it underwent a decade of intense persecution, Protestantism in Colombia has experienced rapid growth. There, as in other Latin-American countries, a network of Protestant schools is maintained, as well as other forms of outreach, such as medical work and literacy programs. Educationally, the Seventh-day Adventists and Presbyterians have been the most active in Colombia.

It would appear that all private, church-related education, including the Protestant, is at present facing an unprecedented crisis. At the root of it may be a growing tendency towards secularization in most societies.[41]

The deficiencies of Protestant education are clear. There is a scarcity of schools at every level. Programs at the university level are limited, particularly in vocational areas. It seems that Protestant schools are not able to attract and hold the children and young people who are church members. Reasons for this are clear. The schools are private and expensive and a large percentage cannot afford to attend them. Also, mainly the academic courses of study are offered which

immediately excludes those students whose interests are vocational. In his study of Seventh-day Adventist schools in South America, Dr. Werner Vhymeister pointed out the need for diversification at the higher education level. He called for more "specializations" at that level. The point is well taken. However, there is also a need for expansion and diversification at the secondary level where very little if anything is offered in vocational lines. What is offered is of the most rudimentary nature. Schools such as the Seventh-day Adventist Instituto Colombo-Venezolano in Medellín and the Presbyterian Colegio Americano in Bogotá are in the main general secondary or academic schools. The Instituto Colombo-Venezolano offers the teacher-training or normal course as well as post-secondary programs in accounting and theology, the latter intended solely for the training of ministers of the gospel. The theology program is the only one leading to a licenciatura or B.A. degree. Aside from these, there are no other options. The Instituto Colombo-Venezolano is overcrowded, its buildings are in disrepair and it is beset by serious financial problems. Non-Adventist students are accepted in the school, but the writer was not quoted an exact percentage by the officals he interviewed. Those nonmembers who are admitted are required to abide by Seventh-day Adventist norms and beliefs. The school has an enrollment of 780.

More studies like that of Vhymeister's on Seventh-day Adventist education are needed. The school systems of the various Protestant denominations presently active in Latin America should be studied in depth and comparative studies carried out. Only then can a comprehensive picture of Protestant education be had. Data currently available are fragmentary and inadequate for a thorough study.

On the basis of the limited information now available, it may at least be surmised that Protestant education is defective in that its emphasis on the academic curriculum renders it irrelevant to the developmental needs of the countries in which it is offered. In this respect, it is no different from all other Latin-American systems of education, public or private.

Can church-supported schools remain uniquely sectarian and survive? This is a fundamental question. Even in Colombia there is a growing indifference toward religion and a wave of secularization is sweeping the country.

Many Protestant schools are accomplishing no more than the mere indoctrination of part of their youthful adherents. A large percentage attend public schools where they are exposed to values diametrically opposed to those of the churches to which they belong. Many are lost to the churches in this way. The problem appears to be most accute at the post-secondary level. Since Protestant churches are barely able to hold a small percentage of their adherents through their schools, it has been suggested that all attempts at maintaining uniquely sectarian schools be abandoned and that schools supported by Protestant churches should exist for the benefit of all, regardless of religious persuasions. In actual practice, this is the case of the Presbyterian Colegio Americano in Bogotá and many Seventh-day Adventist schools throughout South America, as Vhymeister pointed out in his study. The problem with this approach is that eventually denominational control of the school will be challenged, as indeed has occurred at the Colegio Americano, with the danger of withdrawal

of denominational support becoming quite real. This would not pose a major problem where the constituency is capable of supporting the school on its own, thus breaking all denominational ties. Chances are that in most cases this is not possible. There is also the possibility that the government may take over the Protestant schools that are unable to support themselves.

In order to survive, the Protestant schools of the future in Latin America may have to be completely interdenominational in character since so many churches appear to be financially unable to maintain quality schools. Nevertheless, rapprochement even among certain Protestant groups is difficult because of doctrinal differences and it is unlikely that the more conservative churches would be in favor of joint educational effort.

Meanwhile, the best that can be augured concerning the future of Protestant schools is that they will continue to lead a tenuous existence, offering a basic academic education with few or no vocational options. They will maintain a semblance of denominationalism while in actual practice they are more or less secular schools opening their doors to nonadherents because of insolvency.

The greatest need of Protestant education in Colombia and elsewhere in Latin America is for new, creative and imaginative plans that will chart its future course. Without that, it may head toward extinction. Some critics feel that it is already headed in that direction.[42]

FOOTNOTES

[1]Lewis Hanke, Contemporary Latin America: A Short History, p. 224.

[2]Church and Society in Latin America. Social Justice and the Latin Churches, (Richmond, Va.: John Knox Press, 1969), p. 40.

[3]See James E. Goff. "The Persecution of Protestant Christians in Colombia, 1948-58 with an Investigation of its Background and Causes." Unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, San Francisco Theological Seminary, San Anselmo, California, 1965.

[4]P. Camilo Crivelli, Directorio Protestante de la América Latina. (Isola del Liri: Soc. Tip. A. Macioce and Pisani, 1933).

[5]James E. Goff,"The Persecution of Protestant Christians in Colombia, 1948-58,"pp. 328-397.

[6]Eugenio Restrepo Uribe, El Protestantismo en Colombia (Bogotá: Ed. Lumen Christi, 1944).

[7]John Mackay was aware of it in 1932. For an interesting discussion on this point, see Mackay's The Other Spanish Christ, (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1932), pp. 257-264. Jesuit Prudencio Damboriena uses the same argument in his work El Protestantismo en América Latina, Vol. I (Bogotá: Oficina de Investigaciones Sociales de FERES, 1962), pp. 11-12: "May it not be that the Latin-American idiosyncracy is so impregnated with Catholicism that despite its defects of our religion and the ficulties it faces today, it does not present a natural zone of penetration to Protestantism?"

[8]Helpful discussions on this point may be found in the following: Thomas G. Sanders, "The Relationship Between Population Planning and Belief Systems: The Catholic Church in Latin America," AUFS, West Coast South America Series, Vol. XVII, No. 7, especially pp. 7-10. Julius Rivera, Latin America: A Sociocultural Interpretation, pp. 97-120. John Mackay, The Other Spanish Christ, pp. 109-156. W. Stanley Rycroft, Religion and Faith in Latin America, pp. 101-142.

[9]W. Stanely Rycroft, Religion and Faith in Latin America, p. 173.

[10]Julius Rivera, Latin America: A Sociocultural Interpretation, p. 116.

[11]See Frederick Turner, Catholicism and Political Development in Latin America, (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1971).

[12]Julius Rivera, Latin America: A Sociocultural Interpretation, p. 116. For an evaluation of the state of ecumenism in Latin America see Victor Hayward, "Latin America--An Ecumenical Bird's Eye View," International Review of Mission, Vol. LX, No. 238 (April 1971), pp. 161-185.

[13]Camilo Crivelli's Directorio Protestante de la América Latina (1933), as well as Prudencio Damboriena's El Protestantismo en América Latina (1962), both cited previously, come close to being histories. Although understandably written from a defensive Catholic viewpoint, they contain much valuable information on the origin and progress of the different Protestant groups in Latin America. Also useful are the following: W. Stanley Rycroft and Myrtle M. Clemmer, A Factual Study of Latin America, (New York: The United Presbyterian Church, Commission on Ecumenical Mission and Relations, 1963); W. Stanley Rycroft, Religion and Faith in Latin America (1958); John Mackay, The Other Spanish Christ (1932); Christian Work in Latin America (1916), a report of the Congress on Christian Work in Latin America published for the Committee on Cooperation in Latin America by the Missionary Education Movement. A good bibliographical source is John H. Sinclair's Protestantism in Latin America: A Bibliographical Guide, (Austin, Texas: The Hispanic American Institute, 1967). See also John Joseph Considine, New Horizons in Latin America (Freeport, New York: Books for Libraries Press, 1970), pp. 234-274.

[14]W. Stanley Rycroft, Religion and Faith in Latin America, p. 12.

[15]John J. Considine, New Horizons in Latin America, pp. 234-38. Cf. Prudencio Damboriena, El Protestantismo en América Latina, Vol. I, pp. 17-45.

[16]Ibid., pp. 237-38.

[17]Committee on Cooperation in Latin America. Christian Work in Latin America. Panamá Congress 1916. 3 Vols. (New York City: The Missionary Education Movement, 1917).

[18]John J. Considine, New Horizons in Latin America, p. 239.

[19]Ibid.

[20]Ibid.

[21]Julius Rivera, Latin America: A Sociocultural Interpretation, pp. 113-114.

[22]James E. Goff, ed., Censo de la Obra Evangélica en Colombia: 1966, (Bogotá: Confederación Evangélica de Colombia (CEDEC), 1966). According to other estimates the Protestant population in Colombia was already 90,809 in 1960. Cf. Wilton M. Nelson, "Evangelical Surge in Latin America," Christianity Today, Vol. 7, No. 21 (July 19, 1963), pp. 5-19.

[23]Since 1966, the official membership of the Seventh-day Adventist Church in Colombia has more than doubled. According to the 1975 Seventh-day Adventist Yearbook, SDA church membership for that year was 38,807. The highest concentration of members (23,486) is in the "Upper Magdalena Conference", which includes Boyaca, Cundinamarca, Huila, Norte de Santander (except the North Ocana District), Santander, Tolima, and the Territories of Amazonas, Arauca, Caqueta, Meta, Vaupes and Vichada.

[24]This is according to Raymond B. Buker, Sr., and Ted Ward, The World Directory of Mission-Related Institutions (So. Pasadena, California: William Carey Library, 1972), p. 351.

[25]For details and statistics for 1966, see James E. Goff, ed., Censo de la Obra Evangélica en Colombia, pp. 5-12.

[26]Prudencio Damboriena, El Protestantismo en América Latina, Vol. I, pp. 121-138.

[27]Werner Vhymeister, "Crisis de la Educación Adventista en la División Sudamericana." Two installments: El Ministerio Adventista (July-August, 1973), pp. 6-10; (September-October, 1973), pp. 10-12. El Ministerio is a journal for Seventh-day Adventist ministers in South America published quarterly in Montevideo, Uruguay.

[28]James G. Maddox, Technical Assistance by Religious Agencies in Latin America (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1956), p. 24.

[29]W. Stanley Rycroft and Myrtle M. Clemmer, A Factual Study of Latin America, p. 101.

[30]Ibid.

[31]Ibid., p. 102.

[32]Ibid., pp. 102,103.

[33]Ibid., p. 154. See Jacob A. Loewen, "Literacy: Bridge in Chocó Evangelism," Practical Anthropology, Vol. 12 (1965), pp. 76-84.

[34]Ibid., p. 183.

[35]Werner Vhymeister, "Crisis de la Educación Adventista en la División Sudamericana--II," El Ministerio Adventista (September-October, 1973), p. 11.

[36]Ibid., Part I, p. 9.

[37]Ibid., pp. 9, 10.

[38]For details of the heated controversy see the following newspaper articles: "Rebelión en el Americano," El Tiempo, July 17, 1974, p. 15-C; "En el Americano: Por un cubano quieren reemplazar al rector," El Espacio, July 17, 1974; "La realidad del problema en el Colegio Americano," El Espectador, July 18, 1974.

[39]Alberto Rembao in Foreward to W. Stanley Rycroft's Religion and Faith in Latin America, p. 8.

[40]Federick Turner, Catholicism and Political Development in Latin America. See also: Don Francisco Lacueva, "Should We Return to Rome?" Christianity Today, (October 12, 1962), pp. 12-13.

[41]Jaime Rodríguez, Educación Cathólica y Secularización en Colombia (Bogotá: Confederación Interamericana de Educación Católica--CIEC, 1970).

[42]Gottfried Oosterwal, Professor of Mission and Comparative Religion at Andrews University, observes that "most Protestant organizations have given up educational mission as part of their plan to evangelize the world." Their schools, Oosterwal notes, have been "taken over by governments," which he sees as "a gain in the long run" in the sense that schools "absorb far too much in resources and personnel," which can be spent "in other evangelistic programs of the church, including the strengthening of local churches, youth programs, family evangelism and other missionary activities." Referring to the educational program of the Seventh-day Adventist Church in particular, Oosterwal notes: "If in the affluent United States, Adventist schools are already hurting for lack of funds and more and more Adventist youth (now at least 55 percent) are attending public schools as a result, how would the chruches in the poverty areas of the world, where most Adventists live, be able to support church schools? The answer is: They cannot. "--Gottfried Ooosterwal, "The New Shape of Adventist Mission," Spectrum: A Quarterly Journal of the Assoication of Adventist Forums (Spring, 1975), pp. 44-54.

CHAPTER VI

RECAPITULATION AND COMMENTARY

Colombia is a poor country whose economy is based primarily on agriculture. Of its economically active population, 45.2 percent is engaged in agriculture. However, only 20 percent of its total land area is agricultural land--2.4 acres per capita. Half of the country's total land area consists of malaria-infested lowlands and forests and about one-fourth of grazing lands. Most of the best farmland is hilly with soil best suited for growing coffee, which is Colombia's most important crop. Colombian coffee accounts for one-fifth of the world's coffee production and 80 percent of Colombia's foreign revenue. It was pointed out that reliance on coffee exports as the principal source of foreign exchange means that Colombia's export earnings are highly vulnerable to conditions in the coffee market.

The land is inhabited by people of various racial backgrounds. There are three Andean mountain ranges in Colombia--the Cordillera Occidental, Cordillera Central, and Cordillera Oriental, within which are located some fourteen major clusters of population. Historian Hubert Herring has observed that Colombia's politics, economy and culture have been shaped by her awkward geography. How geography has shaped the politics of the country is explained by Gary MacEoin:

> The isolation caused by rugged terrain and the economic concentration resulting from reliance on a single crop, coffee, have tended to reinforce the power of the small group of wealthy men who have traditionally run the country.

> And although the resulting closed society has been the basis for a measure of tranquility, it has also been the cause of a wave of senseless violence born of poverty and frustration.[1]

Estimates of Colombia's ethnic composition vary according to the source. However, it is certain that the large majority of Colombians are Mestizos or mixed Indian and White. A small, predominantly urban group of Whites controls the wealth and exercises the national power. Studies were cited in Chapter II (Whitten and Szwed, Sanders, Solaún and Kronus) that seem to indicate that White values are normative for the Blacks and the miscegenated of Colombia.

Thomas G. Sander's Chocoan case study was considered at length not only because it sheds light on the subject of race relations in Colombia, but also because of what it says concerning education in general in that country. In effect, the Chocó constitutes a microcosm wherein the futility of the traditional general academic education may be seen, an education which does not provide the skilled workers urgently needed by a developing economy. As Sanders himself expresses it, such schooling has an overwhelmingly negative effect on the possibilities of development.

Yet for hundreds of years Colombian schools at all levels have emphasized the general secondary or academic curriculum. Latin-American universities have been turning out thousands of lawyers when there is a critical need for engineers, economists, physicists and agrarian experts.

However, Colombia is seeking to correct the situation by expanding and diversifying education at all levels and adding vocational options to the curriculum. It will be recalled that the passage of Law 080

in 1974 calling for the reform of the bachillerato was a major step in that direction. The ultimate objective is that the student have a marketable skill upon completion of the secondary course of study. Vocational, scientific and technical preparation is being stressed at the university level also. Today the avowed aim of university training is to prepare high-level professionals, to initiate them in scientific investigation, and to prepare the cadres of leaders needed in the country. At all levels, but especially at the elementary where the most pressing needs lie, efforts are being made to combat the three major problems of Colombian education: 1) shortage of facilities, 2) outmoded curricula, and 3) lack of qualified teachers. Certainly there is an awareness of educational problems, and plans have been devised for solving them.

Scholarships and low-interest loans are being made available to needy university students through ICETEX (Colombian Institute for Educational Loans and Advanced Training Abroad). ICETEX receives financial assistance from the United Nations, foreign governments and universities, and foreign philanthropic organizations. The United States, through AID, is the major contributor. The Colombian Institute for the Development of Higher Education (ICFES) was recently created. It is the central planning organization for all higher education in Colombia and works closely with the Association of Colombian Universities (ASCUN), which in part functions as an accrediting agency in higher education. Promotion of scientific and technological research in both public and private institutions of learning and the planning and coordination of all such research throughout the country is the responsibility of COLCIENCIAS, the Colombian Fund for Scientific

Investigations and Special Projects. Guidelines for the establishment of graduate programs have been developed by ASCUN. The avowed purpose of all educational planning is the conversion of the national education system into a basic instrument for social change and integral national development. Vocational and technical education is being promoted at all levels of Colombia's educational system.

The key word in Colombian educational circles today is reform. The stated aim of the educational reformation movement is to channel education toward what the country needs in order to develop its human and physical resources.

Since much of Colombian education is private, an entire chapter was devoted to a study and analysis of the private educational sector (Chapter IV). In view of the fact that Protestantism has made great gains in Colombia despite persecution, a chapter was devoted to a consideration of Protestant educational efforts in the country (Chapter V).

It was found that private schools, most of which are owned and operated by the Roman Catholic Church, are no less deficient than public institutions in that they emphasize the more prestigious general or academic curriculum which, as noted repeatedly throughout this study, is irrelevant to the needs of Colombia's developing economy. Since most private schools are located in urban areas where they cater to the educational needs of the upper classes, private education is no less guilty of rural neglect than its public counterpart.

Protestant schools in Colombia are a case apart. It must first of all be recognized that Protestants were at one time severely persecuted in Colombia and that many of their churches and schools were

destroyed. They have had to go through a period of readjustment and restoration. Today Protestants are able to operate freely throughout the nation, though they still do so against formidable odds in a country where only one religion, the Roman Catholic, is officially recognized. Protestant educational efforts are at best modest. Perhaps the greatest contributions of the Protestants are in the area of nonformal education. Several of the deficiencies of Protestant education were noted: 1) a scarcity of schools at every level, 2) programs at the university level are limited, particularly in vocational areas, 3) the schools are of course private and expensive, and a large percentage of children and youth cannot afford to attend them, 4) mainly the academic courses of study are offered, a fact which excludes those students whose interests are vocational. On the basis of the information available to the writer, particularly the Vhymeister study on Seventh-day Adventist education in South America, it was observed that Protestant education is defective in that its emphasis on the strictly academic curriculum renders it irrelevant to national economic development. It was concluded that in that respect it is no different from all other Latin-American systems of education, public or private. The future of Protestant education in Colombia and in other Latin-American countries is uncertain. Perhaps its salvation lies in interdenominational educational endeavors.

The problems facing Colombian education have by no means been solved yet. It will take years to implement the current legislation calling for educational reform. The effects of centuries of educational neglect cannot be eliminated by means of grandiose proclamations and

resolutions emanating in a steady stream from the offices of the national Ministry of Education, no matter how well-intentioned they happen to be, and surely they are. No sudden educational miracles will be performed. Educational reform will be a long, protracted process in Colombia.

The traditional, aristocratic view of education, which is in great part responsible for the current Colombian educational crisis, is deeply rooted. Also, as mentioned earlier in this study, a long-standing disinclination to engage in manual labor has resulted in a certain negativism toward education in technical fields and trades. This attitudinal bias toward vocational education poses one of the greatest challenges to those who wish to reform education in Colombia. Again, it will take a long time to bring about the desired change.

The task of reform is an arduous one, but it is unavoidable. The situation demands careful, long-range educational planning, large inputs of money on the part of the national government as well as financial and technical assistance from developed countries. It also demands of educators and national leaders a dedication such as they have never had before.

But there is one fact that Colombian educators and national leaders must face squarely, namely that true educational reform cannot be carried out without a change in the social order. Colombia's politico-ecclesiastical oligarchic tradition is well known to students in Latin-American affairs.

It remains to be seen whether or not the traditional social order in Colombia will be changed, by whatever means, in order that

Colombia may indeed attain those characteristics which are productive of qualitative change and growth toward good life in all dimensions for all of the people.

The country's most important resource--the human--has been neglected long enough. The time has come for a new Colombia to emerge.

FOOTNOTES

[1] Gary MacEoin, Colombia and Venezuela and the Guianas, (New York: Time Incorporated, 1965), p. 92.

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