INTRODUCTION

This talk is described as being on Christian Faith, ideologies and social change. I find it useful to begin by saying a few words about social change.

There is practically universal agreement on the need for social change, not only in relation to the Philippines and other Third World countries, but even in relation to the economically developed countries. The latter may not suffer from the mass poverty and the grave maldistribution of wealth, income and opportunities for human development which beset Philippine society and the countries of the Third World, but they nevertheless suffer from their own serious social evils. Take for example the structural unemployment of the developed capitalist democracies, and the discrimination based on political, ideological and antireligious grounds which characterizes Marxist-Leninist state socialist regimes.

The debate among most people is therefore not on the need for social change, but rather on the direction and manner of social change.

Christians are being consistent in thinking that their efforts toward social change should be guided by Christian faith. At the same time, some of the groups most effective in advocating or directing social change claim to be guided by ideologies. This raises the question of how Christian faith relates with ideologies.

This question is answered in varying and even in opposed ways by Christians whose commitment to Christian faith and to liberating social change is beyond question. Thus, on one hand, Juan Luis Segundo, the famous Jesuit liberation theologian from
Uruguay, says that "a faith without ideologies is, in fact, dead." On the other hand, Dom Helder Camara, former Archbishop of Olinda and Recife in the poverty-stricken northeast of Brazil, and renowned defender of the right to land and the other human rights of his mostly peasant and rural worker flock, says that "With the gospel message, the social encyclicals, Vatican II and Medellin, we have no need to appeal to any ideology to inspire us in our sacred commitment to foster human betterment . . ." Such opposed statements cause much perplexity among many sincere Christians who take their faith seriously and who wish to let their faith guide their praxis of liberating social change. This situation of widespread perplexity lends importance to the question of the relationship among Christian faith, ideologies and social change. I shall approach this question in six steps:

First, I shall present the meaning of the term "Christian faith."

Second, I shall describe the link between Christian faith and social ethics.

Third, I shall enumerate and describe the three fundamental moments in the ethical transformation or "moralization" of social reality.

Fourth, I shall lay down the relation between Christian faith and the three fundamental moments in the ethical transformation of social reality.

Fifth, I shall give the principal meanings of the term "ideology."

Sixth, and by way of conclusion, I shall describe the link between Christian faith and ideologies.

I. MEANING OF THE TERM "CHRISTIAN FAITH"

Christian faith is a person's free and wholehearted acceptance of God's self-revelation as humankind's liberator in Jesus Christ. It springs from the person's religious experience of God's self-revelation for the sake of our total salvation or liberation, that is, for the salvation or liberation of all aspects of our being. Religious experience, whenever authentic, elicits awe toward God and brings about conversion, which means a radical change in the orientation

of one's life. This conversion can be said to have four aspects: belief, ultimate meaning, commitment and trust.

Firstly, faith includes belief in the Christ-event and its central and indispensable significance in God's plan for humankind's salvation or liberation. Secondly, this God who reveals himself as desiring and able to save us in and through Christ, is the Being whom the person of faith accepts as giving ultimate meaning to his or her life. Thirdly, the person of faith is therefore committed to sacrifice everything, if necessary, even this present mortal form of life, in order to obey God's liberating will. Fourthly, because of these foregoing premises, faith reposes total trust in God as the Being who can and will save the person of faith from ultimate evil, destruction and frustration. Faith therefore springs from religious experience, and has the dimensions of belief, ultimate meaning, commitment to sacrifice, and trust, of which God is the object, and which is both a gift of God and a free human response to this gift.3

We see therefore that faith has to do with a worldview, that is, with judgments regarding fundamental meanings and values found in reality. Some of these fundamental meanings and values are: God as sovereign and transcendent; God as free and purposeful; God as the friend and liberator of humankind; the world as real and orderly; the world as essentially benign because of God's justice, omnipotence, and loving providence; the innate dignity of each human being; and the unconditional demand of love for the neighbor, both of the latter two being founded on the conviction that a human being is an image and likeness of God and is called to share in the life of God himself.4

It is important to keep in mind that Christian faith considers as absolute the meanings and values which we have just mentioned.

This worldview shapes the intentionality with which believers carry out their actions, and thus gives a specifically Christian character to these actions. For the believers, their actions are meant to realize the meanings and values we mentioned, in their own lives and in the lives of others, and in concrete historical terms.

Catholic Christians have a deep awareness of the social character of human nature and the incarnational thrust of God’s definitive self-revelation in Jesus Christ. Consequently they affirm that God’s self-revelation is socially mediated, and that the Church is the institution which in a privileged way socially mediates this self-revelation, and that the Church subsists in the Catholic Christian Church. Hence Catholic Christians hold that authentic faith necessarily has an ecclesial dimension, in the sense that the Church maintains the attitude of faith, safeguards and explicates its content, and authoritatively guides its realization in the various aspects of human life.

II. LINK BETWEEN CHRISTIAN FAITH AND SOCIAL ETHICS

When we consider the duty of Christians to realize in life the meanings and values of Christian faith, we enter the realm of ethics. This is because ethical reflection has to do with the evaluation of human acts from the viewpoint of the meanings and the values or disvalues that they convey or bring about. This is in contrast with instrumental or technical reason, which evaluates human acts in terms of their efficacy in bringing about certain states of affairs. Thus ethical reflection asks such questions as why, in terms of meanings, human values and disvalues, an act is done or proposed. In contrast, instrumental or technical reason asks how a certain desired state of affairs can be brought about most efficiently.

Obviously Christian believers have the duty to realize the meanings and values of their faith in their life and activity. Refusal to act in such a way as to realize these meanings and values in all aspects and levels of life, including the societal as well as the intrapersonal and interpersonal, would reveal the moribund or counterfeit character of a person’s claim to Christian faith. In the context of societies suffering from grave structural injustice, such as that of the Philippines, this implies an urgent ethical commitment to social change. Here we see the logical link between Christian faith and social ethics.

Therefore, Christian faith, to be authentic, must be mediated by ethics, one aspect of which is social ethics. The task of social ethics is the ethical transformation or “moralization” of social reality, and this “moralization” of social reality has three fundamental moments or aspects.
III. FUNDAMENTAL MOMENTS IN THE ETHICAL REFLECTION OR "MORALIZATION" OF SOCIAL REALITY

The three fundamental moments or aspects of the process by which ethical reflection and action "moralize" social reality are: first, the proposal of utopias; second, the formulation of societal models; and third, the adoption of strategies and tactics as means for implementing the societal model chosen. I shall now describe these three fundamental moments in the moralization of society, and provide some examples of these.

I shall first deal with utopias. "Utopia" is probably the least familiar and most elusive among the basic concepts involved in the three fundamental moments for the moralization of society, and so has to be treated with much care. Here we are not using the term "utopia" in the usual, pejorative everyday sense of "unrealistic visionary ideal." Rather, we are using "utopia" in the favorable technical sense frequently employed by some European and Latin American theologians, among them Leonardo Boff, Gustavo Gutierrez, Johannes B. Metz, and Jürgen Moltmann.

Thus in this article "utopia" refers to a humanly constructed historical plan for a society that is qualitatively different from present societies, in terms of its functionality for approximating the goal of the fullness of human life and freedom. Utopias express the aspiration to establish new, authentically humanizing social relations among people. They emerge when science has reached its limits in its explanation and humanizing transformation of social reality, and when new paths need to be opened up for liberating historical praxis. At such moments, science needs the mediation of the creative imagination in order to make a new breakthrough in its capacity to serve human fulfillment. Imagination in politics is called "utopia." Utopias are socially and politically useful, because any particular historical project, while on one hand related to the analysis of historical conditions, is on the other hand dependent on utopian visions to project the shape of the society towards which it moves.⁵

Example of a utopia is the "classless society of working people" envisioned by various Democratic Socialist groups in the Philip-

pines and overseas. The following are some of its characteristics: in the economic field, social ownership of the bulk of the means of production, as well as workers' control and self-management of production units; in the political field, effective respect for the full range of democratic rights and civil liberties.

I shall next say a few words about societal models. These refer to relatively concrete proposals for the configuration of an ethically good society. These are expressed in the minimum and maximum programs of those political parties or movements which have well-developed theories.

Examples of societal models are: welfare state capitalist democracy, Marxist-Leninist state socialism, and Democratic Socialism.

The third fundamental moment or aspect in the moralization of society is the adoption of strategies and tactics. The terms "strategy" and "tactics" are of military origin, but have been analogously applied in politics and in social ethics.

In this analogous sense, "strategy" refers to the knowledge of the laws of social transformation and political combat or competition as a whole, and the application of these laws to each struggle for social transformation or for enduring political supremacy on a national or similar scale. Examples of the elements of strategy in this sense are: the analysis and deployment of social forces, the choice of principal and secondary conflicts, the forms of struggle — legal, \(^6\) extralegal, \(^7\) and armed \(^8\) — and their proper coordination, the principles of political organization and communication, and the structured political organization needed to apply the foregoing.

In a similarly analogous sense, "tactics" refers to the knowledge of the laws which govern sociopolitical combat or competition in a given setting, and the application of these laws in the course of each of the struggles or campaigns that make up the entirety of a struggle for social transformation or enduring political victory. Examples of the elements of tactics in this sense are: the concrete combination of the forms of struggle, the choice of issues and of campaigns and mass actions, and the concrete organizational struc-

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6. By "legal struggle" is meant the forms of struggle which are allowed by the laws of the incumbent government.
7. By "extralegal struggle" one refers to forms of struggle considered illegal by the incumbent government, but which stop short of systematic armed confrontation.
8. By "armed struggle" we refer to systematic armed confrontation.
tures to be set up for the most effective deployment of social forces for the given situation.

Speaking about strategy, we can say that in the Philippines leftist groups, whether Marxist-Leninist or Democratic Socialist, agree on the strategic principle that the social forces whose mobilization is necessary to bring about liberating societal change are the basic masses — the peasants and the workers. However, Marxist-Leninists and Democratic Socialists differ on the role of armed struggle in their respective strategies for societal change. Marxist-Leninists generally insist that correct strategy involves giving primacy to armed struggle, with legal and extralegal struggle contributing to the success of the armed struggle. Democratic Socialists affirm that the use of armed struggle to attain political objectives is strategically unacceptable, on ethical and pragmatic grounds, in a situation of political democracy, and in such a situation, only legal (and occasionally, extralegal) struggle should be employed in the pursuit of societal goals.

Most Marxist-Leninists hold that the principal conflict in Philippine society is that between the people (organized in an alliance led by Marxist-Leninists), on one hand, and the imperialist power and domestic feudal and bureaucrat capitalist allies, on the other hand. Consequently the strategic united front which Marxist-Leninists propose has, for its basis of unity, the struggle against imperialism, feudalism and bureaucrat capitalism, and the acceptance of the leading role of the Marxist-Leninist party. Democratic Socialists hold that while it is true that the gravest structural problems of Philippine society are imperialism, feudalism and domestic capitalism, the Philippine problematic is only one theater of the principal conflict on the worldwide level — that between authentic humanism (of which democracy is an essential part), on one hand, and the new totalitarian barbarisms of fascism and orthodox Marxism-Leninism, on the other hand. Hence the strategic united front which Democratic Socialists advocate has, for its basis of unity, the struggle against imperialism, feudalism and domestic capitalism, and, in addition, a clear and resolute commitment to political democracy.

Turning to tactics, we observe that the current tactics of the dominant faction among Philippine Marxist-Leninists include all-out confrontational moves against the Aquino administration,
which this faction looks upon as reactionary, subservient to United States imperialism, and crypto-fascist. These confrontational moves include sustained rural guerrilla campaigns, escalating urban guerrilla operations, extralegal agitation, and legal moves which support the armed struggle.

The Democratic Socialists, on the other hand, though dismayed at the basically pro-capitalist orientation of the Aquino administration, lend it critical support. Democratic Socialists strongly support the Aquino administration’s efforts to consolidate constitutional political democracy. But they also criticize the Aquino administration’s slowness in addressing the basic problems of the Filipino masses, and exert all the pressure they can so that the administration would take appropriate action regarding these problems. At present, Democratic Socialists employ electoral politics and legal but militant mass campaigns in order to move the Filipino people to democratically opt for, construct and maintain a socialist economy.

I would like to insist on the necessity of all the three moments in the moralization of society — utopia, societal model, strategy and tactics — for an ethically acceptable social praxis. The absence of a liberating utopia causes societal models and strategies and tactics to degenerate and become fossilized, increasingly irrelevant, alienating and manipulative. This seems to have happened to the efforts of some Third World military-technocratic dictatorships to bring about national development. The absence of a societal model renders a utopia merely abstract and makes strategy and tactics disoriented, and therefore both utopia and strategy and tactics become ineffective for moralizing society. This seems to be the defect of some Catholic Christian reformist organizations and movements. The absence of strategy and tactics make both utopia and societal model merely abstract and inconsequential, and so also unable to moralize society. This lack seems to have impaired the work of the Christian Democrats in the Philippines, at least until quite recently.

IV. RELATION BETWEEN CHRISTIAN FAITH AND THE THREE FUNDAMENTAL MOMENTS IN THE MORALIZATION OF SOCIAL REALITY

I will now proceed to our fourth step — that of laying down the relationship between Christian faith and the three fundamental
moments in the moralization of social reality.

It is possible to propose utopias heavily based on Christian faith. One way in which such faith-related utopias project the fundamental meanings and values of Christian faith is through the theological mediation of eschatology. Christian eschatology holds that these meanings and values are fulfilled proleptically, that is, partially in existing human realities of various kinds, this partial fulfillment being a sign and pledge of their future perfect fulfillment, through God’s decisive intervention, when Christ comes again to definitively establish God’s active reign. This proleptic fulfillment includes three main features which are among the great aspirations of humankind today — liberty, equality, and participation. This utopia spurs on the Christian’s ethical effort toward lessening as much as possible the gap between the actual partial realization of these fundamental Gospel meanings and values, and the ideal, perfect realization of these meanings and values, attainable only by God’s decisive intervention.

Christian faith, however, does not directly give us a detailed moral code, whether at the intrapersonal, the interpersonal, or the societal levels of our conduct. The authoritative source of the content of Christian faith is Tradition, of which Sacred Scripture is a privileged and normative expression. This authoritative source does not prescribe concrete societal models which would definitively embody fundamental Gospel meanings and values, nor concrete strategies and tactics to achieve the implementation of our chosen societal model.

(This is what is meant by the exclusion of ostensibly Christian “third ways” between capitalism and socialism. An example of such a proposed “third way” was the corporative state, the outlines of which could be picked out from the encyclicals Rerum novarum by Pope Leo XIII in 1891 and Quadragesimo anno by Pope Pius XI in 1931. The exclusion of Christian “third ways” does not therefore represent a loss of nerve or a loss of confidence in the creativity of human ethical and technical reasoning. Nor does it mean confining the ethical choice of social model by Christians to one between capitalism and Marxist-Leninist state socialism. It only means that Christian faith does not prescribe

concrete societal models and strategies and tactics as definitive expressions of Christian meanings and values.

Yet the formulation of societal models and the adoption and carrying out of appropriate strategies and tactics are essential moments for the moralization of society, which in turn is a necessary mediation and task of faith for the societal level of human life and activity. Christian faith therefore has to seek concrete ethical mediations in terms of the formulation of societal models and the adoption of strategies and tactics. These mediations must of course be compatible with the worldview which faith holds and the utopia proposed partly on the basis of faith. It is in relation with the social ethical mediation of Christian faith through societal models and strategies and tactics, that we touch upon the relation between faith and ideologies.

V. PRINCIPAL MEANINGS OF THE TERM "IDEOLOGY"

At this point it is important that we clarify the principal meanings of the term "ideology." One of these meanings is pejorative, while the other is favorable or at least neutral.

Pejoratively, "ideology" refers to "false consciousness," in the sense of a psychological rationalization of dehumanizing practices and institutions, by means of uncritical beliefs, doctrines or ideas which often have a deep emotional basis, and which reflect the socio-economic interests of an exploitative and privileged minority within society. Obviously Christian faith, with its humanizing and liberating thrust, has to reject and combat ideology in the sense just described.

The term "ideology," however, has another meaning, more favorable or at least neutral from a Christian and humanist point of view. Thus "ideology" can be understood to mean a (more or less) coherent set of ideas and values of human origin, that function as regulating or normative principles for action.10 This action is quite often political work. This set of ideas and values operates to justify the history, situation and future of a person or group, and gives that person or group a basis for analyzing, criticizing or

advocating particular societal arrangements or models, as well as particular strategies and tactics.

We therefore can see that ideologies contain or can proximately give rise to (more or less) developed worldviews, utopias, societal models, and strategies and tactics. In other words, aside from a worldview, an ideology contains or can proximately give rise to all three fundamental moments or instrumentalities for the moralization of society, namely, a utopia, a societal model, and concrete strategy and tactics.11

Parenthetically, we can also see that every mature and sane person has an ideology in one of the senses which we have presented.

With ideologies being so useful and pervasive, we then cannot avoid asking ourselves how Christian faith relates with ideologies.

VI. LINK BETWEEN CHRISTIAN FAITH AND IDEOLOGIES

I have already given a hint on the link between Christian faith and ideologies when I mentioned that faith needs to be mediated

11. This concept of "ideology" obviously differs from that used by many sociologists, philosophers and theologians, Juan Luis Segundo being one of the most prominent among the latter. In Segundo's book, Faith and Ideologies, for example, "faith" and "ideology" are understood, to begin with, as two anthropological dimensions of human life and activity. These two dimensions are distinct but complementary. All human beings have "faith," understood as a fundamental structure of meanings and values, this structure being acquired through relationships in the cultural and social setting in which a person is situated. All human beings also have an "ideology," understood as human knowledge about effective means for realizing one's fundamental values. The same relationship of complementarity is posited between faith and ideology when "faith" is considered in religious terms. Those who have religious faith believe that the structure of meanings and values which their faith conveys has for its origin an objective source of total truth, and they consider this structure of meanings and values as absolute. Nevertheless, faith by itself does not possess the conceptual instrumentalities for realizing this structure of meanings and values in historical reality. These conceptual instrumentalities are societal models and strategies and tactics. The latter are provided by ideology. While such a usage has its merits and is widely accepted, I have chosen to use a different framework of reference, and for the following reasons. First, I wish to emphasize the claim to criteriorational or "scientific" status of much of what Segundo calls "faith"; this criteriorational thrust is not limited to the levels of societal models and strategies and tactics. Second, I would like to stress the fact that in some systems of thought such as Marxism (at least in the latter's predominant forms), worldview, utopia and societal model are closely if not organically interrelated, making the separation between the level of meanings and values (worldview) and the levels of means (utopia and societal model) rather artificial. Third, I give more importance than Segundo does to the fact that the advocates of such systems of thought as Marxism (at least in the latter's predominant forms) do not wish their fundamental structure of meanings and values (worldview) to be designated by the term "faith," with its religious overtones. Finally, the usage I have chosen is found in many important Church documents, such as in Octogesima adveniens, nos. 26-37.1.
by social ethics, and social ethics requires mediation by societal models and strategies and tactics. Now I shall amplify the treatment of the link between Christian faith, on one hand, and ideologies, on the other hand, by briefly analyzing their relationship at the level of worldviews, of utopias, of societal models, and of strategies and tactics.

For a Christian carrying out reflection at the level of worldviews, the worldview of Christian faith is taken as absolute. This is understandable insofar as this worldview is accepted as coming from a transcendent source, none other than God's self-revelation. Consequently the worldview of faith should prevail over the worldview of any ideology.

At the level of the proposal of a utopia, we affirm that a utopia heavily influenced by faith has some normative priority over the utopias proposed by ideologies, since the linkage between Christian faith and a faith-influenced utopia is usually close. The utopias of ideologies may be accepted and used by a Christian in the moralization of society, to the extent that these utopias are congruent with the utopia (and ultimately, the worldview) arising from faith. But a faith-based utopia could plausibly suffice for itself, in terms of carrying out the function assigned to a utopia in the process of the moralization of social reality.

At the next two levels, in order to be able to formulate a societal model and to adopt and implement strategies and tactics, Christian faith, inasmuch as it has none of these specific to itself, needs the mediation of ideology. Without a societal model and strategy and tactics, which are necessary for the moralization of society, the worldview of faith and faith-influenced utopias remain abstract and therefore inoperative. It is in this sense that we conclude that faith without ideology, being abstract and merely formal, is dead, since it has no concrete or material effects on social reality.

Failure to understand this conclusion or unwillingness to accept it exposes one to certain dangers. One such danger is the domestication of one's faith by the established social disorder. By not taking up a societal model and strategy and tactics to make Christian faith bear upon societal reality, we actually end up serving a set of meanings and values, that is, a worldview, different from or even opposed to the Christian faith. This non-Christian or even
anti-Christian worldview is usually that of the established social disorder.

Furthermore, it can be plausibly asserted that a tragic effect of not having taken up the concrete instrumentalities for the moralization of society has been the relative inefficacy of explicitly Christian social ethical effort to build just societies. Could this perhaps explain the fact that in spite of the often heroic labor of thousands upon thousands of clergy, religious, and lay persons in so many ecclesiastical circumscriptions, religious orders and congregations, secular institutes, and apostolic movements dedicated in some way to the building of an authentically human world, many sociologically Catholic Christian countries are still in the dire clutches of mass destitution and scandalous socio-economic inequality?

Since faith needs to be mediated by societal models and by strategies and tactics, we must try to identify some criteria for determining whether a given concrete effort at such a mediation is acceptable or not from the viewpoint of Christian moral theology or theological ethics. In relation to societal models, one criterion would be the extent to which the societal model in question is congruent with the Christian worldview and with one’s faith-influenced (and also ideological) utopia, and another criterion would be the feasibility of the societal model under present circumstances. In relation to strategies and tactics, one criterion would be how congruent a given strategy and tactics are with the Christian worldview and the faith-influenced (and ideological) utopia, and another criterion would be the efficacy with which the strategy and tactics under consideration promote the realization of the societal model chosen by the moral agent.

In sum, Christian faith needs ideology because the latter provides it with the necessary instrumentalities — societal models and strategy and tactics — for it to have real concrete bearing on societal reality in line with its worldview and utopia.

For a Christian, however, the relationship between faith and ideology is not one-sided. Ideology must be guided by the worldview and the utopia of faith. Otherwise it runs the risk (by virtue of the relative efficacy given it by the societal model and the strategy and tactics to which it gives rise) of doing grave harm, should it take a deviant and dehumanizing direction, to the real-
ization of the authentically humanizing and liberating meanings and values which both faith and ideology should uphold.

It is now clear that Christians may neither identify faith with ideology nor completely separate them. How then should they relate these two realities? The answer to this question may be summed up in two steps: discernment and choice. Christians, using the illumination given by the fundamental meanings and values of the faith, should discern which among the various viable ideological options is likely to most efficaciously promote the values upheld by Christian faith. They should then choose that option which existentially best promotes these values, to be the object of their political support. If they find no existing politico-ideological option worthy of support, then they would do well to build up an acceptable and viable politico-ideological alternative. Now this is a very complicated and strenuous task, beyond the capacity of an individual to achieve. This should therefore be a group endeavor.

I am not saying that Christians alone, much less moral theologians by themselves, have the responsibility of drawing up societal models and strategies and tactics. This must be a collaborative effort involving, among others, social scientists and political strategists, both Christian and non-Christian, believer and non-believer, articulating and formulating the aspirations and needs of the people. Just as it depends on the social sciences for the scientific analysis of social reality, Christian social ethics depends on the competent and relevant sciences for the formulation of the technical aspects of concrete solutions to societal problems, critically evaluating and judging them in the light of Christian meanings and values. While there is a proper place and a valid function for prophetic denunciation and annunciation, broad statements of principle cannot substitute for the careful weighing of the respective human costs and benefits of competing societal models and strategies and tactics, considering the complexity of the issues involved in the task of achieving justice and the common good in national and world economics and politics.

Precisely because of these complexities, Christians should respect a legitimate pluralism in the choice of societal models, political movements, and strategies and tactics, as the goal and means of their praxis of sociopolitical liberation. But this technical and
ethical pluralism in the realm of Christian social ethics has its limits. These limits are defined by the worldview of Christian faith, and to some extent, by faith-influenced utopias. More concretely, they are partly defined by the criterion of respect for the human rights implied by the worldview of Christian faith and by faith-influenced utopias.

These human rights, however, should be understood in a manner purified of individualistic, bourgeois liberal distortions. This purified understanding of human rights should be attentive to the priority of rights stemming from a balanced integration of liberty and equality. (It should therefore affirm, for example, that though all human beings are the subjects of human rights, particular attention should be paid to the rights of the oppressed, namely, those whose rights are being violated, and that the right of the majority to satisfy their basic needs is prior to the desire or aspiration of the minority to nonbasic needs.)

It is safe to say that the limits to ethical pluralism in Christian social ethics exclude liberal capitalism and totalitarian ideologies of both the extreme right and the extreme left from the options acceptable to Christians. Nonetheless, we have to be attentive to developments in the elements of concrete ideologies and in the interaction among these elements. Changes in these elements and in their interaction may warrant changes in the moral evaluation of the ideologies involved, as well as of the concrete political movements advocating these ideologies.

A final caution which is especially relevant to our situation as a Third World country, but which also has significance for all nations in this fast-shrinking global village of ours. A utopia, because it pursues ever-new possibilities of human fulfillment, may fall into the error of equating this increasing fulfillment with ever-increasing levels of consumption. We do not have a clear idea of the extent to which science and technology can make the world’s resources support, for the present population of the world, a lifestyle as affluent as that of the economically developed capitalist countries,


13. For a nuanced Catholic Christian approach to the moral evaluation of the elements of ideologies and the historical movements which advocate them — an approach sensitive to the possibility of the historical evolution of these elements and movements, see Octogesima adveniens, nos. 26-37.1.
without destroying the habitability of our planet. Nor can we shake off the increasingly strong suspicion that such an affluent lifestyle may be detrimental to certain basic human values. Consequently we might do well to cultivate a simpler, more austere lifestyle, meeting our basic needs but reducing our nonbasic wants. We should aim to achieve the maximum of well-being with the minimum of consumption,\textsuperscript{14} thus helping conserve our planetary ecology and reducing the domestic and international tensions abetted by the increasingly fierce competition for ever-scarcer economic resources. In this way, from the position of Christian faith, we can more effectively promote the attainment of the utopian ideal of world peace and the unity of humankind.