

THE CURSILLO MOVEMENT: ITS IMPACT ON PHILIPPINE SOCIETY

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CHANGE IMPLIES A MOVEMENT, A PROCESS. IT IS A PROCESS OF development and growth, of risking new things and new ways, of making mistakes and learning from these. Thus, change implies tension—a very healthy tension—arising from people's attempt to wrest themselves from anachronistic systems, structures, and values; to adopt, perhaps even to create, entirely new forms. This attempt is necessary if a society is to meet the demands of the present and assure its future generation's own coming-into-being. Intelligent change will come about only from a balanced combination of the wisdom-from-experience of the past, the ingenuity and initiative of the present, and the continually unfolding possibilities of the future.

As a newly developing and rapidly changing country, it is expected of the Philippines at the moment that it should be fertile soil for all kinds of social movements, from highly ideological specific movements, youth movements, fashions, to movements of thought. The particular problems of Philippine society which seem to have everybody's attention nowadays, have long been there. It is evident, however, that it is only now that Filipinos have formed a clearer picture of the social situation, and are collectively concerned and rallying together to attempt some solution. Cantril aptly said that social movements flourish when the times are out of joint.¹

Though sociologists type social movements differently, all agree that they share the same essential characteristics and pass through more or less the same predictable stages or phases of development. A social movement is a conscious, intentional, collective effort of people aimed at promoting or resisting change in society at large. Each social movement arises in a particular social context; each has its characteristic followers; each, its special appeals. The nature and course of development of social movements in any given society reflect the "mood" and the collective desires of the members of that society.

Not all social movements progress in the same way. Some begin quietly and grow steadily into large and enduring institutions. Others originate from a wave of collective excitement and enthusiasm and run through a course of settling down to conventionality and, in some cases, even to corruption and disintegration. The life span of any social movement is

¹ Hadley Cantril, *Psychology of Social Movements* (New York: John Wiley & Sons, Inc., 1948), p. vii.

directly proportional to the extent to which it meets the urgently felt needs of the people among whom it has arisen. A great deal likewise depends on the leaders of a social movement. Depending on how they are able to manipulate certain mechanisms, namely, agitation, development, and maintenance of *esprit de corps* and morale, formation and sustained clarity of ideology, and the continual adjustment of operating tactics to the growing and changing needs of the group, a social movement will either grow into an institution or just slowly disappear.

The title of this article is the concluding sentence of an exploratory study made of the Cursillo Movement two years ago.² The study was mainly exploratory and descriptive in nature, aimed at gaining familiarity with a social phenomenon in the Philippines, which had, particularly during the progress of the study (1969-1970), spread out so rapidly and stimulated reactions both favorable and adverse. Tracing the origin, history, nature, objective, and structure of the Cursillo, the study set itself the task of finding out whether or not the Cursillo had the essential characteristics of a social movement. More specific hypotheses about the subject could not be formulated for lack of adequate research data. The study answered fundamental questions about the Movement upon which later studies could be based. The particular focus of the study was the women's Cursillo of the Archdiocese of Manila during its first three years.

To answer the question posed by the above-mentioned study scientifically requires a formal, in-depth research on the third and most important stage of the Cursillo Movement, namely, the post-Cursillo stage or, in Cursillo parlance, the "Fourth Day." The writer has not had the opportunity to do such research, but two years after the first study the question is once again reiterated as an invitation both to students of social movements, and perhaps to Cursillo leaders as well, to reevaluate the Cursillo Movement in the context of more recent development on the Philippine social scene and in direct relationship to the stated ideals and objectives of the Movement. The following pages will simply review briefly the data already gathered in my earlier study to serve as foundation material for a better understanding of, and insight into, the Cursillo Movement in the Philippines.

THE CURSILLO MOVEMENT: A GENERAL PERSPECTIVE

"Cursillo de Cristianidad," Spanish for "Little Course in Christianity," is the original and full title of the now more popularly named "Cursillo Movement" or "Cursillo." "Cursillo" is a very common Spanish word, a diminutive of "curso," and means "a little course," that is, a course that lasts just for a few days rather than the usual six-to-nine-month course of the school calendar. The term connotes the idea of intensity, of doing a great

² Sister P. G. Bautista, r.c., "The Cursillo Movement: A Study of the Women's Cursillo of the Manila Archdiocese" (unpublished Master's thesis, Department of Sociology, University of the Philippines, 1970).

deal in a short time. Furthermore, it is a word commonly used in educational circles, e.g., language "immersion courses," seminars, workshops.

Hence, the designation "Cursillo de Cristianidad" is a short, intensive course in Christianity. More specifically, in the words of the founder, Bishop Juan Hervás:

the Cursillo is a short and intensive period of exercises that aim, and by the grace of God ordinarily succeed, in making each participant live for a few days a life of militant Christianity, while furnishing the necessary means to make that life of militant Christianity endure within each participant for the rest of his life.³

It is interesting to realize that a word as "neutral" or as "secular" as "cursillo" was purposely chosen for a religious movement which also had its origin in a thoroughly Catholic country. The reason for this seems to be the founder's desire to move away from a name that was overly "pious," for the Cursillo was born in an environment and at a time when anti-clericalism was strong; and a Christian movement with a name that had no immediate religious overtones was more likely to be accepted.

The first Cursillo was held from January 7-10, 1949 in the Monastery of San Honorato del Monte Luliano de Randa at Palma de Mallorca, an island off the coast of Spain. Behind this first Cursillo were seven years of what the founder calls "remote preparation: a great collection of ideas and facts, personal experiences and the experiences of others." The Cursillo, in the form that we know it now, is the culmination, so to say, of many years of study and research, diligent effort, and collaboration of a specially selected team of young priests in Rome and laymen, under the direction of their Bishop, Juan Hervás.

The Cursillos actually began with the youth—the Spanish youth who were members and leaders mostly of "Juventud de Accion Catolica," the Catholic Action group of the diocese of Mallorca. Over a period of several years there were series of spiritual exercises for those going to the world-famous pilgrimage center, Santiago de Compostela, the sepulchre of the apostle, St. James the Greater, in the province of La Coruna in Northwest Spain. In time these "Cursillos of Advanced Pilgrims" gave way to an improved approach to the apostolate for the same youth which were named "Cursillos of Pilgrimage Leaders." From these earlier Cursillos there sprang something new which, incubating over a lengthy period of time, studied minutely, and experimented with in "Apertivos de Cursillo," finally germinated into today's Cursillos in Christianity.

The Cursillo is an international Catholic religious movement, the immediate aim of which is the revivification and intensification of the Christian life of individuals and, through them it is hoped, ultimately that of the larger community. The term "Christian life" may be defined as a per-

³ Bishop Juan Hervás, *Cursillos in Christianity: Instrument of Christian Renewal* (2nd ed.; Arizona: Ultreya Publications, 1967), p. 57.

sonal closeness to God, expressed outwardly by specific gestures of worship and devotion and, quite importantly, by concrete acts of service to, and good influence over, one's fellowmen.

Bishop Mariano G. Gaviola, Secretary-General of the Catholic Bishops' Conference of the Philippines and Director of the National Secretariat of the Cursillo of the Philippines, defined the Cursillo as

an instrument of Christian renewal; a civic-religious movement instituted for the renewal of the parish, and through the parishes, the renewal of the diocese, and indeed for the entire people of God It is not an organization but a center of formation, a school which lasts three days in formal classes and a subsequent in-training of their apostolate throughout their lives.⁴

Before proceeding with the study of the Movement's organizational structure one may ask, what were the determining influences on the ideology of the Cursillo? Bishop Hervás cites three major influences. He says that the Cursillo was, first and foremost, begun as a response to the call of the Roman Pontiffs to build a new social order: particularly, Pope Pius X's "restoring all things in Christ" and Pope Pius XII's "toward a better world." Secondly, the Movement was born in the hope of furthering the purpose of Catholic Action, which is "to make religion a thing for grown-ups, living and practical." Lastly, he gives definite credit to the inspiration that the Cursillo takes from the "Spiritual Exercises" of St. Ignatius of Loyola, the founder of the Jesuit Fathers. Apropos of the latter, however, the Bishop explicitly points out that the Cursillo is not a mere adaptation of the Exercises, nor should the two be compared. He states, "It is simply a matter of two different methods that offer their own doctrinal core, with their own particular arrangement of material and with adequate rules for the immediate objective."

The ordinary understanding of "cursillo" actually refers only to the three-day course that a cursillista undergoes. As a whole, the Movement can be really said to consist of three distinct stages of which the three-day course is only one.

The first stage consists of a plan which the bishop draws up with his assistants for his whole diocese and for each parish in the diocese. It is a preliminary plan wherein are outlined the objectives, division of labor, and responsibilities of the apostolate of the laymen and priests together. This is the pre-Cursillo stage.

The second stage, which may be called the Cursillo proper, refers to the three-day course that takes place in a Cursillo House. These are three days of intensive study, prayer, and "Christian community living" conducted by a team of laymen and priests.

The third stage, or the post-Cursillo, also known as the "Fourth Day," denotes the rest of the cursillista's lifetime after his Cursillo. It is in this

⁴ Rebecca E. Jimeno, "60,000 Strong in the Cursillos," *Weekly Nation*, October 2, 1967, p. 12.

stage where the efforts of Cursillo leaders in perfecting organization and technique are centered, because they realize that within this stage lie the continuance and future of the Movement.

The organizational structure of the Cursillo is diocesan, that is, every diocese (district governed by a bishop, consisting of several parishes) has its own Cursillo. Referred to as the Diocesan Secretariat,⁵ it is made up of a group of chosen priests and their lay collaborators, under the final direction of their bishop. Technically, the Cursillo is an organization of laymen in the given diocese. As a body in the Secretariat, the clergy and laity have the joint and full responsibility of promoting, directing, and regulating the entire work. However, it is not a "Mandated Organization," unlike the SCA, Catholic Charities, etc.

The team of priests appointed by the bishop, is responsible for the formative and doctrinal guidance of the Cursillo. The team of laymen, also appointed by the bishop, carries on the executive management of the Movement, taking charge of its organization and operation in accordance with the approved rules and regulations. Both teams are divided into departments for the purpose of making each one especially responsible for specific activities.

The Diocesan Secretariat, "the brain directing the organization," was in sole operation when the idea of a National Secretariat was conceived. The latter has no jurisdictional functions over the various diocesan secretariats of the country, which actually are wholly autonomous in conducting their own diocesan Cursillo Movement.

The manuals of Bishop Hervas repeatedly emphasize the idea that the Cursillo Movement is not an association of persons with special rituals and activities, but rather an "organized movement." By this he means that all cursillistas, after their three-day course, are to go their individual way in their mission of christianizing their particular milieu; and whatever formal organization and structure the Movement presents to the public are limited to its leaders whose task is to help the individual cursillista attain his Cursillo ideals. It may be truly said that even in the post-Cursillo "group-activities," like the weekly "ultreya" and "group reunions," it is aimed at further informing the individual member doctrinally and forming him spiritually.

From the aforesaid nature of the Movement, the nature and ends of the National Secretariat follow. An afterthought of Cursillo leaders, the Secretariat's functions are outlined only in Bishop Hervas' third book.⁶ It is created by and directly dependent only on the particular country's Conference of Bishops (i.e., the national body of the episcopate); it is autonomous of all other national lay organizations. Its task is to direct the

⁵ Bishop Juan Hervas, *Leaders' Manual for Cursillos in Christianity* (Arizona: Ultreya Publications, 1967), pp. 299-314.

⁶ Bishop Juan Hervas, *Questions and Problems Concerning the Cursillo* (Arizona: Ultreya Publications, 1967), pp. 180-86.

Cursillo Movement on the national level and represent it on the international level. It is composed of a director, a secretary, a treasurer, and a few subordinate staff members "demanded by its nature and ends." The National Secretariat is not the governing body but merely a "guardian" and a "clearing house," a coordinator of services for all the diocesan secretariats, a source of information, and an official promoter of the Movement on the national level.

Although charted as being directly under the Chairman, the Leaders' School is a structure apart within the Cursillo Movement. It is an eight-month course wherein Cursillo leaders are trained technically and formed spiritually. The School meets for two hours once a week. A priest appointed by the bishop and usually the Counsellor-Director of the Diocesan Secretariat, aided by other priests, directs the School. These priests handle the doctrinal aspect of the course. The co-director of the School is a layman. He and a team of other veteran Cursillo leaders give the technical training to the future rectors and *rollistas* (lecturers) of Cursillos. The student-members of the School are all volunteers rigorously screened by the Diocesan Secretariat. The subjects studied in the Leaders' School aim at a mastery of Catholic doctrine and a thorough knowledge of the Cursillo Movement itself.

The goal of the Cursillo Movement is essentially to discover, to further form, and, hopefully, eventually to make use of real "Christian leaders." While it is true that the doctrinal content and life program of the Movement is for every Christian, the organizational objective of the Cursillo goes beyond simple dissemination of Christian doctrine and ideals. Therefore, men of maturity and of leadership potential are those that the Cursillo wishes to tap. It is in this regard that the leaders of the Movement stress that the Cursillo is "not a reformatory" but first and foremost a training ground for promising and willing leaders of the Christian community. It is required that the candidates be generally in good moral standing.

Each parish in the diocese is assigned a quota of candidates for every Cursillo that is held. Thus, at every new Cursillo class, all or nearly all the parishes of the diocese are represented. The respective pastors of the diocese parishes who, it is assumed, know the moral fibre and qualifications of their parishioners, are entrusted with the task of recruiting and recommending worthy candidates for Cursillo training. Ideally, too, the pastor, or at least one of his assistants, is to have made the Cursillo first, before encouraging his parish members. This is not always the case. In fact, there are many pastors who have none or little to do with the Cursillo and the cursillistas in their parish.

In the course of time, it is those laymen who have made the Cursillo who sponsor other candidates. The sponsor is responsible for seeing his candidates through the screening process before they are admitted to

the three-day Cursillo course. No candidate is to be admitted without his pastor's signed recommendation bearing the official seal of the parish.

Cursillo-proper consists of four nights and three days, a blend of spiritual exercises, lectures or "rollos" by a team of laymen and priests, and tension-releasing activities, like singing, games, or joke sessions. It is perhaps the very intensity of such serious activities as prayer and study that justifies and logically explains the balancing side of the Cursillo days, namely, the atmosphere of gaiety and laughter and song that is so consciously and faithfully generated by the conducting staff.

The main spiritual exercises of a three-day Cursillo include daily Mass, common prayers, visits to the Blessed Sacrament, and climactic events, like the "confrontation" and the solemn closing ceremonies or "clausura." There are fifteen "rollos" in all: five are doctrinal and therefore given by priests, and ten are given by various laymen.

In the post-Cursillo stage, the new cursillista is expected to regularly and perseveringly attend the "ultreya" or weekly meeting. The Spanish word "ultreya" is derived from "ultra," meaning "beyond." The medieval pilgrims to Compostela (Campo de la Estrella, or Field of the Stars), on the arduous journey in the bitter cold of winter, used the enthusiastic cry, "Ultreya!" ("On to the end!"), to encourage one another to continue their long pilgrimage. So the Cursillo leaders adopted the cry of courage, aspiration, and perseverance of the will to epitomize the firm resolve to make the Cursillo a lifelong commitment.

The aim of the ultreya is continued and systematic formation and the stimulation of zeal and fervor among the Cursillo graduates. It is also meant to foster the spirit of unity and brotherhood first learned and experienced in the Cursillo house. The weekly ultreya lasts only an hour and is held in the parish's ultreya center.

To maintain fidelity in keeping the promises made by the cursillista in his "service sheet" at the end of his Cursillo, to encourage others in the group, and to check up on the slackers, there is also the post-Cursillo "group reunion" or the "team reunion." This is a ten-to-fifteen-minute prayer-meeting of a small group of cursillistas, ranging from about three to six persons. It is done weekly, at their own convenience, at a time and place of their choice, decided usually during the ultreya meeting.

Annually, each particular "class" (a three-day Cursillo group) has a general reunion. This is to keep the cursillistas in contact with their original source of "happy Christian community living." The post-Cursillo or "fourth day" is really where collective efforts at perseverance and sustenance of *esprit de corps* become important and necessary.

THE WOMEN'S CURSILLO: AN ADAPTATION FROM THE MEN'S CURSILLO

The Cursillo was not originally intended for women but was designed for young men and only eventually for mature men. In 1957, however, the first experiments with women's Cursillos took place in Mallorca, more

specifically for the wives and girlfriends of the men attending the Cursillos, "to fill the gap in spirituality and outlook which created difficulties in the heart of the home."

Speaking of the women's Cursillo, Bishop Hervas says, "Their origin marks their destiny." He stresses that this background of the women's Cursillos was taken into account in determining their immediate objective and their post-Cursillo objectives. Hence are detailedly outlined the criteria and rules for the adaptation of the men's Cursillo to the women's Cursillo.⁷

The objective of the women's Cursillo is not so much to make of the woman-cursillista a zealous leader outside the home, as it is to form her into an exemplary wife and mother—a real woman. This is emphasized in the rollos or lectures during the Cursillo for women. The main apostolate of the woman-cursillista is her own household; she is to play a complementary role in relation to her husband. Only after she has made her influence felt in her own home may she try to extend it to the larger community. The women's Cursillo is exactly the same as the men's Cursillo except for modifications necessary to suit the particular psychology and pedagogy applicable to women.

The Cursillo Movement remains primarily a men's movement and great care is exercised to keep it a men's movement. That is why, in the acceptance of women candidates, it is required that the husband shall have first completed the Cursillo. Furthermore, in the scheduling of Cursillos in a diocese, it is also so arranged that women's Cursillos are less frequent than the men's.

From the diocese of Mallorca in 1949 the Cursillo spread to every diocese of Spain and to other parts of the world. It was introduced in the United States in May, 1957 and the first English Cursillo was given in November, 1961 in San Angelo, Texas.

During the 1962 sessions of the Second Vatican Council in Rome, at which Catholic bishops throughout the world were present, four Filipino bishops who were there were invited by the Cursillo founder Bishop Hervas, to come to Ciudad Real. They were Archbishop Lino Gonzaga of Zamboanga; Bishop Epifanio Surban of Dumaguete; Bishop Alejandro Olalia of Lipa; and Bishop Cipriano Urgel of Calbayog. The first two observed the women's Cursillo while the latter two observed the men's Cursillo.

After this, Archbishop (now Cardinal) Julio Rosales of Cebu invited two American laymen from Stockton, California to form the first Cursillo team in the Philippines. Thus, early in February of 1963, the first men's Cursillo opened in Cebu, under the leadership of Mr. John Markey and Mr. Jack McFarland.⁸ From there it spread quickly to other dioceses. Thus, the flame of the Cursillo Movement was ignited in the very place where, four

⁷ Hervas, *Leaders' Manual for Cursillos in Christianity*, op. cit., pp. 317-24.

⁸ Gloria Sales Martinez, "A Strange and Awesome Christian Movement," *Weekly Graphic*, December 15, 1965, p. 137.

centuries ago, the seed of Christianity was planted in the Philippines by the Spanish missionaries. At present, almost all twenty dioceses and eight archdioceses in the country have each a Cursillo House for men and another for women. About four of them have more than one.

The women's Cursillo was brought to the Philippines by Mrs. Aurora Aquino and Mrs. Rafaela Vera, who stayed a year in Spain to study the Movement firsthand.⁹ In November, 1964 they organized the women's Cursillo in Ciudad Real and, returning to the Philippines, they conducted the first women's Cursillo in Sorsogon in August, 1965. The following month they conducted another women's Cursillo in Cebu and from these first beginnings, the women's Cursillo Movement spread out to other dioceses of the country. Now there is a women's Cursillo House, as well as a men's Cursillo House, in almost every diocese.

Five months after the first women's Cursillo in Sorsogon was organized, the Movement was introduced in the archdiocese of Manila. The first women's Cursillo in the archdiocese was held at the Betania Retreat House in Quezon City in January, 1966.

THE WOMEN'S CURSILLO OF THE MANILA ARCHDIOCESE

As earlier mentioned, the data for this paper is based on a study made two years ago of the Cursillo Movement, the special focus of which was the women's Cursillo in the archdiocese of Manila, over a period of three years from its beginning in January, 1966 through December, 1968. The principal source of information was the records file at the Office of the Cursillo at the Pius XII Catholic Center in Manila. From 1966 to 1968, 78 Cursillo classes were held which graduated a total of 3,597 participants. Data was collected from a 10% stratified random sample of these women-cursillistas' application forms. A 50% sub-sample was taken, to whom were mailed questionnaires. The three-page questionnaire consisted of 12 questions. Eleven of these were open-ended questions, and one was subdivided into nine close-ended questions answerable by multiple choice. The questionnaire was meant to elicit replies not covered by the application forms. It was geared toward finding out some of the activities of women-cursillistas in the archdiocese of Manila after finishing the Cursillo. It was also meant to gain some insight into their attitude toward, and evaluation of, the Movement and fellow-cursillistas.

In the first three years of the women's Cursillo in the archdiocese of Manila, the highest percentage of participants were middle-aged married women, coming from the upper or upper-middle classes of the Greater Manila area. They were also mostly college graduates, professionals, teachers,

⁹ Interview with Mrs. Aurora Aquino, March, 1968. In this connection, Mrs. Aquino also pointed out that no women's Cursillo is started in any diocese unless there are already a thousand men-cursillistas (in the large dioceses) or at least 500 (in the smaller dioceses).

and college instructors.¹⁰ Most of the women stated that they had joined the Cursillo on their own initiative, although a good number attributed their joining to the influence of either their husbands or friends. Personal evaluation of the Cursillo was generally favorable and the expressed desire to have others join a Cursillo was unanimous. At the same time certain "undesirable factors" in the Movement as a whole and "annoying or offensive practices" of some cursillistas were frankly admitted by a significant percentage of the respondents. Attendance at ultreyas after finishing the Cursillo was very poor; and very many did it only in the beginning and then gradually dropped off.

It is to be expected that the early followers of any movement will be drawn from the circle of people closest to the organizers, with later ones coming from other groups. The women's Cursillo in Manila was begun by women of the upper class, by all standards, so that a similar distribution of the first recruits, evident from their residential districts, occupations, professions, and educational attainments, is easily explainable. The continuing trend in the Movement now, however, is the membership's seeping down into the lower strata of society. From this can be deduced that the educational level, occupational distribution, distribution by residential districts, and other variables will also change.

Until August, 1969, when Pentecost House (as the archdiocesan Cursillo House in Antipolo, Rizal is called) was inaugurated, both men and women's Cursillos were held at various available places. It may also be pointed out that the women in this sample were those who actually attended their Cursillo in the archdiocese of Manila. There are hundreds of other cursillistas, both men and women, residing in the archdiocese but who attended their Cursillos "outside," that is, in Cursillo Houses in other dioceses, like Pampanga, Batangas, Bulacan, or Bataan. However, at present, the men's Cursillo and the women's Cursillo of Manila share Pentecost House according to schedule (one women's Cursillo to two men's Cursillos monthly; by December 2-10, 1971, the women's Cursillos should have numbered 136, which is 58 more Cursillo classes since the study was completed in 1968 and with around 2,320 more women-cursillistas added). The two groups also share a common office at the Pius XII Catholic Center in Manila.

THE CURSILLO-PROPER OR "THE" CURSILLO

A carefully recorded participant-observation of Women's Cursillo No. 46 is found in Chapter V of the thesis. This was done by the author with the realization that this is the most valuable contribution of the study, since it will give the necessary insight into what is actually just one stage of the Cursillo Movement but which is generally referred to as "the" Cursillo.

¹⁰ Appendix C of the thesis gives a more detailed tabulation of selected items from the application forms. Replies to the mailed questionnaires are likewise more completely tabulated in Appendix D.

The three-day course distinctly proves that the Cursillo (again, may we reiterate that this actually refers to the Cursillo-proper alone) is a minutely-planned and well-knit sequence of activities that presupposes specified results if properly carried out. Bishop Hervas and his colleagues purposefully made it so. A Cursillo is the synthesis of the most valid psychological, pedagogical, sociological, and ascetico-theological principles, resulting in what he calls "a precise instrument." As in all precise instruments, each part has its place; the instrument is sensitive and cannot, should not, be tampered with.

In a Cursillo every single activity in the sequence has its place and is meant to yield specific results at specified junctures in the sequence. Of course, unlike an inanimate instrument, the Cursillo mechanism involves thinking and "will-ing" human beings, and therefore allowances must be made for possible "mis-operations," so to say. Nevertheless, the fact remains that this precision-of-the-instrument is the biggest factor in the success with which a Cursillo staff is able to elicit from a Cursillo class the precise reactions called for as the course moves on from one day to the next.

It is a well-known psychological principle that the will of man can be effectively trained by implanting a complex of the highest values, systematically arranged and interlinked. Under the most favorable conditions possible, this can develop motives and cultivate daring activity. The more general and challenging the motives are, and the more they are associated with future experiences in life, the more profitable they will be. This principle is the crux of the Cursillo's operational techniques.

Other principles made to operate during a Cursillo are the very personalized approach to a new candidate, both during the Cursillo and in the pre-Cursillo stage, making the person feel important. Here is included the element of delightful play and the cultivation of a spirit of joy and camaraderie among the group. A lot depends on the skill, devotedness, and enthusiasm of a staff; the rector and the spiritual director set the tone of a Cursillo.

It is important to add that a new candidate comes to a Cursillo expecting hard things (since veteran cursillista-friends have leaked out very knowing "tidbits of information"). He comes expecting and desiring a deep "religious experience," a "conversion," like the one he heard of from many of his cursillista-friends. And he is willing to pay the price, joyfully and courageously. The thought of W. I. Thomas' "self-fulfilling prophecy" suggests itself appropriately at this point.

Are the emotions exploited in a Cursillo, as is often criticized? If by that is meant the staff of rollistas and the rector doing the exploiting, the answer is negative. Cases may be singled out as proof, but ordinarily what accounts for occasional hysterias or breakdowns is the weak constitution of the candidate. This is why candidates need to be screened properly. Other abuses in this area which may be true in some places could only be attri-

buted to the wrong, or at least exaggerated, interpretations of the original intentions and directives of the Cursillo founders.

The Cursillo of three days is an intense psychological, emotional (in the normal, human sense), and spiritual experience. To face oneself squarely and "know oneself," much more, accept what one sees in oneself, is not an experience for which every person is ready. It requires sufficient emotional and psychological maturity and stability to be able to go through a Cursillo profitably. The "mechanism" of the Cursillo, as explained earlier, does make use of human emotions to advantage, which is valid. This is true even of the oft-questioned "confrontation" experience. Exploitation of the emotions, however, is far from accurate. All said, this is an area of investigation the details of which are the proper interests of psychologists, especially group dynamicists and perhaps psychiatrists.

Finally, the Cursillo is, of its nature as a religious movement, such an intricate combination of natural and supernatural elements. This may be a matter of mere personal belief, but it cannot be discounted because it is a factor that enters into any attempt at analyzing a movement like the Cursillo. The best that can be done is to say that if "grace builds on nature" and if the Cursillo harnesses the best natural means in psychology, sociology, theology, and pedagogy to accomplish its aims, whatever is not completely or even satisfactorily explained by these sciences, as far as what takes place within a person during a Cursillo is concerned, will have to be attributed to the realm of the supernatural.

THE CURSILLO AS A SOCIAL MOVEMENT

The Cursillo is a social movement, bearing all the essential characteristics of one. It can best be typed as a "mixed movement," as it combines within itself certain characteristics of specific, expressive, revolutionary, religious-reform, and gain-through-community types of social movements. The Cursillo is a post-Vatican II phenomenon, a challenge to the "emerging layman" who is supposedly also an increasingly theologically discerning layman. As a responsible 20th-century layman, the modern Christian (which the Cursillo is meant to eminently help produce) is no longer content with mere pious rituals and devotions nor with a nice little private affair with God. Rather, he wants action and involvement which, he believes, put him in touch with his God as well and, therefore, faithfully "practising religion." This calls attention to the post-Cursillo phase of the Movement. How seriously do cursillistas take it and how do Cursillo leaders manage it?

True enough, as the incumbent national and Manila archdiocesan president of the Cursillo Movement wrote three years ago:

There are now some 180,000 cursillistas throughout the country. Imagine what an impact they can create in our national life, if they get united and live

their Christianity in their professions and public life.¹¹

These words embody both the ideals, the goal, and the challenge for the future of cursillistas and the Cursillo Movement. There are now more than 180,000 cursillistas; they are a very potent force to help solve our social problems in the country, including the building up of a country, a people, a whole future. The validity of the existence of a social movement and its sole guarantee for continued survival lie in the extent to which it meets the felt needs of a group. We need not look long at our Philippine society at the moment to establish priorities among these needs.

There is no doubt that the individual Christian, the individual cursillista, is trying to exert what little influence he can contribute to his social milieu, but as a group—an organization with the number and motive-power that it has within itself—the Cursillo has an awful lot to offer because of its own avowed ideals and objectives, as well as the crying needs of the society wherein the Cursillo hopes to continue to flourish.

¹¹ Carlos J. Valdes, "A 'Think-Tank' To Solve the Nation's Problems," *Action Now*, December 14, 1968, pp. 22-23.