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## **Practical Theology in a Canadian Context**

In August of 1975, about 200 Christian Thinkers from South and North America met in Detroit "to study theology by taking as their starting point their respective historical experiences"<sup>1</sup>. This week-long conference was the brainchild of the Chilean priest Sergio Torres and a group of friends. Among the goals of this dialogue, the North American theologians wanted to learn from the well-known Latin American representatives of liberation theology what meaning this new approach might have in their own theological community. The follow-up to the conference expressed a change in perspective. The goal is no longer to apply liberation theology or to discover the meaning of this approach in the North American context. The goal is rather the "contextualization" of North American theology.

The title of the follow-up clearly indicated this will to articulate a new Christian theology that emerges from our own experience as North Americans. I quote: "The aim of this program is to explore one aspect of the "context" of the reality in which Americans live: the dynamics of power and powerlessness in the present American experience... Conversion to God implies self-knowledge... God is calling American Christians to conversion, and our obedience to the Lord demands a critical evaluation of the uses and abuses of U.S. power"<sup>2</sup>. A new methodological approach was proposed to carry out this program. First, theology will spring from the experience of all Christians and from the voices of the oppressed themselves. Second, this approach will use social sciences and integrate a structural analysis of the American context as part of this theological enterprise. Third, theology will explore a new way of knowing from the praxis; in this perspective, it is better to begin "doing" theology instead of "studying" a theoretical discourse already made elsewhere. The application of this program in diverse context would help to develop different theologies in conversation with each other: a black theology, a Hispanic theology, a Canadian theology, and so on.

In this short paper, I wish to show that this program has been seriously pursued in the Canadian context, so that a new practical theology is going to be developed with certain characteristics closely related to this social environment. This essay presents an analysis of this

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<sup>1</sup> Sergio Torres and John Eagleson, eds., *Theology in the Americas*, (N.Y.: Orbis Books, 1976), p. 3.



emerging theology produced not only by academicians, but also by faith-and-justice Christians and by the Canadian Catholic bishops as well. A Protestant theologian well-known for his concept of contextual theology will help us to describe the components of our context. Since I regard this theology more as a new way of thinking the faith shared widely among sensitive North American Christians than as an enterprise pertaining to any person or group, I will be obliged to make a selection in order to describe its particular character. This is not an easy undertaking. It would have been easier to summarize what has been discussed among specialists in our research-teams, but it seems to me that these epistemological and methodological debates remain often theoretical ideas well-known in other countries<sup>3</sup>. Finally, this description reflects my own experience and social location, especially as Dean of a Departement of Religious Studies in a state university of Quebec, President of the Canadian Society of Theology, associate member of many associations or research-groups in practical theology and theological advisor of my Catholic bishop. In the second part of the paper, I wish to explore the components of our context, to point out the tasks of practical theology for the future of the Church and to raise some questions on the challenges of this theology made in a Canadian context.

# **1. Aspects of an emerging Canadian practical theology.**

The foregoing considerations indicate that we mean here by "practical theology" this Christian praxis oriented to action, activation of the

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<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 434.

<sup>3</sup> Among the publications of the Groupe de recherche études pastorales/Group for Research in Pastoral Studies, see Mark Pelchat, ed., *Les approches empiriques en théologie/Empirical Approaches in Theology* (Québec: Faculté de théologie, Université Laval, 1992); Camil Ménard, ed., *L'intervention pastorale. Recherches et analyses* (Montréal: Fides, 1991); Jacques Gagné, ed., *La Prospective en pastorale/The Exploration of the future in Pastoral Studies* (Québec: Faculté de théologie, 1991); A. Visscher, ed., *Le études pastorales à l'université /Pastoral Studies in a University Setting* (Ottawa: Presses de l'Université d'Ottawa, 1990); Jean-Guy Nadeau, ed. *L'interprétation, un défi de l'action pastorale* (Montréal: Fides, 1989); Marcel Viau et Raymond Brodeur, eds., *Les études pastorales: une discipline scientifique/Pastoral Studies as a Scientific Discipline* (Québec: Université Laval, 1987); Roland Chagnon et Marcel Viau, eds., *Les études pastorales: pratiques et communautés* (Montréal: Bellarmin, 1986). The review *Pastoral Sciences/Sciences pastorales* (Ottawa, St-Paul University) has published two other works of this group (Vol. 6- 1987 and vol. 3- 1984).



Church and social transformation<sup>4</sup>. The recovery of a more vital relationship between theological reflection and Christian life in the world has become increasingly common in recent years<sup>5</sup>. Calls for recovering such an understanding of theology have previously surfaced within a variety of theological context but have received in America an eager interest that has literally sparked a huge theological creation. Latin-American theology is now one of the best known in the world. It is time to realize that North-American theologians have also accomplished an original work around a largely shared set of concerns. In order to describe as completely as possible the character of this Christian praxis, I will focus on five main aspects<sup>6</sup>.

**1.1 A distinctive American Catholic theology is something very young.** It has taken on contours that did not exist thirty years ago when it was still a mere outgrowth of European theology. It is in fact a post-conciliar development. Prior to Vatican II, theologians teaching in the seminaries had received their education in Italy or France; they therefore used neo-scholastic manuals largely produced in Europe. As secular priests or members of a religious order, they taught in obedience to their vow an anxious and defensive theology that could not face the questions which modernism, with its liberal criticism and its evolutionary understanding of the history of dogma, had put to the Church at the beginning of this century. A real change began when the Council was still in session and when the old manuals were replaced by loose-leaf notebooks showing that theological thinking must be creative<sup>7</sup>. At that time, theology as systematic discourse was not related to historical Christian sources as it was in Europe, nor to American culture. It seemed formulated in all ages and all places. The new theology was open to modern culture, to the historical critical method, to ecumenism and to self-criticism inside the Church. At that point American Catholic theologians began to think and write for their students and a new public of educated Christians. For these theo-

<sup>4</sup> For the notion "practical theology" and its distinction from and relation to fundamental and systematic theology, cf. David Tracy, *"The Foundations of Practical Theology"*, in Don S. Browning, ed., *Practical Theology. The Emerging Field in Theology, Church and World* (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1983), pp. 61-82.

<sup>5</sup> See the excellent historical survey of Randy L. Maddox, "The Recovery of Theology as a Practical Discipline", in *Theological Studies* 51:4 (1990), pp. 650-672.

<sup>6</sup> Since nothing has been written on this particular topic, it has been helpful to use Gregory Baum's report, "The Social Context of American Catholic Theology", in *Theology and Society* (New York/Mahwah: Paulist Press, 1987), pp. 181-206.

<sup>7</sup> See P. Partikian and L. Rousseau, *La théologie québécoise contemporaine (1940-1973): Genèse de ses producteurs et transformations de son discours* (Québec:



logians, it is clear that the last council was a starting point and a great moment of discontinuity in the Church's tradition. They have kept in mind the need for historical reflection and this obligation to change the Church's teaching even if Roman authority does not yet agree. Progressive thinking is a characteristic of new American theology, above all in the field of moral theology<sup>8</sup>.

**1.2** This new theology is a work of the whole people of God. An **eclesial** theology has replaced the old ecclesiastical discourse. Among American theologians, there are "family resemblances", and one of them is the fact that their work has been pursued in harmony with the ordinary teaching of the Church. How can we explain this situation? Because Canadian Catholic bishops are not great theologians, but good pastors who soon realised that their people were no longer participating in the Church<sup>9</sup>. In 1965, a young theologian launched a brilliant book deploring a lack of prophetism<sup>10</sup>; he argued that life in the Church was an exercise in fidelity to the Spirit who provides each Christian with critical guidance for building a new society. A second evangelisation was necessary to exercise this prophetic mission<sup>11</sup>. In 1968, the Quebec bishops appointed a research commission to examine the contemporary crisis and to make recommendations for new and more appropriate pastoral policies. The final report (1972) retained two principles: a) secularization is an irreversible process; and b) rupture and fidelity are needed to define the new identity of the Church. The new project purported to be faithful to the heritage and would therefore have three characteristics: to serve the world in dialogue with society, to play a prophetic role in the transformation of society and to develop more participation in the structures of the

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Université Laval, Cahiers de l'Institut Supérieur des Sciences Humaines, no. 8, 1977).

- <sup>8</sup> Charles Curran would be a good illustration showing that progressive thinking in moral theology is not yet accepted by Roman theologians. Father André Guindon (St-Paul University, Ottawa) is an other scholar who has had recent problems. Fortunately, he is being strongly supported by theologians and bishops and his case will be treated otherwise.
- <sup>9</sup> The review *Sociologie et Sociétés* has an excellent analysis of this evolution of Catholicism in Canadian Society (Catholicisme et société contemporaine/ Catholicism and Contemporary Society XXII:2 (1990)). See also Gregory Baum, "Catholicism and Secularization in Quebec", in *The Church in Quebec* (Ottawa: Novalis, 1991), pp. 15-47.
- <sup>10</sup> Jacques Grand'Maison, *Crise de prophétisme* (Montreal: L'Action catholique canadienne, 1965). This major intellectual figure in the Quebec Church has for thirty years been developing a practical theology that deserves international attention. See Gregory Baum "Jacques Grand'Maison: Prophecy and Politics", in *The Church in Quebec* (Ottawa: Novalis 1991), pp. 91-107.



Church<sup>12</sup>. The new theology has been built in that perspective of Christian stewardship and critical stance in regard to modern society.

**1.3** This concern of Canadian theology for the world explains its **strong public presence**. Even if Sunday attendance is low in the churches, significant controversies in the Church are reported and discussed in the media. Theologians also have great influence in public debates, on political, economical or cultural issues. For instance, a research-team in practical theology has recently conducted a five-year-research-action in six regions of the province of Quebec. They wanted to know if — and how — the experience of faith could be lived in this secularized world. They listened to hundreds of people. They have published four books so far that have generated widespread interest<sup>13</sup>. Social workers, judges, school boards, and many other groups continue to invite them for conferences and discussions. Another good illustration of this publicness is given by the pastoral documents published over the years by the Canadian Catholic bishops. Their "Ethical Reflections on the Economic Crises" (1983), created through dialogues with church groups and centers in Canada, has sparked considerable debate in the newspapers and even in political milieux<sup>14</sup>. A research project on this subject has identified two hundred and forty-eight articles or letters discussing this document in the six largest newspapers in the country<sup>15</sup>. A special commission and many conferences have since been organized to study this document which calls "the option for the poor" the first principle of a Christian reflection and praxis to solve the economic crisis. This exceptional impact shows that Canadian theology has a strong public presence even on economical and political issues.

**1.4** Another mark of this Canadian theology is its **pluralistic character**. It has developed in many different kinds of institutions: semi-

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<sup>11</sup> Jacques Grand'Maison, *La seconde évangélisation* (Montréal: Fides, 1973)

<sup>12</sup> On this important report, see Gregory Baum, "The Report Dumont: Democratizing the Catholic Church", in *The Church in Quebec* (Ottawa: Novalis, 1991) pp. 49-65. This six-volume report had the suggestive title: *L'Eglise du Québec: un héritage, un projet* (Montreal: Fides, 1971-1972).

<sup>13</sup> Jacques Grand'Maison, ed., *Le drame spirituel des adolescents. Profils sociaux et religieux* (Montreal: Fides, 1992); *Vers un nouveau conflit des générations. Profils sociaux et religieux des 20-35 ans* (Montreal: Fides, 1992);

<sup>14</sup> On the social theory produced by the Canadian Catholic bishops, see Gregory Baum, "Toward a Canadian Catholic Social Theory", in *Theology and Society* (New York/Mahwah: Paulist Press, 1987), pp. 66-97.



naries, faculties of theology, départements of religious studies at secular colleges and universities, Protestant divinity schools, pastoral institutes and so on. New disciplines have been created, with curious names like ethicology, religiology, praxeology<sup>16</sup>. Theology is now taught by men and women who are mainly lay people working in institutions no longer under the control of ecclesiastical authorities. This freedom of thought allows a new dialogue with the social sciences and humanities and with other Christian denominations. Interreligious dialogue is an important part of this pluralism that raises questions on crucial issues like Christian identity, the universality of salvation in Jesus and the future of Christianity in the modern world<sup>17</sup>. The pluralism of Canadian theology includes many practitioners who are identified with marginalized groups: women, native people, Christian-Marxist networks, gays and lesbians struggling for their social recognition. Pluralism is not seen as liberal relativism, but as a new way of serving the truth that is always seen perspectively. Because of this pluralistic character, some Catholic bishops have reorganized major seminaries where "orthodox" theology for future priests and teachers is taught.

1.5 Finally, I wish add that Canadian practical theology has been **strategic** with relative efficiency in the field of education and evangelization. It was the case in the 1970's, when Catholicism had to face the rapid secularization of modern Canadian society. Practical theologians organized authentic communicational activity in the Church in order not only to fix the purposes but also to build the strategies and tools of a second evangelization. Many programs in the field of pastoral studies were created at that moment to provide new formation about learning from the Christian praxis<sup>18</sup>. Ten years later, critical evaluation showed that the Catholic church was still "between Temple and exile".

15 Marcel Lefebvre, "Une intervention pastorale particulière des évêques du Canada sur l'économie", in Camil Ménard, ed., *L'intervention pastorale. Recherches et analyses* (Montreal: Fides, 1991), pp. 143-183.

16 See Louis Rousseau et Michel Despland, *Les sciences religieuses au Québec depuis 1972* (Waterloo: Wilfrid Laurier University Press, 1988). And Marcel Viau, *Introduction aux études pastorales* (Montreal: Editions Paulines, 1987), in particular pp. 81-101.

17 Such issues have been studied in the last conventions of the Canadian *Society of Theology*. Among others, see Jean-Claude Petit et Jean-Claude Breton, eds., *Le christianisme d'ici a-t-il un avenir?* (Montreal: Fides, 1988); *Enseigner la foi ou former des croyants?* (Montreal: Fides, 1989); *Jésus: Christ universel?* (Montreal: Fides, 1990); *Questions de liberté* (Montreal: Fides, 1991); *Seul ou avec les autres? Le salut chrétien à liberté* (Montreal: Fides, 1992); Camil Ménard et Florent Ville-neuve, eds., *Le pluralisme culturel et ses enjeux* (Montreal: Fides, 1993).

18 See Guy Lapointe, ed., *Crise des prophétisme. Hier et aujourd'hui. L'itinéraire d'un peuple dans l'oeuvre des Jacques Grand'Maison* (Montreal: Fides, 1990).



The old institution had not yet been able to leave its doctrinal security and its concern for sacramental activities<sup>19</sup>. The expected democratization of the ecclesial structures was a failure. In the 1990's, three important pieces of research have revealed a "black hole" in the galaxy of faith<sup>20</sup>. People outside the Church's influence are living in a distinct world. They have created new "language games" to express their experience of human faith, combining diverse philosophical and religious ideas. While many bishops are now tempted to "risk the future" with a minority strategy of education, some practical theologians continue to claim that the mission of the Church is to evangelize at large and to be evangelized by a popular Church. The future of Christianity depends on the choices that will be made in the next months. In the political sphere, Canadian theology has always been concerned with economical and constitutional debates. Protestant theology in the 1930's had a clear link with the Socialist party of Saskatchewan<sup>21</sup>. The Catholic Church has a close relation with the National-Socialism of the Province of Quebec<sup>22</sup>. Unfortunately, it has never been possible for progressive Catholics and Protestants to make a common strategic choice for a Canadian socialist system as did Latin-American theologians. Their prophetic vision aiming at the transcendence of capitalism was not related to what McCann and Strain call some "middle axioms" capable of guiding a concrete Christian social praxis<sup>23</sup>. This lack of strategical consensus explains, in my opinion, why Canadian practical theology has never been a collective enterprise and remains for that reason without great impact on the transformation of our society.

19 Fernand Dumont, Jacques Grand'Maison, Jacques Racine, Paul Tremblay, *Situation et avenir du catholicisme québécois*. Tome 1. Milieux et témoignages. Tome 2. Entre le temple et l'exil (Montreal: Leméac, 1982).

20 In addition to Grand'Maison's research quoted note 13, two other works are useful for understanding the present religious situation. See Raimond Lemieux et Micheline Milot, eds., *Les croyances des québécois* (Québec: Université Laval, 1992) and Reginald W. Bibby, *Fragmented Gods: The Poverty and Potential of Religion in Canada* (Toronto: Irwin Publ. 1987).

21 See Gregory Baum, "Political Theology in Canada", in *The Social Imperative* (New York/Ramsey/Toronto: Paulist Press, 1979), pp. 70-98.

22 See Raymond Lemieux, "Le catholicisme québécois: une question de culture/ Quebec Catholicism: a Cultural Question", in *Sociologie et Sociétés* XXII:2 (1990), pp. 145-163.

23 Dennis P. McCann/Charles R. Strain, *Polity and Praxis. A Program for American Practical Theology* (Minneapolis: Winston Press, 1985), pp. 145-177. See also John A. Colemann, *An American Strategic Theology* (New York/Ramsey: Paulist Press, 1982).



## 2. The Canadian Context. Tasks of a Contextual Theology.

In the second part of the paper, I want to turn briefly to the context in which we have to carry out theological reflection on Christian praxis. I suppose that it is not necessary here to define contextuality nor to develop the meaning of contextuality in Christian thought. With the Detroit conference, we shall assume that the aim of this exploration is to come to a correct collective understanding of our historical situation<sup>24</sup>. How, as Christians, can we assess the contemporary North American and Canadian social situation?

### 2.1 The Canadian context.

The question of the circumscription of this context is much more difficult at this time because of our international consciousness. Ecologists have demonstrated to our technological society the terrible connectedness of things. Moreover, globalization in economic exchanges has created a planetary market which increases interdependence between the nations. The unemployed, low-income groups, welfare recipients, immigrants and senior citizens are victims of social injustice common to all modern society. For the sake of this paper, what is important about theological reflections within our social, historical and cultural context are some attributes which, in fact, characterize the "New World" in itself. By the way, is it not surprising that a culture almost 500 years old still clings to the idea of its newness? What is the clue to this mystery?

In a penetrating analysis of our world, the Protestant theologian Douglas Hall argues that a dominant culture has evolved in **North America as a whole**, thus allowing a first larger analysis. According to him, a contextual theology done in the spirit of the prophetic tradition is a *theologia crucis*. Its point of departure is the brokenness of the human spirit and the human community. Its aim is to understand the culture of the milieu in terms of the forces that make it inhuman and call for rescue and transformation. Without ceasing to be a personal and pastoral theology, "the theology of the cross becomes today", he says, "of necessity, a political theology"<sup>25</sup>. It therefore generates solidarity with the prophetic voices that reveal the ambiguity of the dominant culture.

<sup>24</sup> S. Torres and J. Eagleson, eds, *Theology in the Americas* (New York: Orbis Books, 1976), p. 434.

<sup>25</sup> Douglas John Hall, *Thinking the Faith, Christian Theology in a North American Context* (Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1989), p. 32. For an introduction to Hall's theology, see Gregory Baum, "Douglas Hall: Contextual Theology", in *The Church in Quebec* (Ottawa: Novalis, 1991), pp. 109-133.



What then is the ambiguity of dominant American culture? The culture of North America belongs to the first world defined by technological reason, industrialization and strong confidence in inevitable progress. In Europe, Hall argues, the first World War created a violent change. The failure of the modern vision was soon recognized. But here modern faith in progress remains undisturbed. The "American Dream" is our continental heritage. We are **prisoners of optimism** and this success-oriented culture has become the religion of progress. Following the church historian Sidney Mead, Hall proposes the thesis that Protestantism and Americanism have been amalgamated in the formation of this highly positive view of human experience. Prophetic voices in Christianity were never strong enough to shake the foundations of this spirit. Consequently, this cultural optimism has developed a form of false self-consciousness. The specific darkness that pertains to our social situation is still hidden. Explosions of violence among Black people, the increasing gap between rich and poor, terrible diseases like AIDS are some symptoms of the malaise of our society. As an organism breaks down, so society breaks down. The denial of death cannot solve this problem.

The refusal of American culture to face up to the collapse of its entire system of values has destructive social consequences. Hall distinguishes three types of responses for a society in despair<sup>26</sup>. One can abandon hope and adopt a pervasive cynicism, whose familiar garb is shallow hedonism. However, silent majority of people will prefer the second way: subconscious repression of despair and the nurturing of false hope. The third choice is the possibility of being truthful about what is happening in the historical situation. Fortunately, Hall discerns in our contemporary experience growing but chaotic forms of disillusionment that need a reasoned reflection upon its cause and its meaning. Therefore, a truly contextual theology will be a critical one. It has "the vocation of exploring the failure of the illusion that is passing, and of articulating a new expression of the faith which can absorb this failure and point towards a new symbolic transcendence of it"<sup>27</sup>. In other words, the gospel of failure, which the churches have to preach at the present time, remains good news, because God's redemptive action is still at work in our world. Practical theologians must be close to these events and tell their story in order to create new hope.

In his discussion of the **critical components** of the North American context, Hall concentrates his attention of seven especially crucial

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<sup>26</sup> *Thinking the Faith*, pp. 172-177.

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 195.



areas. Two issues seem to me very significant<sup>28</sup>. The first is the new position of Christianity in our culture. Few Christians have realized that we are living at the end of the Constantinian era and that the Church is now a diaspora, as predicted by Karl Rahner thirty years ago. Religious pluralism makes the end of a monopolistic situation evident; consequently, the Christian mission in the world must be re-considered. The second component of particular significance is what ecologists call the rebellion of nature. In Canada, people are very concerned with the disappearance of species, the construction of huge hydro-electric dams that change all the natural system in northern Quebec and the logging of centuries-old trees on Vancouver Island. A new respect for "Mother Earth" forces a change in Christian attitudes toward this world.

Hall's understanding of the Canadian situation is very relevant. He distinguishes two salient features of this reality "The first is the tenuousness and the extreme vulnerability of our whole experiment in nationhood. The second is our proximity to one of the great superpowers, the United States of America"<sup>29</sup>. A people living on the edge of an empire is in a provocative position. Is it possible to share 4,000 miles of undefended border with a giant without being greatly attracted by its models? Canadians feel envy, resentment and dependency when they look at their powerful neighbour. They are tempted by the "Florida sun": by the culture of success and optimism, by the cult of body and entertainers, by the ideology of technical rationality capable of solving all the problems of humanity. In contrast, Canadians listening to the prophetic voice of their cold landscape are called upon to treasure their "winter light": their tradition of modesty and freedom, their role of mediation between the United States and other countries, their international role as peacekeepers. While there is suffering and poverty in our country, Canadian society cannot be compared with Third World oppression. But Canadians can easily understand all the people living under the influence and the power of U.S. imperialism. We feel more humiliation than oppression<sup>30</sup>. We have to live with economic decisions made outside the country which have direct consequences on our political and social existence. Canadians are then called upon to reinforce their independence and to develop prophetic wisdom in the concert of nations.

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<sup>28</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 197-237.

<sup>29</sup> "A View from the Edge of Empire: Prophetic Faith and the Crises of our Time", in *ARC: The Journal of the Faculty of Religious Studies*. McGill University, vol. 20 (1992), p. 21.

<sup>30</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 31-33.



## 2.2 *Task of a contextual theology.*

To conclude this paper, I will emphasize the task of Canadian contextual theology. Four theses can summarize this proposition.

**2.2.1** The fundamental issue we have to face is the possibility of faith as such. The younger generation in North America realise for the first time in our historical situation that their social and economic conditions will be less than what their parents enjoyed. It is hard to believe when the future seems lost in the night. Theologians have to remember our strong tradition of survival in a cold climate and to propose a positive vision of collective existence built on solidarity.

**2.2.2** Thinking the content of Christian faith has been neglected in our theology. It is clear that the metaphysical thought in which Christian doctrine was organized is no longer understood. The triune God, the person of Jesus and his salvation, the Church and the ministry, all the doctrine must be rethought in post-modern culture. Theologians have to leave the security of the past and to risk a new interpretation of Christian vision capable of inspiring human existence in the darkness.

**2.2.3** Theological enterprise has to use the humanities, but above all the social sciences, to explain the world. Practical theology in a Canadian context is tempted nowadays to develop a professional approach without real confrontation with other interpretations of religious transformations. In fact, critical sociology is less than before used to train the students. Practical theology can easily become ideological discourse<sup>31</sup>. We shall have to clarify this methodological issue in our academic discussions.

**2.2.4** Contextual theology is a Christian praxis that needs strong commitment in a particular field. Whatever this field may be, theology in the Canadian context must be based on preferential solidarity with the victims of this society. This strategic choice seems to me to be the future of the Church and a chance for practical theology to take part in the salvation of freedom in North America<sup>32</sup>.

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<sup>31</sup> The danger of practical theology falling into ideological discourse has been strongly emphasized by a well-known sociologist at St-Paul University. See Paul-André Turcotte, "Sociologie, théologie et pastorale. Conditions institutionnelles et pratiques", in *Théologiques: Revue de la Faculté de théologie de l'Université de Montréal*, vol 1/1 (1993), pp. 33-54.

<sup>32</sup> For further considerations, see Camil Ménard, "L'urgence d'une théologie pratique nord-américaine comme théorie critique de l'agir chrétien au service de la société", in Jean-Claude Petit et Jean-Claude Breton, eds., *Seul ou avec les autres? Le salut chrétien à l'épreuve de la solidarité* (Montréal: Fides, 1992), pp. 297-318.