



Meredith Alister McIntyre

MR. CHANCELLOR, I present to you Meredith Alister McIntyre, economist, development planner, public servant and scholar. Indeed, your receiving him this night, Mr. Chancellor, could very well be seen as a rescue operation from the somewhat recent defection by the said Mr. McIntyre from this very community of scholars to another place where, according to tradition, things are said to get done. We welcome him back into the fold not so much as a prodigal but as someone whom many would wish to see acknowledged especially since he is modest enough to shy away from honorific awards, a trait that was evident even when he served faithfully and with distinction as Lecturer in Economics at the Mona Campus of the University of the West Indies from 1960, as Senior Lecturer and Chairman of the Division of Social Sciences at St. Augustine from 1964 and as Director of the Institute of Social and Economic Research from 1967.

He had of course prepared himself for all his pains by studying at the Grenada Boys' Secondary School in pre-revolutionary days. Then he journeyed to the London School of Economics and Political Science in that institution's seeming post-revolutionary days. Oxford was the next stop at a time when that sanctuary of lost causes was clearly between revolutions.

The spirit of change never did elude him for long, however, for he was to catch up with it on his return to the Caribbean. But, rather than becoming overpowered by it, he absorbed and channelled it into constructive endeavours in his characteristically self-effacing way by giving guidance, leadership and a generosity of spirit to the mood of change which descended on the Caribbean in the wake of the dissolution of the West Indies Federation and the advent of Independence in the early 1960's to Jamaica, Trinidad and Tobago, Guyana and Barbados — in that batting order, an allusion Alister McIntyre who was somewhat of a cricketer should readily apprehend. His deep and clear understanding of the dynamics of post-colonial politics in the Caribbean and of the need for indigenous development strategies in underfed, underhoused, underemployed, poor countries informed his ready support for that now historic corps of Caribbean-integrationist scholars who inhabited the Mona Campus in the middle 1960's as well as reinforced his conviction that the Caribbean's control and maximisation of its own natural resources is a *sine qua non* of the emergence of the territories of the region into a community of truly independent states. But it is his deep knowledge, sober realism, and faith in the

region's capabilities that have made him see the possibility of constructive growth and development where others see decline and disintegration; cooperation where others see confrontation; global interdependence where others see hegemonic polarisation. He was to become a much sought after resource person in the great debate about the future of the world in what is commonly known as the North-South Dialogue and the movement for a New International Economic Order.

This is no surprise to friends and colleagues in these parts who worked with him and knew him well. For Alister McIntyre's approach to the discipline of economics was conditioned by a consciousness of the Caribbean as a vibrant and active part of an international system — a sub-system which, however defined and whatever the admitted dominance of the externalities, could exercise economic choice to its advantage. The function of the economist — indeed of the social scientist — was therefore to use the discipline to discover and explain this possible range of choice.

This view, which he transmitted to his students, later contributed significantly to the development of the research content of the Faculty of Social Sciences. At a time when the possibilities open to small countries such as ours, were according to the tradition of the discipline, defined purely from the point of view of international events, he was aware of and used the practice of economics to explore the scope for positive domestic economic policy.

He was ably fitted for this. His exceptional understanding of the tools and the methodology of economics, his consciousness of Caribbean social, economic and political realities, and his awareness of the international implications, allowed him the facility to explore new dimensions of Caribbean economic policy. While he was thoroughly versed in the more abstract aspects of economic theory he had little patience with abstractions unless they could be used to solve a problem and shed new light on an issue.

Small wonder that the wider world, mad as it is, should seek out the sane among the saints. An impressive list of distinguished consultancies in the Commonwealth, in the Inter-American system and in the United Nations body were but aspects of a more general life of dedicated public service with the generous and tireless offer of his academic skills and rare sensibility. His writings betray his early vision that patterns of trade and commercial policy, rather than being a 'given', could be directed to the economic advantage of the Caribbean countries. He saw before many others did, the diversification of trade strategy as a means of lessening Caribbean dependence. That he is now the director of the Commodities Division of the UNCTAD Secretariat is therefore the well-deserved recognition of a Third World mind and force which is crucial to the solution of development problems in the last quarter of the twentieth century. That he is a product of the Caribbean and a former University of the West Indies teacher to whom the University campus must have provided laboratory opportunities, are sufficient cause for celebration.

In celebration of the scholarly attainments of Meredith Alister McIntyre; in celebration of his sterling record of public service; in celebration of the international recognition which these have brought to him; in celebration of his personal gifts of saintly sanity, strength of character, integrity and a spirit of generosity; I have great pleasure in calling on you, Mr. Chancellor, to receive back into the fellowship of the University of the West Indies scholars: Meredith Alister McIntyre with the degree of Doctor of Laws *honoris causa*.