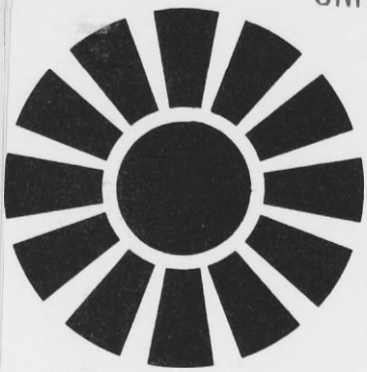

BAPTIST-CATHOLIC
REGIONAL CONFERENCE

THE CHURCH INSIDE AND OUT

MARRIOTTSVILLE, MARYLAND
FEBRUARY 4-6, 1974

SPONSORED BY
HOME MISSION BOARD
DEPARTMENT OF INTERFAITH WITNESS
AND
BISHOPS' COMMITTEE FOR ECUMENICAL
AND INTERRELIGIOUS AFFAIRS
FOR
NATIONAL CONFERENCE OF CATHOLIC BISHOPS

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1974

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Foreword

Over ninety Southern Baptists and Roman Catholics met for a Regional Conference in the serenity of the Bon Secours Sisters' Spiritual Center, Marriottsville, Maryland from February 4-6, 1974. This was the third in a series of sectional gatherings which afford an opportunity to exchange views between the two Christian groups. For three days delegates from northeastern states dialogued, prayed and conversed over the theme "The Church Always In Need of Reform."

As a result of this conference another forward step has been taken in Southern Baptist/Roman Catholic mutual understanding and reconciliation.

We are indebted to all who attended, but, particularly, to those who labored to plan and present the conference, especially, Dr. M. Thomas Starkes, Dr. C. Brownlow Hastings, Most Rev. Joseph Durick, Rev. Robert C. Berson, Rev. John F. Hotchkin, Rev. John Peter Sheehan and the Sisters of Bon Secours.

Contents

SECTION I

OPENING REMARKS

Opening Remarks

BISHOP JOSEPH A. DURICK

My dearly beloved brothers and sisters of our Southern Baptist-Roman Catholic Conference traditions—Clergy and Lay—Friends all in God:

It affords me genuine pleasure and privilege to bring cordial greetings to you this evening as we open the third Baptist-Catholic Regional Conference. To do that, may I relate in my remarks this evening an answer given me by a young girl in Tuscaloosa, Ala., when we were discussing at a Confirmation the Baptism of Jesus. The usual answer given was the translation from the old Douay Version and concluded with the voice from heaven saying: "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." But this young lady was different. She said: Bishop—when Jesus was baptized, a voice from heaven said: "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am mighty proud." (Matt. 3:17).

Thus—in the language of the Southland, I am "mighty proud," as Episcopal Liaison of the American Bishops, to greet you, to thank you for coming, to make new acquaintances and renew valued friendship of many from the Home Mission Board, Department of Interfaith Witness—especially Dr. Thomas Starkes and Dr. C. B. Hastings.

As you know, this is the third in our series of conferences. Like Jesus' word in Luke 4, critics of our first interchange in Daytona Beach, viewed us as less than "prophets gaining acceptance." But we worked through that first pioneering effort—really humbled at the marvel of the Spirit of Jesus manifesting Himself through each group. Like the Church bulletin which expressed the pastor's improvement in health: God is good—Fr. O'Toole is better—so we thought Daytona Beach was good—and in the open—we thought Houston was better and in greater openness.

Thus we are assembled this evening for sacred purpose, resolved as Paul says in Colossians: to "do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through Him" (Col. 3:17). Sliding down the scale a bit to the book according to PEANUTS, I noted a simple message there in similar vein which showed Lucy screaming in the first three frames: She's saying: "It's my life—I'll do whatever I want with it . . . I'm my own person and I'm the one who has to live it." Then in the fourth

frame, Lucy quietens down—and adds humbly—very humbly in fact for Lucy—WITH A LITTLE HELP FROM OTHERS.

Because our theme is one of the most challenging of all our conferences thus far, may we all prayerfully and productively be helpful to each other in our discussions of THE CHURCH INSIDE AND OUT. It goes without saying we all join in Common Cause in invoking the Heavenly Father to bless our efforts, to deepen understanding of our role in the Kingdom, to intensify our determination to live—in inward renewal and reconciliation—our great religious heritages.

Finally—as we look for some surcease in world turmoil, and mourn the loss of domestic tranquility in our great Country, might I humbly suggest that we could turn to the Book of Nehemiah for some scripturally motivating similarities to world conditions today.

Along these lines, I have grouped Ezra and Nehemiah because the accomplishments of these men were quite complementary; each helped to make it possible for Judaism to hold fast to its self-identity during the trying times of the Restoration.

For instance, Ezra the priest-scribe, is the first to mention Water Gate (Nehemiah 8:1)—just as Ezra as a great religious reformer succeeded in establishing the Torah as the constitution of the returned Community. Thus—in our 20th Century, we too must do our part to restore as the Spirit moves us the love of God and fellow-man to suffering humanity; to the people asking us to help them as they work and pray for a return to individual and national moral integrity in this Country. For I believe with Walter Lippmann, who once remarked and still reiterates in his latter years—that the great issues of life and politics in a prosperous nation like ours—ARE NOT MATERIAL—BUT SPIRITUAL . . . "for those in high places," he says, "are the custodians of the beliefs it cherishes, of its permanent hopes, of the faith which makes a nation out of a mere aggregation of individuals."

May we draw inspiration, too, from the great Nehemiah. He was a man of action; he rebuilt the walls of Jerusalem; he introduced critical administrative reforms. His "generous dedication of talents to the service of God and of God's people remains an example of undiminishied force for laymen today."

In the next several days of Conference, let us in our discussions about Jesus and the Kingdom—be mindful of our common vocation to contribute continually to a more effective community of peace, justice and love—that with open hearts—and open heart surgery occasionally (if necessary) disabuse us from our ennui, our ignorances, our stereo-

types—that in clarity and charity—we may remember and apply the beautiful words of the Ezra-Nehemiah message to the people: "Today is holy to the Lord your God. . . . Do not be saddened this day, for rejoicing in the Lord must be your strength."

Thank you and God bless you.

Opening Remarks

DR. M. THOMAS STARKES

GREETINGS—Bishop Durick, Father Hotchkin, and Dr. Belew.

We come here to make history—two great bodies—in the new shape of ecumenics, in the midst of a crisis in American and world values.

We can respond by covering—or imagining a conspiracy—by branding all who have different ideas, different concepts and different ethical mores as traitors, or the goats relegated to punishment or oblivion. This reactionary view always wishes to feed the correct doctrine into other people. This highly intellectualistic view of the individual does not—and, indeed, cannot—recognize an other self as a creative mind or unique person.

But there is another option: one of open dialog—not duelogue.

Michael Novak, in *American Philosophy and the Future,* points out that too often we do not perform authentic dialogue, even with a group of friends, rather we perform a duelogue in which we are primarily interested in shooting down one another. Instead of listening, we are busy reloading. The only realities exchanged are volleys.

The youth counterculture in 1974 is trying to tell us something about why we are here.

The critical issue for the group of angry yet patient generation—with which I am quite familiar—is the transformation of culture—a new vision.

Underlying their experimentation of dress, drugs or rock—is a positive commitment to a new style of living that evidences what it means to *be*.

And to *be* authentically human, joyously alive *and* personally fulfilled.

We come here tonight as representatives of two great traditions—but also as representing God's effort to have us be the church in the late 1970's.

Are we guilty as charged?

As part of an institution so much in trouble, not because it is controversial, but because it is *boring,* and failing to speak to genuinely human issues.

We are unable to ignore what the charismatics are saying—even if it is sometimes in tongues.

They say, "We want and deserve joy—and direct personal experience—and celebration."

But unlike the charismatics—may we mix our message, please, with challenge to *be* the church in the world.—

So we come as bureaucrats set for a high-level conference.

Will we come laden with inherent superficiality, confusing activity and numbers with growth of faith and connection.

Will we be so self-sufficient that we forget to be human while being experts?

No?

We will be honest enough to admit that within the sphere of denominational fellowship we feel strongly the compulsion to conform to the expected standards of that group—and in ecumenical gathering the pressures are there to be more responsive to other Christian bodies.

So here in the next few hours, we will be open enough to be true to our past and expectant of the future.

We will face the question of how or whether we should and can transcend the forms of our institutional churches to become the church obedient to the workings of God in the world.

So, we gather among friends, such as Bishop Joseph Durick, Father Bob Berson, Father Pete Sheehan, and we celebrate that God is here. We come to be and to change and to think—and perchance to dream.

These are my greetings.

Here are my hopes: that one day Christians' words will not linger for acceptance in the wings, but be center stage—

"By this shall all men know that you are my disciples—if you have love one to another. . . ."

SECTION II

ADDRESSES

The Dialogical Process

REV. EDWARD J. KILMARTIN, S.J.

INTRODUCTION

This paper is concerned with the *doctrinal dialogue* between *representatives* of Christian denominations. It is divided into four parts. First of all we will discuss, in a general way, the nature, aim and method of dialogue. This section will include a consideration of the origin of the modern concern for dialogue both inside and outside the churches. Secondly, some remarks will be made on the problem of representation of Christian denominations. The existence of intellectual pluralism within churches prompts us to ask: Who do representatives represent? Thirdly we will undertake a consideration of the possibility and legitimacy of doctrinal dialogue between world views which are really or at least apparently essentially opposed. These general observations are especially applicable to the dialogue between Christians and non-believers but also are useful for the question of dialogue between churches which accept the possibility of heresy. Finally, a presentation will be made of the official Roman Catholic viewpoint concerning Ecumenical Dialogue on doctrinal issues between representatives of Christian churches.

I. *DIALOGUE: GENERAL CONSIDERATIONS:*

In general, what is the nature, aim, conditions and method of dialogue? To what can we attribute the modern concern for dialogue everywhere in the world? These are the questions I would like to discuss in this section.

1. *The Nature of Dialogue.*

The word *diálogos* refers to a speaking together with the accent on togetherness and communication by persons of themselves to one another: *Diá - logos:* through a thought, a word which is directed toward a community of thought. The result of properly conducted dialogue should be a better mutual grasp of the truth, better relations between the participants (respect and mutual trust.)

2. *The Aim of Dialogue.*

Dialogue is an indispensable tool for those who are attempting to

broaden areas of mutual agreement on the level of simple human relations, quest for the truth or collaboration in attaining ends of a practical nature.

Depending on the particular goal of a dialogue, a different emphasis will be found. Here we can distinguish three types of dialogue:

1) the encounter aimed at overcoming mutual prejudice and establishing mutual esteem and respect;

2) the encounter aimed at seeking the truth of positions held by the interlocutors and so attaining a deeper grasp of the truth and fuller knowledge of reality;

3) the encounter aimed at collaboration toward fixed practical objectives.

Each of these types of dialogue has its own particular value and, in some measure, leads to the other types and enables advancement in the other types. Psychologically speaking, the first type of dialogue seems absolutely necessary as a starting point for any real progress on the other two levels. For dialogue implies a certain reciprocity (a giving and receiving).

3. *Conditions of Dialogue.*

Since dialogue is aimed at progress in unison toward a greater community of life, outlook and accomplishment, each partner must be open to the other, ready to accept newer insights and, at the same time, appeal to the individual insight and free assent of the others. *There must be reciprocity!* But this implies also the readiness to change one's own way of living and acting if the truth is leading in a new direction. *There must also be mutual commitment!* Ultimately dialogue is the communication of ourselves to one another on all levels: human relations, truth and practical collaboration. It differs from teaching as such, from polemics; both of which involve monologues. Its aim is mutual enrichment and unity on as many levels as possible.

4. *Method of Dialogue.*

The method of dialogue involves several elements which can operate in succession or concurrently:

1) Exchange of ideas whereby each presents a point of view on the subject at issue;

2) Comparison of ideas to bring out the differences or similarities;

3) Further investigation of shared positions;

4) Highlighting aspects of the subject previously unnoticed which leads to further investigation.

5. *The Origin of Modern Concern for Dialogue.*

We live in an age of dialogue. The *development of communications* has advanced the idea of the unity of all mankind and, to some extent, the reality of it. On the other hand, there is the growing recognition that our society is characterized by intellectual pluralism. By "intellectual pluralism" is meant the sum total of experiences, insights, impulses and human possibilities in all spheres of human living. As a sum total it is so immense and complex that it cannot be organized and reduced to a single integrated system. It derives from the most diverse sources of knowledge and experience of such complexity that no *a priori* theory of science can be found which can reduce them to a system or relate them to one another. There is no one representative of this total complex such as might exercise authoritative control over all its elements. All departments of this amorphous complex are significant for the tenets of the Christian faith. All these elements are factors in modern man's picture of the world, and in his interpretation of himself, which in turn constitute the situation in which he lives out his life—and also his Christian faith.

In the face of this pluralism it is clear that dialogue is required if mankind is to live with one another.

Moreover, personalist philosophy has shown the value and necessity of dialogue through its development of the meaning of the human person. In its explanation of the meaning of the human person in his relations with others, it has made clear the interdependence of persons in their subjectivity, i.e., the relations between persons as subjects of feelings, thoughts and achievements. These interpersonal relations are shown to tend to the development of mankind and society, relations of understanding and truth, of love and peace, of encounter and communion, of hope and fulfillment.

II. *REPRESENTATIVES OF CHRISTIAN DENOMINATIONS IN DIALOGUE:*

This intellectual pluralism of which we speak exists also in the churches and necessarily so. For the members of the churches live in a situation constituted by this intellectual pluralism. Such a situation gives rise to pluralism in theologies even within the same denomination. Whence arises the question: Who do the representatives of Christian denominations engaged in dialogue represent?

In the concrete case the answer has to be given by a judgment based on concrete facts. However we should say that intellectual pluralism within a church does not of itself exclude the possibility of *true representatives* of the church as a whole. Complex and heterogeneous schools of thought are compatible with a common confession of faith. But, whether in fact a particular theological outlook is consistent with the characteristic belief of a community is often more difficult to establish than was formerly the case.

For this reason a short formula of faith is especially required today, in this pluralistic society and pluralistic church, i.e., pluralistic in theologies. Such a formula should distinguish between fundamentals and other truths and not simply repeat old formulas but explain them (Cf. K. Rahner, "The Need of a 'Short Formula' of Christian Faith," TI IX, 117-126). Such a formula, representing the common confession of faith of the community, can serve as a focal point of dialogue within a church to establish whether a particular theology, a reflective interpretation of the faith and creed, is consistent with the symbol of faith.

We have to accept the fact that intellectual pluralism exists in most churches: variety of expressions, insights, etc., because the members of the churches live in a situation constituted by intellectual pluralism. The theologians within a church can be extremely pluralistic. However since such a close connection exists between faith and theology, they can never be completely separated. Hence Christians, being pluralistic in theology, in spite of their unity of faith, must discuss their theologies in order to assure themselves that the differences in their theologies do not affect the unity of their creed. Out of such dialogue within a church one can establish legitimate representatives of a church.

However, in actuality, certain representatives appointed for dialogue with another Christian denomination may not really be representative but only be mistakenly presumed to be so. It may also occur that because of the respective theologies of representatives of a church, they do not seem to be representatives of a particular church to the partners of a dialogue; or it may be that the partners of the dialogue will judge that a church which allows such pluralism is incapable of a common confession of faith.

To establish whether parties in dialogue really represent the respective churches requires, on the part of each group, internal dialogue in order to establish whether they are really, and to what extent, representatives of a church. It also requires dialogue between the two parties to establish that the pluralistic theologies found within each group are consistent with the unity of their respective creeds. Otherwise the danger exists that a false impression will be given of lack of unified witness within the particular representatives of a church.

III. *THE POSSIBILITY AND LEGITIMACY OF DOCTRINAL DIALOGUE:*

Human history has led men's minds to a personalist philosophy of communion. Dialogue has been the fruit of this philosophy. Throughout the world dialogue is seen as both possible and necessary between even those who hold opposing world views. This attitude should be accepted by Christians.

All Christians are called to promote dialogue with all mankind as an expression of brotherly love and can find grounds in revelation for the confident assertion of the dignity and worth of the individual, i.e., his eschatological vocation. He can accept even an unbeliever as worthy of a dialogue which will be profitable for both parties.

The question of the possibility and legitimacy of doctrinal dialogue with unbelievers has been raised and answered many times. Here I only want to point out the substance of those replies which seem satisfactory. This is done because, in the nature of the case of dialogue between Christians, some similar questions arise which require similar answers. Also, I want to treat this question because of the criticism which has arisen over the establishment of the Vatican Secretariat for Non-Christian Religions, whose function is to promote dialogue with those holding world views contrary, or seemingly contrary, to the Christian perspective.

The basic questions concerning real dialogue between Christians and non-believers can be summarized as follows:

1. Must the parties remain in an attitude of inquiry about all doctrines if dialogue is to be open?

2. Can dialogue be carried on if both parties believe they possess the truth?

3. Is dialogue possible if the partners start from different systems of thought?

4. Is dialogue possible if one partner believes that all truth derives from man, while the other holds that there are objective truths?

We will attempt to answer these questions in turn.

1. Doctrinal dialogue between partners holding opposite views can result in the discovery of points of agreement and lead to enlarging on them.

It should be recognized that in such dialogue one is always dealing with the *personal acquisition of truth.* One should be aware of the limitations of the individual and of historical communities in the search for truth. This creates readiness to consider the opinions and efforts of

the other and to embrace the elements of truth contained in both positions.

On the other hand, doctrinal dialogue has no meaning unless one believes that the intellect can obtain, to some extent, objective truth; and that each individual has a contribution to make in search of the truth which others should value because of the fact that he attains a view of reality which is proper and unique to him.

2. The fact that each participant considers himself to be in possession of the truth does not preclude dialogue. In fact dialogue is intended to clarify and bring more closely together different positions. It is sufficient that each of the participants believes that his grasp of truth can increase through dialogue.

This attitude should be accepted by all believers because the truths of faith are always inadequately grasped by believers. What is known has a history of comprehension and interpretation in which the known still remains not completely known and can be better known through dialogue.

Furthermore such dialogue can issue in agreement because it may be discerned that what is really meant is the same though expressed in different ways. The condition for such a conclusion will be the appropriation of the whole existential experience out of which the partner in dialogue speaks. Only then can one say that what the other holds and really means is false or included in his own view of things. In such dialogue one must attempt to draw the "no" of the other within his own view and answer it by a fuller "yes" by facing it.

3. The fact that the partners hold different systems of thought does not preclude dialogue. Every system of thought contains certain truths and values not necessarily receiving their sense and importance from the system itself and which can be separated from it. Placed in their proper light a certain degree of agreement can be reached on these truths and values.

4. Where partners do not agree on the meaning of truth, the purpose of the dialogue will be to come to some notion of truth and of principles of reasoning that all can agree on. Without such agreement, still the conversations are not without fruit. For both have come to knowledge of the limits beyond which the dialogue cannot proceed.

The churches should enter into dialogue with all mankind not only because human freedom demands that the truth be freely accepted through personal assent, but also because the churches are capable of being led to deeper levels of their own truth. The churches can be led to purify distorted interpretations attached to their understanding of the

faith. They can attain that concrete historical form of the truth which has to be worked out if they are to proclaim the Gospel effectively today.

The conditions for such dialogue with unbelievers are the following:

1) It must seek the truth. Hence dialogue should be broken off when it is being manipulated for other ends.

2) It must be faithful in presenting positions. Differences must not be concealed by the use of the same language which hides varying meanings.

3) It must be committed to revision of positions where demanded.

4) Even where this dialogue does not result in doctrinal agreement, agreement on practical objectives can be reached. To proceed to action is legitimate granting the objective is good, values are not compromised and it is opportune.

IV. *THE DIALOGUE AMONG CHRISTIAN CHURCHES: THE OFFICIAL ROMAN CATHOLIC VIEWPOINT:*

The Vatican II Council sought to promote dialogue between churches with the goal of fostering the unity of separated Christian communities (Cf. *Unitatis Redintegratio* 4, 9, 11, 22). It acknowledged the principle of equality in dialogue and the importance of dialogue to foster mutual understanding *(Unitatis Redintegratio* 9). However, the document on Ecumenical Dialogue of the Secretariat for Promoting Christian Unity, published in 1970 ("Reflections and Suggestions Concerning Ecumenical Dialogue"), offers a more detailed discussion of the nature, aim, basis, conditions, method, subjects for, and forms of ecumenical dialogue.

I would like to review with you some of the highlights of this document relative to the official dialogue between representatives of the Catholic Church and other churches.

On the subject of the nature and aim of ecumenical dialogue, we read that what is demanded of dialogue in general (reciprocity and mutual commitment) must be found in ecumenical dialogue, specified, however, in accord with the concrete aim of this dialogue (II, 1-2).

The goal of ecumenical dialogue is to prepare the way for the "unity of faith" in "a church one and visible" (II, 2d). Hence, in the concrete, it aims at the following: 1) mutual growth through sharing in the mystery of Christ and of His church on all levels; 2) mutual sharing in the ministry of the Gospel of Jesus Christ; 3) cooperation in responding to the questions posed by the "world"; 4) cooperation in answering the common questions which arise within the Christian communities themselves. (II, 2a-d).

The basis of ecumenical dialogue, already established by Vatican II *(Ad Gentes* 15; *Unitatis Redintegratio* 3, etc.), is amplified with insistence

on the fact that because Christians share in the new life in the Spirit by faith and baptism, a certain community already exists.

The Secretariat for Promoting Christian Unity document (*Reflections* III, 1-3) calls attention to the following: 1) Christians, living in the Spirit, are in a position to communicate to each other the riches of the Spirit they possess; 2) Christian communities as such, possess spiritual goods and are capable of sharing with each other their common elements; 3) The Holy Spirit is continually working in the life of faith of the individual Christian prompting each to exercise a prophetic role by communicating the spiritual goods they possess to others. Ecumenical dialogue provides the occasion for such an exchange.

In addition, the document refers to the natural consequence of the churches' effort to renew themselves: They are led into dialogue in order to question themselves concerning their fidelity to Christ's will (III, 4).

Thus, the SPCU document underlines the consequences of the mutual possession of the Spirit by individual Christians and churches. It makes possible the sharing of the gifts of the Spirit through dialogue and so enables Christians to grow in unity of thought and action! Here it is presupposed that no one has a corner on the market. The Spirit is possessed by each believer and community according to their openness and shares its riches through the faithful disciple.

These remarks, as the corresponding ones of II Vatican, are aimed at provoking among the churches a *Theology of Communion* founded on the mutual possession of the Spirit and actualized through the human communication characterized as dialogue: a situation of openness to the advent of the Spirit through all men of good will!

In considering the conditions for dialogue, the SPCU document notes that, by its very nature, dialogue requires an attitude of sympathy and openness (IV, 1). Again it asserts also the principle of equality (IV, 2a-c).

But what does the document mean by saying that the participants are to consider themselves equal. A close reading of the text in question reveals that: 1) both parties should consider each other as faithful to the Gospel according to their lights (IV, 2, a); 2) that both parties possess the Spirit and so are able to learn from each other speaking through the Spirit (IV, 2, b); 3) that a certain communion of spiritual goods already exists between the Christian communities represented (IV, 2, b).

On the other hand the SPCU document calls attention to a basic inequality between the different Christian communions (IV, 2, a). This inequality, based on concrete differences, leads to the conclusion that all positions are not equivalent. Therefore it leads to the rejection of

doctrinal indifferentism (IV, 2, a). The object of dialogue, therefore, is the differences which exist in the content, development and expression of the faith of the churches (IV, 2, b).

In this latter connection, the SPCU document calls attention to the way Catholics should present doctrine. Here we will only note the crucial points: 1) Catholics are instructed to bear in mind that there exists a hierarchy of truths which vary in relation to the foundation of Christian faith (IV, 4, b; cf. UR 11). This hierarchy of truths should be clearly indicated, as well as the link which is seen between these truths. 2) Secondly, attention is called to the problem of language. Since it is a question of establishing real communication, the participants should submit the language they use to a hermeneutic, a critical study. To avoid travelling along parallel lines wherein the same thing is meant by different words, one should discuss the mentality, the genius of a culture, the philosophical tools, traditions and styles of life (language) which lies behind what is said (IV, 4, c). 3) Finally, the SPCU document calls attention to the area of legitimate diversity which is compatible with the unity of the churches (IV, 5).

Concerning the method of dialogue, after noting what must be observed in common with all dialogue (V, 1, a-d), it goes on to discuss certain things specific to the method of ecumenical dialogue. Concerning the lines of enquiry, the SPCU document suggests: a) truths confessed in common; b) truths obscured in one community but developed in another, c) religious insights even in areas of divergence (V, 2, a). It also calls for an exposition of doctrine done in a constructive way which avoids the tendency to define by opposition: a process which generally results in overstress or hardening of certain positions (V, 2, b). Finally, it encourages cooperation in a constructive synthesis with use made of every legitimate contribution and aimed at the assimilation of the whole of revealed truth.

On the subject of the topics of dialogue, the document has some good observations to make. First it insists that the subject of dialogue should be chosen with a view to the real life of the churches. Secondly it suggests that they be chosen because they lie within the competence of those in dialogue. The reason for this is clearly stated: The practice of bringing in others to discuss special topics risks bringing the dialogue to an end because the participants will be unable to express themselves to one another.

CONCLUSIONS

In conclusion, I would like to make some personal observations.

1. It seems appropriate to stress what is implied in the document of the SPCU and the whole dynamics of dialogue, namely the role of

love. The partners in dialogue must accept the fact that behind what one judges to be the falsest of theories can be hidden the being-in-the-truth of the man who accepts his existence genuinely. This provides the basis for mutual love: The acceptance of one whom God accepts. It is this love which must support dialogue. Without this love dialogue is not possible: true dialogue, which aims at the *truth*. St. Paul says: "If I have all the eloquence of men and angels, but speak without love, I am simply a gong booming and a cymbal clashing.

But this love already unifies. Hence, it is the goal of dialogue to make the effort to insure that the love which already exists in the heart, and which makes Christianity believable, may appear in mutally expressed and possessed truths. It is by loving one another and conversing with one another that we actually do theology or rather build theologically.

2. Dialogue between the churches is required for decisions of the churches, but it is not a substitute. Dialogue cannot overcome the gap between theory and action, between the possibility and actuality. Here we have in mind theological conversations.

3. Those appointed for dialogue between different denominations should foster dialogue on all levels: human relations, search for truth, collaboration in practical action. In a word they should be a "community" which accepts the ancient Hebrew view of truth, i.e., that it does not exist in the abstract but must concretize itself in action. Such a comprehensive dialogue ought to be considered sanctioned by the churches which approve their membership engaging in the particular form of communication known as *dialogue*. The form and extent of practical action will depend on circumstances. But it should occur that the truth of unity may appear.

4. Since meetings between members of official dialogues are so few and far between, it seems imperative that the members normally dialogue between themselves almost exclusively. They should carefully prepare the subject of the dialogue and give their witness to each other, listening and learning from each other. Only rarely should outsiders be brought in to lecture. The process of growing together requires being together and not giving attention to someone who can only serve to intrude on the mystery of personal encounter by which we come to really know one another.

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The Ecumenical Experience at the Grass Roots

DR. C. BROWNLOW HASTINGS

How can we experience any kind of cooperation between Baptists and Roman Catholics at the grass roots? Let's take a look. In October of 1972 in Houston, Texas, one of the features of the program of our Southwestern Regional Baptist-Catholic Conference was a Baptist worship service brought by the pastor and choir of a local church. During the singing of the choir all of us were struck by one young lady who seemed to radiate joy more than any. Her face looked slightly familiar, but traveling at my age and being in so many different places, I gave up trying to place her. After the session, the choir had gone to their buses and I was busy with preparations for the morrow, when I looked up to see our friend returning to the room. "I just wanted you to know," she told me, "that I heard you in Virginia some months ago speak about your work in Baptist-Catholic relations and frankly I didn't get it. But after seeing and hearing what went on here tonight I am so glad that we don't have to hate Catholics anymore!"

Then there was that Cleveland, Ohio, priest, who heard about how to start local dialogues between Baptists and Catholics at the ecumenical workshop in Toledo a year ago. He believed what he heard and went home to organize a Sunday afternoon dialogue in one of the largest Baptist churches of the city. He brought 400 people together representing three parishes and three Baptist *conventions*. Of course, it was a bit stiff and uptight, but it was happening! And perhaps his greatest accomplishment was in getting the three Baptist groups to sit down together. Naturally you could have expected at least one Catholic would urge all us "separated brethren" to return to Rome and one Baptist rehearsing all the gory details of the Inquisition, but the lay people were not buying all such irrelevancies. They are the ones who are truly practicing ecumenism at the grass roots. And it is breaking out all over. Father Bob Berson, whom you will meet here, is the regional missionary in the Southeast for the Glenmary Fathers and is the field worker for the Bishops' Committee for Ecumenical and Interreligious Affairs as liaison with Southern Baptists. Within the past year he has helped to arrange several different kinds of dialogue in Georgia, Florida, North Carolina and Tennessee and is presently working with local groups in Louisiana,

South Carolina and Alabama. We both agree on two observations about ecumenism: our biggest enemy is not prejudice but apathy, and our greatest joy is to hear of spontaneous ways local Baptists and Catholics are working together in many places. We also observe that apathy is in proportion to dominance. Where Catholics predominate, the hierarchy could care less. And it is very hard to get those Baptists in one rural Alabama county excited about this work where their associated report claims a total membership just under 110% of the 1970 census!

Our progress may be likened to two neighboring patrimonies, whose ancestors fought so much each built high walls against the other. As a consequence all manner of suspicions, false images, rumors and outright lies grew like weeds in a dismal swamp. As the walls crumble with age, the present descendants find less and less enthusiasm for restoring them to their former perilous heights. Now between fallen parapets we are beginning to catch a glimpse of each other in our patchwork backyards. Our first shock is to discover that our neighbors are very human, made in all points like as we are including our sins. Then as we begin to reach across and touch we discover that Christ truly shines forth through more of us than we used to admit. The walls are still there, the heritage is still strong, but the hearts are more and more concerned with the needs of the present age and the eyes are alight with a new hope of the Kingdom of God.

I know I will be accused of too quick and easy solutions, but at the risk of being called theologically naive I would like to make a timid proposal for the future of Baptist-Catholic relations. Can we not shift our focus from the Church to the Kingdom? I do not intend that each of us would forsake the continuing pursuit of the meaning of the Church in our own traditions. My friend, Bob Berson, is planning a study leave of two or three years. He has intrigued me with his choice of a field for his graduate study—ecclesiology. This is significant of change taking place in Catholic thought today. When he was in the seminary doubtless he felt that he was taught all that anyone needed to know about the Church. It was given. Final, irrevocable and unchangeable. But now there is much ferment in Catholic thinking about the Church. He does not plan to teach in some secluded seminary. He plans to use his sharpened understanding of the Church to increase the effectiveness of his already able ecumenical ministry. He and I do not often agree on how one enters the Church, nor on the means of sustaining the life of the Church, but we do see eye to eye on one thing: the sharper the vision of one's own understanding of his faith, the greater the cooperation possible in affairs of the Kingdom.

We will still need scholarly dialogues to debate our theological issues. We Baptists need to understand the ideals of which you speak

when you say that the Church should be *holy,* that it should be true to its *apostolic* origins, that it should be genuinely *katholikós.* Vatican II has liberalized your theology of the Church with its definition "the pilgrim people of God." You are moving away from your former extremely high-church stance.

Baptists, on the other hand, have moved into the lead in size and potential influence among Protestants in the post-war years. All of a sudden we have awakened to the fact that our aggressive evangelism and multiform programs have carried us pell mell into the forefront. We look around anxiously and ask ourselves, "Is this all that God requires of us? Will the Kingdom have come when we baptize our last convert?" Since most of us have only a meagre concept of the Church beyond the local congregation, our growth is forcing us to reconsider our Low Church theology and grapple with one suited to a world-wide communion of the people of God. Your new trend toward democracy and co-responsibility and ours toward universality and coherence at least deserve close watching by our ecclesiologists.

But this is not where the action is in Baptist-Catholic relations. It is in the *work* of the Kingdom of God, which Vatican II finally freed from the necessary bounds of the institutional Church. Now, what is the work of the Kingdom? Simple. It is the business of the King Himself.

What was the King's business while He was among men? Proclaiming the good news that God is a Father who cares enough to save everyman and who rules among men through redemptive love. Healing the hurt of men and suffering with and for them to restore life and health like His own. Calling, teaching, equipping disciples to be able to carry the responsibilities of God-ruled men.

What is the King's business in the Now time? Ruling over men and nations at God's right hand. Representing us to the Father and serving as the agent of communication between God and men. Releasing His power and love into the world through His disciples to make their work effective. So as King, Christ furnishes us with the pattern and the power for our work as citizens of the Kingdom. Let us see how this works out in Baptist-Catholic relations.

First, let us honestly take stock of the issues that divide and unite us. We agree on authority to the extent that Christ has the only and final Lordship. We disagree on how that authority is delegated among the citizens of the Kingdom. We agree on the revelation of God as given to us through sacred Scripture; we disagree on the channels by which Scripture is brought to bear upon the disciples. You are returning more and more to the primacy of Scripture over Tradition; we are admitting

more and more the influence of Baptist tradition in the handling of Scripture. Lest we meet and pass in the night, it behooves us to keep our theologians in frequent dialogue.

We agree on the Atonement of Christ as the basis of God's saving of any man; we disagree on how His atonement is applied to sinful men. We agree that worship is necessary to the sustenance of our souls; we disagree on the modes of worship. You are seeking to make your sacraments more meaningful for the people; we are seeking more symbols by which to make truly holy our many churchly activities. We agree that Church and State are two distinct life-styles ordained of God for mankind; we disagree on their relationship and ways of influencing each other.

Now in the light of this many timid souls would conclude there is no room for Baptists and Catholics to work together in Kingdom business. There is no dearth of those narrow souls who see more in Paul's word, "Come ye out from among them and be ye separate" than in Jesus' word, "Whoever is not against us is for us." But then, it has always been easier to proof text our prejudices than to illumine the paths of reconciliation.

Now if Kingdom business be proclaiming the Good News and making disciples, can Baptists and Catholics possibly work together here in spite of obvious disagreement? Well, they have and are.

Take evangelism as a starter. Last fall there was a city-wide Billy Graham film festival in New Orleans. One of his gospel films was shown in eight or nine movie houses during the week. There were some 5500 decisions for Christ. The Presbyterian pastor who was in charge of enlisting the counselors said that of the 400 who volunteered to serve, there were 25 more Catholics than Southern Baptists. On the other hand, a Catholic Teens Encounter Christ in Massachusetts recently invited a Baptist youth worker to lead their retreat on how to lead others to become Christian. I was invited to speak to a group of church leaders in Tifton, Georgia, last year on the techniques and materials our Evangelism Division of the Home Mission Board uses in training lay people to win the unchurched. My audience: 15 Catholic pastors and three nuns.

You can imagine how Minnesota Baptists reacted when our late leader, Warren Littleford, invited two nuns to the state Baptist evangelism convention to give their testimony of how they had experienced the New Birth. Do you feel the frustration of an old-line Baptist trying to figure out a nun, in a modified habit, saying in effect, "I've been born again through the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ and I'm staying in the

Catholic Church!" He shakes his close-cropped head muttering "No way, Sis—, No way!"

More to the point of Kingdom business is the problem of making disciples out of new converts. Here both of us have our hands full. However we may differ on the how of making converts, we are both genuinely concerned that we have far too many church members who cannot show to the world any better quality of life than the non-churched. We are plagued with a vast host of people who are just as much trapped in the culture, the lifestyles, the unchristian value systems as the unbeliever. Our track records are poor in race relations, in subservience to the powers that be, in political chicanery and ecclesiastical isolation.

To the end of training disciples we can find more ways of working together. Adult education in the CCD, in Cursillos, in continuing education is a growing thing among Catholics today. The crisis in your schools and the demands of catechetical classes in parishes woefully undermanned by the religious are calling for a great new army of lay teachers. Baptists can help you with successful techniques of training lay teachers and involving the masses in Bible study. We stand ready to recommend certain profitable conferences and workshops where you would be welcome.

On the other hand we Baptists are too activist. We need to learn from your great schools of spirituality how to discipline our minds and souls to be attuned to the things of the spirit. Not that we will enlist in large numbers in the Spiritual Exercises of Ignatius Loyola, but we will learn how to listen to the spiritual giants of the past and adapt their values to our life-styles. More and more of us are finding real restoration of soul and a deepening of the spiritual life in monastic retreat centers, in reading the greater classics of the soul, such as Thomas Merton, and in Bible study that is designed for the whole man and not alone for his mind. Once a month six of us Baptist preachers join three monks at the Trappist monastery at Conyers, Ga., for a day, reading the Greek New Testament together. It is a veritable soul-feast, for no one has any axe to grind, no one has any status to uphold. We bare our minds and hearts to what the Spirit says through the Word and slug it out with each other at the deeper levels of our being.

Last year five Baptist and five Catholic lay couples met once a week in homes to study for nine weeks the book of Romans. A Jesuit priest and I served as resource, but the lay people taught themselves. Of course, our basic differences surfaced and that right often, but we found that the Word was more attractive than our pop debates. We ended with a deeper sense of unity and love than any of us dreamed possible.

All of us are deeply concerned over moral issues, especially those that relate to family life. I am confident that Catholics would find a ready welcome among many Baptists in your stand *against* unlimited abortion and *for* the right to life. We too are concerned about where genetic engineering may take us in the near future. But we would warm you of the pitfalls of trying to legislate moral standards that are not shared by unbelievers, from our experience with Prohibition.

You do have some excellent family life programs going where we could plug in: the pre-Cana conference for those about to be married, for example. And since more and more of our young people are marrying across interfaith lines, would it not be wise to include some Baptists in those conferences where appropriate to interpret the faith and rights of the Baptist party? Your Marriage Encounter weekends and our Couples' retreats take on an added dynamic when there are present those of other faiths. Why should we ignore each other in these when our people go right back into their communities to work out their problems shoulder to shoulder with people of other faiths?

So without trying to force our present structures we can challenge Baptist and Catholic friends to discover new ways of sharing in the resources and disciplines of the Christian life. We may not be able to eat together at the Lord's table, but we can at least eat in each other's homes and retreat centers with spiritual concerns dictating the way we break bread together. If not the Eucharist, then surely an Agape meal. Of course, it helps if we are all of one mind and accord, but if we had to wait on that kind of unanimity, my three-generation family would never eat together!

Now let us not despise simple things. Some are saying ecumenism today is a burnt-out wick. There are too many other pressing issues for us to go on with meetings like this where we just meet to get acquainted and try to update our images of each other. And some are saying let's spend our energy and money on those who are close enough to us to hope for union. But that invites a return to the old triumphalism, which we both are trying to eschew. It is true that much of the early post-Vatican II enthusiasm has waned. We are tired, overburdened and often short-tempered in the midst of the crowds who look to us for ministry.

But it is just for *these very reasons* that we must not quit nor return to our denominational ghettos. The world, the flesh and the devil are too much for either of us and especially as individuals fighting our isolated battles. We need to go beyond the formal ministerial conferences, the local councils of churches and the many worthwhile civic and social projects, where we ought to be throwing our combined weight. We hunger for each other in our humanness and seek to draw

hope and courage through men whose lives God has touched. I could wish that, if we have not already done so, each of us would return to our places of ministry to hunt up some neighboring pastor across our interfaith lines and develop a life-long friendship. Sure, if the word gets out, some Baptist may lose a revival meeting and some Catholic a promotion. But that's a small risk as compared with the blessings that may accrue.

This kind of strengthening of each other is beginning among seminarians. When they develop the right kind of human understandings in their formative training, they will not be so apt to carry into life a burden of prejudice and isolationism. James Hefley, while at New Orleans Baptist Seminary a few years ago, learned by practical contacts in that unlikely environment of South Louisiana. He wrote of his *metanoia* in the book, *A Prejudiced Protestant Takes a New Look at the Catholic Church*. And he is still a Baptist!

How encouraging it is to see the growth of consortiums of theological schools, such as in Louisville, where students from several seminaries are encouraged to take classes in other than their own. Faculty members are giving lecture series in other seminaries. Pastoral counseling and clinical training uses methods and understandings that know no interfaith bounds.

Even better for these seminarians is the practical experience many are receiving in student ministries. There they have opportunities to learn how to work together in inner city ministries, in rural areas such as Appalachia. On a more long-term basis the work of CORA and JSAC provide all of us with more vehicles of ministry than either of us are fully utilizing. We could take these avenues more seriously than we are at present. Here in the fires of service we can melt more prejudice than dozens of structured conferences.

But we ought not to despise the structured modes either. For some of us are so highly programmed that we would never get around to crossing these bridges of understanding unless someone built the bridge and gave us a shove. Detractors will always ask "What good does it do to get Baptists and Roman Catholic leaders together? What is your hidden agenda? Why spend good mission money on such futilities?" Well, why *not*? Christ has promised that where two or three, or 80 or 90, are gathered together in his name He will be in their midst. And when Christ is allowed in the midst, even of such a gathering as this, who can guess the directions the Spirit of God may take? The past regional conferences at Daytona Beach and Houston produced unexpected and thrilling consequences as these people went back home. I have great faith in the Spirit who has always been able to use the most unlikely

means and the most improbable of people to bring about results. Truly, it is not by the might of our ecclesial organizations, nor by the power of our dynamic leaders, but by my Spirit, says the Lord of Hosts. Let's get on with Kingdom business then!

SECTION III

PRESENTATIONS

The Role of The Minister and The Church In Reference To The Unchurched

DR. PAUL G. GILLESPIE

The Christian church is by its very nature evangelistic. Having been grasped by the message of the gospel, a first impulse is to find ways of sharing the Good News with our brothers. I represent a tradition that in attempting to devise ways of sharing the gospel has resorted to some pretty unacceptable methods and techniques. Yet we all are obligated to try to communicate the gospel with the people of God's world.

At the 1954 meeting of the Assembly of the World Council of Churches, one document on evangelism stated:

> "Evangelism is the participation of the total Christian community in Christ's mission in the world;
> Every single aspect of the Church's life and activities is of evangelistic significance;
> In proclamation, fellowship and service, the Church must demonstrate the Gospel in the actual life context of men;
> Laymen are on the frontline, served by the ministry whose function is to equip the people of God for its mission.
> Laity and ministry together strive to be of the mind of Him who 'emptied Himself' in service to the world."

In our own parish we have found that evangelism is as much the work on boring committees that free the church structures for openness and ministry to and with people of all stations and races, tutoring and social casework, work with former mental patients, and the like, as much as proclamation and visitation.

What is it that we actually have to offer the unchurched and unredeemed of the world? My conviction is that we only have CHRIST IN COMMUNITY to offer. Christ in community. Ours is not the task of winning people. That is God's work. Ours is the mission of sharing the

Good News of Christ in community. For all of the key New Testament words are "relational"—*reconciliation* being the most obvious.

Three things are to be shared. First, we share through our witness the TRUTH of God and his relationship to man. Second, we offer ourselves and Christ for relationship. And third, we invite people into the Christian community (church). Accordingly, when we share our Christian witness with another, leading them to embrace Christ, we have a threefold obligation to help them: 1) Find a church where the system for embracing and being embraced by the TRUTH is to their own liking; 2) Offer ourselves to them for a continuing relationship of "brothering"; and 3) Help them find a "community" where they can feel comfortable with the style of church life and find nurture, love, and support.

Two kids—one black and one white—one formerly Unitarian and the other formerly Episcopalian—were seeking a "community" to help them grow up in their new commitment to Christ. And I think evangelism was tied up in creating a parish community that could love and accept responsibility for and to them without either judging their interracial courtship or their previous church affiliation. To me, that is the work of evangelism.

Introduction to a Discussion of the Role of the Minister and the Church in Reference to the Unchurched

ROBERT C. BERSON

This discussion is intended to direct our attention to the thousands of people in America who are outside the visible fellowship of the church. It is not designed to raise the more basic theological question "Who Is the Church?" What we want to get at is simply what we ministers and church people can do to reach our non-churchgoing neighbors with the Christian gospel.

Your particular discussion group may wade into this subject with no need of prodding. If, however, some help is useful in getting started, you might want to consider these six questions which address the subject at hand:

1. Does the church have any spiritual ministry to those unchurched persons who show no promise of even remote interest in church membership?
2. Can the unchurched be reached by enlisting their active cooperation in church-initiated programs of assistance to the disadvantaged?
3. Who are these people who do not come to our churches? Are they the very poor and the very rich? Are there obstacles in their road which have nothing to do with faith?
4. How can a middle class church gather in new members or even proclaim the gospel to people on other strata of society?
5. Is there a way to reach those who have already been approached many times, perhaps heavy-handedly, and emphatically rejected the church?
6. Is it enough for the Christian to witness to Jesus and the gospel simply by truly Christian social action? Must the gospel be verbalized by minister and church members alike?

MAJOR ADDRESS

The Church Always in Need of Reform

Ecclesia Semper Reformanda

REV. AVERY DULLES, S.J.

For churches issuing from the Reformation, and especially those having links with the radical Reformation, the idea of reform in the Church contains no surprises. Protestantism is by its very nature a reform movement. Luther's aim was not to found a new Church but to reform the existing one. Calvin considered it his life work to bring about "a reasonable and Christian reformation" restoring the Church to its original purity on the basis of the word of God.[1] Some of the early Protestants, no doubt, imagined that their own Churches, once established, required no further reformation, but by the middle of the seventeenth century John Milton could confidently proclaim that the process must extend "even to the reforming of Reformation itself." [2] In the present century the slogan, "ecclesia semper reformanda" has become widely accepted among Protestants.

In the ancient Church, the idea of reform was operative almost from the beginnings, but the early reformers were concerned with the reformation of persons in the Church rather than with the reformation of the Church itself. Only in the middle ages did it become apparent that in some cases moral and spiritual reform could not be achieved without doctrinal and structural reform. The Gregorian Reform in the eleventh century effected sweeping institutional changes under the leadership of a renewed papacy. In the later middle ages, the emphasis shifted again. For the conciliarists, the papacy became not the chief agent but rather the chief target of reform.

After the Protestant Reformation, the idea of reform was treated more cautiously in the Catholic Church. Reform of morals and discipline still offered no difficulty, and was in fact vigorously pursued by the Council of Trent. But from the sixteenth century to the twentieth, doctrinal and structural reform were suspect. The Church was on guard against innovations that might weaken its links with its own past.

This defensiveness, however, was abandoned under John XXIII. Vatican Council II cordially welcomed the idea of reform, even in the areas of doctrine and structure. The classic text is from the Decree on Ecumenism:

> Christ summons the Church, as she goes her pilgrim way, to that continual reformation of which she always has need, insofar as she is an institution of men here on earth. Therefore, if the influence of events or of the times has led to deficiencies in conduct, in Church discipline, or even in the formulation of doctrine (which must be carefully distinguished from the deposit itself of faith), these should be properly rectified at the proper moment.[3]

For Vatican II's concept of "continual reformation" one should refer also to the Constitution on the Church, in which we read: "While Christ, 'holy, innocent, undefiled' (Heb. 7.26), knew nothing of sin (2 cor. 5.21), but came to expiate only the sins of the people (cf. Heb. 2.17), the Church, embracing sinners in her bosom, is at the same time holy and always in need of being purified, and incessantly pursues the path of penance and renewal." [4] Although the term "reform" is not used in this passage, the idea of ongoing reform is clearly present. Thus we may conclude that the concept of a Church that is continually obliged to reform itself has a secure place today in Catholicism as well as in Protestantism. Practically speaking, all agree that the Church can be and needs to be reformed, but there are sharp differences regarding the nature and limits of reform. After a brief discussion of the meaning of the term "reform," I shall attempt this morning to categorize some of the types or models of reform. Then, in a second part, I shall explore the areas to which reform may be thought to extend, and finally I shall give some reflection on the values and dangers in reform.

I. *REFORM: ITS NATURE AND TYPES:*

The etymology of the term "reform" throws little light upon its meaning. To "reform" could simply mean to "form again," hence to remake or transform. Unlike creation or foundation, reform implies change in a preexisting subject. With some exceptions to be mentioned later, authors generally distinguish reform from transformation. Transformation suggests a radical change, whereby a thing is changed into something else, whereas reformation means a change in which the original identity of the subject is not lost but preserved.

A further precision of meaning has attached itself to the term. Since the second century—as can be shown from the writing of Tertullian—"reform" has regularly meant a change for the better, and amelioration.

A change for the worse would be called rather a "deformation." Those who believe in Church reform, then, hold that the Church can and should be changed for the better without loss of its own identity. They hold that the Church exists in an imperfect but perfectible state.

Advocates of Church reform thus occupy a middle position. On the one hand, they differ from extreme traditionalists who hold that while individuals and groups within the Church should be reformed, the Church itself is irreformable. On the other hand they differ from revolutionaries, who are not satisfied to reform what already exists. The ecclesiastical revolutionary would wish to destroy the existing structure and to erect another in its place.

To view the Church as reformable is to assert against the traditionalists that the Church as it exists in history is made up of humanly limited and sinful persons. It is also to assert against radical innovators that the Church, notwithstanding its blemishes, remains the Church of Jesus Christ and should therefore be preserved.

One can hardly discuss the desirability of reform without making some distinctions regarding the intention or process signified. It will be helpful to distinguish five types of reform, some of them more obviously desirable than others.

1) *Purification*. This would be the removal of a corruption, the correction of an abuse. Many reform movements have assumed that the Church was perfect at its inception and that corruptions gradually crept in with the passage of time. On this theory, reform would be a restoration of the pristine state of perfection or, in a word, repristination.

This kind of reform admitted by the early Councils, which frequently use the metaphors of healing disease or of uprooting weeds as a description of the measures they were urging. Medieval Councils continue to use these metaphors in connection with the idea of reform. In the Renaissance, when humanist antiquarianism was making it possible to gain fresh contact with Christian as well as classical antiquity, there was great enthusiasm for the idea of a rebirth, as the term "renaissance" itself implies. The idea of reform in the writings of the first Protestants is closely connected with repristination.

No Christians, I suppose, reject the idea of reform by way of purification. Corruptions exist and have to be removed. This would be admitted even by those who hold that the earliest days of the Church were by no means ideal, and that reform cannot be content with restoring what previously existed. Even though it were neither necessary nor sufficient to reinstate the ideas and institutions of the first century, it is evident that the abuses of today must be corrected.

2) A second possibility is that, even though the Church lacked no essential perfection from the beginning, changes may be necessary in order to keep it abreast of the times. Thus there is such a thing as reform by way of *adaptation*.

In the later middle ages we begin to discern a consciousness that it is desirable for the Church to make certain adjustments on the ground of "urgent need or evident usefulness." [5] It was on this ground, for instance, that the practice of communion under one kind was justified by the Council of Constance.[6]

Scarcely a decade ago, Pope John XXIII popularized the concept of *aggiornamento*. He observed that so much had changed in the modern world that the thinking and practice of the Church needed to be brought into better alignment with the needs and conditions of the present age. In its most creative document, the Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World, Vatican II sought to set forth the principles of such adaptation.

Adaptation is a gradual, non-threatening type of change. It implies a variation of emphasis and application, but not of principles. Nearly everyone, I suppose, admits the desirability of adaptations, though of course it may always be questioned whether a given adaption is warranted. This kind of reform carries with it the danger that principle may be subordinated to expediency and that the Church may be unduly shaped by the world in which it finds itself. Some fear that through excessive accommodation the salt may lose its savor. They quote in warning the text, "Do not be conformed to this world but be transformed by the renewal of your mind" (Rom. 12.2).

3) A third kind of reform, no less problematical, may be called *accretion*. The Church, according to this theory, would borrow from the non-Christian world certain ideas and institutions and integrate these into itself. Obviously not all human and worldly achievements are good, but some are of great intrinsic value. In the course of history the Church has sometimes adopted philosophical insights, artistic and cultural achievements, political and juridical forms. Some would argue that, living in the world, the Church cannot do otherwise. They would justify such appropriations on the ground that the Israelites were divinely authorized to despoil the Egyptians (Ex. 3.21-22) or on the ground that all the nations are to be given to the Messianic King as an inheritance (Ps. 2.8).[7]

The danger in this type of reform is that the Church may become too immersed in secular culture and that the culture it accepts may be confused with the gospel. Even when the Church takes over genuinely good human achievements, these achievements will lack the saving

power of the divine message that has been committed to the Church. Traditionally, Catholic Christianity has been more receptive to the world; Protestant Christianity, more critical of the identification of the Church with any human culture.[8] But Protestantism too has known movements of "culture Christianity," and in America today Protestantism is perhaps more at home with the reigning culture than Catholicism is. Thus the questioning of the dominant institutions and ethos of our society is perhaps as upsetting to Protestants as to Catholics. Some would say that all the large Churches have compromised themselves by consciously or unconsciously appropriating the American way of life.

4) A fourth type of reform is by way of *development*. The notion of development achieved considerable popularity in nineteenth century Catholicism, when the biological models of growth and evolution were being applied to the human and social sciences. Newman promoted this developmental kind of thinking in his *Essay on the Development of Christian Doctrine* (1844). Vatican I approvingly quoted Vincent of Lerins to the effect that the understanding of dogma should constantly increase in the Church, but cautioned that this growth must be homogeneous.[9] In the twentieth century, this evolutionary style of theology was further disseminated by ecclesiologies that used the mystical Body as the primary category. The Body of Christ was conceived as a growing organism animated by the Holy Spirit.

Evolutionary reformism appears in numerous texts from Vatican II. An example may be found in the Constitution on Divine Revelation, which states, "As the centuries succeed one another, the Church constantly moves forward toward the fullness of divine truth until the words of God reach their complete fulfillment in her." [10] Likewise the Decree on Ecumenism declares that while Catholic ecumenism must be in harmony "with the faith which the Catholic Church has always professed," it must at the same time tend "toward that fullness with which our Lord wants his Body to be endowed in the source of time." [11]

The model of organic growth has appealed to many Catholics because it combines the possibility of change with the assurance that previous acquisitions will be retained. Whereas the concept of accretion carries with it the danger that the Church might be adulterated by extraneous elements, growth implies that the Church, in changing, merely actualizes its own potentialities. Anything taken from the outside is assimilated in such a way that the Christian or Catholic elements are the active principles and are not subordinated to any other forces.

Catholics have tended to justify the organic models of reform on the ground that the Holy Spirit lives in the Church, and the Church lives in history. If the Church did not grow, they say, it would be dead. Protestant thinkers, however, frequently protest that the developmental

model of reform is too immanentistic and triumphalistic. The Church, they would object, takes a possessive attitude toward the gospel. Instead of allowing itself to be criticized by the word of God, it presumes to amplify the gospel. Here again, as in our previous discussion of accretion, we may note a contrast between Protestant prophetism and Catholic incarnationalism.

5) Since Vatican II, some Catholics, influenced by secular theology, regard organic models as too ecclesiocentric. They prefer to think in terms of a dialogic interaction between the Church and the world, and propose a fifth type of reform: *creative transformation.*

According to John W. O'Malley, all the theories of reform prior to Vatican II were basically conservative; they provided for the integral retention of what had been. "What is notably absent . . . is reform by transformation or even by revolution, for both of these imply at least a partial rejection of the past in the hope of creating something new." [12] Vatican II did not explicitly set forth this concept, but it did recognize that mankind is now standing at the threshold of a new age, and it accepted the idea that the Church should engage in respectful dialogue with secular thought. Taken together, these two principles inevitably produced a vision of reform far surpassing anything formally endorsed by the Council. As O'Malley says at the end of his article, we are presently experiencing in the Church something other than a reform as traditionally understood. Instead of a correction, revival, development, or updating, he maintains, "we are experiencing a transformation, even a revolution." [13]

The esteemed French theologian, Yves Congar, independently reaches practically the same conclusion. "Our epoch of rapid change and cultural transformation (philosophical ferments and sociological conditions different from those which the Church has accustomed itself to until now) calls for a revision of 'traditional' forms which goes beyond the level of adaptation or *aggiornamento,* and which would be instead a new creation. It is no longer sufficient to maintain, even by adapting it, what has already been; it is necessary to reconstruct it." [14] Congar quotes authors such as René Pascal and Marcel Légaut in support of this innovative position.

Neither O'Malley nor Congar is by temperament a radical. Both are acutely aware of the risks in revolutionary reform. But they say, in effect, that these risks must be taken if the Church is to enter effectively into the new age in which it finds itself. In agreement with these authors I would hold that, although the Church cannot accept what is simply alien, it can discern the presence of Christ in the signs of the times. In dialogue with the contemporary world, the Church can make innovations that do not simply grow out of its own previous tradition. Reform by devel-

opment and assimilation may have seemed an adequate model when the Church was the controlling influence in Western culture. But today a proper respect for the autonomy of human culture demands a less possessive and a more dialogic relationship. The Church must creatively respond to the initiatives of others. Rather than speak of revolution or reconstruction, I prefer to use the term "creative transformation" to describe the style of reform most urgently needed in the present age.

II. *AREAS OF REFORM:*

The five types of reform we have just considered apply in different ways to different areas of Church life. For present purposes it will be convenient and, I hope, sufficient, to distinguish four major areas: morality, discipline, governmental structures, and doctrine.

1. The area of *morality,* as I here use the term, has to do with personal fidelity to the Christian way of life. Since the very beginnings, preachers have never ceased to exhort the Christian people to a thoroughgoing inner reform according to the standards of the gospel. The Christian Fathers thought of reform as a renewal of the human person in the likeness of God, according to the model of Christ, who is par excellence the image of the invisible God.[15] Throughout the middle ages, such reform was assiduously practiced in the monasteries, as schools of personal sanctity. Even since the middle ages, when the public and doctrinal aspects of reform have come into prominence, the reform of morals has continued to be a matter of serious concern, as was the case at the Council of Trent. At Vatican II, the Fathers particularly stressed the necessity of personal sanctity as a prerequisite for fruitful participation in the apostolate of Christian unity. "There can be no ecumenism worthy of the name without a change of heart. . . . This change of heart and holiness of life, along with public and private prayer for the unity of Christians, should be regarded as the soul of the whole ecumenical movement, and can rightly be called 'spiritual ecumenism.' " [16]

Moral or personal reform is most closely related to the first, fourth and fifth of the types of reform mentioned above. In its negative aspect, it may be considered a reform by way of purification. In its positive side, it involves an initial transformation from sinfulness to righteousness, followed by a progressive development in the spiritual life. Thus the categories of purification, transformation and development are clearly applicable. Those of accretion and adaptation are not so evidently pertinent to moral reform.

2. The second area is that of *Church discipline.* Every Church has its discipline—that is to say, its prescribed or customary way of doing things. Discipline is not the same as doctrine, for it relates to what one does, not to what one believes. Discipline differs also from morality,

since it is a rule of conduct established by a particular social group—in our case, the Church to which one belongs. As examples of discipline, one may point to the way in which the clergy are trained, the requirements for ordination, the order of worship in the liturgy, and so forth. The Catholic Church has a vast amount of canonical and liturgical legislation—more, perhaps, than any other Church—although it is presently in the throes of a reaction against the legalism of the past few centuries.

The Councils of the Church have frequently concerned themselves with the reform of Church discipline. In the Gregorian Reform, and again about the time of the Council of Trent, this meant a tightening up of Church discipline in matters such as clerical celibacy, the training of future clergy, marriage legislation and public worship. The Church considers that it has power to impose canonical regulations when the interests of the Kingdom of God so require.

Under the last three popes, the Catholic Church has made a number of changes to simplify its discipline, with a view to giving more freedom and responsibility to the individual Christian. Some changes have gone in the direction of restoring the practice of the early Church; others, in the direction of adapting the Church to the modern world. Pope John XXIII, in an encyclical of 1959, gave as one of the purposes of the forthcoming Council "the bringing of ecclesiastical discipline into closer accord with the needs and conditions of our times." [17]

The disciplinary changes in the Church are generally to be explained under the categories of accretion and adaptation, though the elements of restoration and development are by no means absent. Speaking to a group of liturgists last December, the American Catholic theologian, Walter Burghardt, lamented that liturgists have generally not been sufficiently open "to creative reform, to transformational reform, to revolutionary reform." [18] It would seem that in the areas of canon law and liturgy, and indeed in the whole field of discipline, the Church is particularly challenged to engage in the kind of reform for which Fr. O'Malley and Fr. Congar, as previously quoted, have been calling.

The main problems attendant upon disciplinary reform are pedagogical and psychological. There is a pedagogical problem because many people tend to confuse the areas of discipline, morality, and doctrine. They do not understand that laws concerning holy days, fasting, abstinence, clerical celibacy, and the like were freely introduced and can be freely changed by Church authority. The psychological problem comes from the fact that many Christians have an emotional investment in the practices with which they have become familiar. Often the practice of the Church, especially in the domain of liturgy, has taken on a sacred symbolic value. To change the discipline is to create a spiritual

void, because a newly introduced practice does not normally have the same devotional significance.

Against these reasons, that would prompt one to move slowly in the reform of Church discipline, there are others, that point to the necessity of moving faster. The acceleration of cultural change means that the Church, if it clings to its ancient and medieval heritage, will become more and more of a museum piece. Young people, raised in a free and highly mobile society often find no sacred significance in the hallowed rites and customs of the Church. Thus the Church is apparently faced by a practical dilemma, forcing it to choose between alienating its staunchest supporters or failing to attract dynamic new recruits.

3. *Governmental Structures.* In Roman Catholic theology, certain structures of the Church are held to have been determined by Christ himself and canonized in the New Testament as permanently normative. For instance, it is believed that the Church must always have pastors with a responsibility for teaching and government, and that among them the successor to Peter will always have special authority over, and responsibility for, the total Church. For Catholics, the papal-episcopal form of government is not expendable, although there is great room for variation in the ways in which popes and bishops discharge their function.

Most of the Protestant Churches likewise have rather fixed notions concerning the form of Church government, whether episcopal, synodal, presbyteral, or congregational. It would be very difficult, I presume, for the Baptist Churches to retain their identity if they were to accept a papal or episcopal system. Conversely, the Catholic Church would seemingly be unable to retain its identity if it abandoned the papal-episcopal form of polity. In each of these two constituencies, the existing form of government is considered to reflect God's will for his Church and thus to be non-negotiable.

On the other hand, both Protestant and Catholic theology recognize a vast area of mutability in the realm of structure. In the middle ages the Catholic Church acquired a centralized, authoritarian, paternalistic form of government. Vatican II, with a view to adaptation, gave official status to pastoral councils and consultations, thus moving the Catholic Church toward a more democratic, participatory style. The heirarchy of boards and commissions in the American Catholic Church today is markedly similar to the decision-making apparatus of many Protestant communities. Liberal theologians in Western Europe and America are agitating for further democratization. There is no reason in principle why the Catholic Church could not accept the election of bishops for a fixed term of office and many other reforms inspired by secular political life. In the area of structure, as in that discipline, the main consideration is, or should be, a practical one: would the change in question lead

the members of the Church to a more intense life of faith, hope, and charity? If the answer is yes, the suggested reform should presumably be introduced. Within the limits allowed by the divinely given constitution of the Church, very sweeping reforms may be made by way of adaptation, accretion, development, and creative transformation.

4. The last area, that of *doctrine*, is the most sensitive of the four. Like other Christian bodies, the Catholic Church is very conscious of its responsibility to proclaim, without dissimulation or attenuation, the revelation originally committed to the prophets and apostles. Like other Christian bodies, the Catholic Church is irrevocably committed to the teaching of the Bible and to the articles of the creed—especially those basic articles dealing with the triune God, the incarnation, the death and resurrection of Jesus, and our own hope of everlasting life. Like other Christian bodies, again, the Catholic Church has certain specific teachings which it regards as non-negotiable.

These are generally known as dogmas. Dogmas are called "irreformable" not in the sense that they can never be better formulated, but in the sense that they are held to be so intimately connected with revelation that the Church can never cease to teach them. Although the Baptists do not have anything precisely equivalent to the Roman Catholic dogmas, they do have, if I am correctly informed, some characteristic teachings that they are not likely to part with; for example, the sufficiency of Scripture, the necessity of faith for a valid baptism, the separation of Church and State, and the primacy of the local church.

As regards reformability in the doctrinal area, the Catholic Church denies, in the first place, the reversability of dogmas. Furthermore, it rejects the idea of any radical innovation or transformation in Church teaching, for it holds that it has no mandate to preach anything except "the faith once for all delivered to the saints" (Jude 3). The Church does, however, acknowledge the possibility of development, not simply in the area of theology but in dogma itself, so that the Church can define, as obligatory doctrine, a truth that was not explicitly known to earlier generations.

Most of the Councils of the Church have used the term "reform" only in the context of morals and discipline. Vatican II in this respect constitutes an exception. In a passage from the Decree on Ecumenism quoted above, the Council taught that "continual reformation" is needed in the doctrinal area. Deficiencies in the formulation of doctrine must be corrected.[19]

The Council especially stressed the importance of adaptation in Church teaching. The Church's purpose, according to the Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World, "has been to adapt the gospel to the grasp of all as well as to the needs of the learned, insofar

as such was appropriate. Indeed, this accommodated preaching of the revealed Word ought to remain the law of all evangelization. For thus each nation develops the ability to express God's message in its own way. At the same time, a living exchange is fostered between the Church and the diverse cultures of people." [20]

Finally, the Council called for a deeper penetration of the deposit of revelation through a skillful utilization of the resources of modern science and scholarship. It discountenanced any obscurantism that would seek to protect the faith by refusing to enter into dialogue with modern scientific criticism.[21] Like Vatican I, Vatican II confidently assumed that there could be no real contradiction between the discoveries of human reason and the deliverances of divine revelation.

Since the Council, it must be confessed, there has been more than a little confusion in the doctrinal area. Some adventurous theologians, seeking to adapt the Church's teaching to the contemporary world, have arrived at new interpretations that their colleagues reject as unsound. In this area, as in those of discipline and structure, a polarization has occurred. Liberals and conservatives accuse one another of being untrue to the directives of Vatican II. Some Catholics blame the Council for not having made its program sufficiently clear, but the present cleavage in the Church would have probably occurred even without the Council. In many branches of contemporary Protestantism—perhaps especially in the United States—similar struggles are being waged between liberals or modernists on the one hand and conservatives or fundamentalists on the other.

Analogous conflicts, I believe, periodically occur in all religions that claim to base themselves on a historical revelation, such as Judaism and Islam. Since these cleavages are so widespread, it should be evident that they arise not from the bad will of individuals but from the very nature of such religions. Judaism, Islam, and Christianity all contain an inbuilt tension between the demands for fidelity to the past and for relevance to the present. These demands often seem to point in contrary directions. Both the conservatives and the innovators are motivated by legitimate concerns. Church authorities would be well advised not to decide any disputed question without listening carefully and sympathetically to what the advocates of both positions have to say.

III. *VALUES AND DANGERS IN REFORM:*

Reform is problematical because it does both good and harm; it is both necessary and dangerous. In this concluding section of my paper I should like to point out both the advantages and disadvantages in reformism.

The arguments for reform are mainly two: the sinfulness and the historicity of man. Sinfulness causes men to distort the gospel—to use it

for their own selfish ends and even to make it an instrument for oppressing others. The record of history makes it clear that Christians, often without conscious bad will, have turned religion into a tool for acquiring personal honors, riches, and security. At times they have appealed to Christian revelation in order to maintain an unjust social order. Unjust wars have frequently been fought with the blessing of high ecclesiastics. And it is not only Church officials who have been guilty of such deformations. The Christian people themselves, at every level, tend to shy away from the harsh demands of the gospel, to muzzle its prophetic impact, and to take refuge in human superstitions. Against all such abuses the reformer must protest in the name of God. It is his task to rebuke, to purify, and to renew.

Secondly, reform is necessary because of historicity. The revelation of God cannot be received except in fragile human vessels, limited by the particularities of time and place. Even the Bible, the most privileged expression of revealed truth, is in many respects a culturally conditioned document. It expresses the divine truth as perceived and understood by a people very different from ourselves. To proclaim the revelation today, the Church has to restate it in ways that come home to a contemporary audience. The Church itself has to be restructured to suit the needs of the apostolate in different times and places. The missionary imperative is perhaps the strongest justification for changes that would be not a simple development of the apostolic deposit, but adaptations, accretions, and creative transformations. Especially in the realms of discipline and structure, some discontinuity may be called for. We must ask not only what Jesus did provide for the Church of the first century, but what he would have provided had he been living in the twentieth. Only a Church that continually renews itself will have the power to proclaim the gospel to every generation. A slavish imitation of the past will not suffice for a genuine renewal.

Inspired by zeal to eliminate corruptions and to modernize the Church, reformers have generally been very dedicated Christians. Many of them would be entitled to say, as did John Stuart Mill, "My love for an institution is in proportion to my desire to reform it." [22] But the zeal for reform, like other kinds of zeal, may be immoderate. There are limits to reform, and these must be indicated.

The most basic limitation, and perhaps the only true limitation, is that it must really be reform. Built into the very notion of reform, as I have defined it for the purposes of this paper, are two provisos: that it be an improvement and that it leave intact the identity of that which is being reformed. An alleged reform is unacceptable when it violates either of these conditions. We must therefore ask with respect to any proposed change: would it weaken or strengthen the Church? Would it tend to dissolve the Church and turn it into something else?

All five types of reform considered in this paper are, or can be, ways of maintaining and building up the Church. This is evident with regard to purification, development, and adaptation. Even accretion may be fully consonant with the nature of the Church as a kind of incarnation of the gospel in human history. Creative transformation befits the Church as a living society animated by the Spirit of God.

Every reform is, in the short run, somewhat costly to the Church. It disturbs Church authorities, because the questioning of established usages tends to undermine the implicit trust of the faithful in their pastors. It disturbs the faithful themselves, because it is never easy to adjust to changes. Whereas young and marginal members, as well as prophetic spirits, may clamor for innovations, the older and more satisfied members, who often have the ear of the highest authorities, prefer to maintain the existing order. Those who are at home in the Church as it is are inevitably tempted to look upon reform as a species of rebellion.

To judge in concrete cases whether a proposed change would be consonant with the nature of the Church and helpful to its mission may be a difficult task. In a healthy Church, evaluation is carried on by means of experimentation and debate, under the vigilance of the responsible leaders. The ultimate decision whether to adopt a proposed reform requires prayful discernment. Prayer is important because it opens us up to the Holy Spirit, the Spirit of Jesus Christ.

Jesus himself, as we know him from the Scriptures, is the most inspiring and exigent criterion of reform. Standing steadfastly within the tradition of the Law and the prophets, he firmly rejected every form of infidelity. But he totally reformed the religion of Israel in the power of the Holy Spirit. He did not hesitate to set two against three and three against two in a single household. Rejected by the religious as well as the civil authorities of his day, he paid the ultimate price, and was vindicated by God. Every Christian reformer must ask himself whether he is carrying on the mission of Jesus. Whoever has to pass judgment on contemporary reformers must sincerely ask himself how he would react if Jesus were alive and preaching in America today.

The topic of reform is inextricably connected with the present rapprochement among Churches of different traditions, so dramatically evidenced by the present meeting. If the Churches are not open to reform, their mutual contacts cannot benefit them, but if they place themselves under the power of the gospel, and submit to authentic reform, they cannot fail to come closer to one another. If every Christian Church were to introduce the changes that the Holy Spirit is asking of it, mutual recognition and fellowship would easily follow. Reform is

perhaps the only path that can effectively lead to the kind of Christian reunion for which we labor and pray.

FOOTNOTES

[1] The views of Luther and Calvin on reform are summarized with some helpful references in Yves Congar, *Vraie et fausse Reforme dans l'Eglise* (Paris: Cerf, 1950), pp. 365-67.

[2] John Milton, *Areopagitica* (1644). Cf. G. B. Ladner, *The Idea of Reform: Its Impact on Christian Thought and Action in the Age of the Fathers* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1959), p. 34.

[3] *Lumen gentium* no. 8; quoted from W. M. Abbott (ed.), *The Documents of Vatican II* (New York: America Press, 1966), p. 24.

[4] *Unitatis redintegratio* no. 6; Abbott, p. 350.

[5] "Urgens necessitas vel evidens utilitas" is the expression used by Constitution 50 of Lateran IV (1215). See J. W. O'Malley, "Reform, Historical Consciousness, and Vatican II's *Aggiornamento,*" *Theological Studies* 32 (1971) p. 579.

[6] The Council of Constance (1415) stated that communion under one species was introduced "rationabiliter" (*DS* 1199); cf. O'Malley, *art. cit.*, p. 580.

[7] *Lumen gentium,* no. 13, uses the text from Psalm 2 to argue that the Church must "foster and take to herself, insofar as they are good, the ability, resources, and customs of each people," Abbott, p. 31.

[8] H. R. Neibuhr expounds and criticizes "culture Christianity," chiefly in its Protestant manifestations, in *Christ and Culture* (New York: Harper Torchbooks, 1956), pp. 83-115.

[9] Vatican I, Dogmatic Constitution *Dei Filius,* Chap. 4 (*DS* 3020).

[10] *Dei Verbum* no. 8; Abbott, p. 116.

[11] *Unitatis redintegratio* no. 24; Abbott, p. 365.

[12] O'Malley, *art. cit.*, p. 595.

[13] *Ibid.*, p. 600.

[14] Y. Congar, "Renewal of the Spirit and Reform of the Institution," in A. Müller and N. Greinacher (eds.), *Ongoing Reform in the Church* (*Concilium* vol. 73) (New York: Herder & Herder, 1972), p. 47.

[15] Ladner, *op. cit.*, pp. 63-283.

[16] *Unitatis redintegratio* nos. 7-8; Abbott, pp. 351-52.

[17] Encyclical, *Ad Petri cathedram,* quoted by H. Küng, *The Council, Reform, and Reunion* (New York: Sheed & Ward, 1961), p. ix.

[18] W. J. Burghardt, "A Theologian's Challenge to Liturgy," manuscript, p. 13.

[19] *Unitatis redintegratio* no. 6; Abbott, p. 350.

[20] *Gaudium et spes* no. 44; Abbott, p. 246.

[21] *Ibid.* no 62; Abbott, pp. 269-70.

[22] Quoted by Richard P. McBrien, *The Remaking of the Church* (New York: Harper & Row, 1973), p. xiii.

PRESENTATION OF DISCUSSION

Social Issues of Common Concern To Christians

DR. WILLIAM J. CUMBIE

My Brothers and Sisters in Christ: I really don't know why I am here to speak. My only qualification to be speaking is the word "concern." I'm really a promoter, administrator, planner but I care about the society in which I live and I care about the future which God is giving us.

I speak out of the context of having spent half my life in the bedroom communities of Suburban Virginia, next door to the Nation's Capital. I said bedroom communities. That really is not accurate; it's bedroom *non*-communities. The major social issue I believe that faces Urban America is the ABSENCE OF COMMUNITY. I do not believe we have it in any Metropolitan area in our Country nor do I believe we have it in the mind-set of most Americans. Christians ought to be concerned about community as its absence robs us all, destroys the fiber of our society and frustrates the prayer our Lord taught us to pray: "Thy Kingdom come, Thy will be done on earth, as it is in Heaven."

I list some concerns. They should not be seen as a want list for a political liberal—they could be seen as that—but they are some concerns I think Christians share. They are not listed in any order of priority. I've already alluded to one that I think is an overriding one—the need for community. And I think that anybody who has lived through the last two years knows that we need a revival of PUBLIC MORALITY in America. When the highest office in the land is stained with scandal, and the governments of major states are rocked with purchase-bribery, and the second highest office is vacated on nolo contendere, we know that something is wrong and Christians ought to be concerned about public morals. We also ought to be concerned about PRIVATE MORALS.

A major concern—a social issue—is HOW CHRISTIANS CAN BE INVOLVED IN THE POLITICAL PROCESS. I, like most of you, reject the withdrawal syndrome. I respect those who believe God has called them to the monastic life, but I do not believe that call is universal for all believers. God has some shock troops who need to get into the legisla-

ture and in the political parties and in the communities to shape and direct His reformation of society. I endorse the enabling role of the clergymen, to instruct and equip the "laos" of God to be involved in the political process. That's a social concern that ought to be uppermost in our minds.

A major social concern is the QUESTION OF WAR AND PEACE. President Eisenhower once cautioned the Country about becoming dominated by a military-industrial complex. Have you thought lately of how much our current affluence is the product of the military spending in Southeast Asia? Have you asked yourself what causes war, and what produces peace, and how can we, as men of God, the called ones, contribute to the building of peace?

A social concern that ought to capture our Christian compassion are the concerns about HUMAN WELFARE. I think particularly about HOUSING which seems to me to underlie nearly all of the other social concerns that cause upheaval in Metropolitan areas. Right now, the County where I live is in a struggle about growth vs. no growth vs. planned growth. Maybe I'm being too judgmental when I say that some of my friends, who advocate no growth in the guise of preserving the environment, have baptized their prejudice with environmental trappings so as to keep out the poor, the Black, and others who have been deprived by our society.

I think concerns about human welfare include EDUCATION. I don't want to get into my colleague's area particularly except to ask this kind of question: Does the public education bureaucracy equip the pupils for responsible living in a free society or is it a bureaucracy to perpetuate incompetence in the professional staff? It is some of both. Christians ought to be concerned that it is not the latter and that it is the former. Does the public school education undergird the values which are in our American heritage that spring out of our Christian concerns about persons, institutions and relationships?

I think a concern that most Christians share about human welfare has to do with HEALTH SERVICES. I'm not talking about the quality of health services; I'm talking about their distribution. Can a Christian endorse an entrepreneur system of health services distribution and turn his eyes away from the hurts of humanity which are passed by in that kind of economic system?

Another area about human welfare concerns HUNGER and POVERTY and SOCIAL DEPRIVATION. A whole galaxy of concerns spring out of these words.

There is a Christian concern about the ENVIRONMENT. My colleague, who is to follow me, is looking for a tank of gas this afternoon.

He wants to get back to Washington. He has burned up down to his quarter and the miracle worker from Baltimore, Wesley Johnson, my colleague here, cannot even tell him where there is an open gas station. That's a concern for Christians, not because we can't get gas, but what have we done to the "Garden" with our pollution and environmental alterations, and to what degree and in what form should our Christian concern address this issue?

There is the whole area of concern about the FAMILY. The present assault on marriage, with its pseudo-scientific descriptions of pagan immoralities, justifying all kinds of unbiblical and, in the judgment of all the Christian Churches through all of their histories, sinful human relationships as being normative. Do we have a word to say that is both redemptive and constructive toward this social issue? How about the change of the roles of male and female? What is legitimate in the aspirations of the feminists? Where should we males drop back from a chauvinist position? What is the Biblical revelation at this point and where does Christian understanding of social issues derive?

And then there is the whole problem of PARENTING. The drive for substitute parents, especially for substitute mothers, institutional in certain settings, is one that we ought to address. If we must have day care centers as substitutes for mothers, how can we impute to them a Christian context where the values that are taught and relationships that are learned are in harmony with the revealed will of God as we understand it?

And there are the problems of the AGING. Most of the physical, social arrangements for living prohibit the multi-generational family. How much of our Christian values have we lost because of the separation in physical environment of the multi-generation unit? And how can we deal with that problem constructively and in the Christian context?

A concern which pervades many of the things above is the concern about RACISM. It's institutionalized in many of the issues I have raised above. Some of my brothers, with whom I have bled and sweated through my own pilgrimage, who are in this meeting today, who have helped open my eyes and helped me break out of my inborn prejudice, could help us to understand how we, without thinking, very often perpetuate racism.

And then there's the whole question of JUSTICE. The collapse of effective justice dispensing in the legal system of our Country is almost obvious. What can Christians do to have equal justice under the law for all people?

Finally, if we are going to talk about social issues, do we really believe that we can make a difference? Dr. Harold Lindsell, with whom

I am privileged to share church membership at the First Baptist Church of Alexandria, is the Editor of *Christianity Today*. He wrote in a beginning of the year editorial about the despair that is pervasive among many Christians about our ability to make a difference. He has suggested on many occasions that our best hope with social issues and hurts is that of amelioration. I am not ready to buy that.

Last summer, when the Baptist World Alliance Executive Committee met in Einsiedeln, Switzerland, I learned a new hymn. (It was an interesting experience for Baptists to hear a Benedictine tell us of the similarities between Baptists and Benedictines.)

"Your Word Makes Us Hope, Lord"

Your word makes us hope, Lord,
And to look ahead with peace
The future opens to us
For our faith is in Thee.

Your word makes us trust, Lord,
That you only are our hope.
That certainly remains forever
Victory through Jesus Christ.

Your word makes us love, Lord,
And concerned for all mankind.
Help our love be ever faithful
So all see we are Thine.

Your work makes us hope, Lord,
And to look ahead with peace
The future opens to all
Who in Thee put their trust.

Otmar Schulz
Theodore F. Adams, Trans.

Social issues are of common concern for Christians. I believe that Christians can and must make a difference! I believe, precisely because we pray . . . Thy Kingdom come, Thy will be done on EARTH!

SECTION IV

GROUP DISCUSSION REPORTS

GROUP DISCUSSION REPORTS

Group 1-A

The first discussion period dealt with a set of topics roughly grouped around Question 4. "How can a middle class church gather in new members or even proclaim the gospel to people in other stratas of society?" It was phrased in the discussion: "How does a middle class church carry on a program of evangelism to the poor? Some of the general notes of this difficulty were first distinguished: 1) There is a problem in identifying the poor in large numbers; they are nameless and faceless. 2) It is particularly difficult for a middle class minister to understand and speak to the poor, particularly if there is also a cultural difference, e.g., black as different from white which impedes this communication. In one locale visits of the minister and members of the white congregation to the black areas were resented, since the whites always returned to their homes in the evening. After several attempts at conducting this sort of evangelism, the white congregation decided that the best way would be to support the work of a poor black church in the ghetto, even though a different denomination. Not a happy solution, but the best in the circumstances.

A special case of the poor and the powerless is that of prisoners, particularly those in maximum security prisons.

A third case of the poor is those who are recently unemployed. How does one reach this class particularly the many among them who are unchurched? These have a special spiritual problem: that of a loss of self esteem. Once very useful and successful, they think themselves useless.

Through all this, the minister ought not forget that his ministry is spiritual: he must have the conviction that the most important element of the life of a man is his relationship to Jesus Christ; and unless the Church assists him to have and strengthen this, the Church has no ministry. The Black churches show us that the poor can be very busy, dedicated and devoted church members because their members have established this relationship, even though they are materially poor.

These notes define the problem.

As for solutions, the following were suggested: The first is that of *presence*: just being there when people hurt, even though there might not be very much today. It is also important that the minister be available: although this help may be offered many times and refused, there will come a time when it is needed, and then it will be sought out. Therefore it is not useless to continue to offer it.

In this matter, the discussion returned several times to the difference between the Catholic territorial parish and the Baptist congregational structure. The priest, because of his clerical garb is very identifiable. (Baptist ministers, however, in several situations where this identity is an asset have taken to wearing some sort of clerical garb.) In a territorial parish also, the responsibility for the evangelization of the unchurched is plain: it is the pastor's. In some cases, where a Baptist minister may wish to take responsibility for the poor in the neighborhood of his church, he will discover that very few of his congregation live in the neighborhood, and to them the process of ministry there seems alien and strange.

Two theological questions were mentioned as worthy of development or of being kept in mind: the theology of laity, their responsibility for the Church and for its mission; and, for the Black community the theology of liberation.

A-1 The second discussion

In the second discussion, the group dealt with a family of problems dealing with the Church and social concerns. The first problem, returned to several times, was that of the clergyman in social concerns. Should the church offer specific solutions to racial problems or remain in the realm of general principles. The either/or was not accepted. It was agreed that the Church should enforce the consciences of laymen, who would then be responsible for creating the solutions; the Church could judge perhaps that a preferred solution was not in harmony with the gospel. From then on, the clergyman must trust in the integrity of the layman as he goes about fashioning the solution.

The fact that there are 15 clergymen in Congress who do not enjoy agreement as the solutions to the common problems they face, indicated the difficulty of there being a Church answer or one Christian solution to any problem.

In Washington, a small group of laymen band together to pray for one legislator: they learn about his life and his responsibilities, the problems he faces; and then meet with him to assist him in the solution to these problems.

It is true also, that Church-assisted and endorsed solutions that work in one community may not, for good reasons, work in another. Project Equality is one such example. Diversity of church solutions and even contradiction between churches, may not be as wide and as opposed as appears at first glance. Often the parties take sharply opposed positions for the purpose of polemic and out of a spirit of mistrust.

A third large question was that of the relation of the individual congregation to the national church board or diocesan office, in designing and implementing solutions to social problems. Both have a role, neither is sufficient without the other. First it was noted that there is a great need for individual action on the part of Christians: writing to their congressmen, and sending letters to the editors of daily papers. Yet, on the other hand, this independence, sometimes identified as American and sometimes as Baptist, should not be stressed. In corporate action there is strength. Second, it is agreed that the weakest link in the chain is the local church. Solutions to social problems seem so clear when they are described in the literature of the national or diocesan board. But they can never be preached or advocated or implemented in that form in the local congregation.

It seemed to some that an episcopal form of church order was better for the identification, preparation and transmission of solutions to be implemented at the local level. Yet on close examination it appeared that both episcopal and congregational churches employ the secular processes of local initiation, higher formulation, and then a return to the local congregation and returning to the national level before a policy becomes firm.

The role of the Church was thought to be fourfold: 1) *Witness*: speaking out in word and deed on behalf of the poor, the powerless, the needy and the disadvantaged in any way; 2) *Advocacy*: the acceptance and support of the programs of another group; 3) *special service*: the caring for the effects of social injustice: hunger, disease, etc.; 4) *and social action*: the healing of the *cause* of the injustice and the misery. All are the work of all churches; none can be omitted; while one may prevail at one time.

Are there specific programs by which the Church might treat of social ills? One is the *Community Life Series*. This is a three evening program sponsored by the Church in a neighborhood, which ought to be ecumenical, trans-racial and involving every economic class. Assisted by facilitators, the people identify the problems of their neighborhood. On the second night they place them in priority order; and on the third night they choose the top three; and formulate some kind of solution to them. Often the process begun by the Church, becomes the beginning of a community organization and the start of substantial social change.

In discussing Baptist and Catholic polity, a fact noted by Brownlow Hastings in his talk, that while the Catholic Church is becoming more conscious of the role of the members of the local congregation in determining the activity of that Church, the Baptists have placed in their confessions some references to the whole universal Church of Christ everywhere—somehow found in each congregation.

The final question: Where do we go next? 1) Catholics and Southern Baptists ought to dialogue again, particularly on the questions aptly chosen for this conference: evangelism to the unchurched, the church and social issues, the need for reform in the Church, etc. Each has much to learn and teach to the other.

2) This conference is unique in that it brings together representatives of the Southern Baptist Churches and of the great, large and powerful Catholic dioceses: Boston, New York, Philadelphia, Baltimore, Washington and Chicago. This is significant: the dialogue has come to a wider than regional basis. This fact would be of interest to the Catholic community.

3) Where possible also, Catholic and Baptist churches, should pair together in the areas of evangelism and of social change.

Group 2-A

Our time of discussion was opened up by asking the question "who are the unchurched"? It was decided that if we are to reach the unchurched in our society, we must first discover who they are. Several basic statements might be made concerning our discussion of this issue. 1) The fact that a person's name appears on a church roll does not mean that they are necessarily "churched." One of the great fields of evangelism is on our church rolls. 2) The fact that a person attends church on a regular basis (perhaps even weekly) does not necessarily mean he is "churched." Often our members "fall out" with the church over slight matters or in times of crisis when they suspect that the church has been judgmental towards them. A sence of community must be developed before one is "churched." A spectator, even a regular one, is not a part of that community. 3) If the church is to reach the unchurched it must equip itself to confront those who have no personal relationships. 4) In searching for answers as to why we have so many "unchurched" in our churches several suggestions were made.

a. Some uphold the tradition of the family.

b. Infant baptism (in R.C.) and pre-adolescent baptism.

In our afternoon session we began by coming back to the area of evangelism and shared some of the patterns which are emerging from our churches. We particularly discussed the involvement of the laity in our witness and the need to evangelize those who made no practice of being a part of the church.

We later jumped to the topic of alienation discussed earlier. It was noticed that often minority groups have a pessimistic feeling of alienation, but that our American experience has been that the minority can be heard and does have the ability to change things (e.g., civil rights movement of the 60's). It was indicated that, in our day, we have to decide, as Christians, that we can no longer depend upon societal pressures in the area of values. Therefore, we must apply what influence we can upon our own people and attempt to bear a witness to the surrounding culture.

From this point on, our discussion wandered from alpha to omega and was generally enjoyed by all.

Group 3

The Church has for a long time avoided social action, however, more and more support for it is found today. Specialization, apart from social action, polarizes people. To avoid polarization, there is a need for sympathy and support from all sides. We must respect the talents and contributions of the social activist. One must be sensitive to the concerns and contributions of others. If we are not sensitive to the whole picture of evangelism, we are failures. Many who have been involved in social action are drawing away from it at the present time. A lot have been disappointed in social action. They thought social action would fill our churches, but to some extent it emptied our churches. For some social action was doomed because it carried a "price tag." A good social action ministry must be nurtured. When we talk about church, we are talking about people. About 13% of the population of Columbia, Maryland, is related to the social activities of the local churches. The church will begin to give social ministry when, 1) the church realizes that people are hurting out there; 2) we have something to share; and 3) people will plug into a community, a group, where others care—doing something about the hurt.

How do you become a Christian witness and avoid the pitfall that faith is just a gimmick? Three words mean the same thing and yet have different meaning to people: dogma, doctrine and teaching. We must get across our teaching to our people: everybody is valuable in the sight of God. A well-instructed laity gets things across to others better than

priests. We must work through people, e.g., when a person comes for instruction in the faith, he is already converted through a lay person. People have the obligation to become missionaries.

Your first mission is to where you are—whether suburban or otherwise. The job of evangelizing—healing hurts—in the suburb is the best thing you can do for the unchurched or for the inner city. The problems of the suburb are much more difficult to define. When the hurts in the suburb are healed, these people can begin to minister unto others. We have not done much healing in the suburb because our society does not allow it.

Individuals and churches are pulling back from social work and it is asked: "How does ecumenism come into the picture?" It comes in cycles—his lack of interest in social work. There was a statement issued in 1918 immediately after World War I. Five years later things changed again. At present we are going downward. The present moral situation is comparable to conditions in Germany in 1929. No one would have predicted the extermination of millions of Jews in the 1930's and no protest over it. Thomas Jefferson saw the continuing conflicts between blacks and whites and eventually one killing off the other. Can we give Christian witness where the law of the land is no longer based upon a Christian appreciation of humanity? (Cf. Court decision on abortion.)

The philosophy of inevitable progress evolved in the nineteenth century; and along with that we developed a theology of enough. Where do we go from here? H. G. Wells recognized the bankruptcy of inevitable progress back in 1914. We should not be despondent about the pullback from social action. People always ask: What has this got to do with religion? There is a real teaching role for us. Through teaching you must liberate people from their hangups.

We must do more than just ride coattails. The Church sometimes does not only stand on the side of the oppressed. She is the oppressor. People are often oppressed in subtle ways often hardly noticeable. In social issues, clearcut things are seldom possible. In social action it does not mitigate my responsibility in case I do not know how to do it? I must share my faith and help. If we have difficulties in church, it is because there has been very little liberation in the Church. What is the role of the minister in liberating his wife? Buddhists admit they know when a Christian is around. He sees wrongs and does something about them. Women should not get less than men for the same work. If a woman chooses to operate in a man's world, it does not mean she is less a woman. The work of the church is to liberate man. The basic insight of Christianity is the liberation of the person of the community.

Social concerns are common to us. One difficulty is to start the dialoguing process. We must come up with an agreement on good and

evil and be able to say, as our founding fathers did, ". . . we hold these truths to be self-evident. . . ." Catholics follow the natural morality. Natural law needs updating. Baptists have not systematically arrived at morality. If we are trying to create a society that agrees on good and evil, then atheists must be brought into the picture. Oppenheimer, frightened by the atom bomb, was willing to talk about human life. Church, local and universal, is the keeper, the steward of the moral value system of mankind. People are willing to listen to some significant voices out of the institutional church.

Group 4, First Session:

The group had some difficulty in getting down to identifying the unchurched. An evangelist came to hold a revival; he asked the pastor if he had any unchurched prospects and he said, "Oh, yes." Then, when asked who they were, the pastor said, "They are all around us." They did not seem to have faces nor addresses nor specific needs.

However, our group did reflect the need and desire to minister to the unchurched and voiced several areas of concern.

The power of the media was noted and the great influence in the homes fed by programs of an immoral and violent nature. Many sponsors appear to have little concern for the types of programs they underwrite. It was suggested that through economic and verbal sanctions some of this might be alleviated. Also, the church might go on the offensive in using the media to present a Christian influence by pooling their resources.

The use of conferences on family life, marriage counseling, etc., could reinforce the family unit and be a means of outreach. In ministering to the unchurched there was expressed the possibility of the church being wililng to change its style of ministry to identify with the needs of the community. This might involve a group of churches working together in the inner city doing what a single church could not do alone.

The question arose as to the motives of the individual church in calling the unchurched to the community of believers. Possibly the church was self-centered and was not willing to make referrals of prospects to other churches.

The pastors felt the great burden that was placed upon them inasmuch as their fellowships needed many ministries that only they could perform. In other instances lay persons could help with outreach. In Baptist circles often the laity lacked a motivation of concern; with Catholics the trend of the lay movement has yet to be widely accepted.

In challenging and equipping the layman, there was the need to examine more closely his particular gifts so that he might be used in that capacity. The availability of materials from the Baptist Home Mission Board on Witness Involvement Now were noted.

One pastor shared that a few of his laymen had begun to reach out to others. He was unable to account for this, but like the wind that blows where it will, he was seeing the results and was grateful to God for it. Thus, the church was found to be not static—someone was asking, "Who is my neighbor?"

Group 4, Second Session:

The moderator shared a thought from Gabriel Moran that the community must not be oppressive but have a Christianity concern in the economic, political, sexist, religious, and racial realism.

The issue of parochial schools was discussed and one pastor suggested he would prefer to dwell on where we might find common ground to wield a concern for the restoration of Christian values in education. With increased mobility in American life, the sense of community and moral values seemed to be lacking. He thought there should be alterations in helping the parochial schools through busing, books and shared time.

There was expressed great apprehension on the question of pro-abortion, not only on that one issue but that it set a pattern or principle for other important causes. That is, when we take the position that overpopulation, possibility of poverty and lack of parental responsibility are solved by abortion, other areas of life also become expendable. People tend to want freedom but fail to shoulder the responsibilities that go with that freedom. Confusion comes about as to a sense of values. The medical profession becomes pressured and uncertain as to their position in relation to abortion.

One pastor recommended the reading of Dr. Menninger's book, *Whatever Happened to Sin*.

In all of this and other issues was the question of how do we succeed because there are tensions no matter which way we decide. It is not enough to work hard to accomplish the American dream so all will come out rosy. The church must be prophetic so it will be a Christian dream. It must be sensitive and act as a corporate body. Where members are part of secular agencies they must be equipped in Christian responsibilities.

In making the Christian principles known on issues of concern, some churches have task groups within the church who speak out on political issues. Southern Baptists use agencies such as Home Mission Board, Christian Life Commission and seminaries as catalysts in challenging the churches to be knowledgeable on these issues so they might speak to them.

In all of this, the emphasis must be on the whole person, for Jesus is not only Savior, but also Lord.

Group 5, First Session:

1. Yes, a Baptist church in Hyattsville has for several years conducted a ministry for compassion, especially directed to that segment who have no church interest. This might include help of food or services in illness or death. This was not done as proselytizing or evangelizing, just hopefully what Christ would do. This was considered to be an excellent example in the practical order of "Lumen Suerti" (Vatican Document). The church is not her own end. She does not exist for herself, but as the vehicle of Christ's teaching.

Most agreed that there is a spiritual ministry to the non-churched, though it is sometimes necessary to be selective in the people who minister. We find these people through twenty-four hour answering service, by performing as Christ did, wherever, whenever needed.

The question was raised as to motives. Do we minister because they are suffering or in need, or for reconciliation? If our first aim is to help the "hurting," is hope of future church membership an ulterior motive? If help is given in the spirit of Christ, then the recipient may ask why? It was agreed that we have to earn the right to witness.

2. Several think from experience, that where church-initiated programs exist, such as halfway houses, church day nurseries, those helped (families) do not respond. Those who have improved situations do not help the less fortunate. Reasons range from lack of responsibility to the existence of crime and drugs.

We all have a mandate to administer to the disadvantaged. Witness and ministry are definitely related but not inseparably joined. The compassionate ACT has to precede the word for credibility.

Also discussed was the dimension of spiritual ministry to the disadvantaged of the heart. Many need spiritual comfort more than services of compassion. It was mentioned we may save a soul, but lose a life. We can reach a soul through the gospel. Are we trying to change the lifestyle

of the person? When drug or crime problems are over, psychological problems have just begun.

3 & 4. Our church rolls are full of people who do not attend services, who feel the church has not met their needs. Members of both faiths recognized enormous numbers of poor people to help. There are obstacles to making church members where there are varying economic and class barriers.

It was mentioned that sometimes an invitation to church membership in the past was based on the potential of some good to the church from this prospect which definitely should not be a criterion.

5. Sometimes, the best way to reach people is in a crisis. Sincere interest in a time of personal disaster will open closed doors.

The question was asked whether we put the church before Christ. Indoctrination seems to be the name of the game. At this point we had an interchange of prejudicial images. Catholics have been criticized for too often getting converts into the church. Catholics responded that Baptists seemed over-aggressive in this manner also, with go-out-and-get-them, knock-on-the-door technique. The Billy Graham image is not always acceptable. We should, as one put it, be fishers of men, rather than keepers of the aquarium.

The crisis approach to non-church goers was only one. Reading matter judiciously passed on and good example were stressed.

Some of the Baptists praised and revitalized stress of Roman Catholics on individual witness. It was pointed out that all of us know more about Christ than we are sharing with others. Deeds of service are more costly than gospel words, but it is not a case of either/or—both are necessary.

Group 5, Second Session:

Discussion of present national situations. What are the causes of the loss of public morality? Some of the thoughts on this—We have been busy producing a pragmatic man who says "How do we get the job done?" not "Is it right or wrong?" We have done so well in achieving the good life here—settled in and received so much sustenance on our earthly home, we have forgotten the ultimate city, the destination. Instead material success has been our goal. Public and private morality question precedes the present situation. We can question motives on both political sides. Isn't public morality necessarily based on personal morality? Can a public morality exist separate from the personal? Fur-

thermore, can we be silent in the face of clear-cut, gross immorality? We have had too many examples of justification, but no repentance for misdeeds. There is much moral sensitivity at the grass roots level, we can still be shocked, thankfully. There are reasons for hope in some areas. Also, much cynicism, frustration of "everybody does it"—guilt in both parties, etc. What is new is the enormous awareness of it, since it has been done before. Do we need new attitudes of responsibility or protest or both? Examples—slander, vicious attacks, malicious underhanded things. We must not excuse this; we must assume our part in making justice prevail.

We all have responsibility and need repentance for what has happened such as in the case of recent wars. Is there such a thing as a "just war?" Many think there never has been a just war, and urge non-violence at the risk of personal martyrdom. Pacifism seems the only answer. It was pointed out that the choice of war or no war is not always available. Also, that some wars are less evil than others. Never black and white, but a choice of the lesser evil. However, there were several in agreement that one can use violence to protect oneself, or one's household. There is a justification for helping our neighbor in case he is threatened. The problem seems to be different on a larger scale. Who is our neighbor and which ones do we help?

On amnesty for the draft dodgers several agreed that there should be a condition of service to the country for forgiveness on the basis that anyone who feels so strongly about killing and war service should also be conscientious enough to make it up some way. Would we, in case of a soft line, suffer as a country for defense in case of an attack. It was pointed out that even more so in hindsight the issues of the Vietnam War were different than others the U.S. had fought. Also, many youth who left the country were disillusioned with the whole country. Should it be amnesty? Haven't they suffered enough? There is room here for grace and mercy.

The issue of peace is a frustrating one. We lack good understanding of world problems, a grasp of issues. However, we can all agree that the best place to promote peace and make starts is with each other—family levels, neighborhood and inter church. We have a terrific individual responsibility to start and to try. We must not underestimate the power of our prayers for the decision makers. Let us react to events: (ex.) effect of demonstrations for Soviet Jewry, (ex.) effect of Ralph Nader on consumerism.

Interestingly enough, there were geographical differences influencing our opinion. Southern Baptists are convinced of very fine Christian schooling in Southern public schools. On the other hand in more liberal

and diverse school areas, the public schools seem to be promoting their own religion of secular humanism, so that concerned Christians fear for unhealthy influences.

I am happy to report that this discussion proceeded with the best ecumenical manners, and with renewed understanding of each other's views.

Group 6, First Session:

1. How can the church reach those who are not interested in church membership? Part of the problem has to do with our own priorities: we easily bog down in building, administering day-to-day operations.

Model: Roman Catholic permanent deacons develop ministries among those who have needs, whether there is expectation of overt response or not.

Model: Baptist mission action groups of laymen and women are designed to serve special groups or institutions with definable, specific needs. Specific religious issues may or may not arise.

Involving church people in evangelism ought to begin with an emphasis on what church is—the redeemed people of God on pilgrimage and in mission.

Reaching others means continuous challenge and presentation of the Gospel, so that when the teachable moment comes, there is a context in which response can be made. One's verbalization and interpretation is important.

Basic, however, is the sharing of whole selves, the communication of personality and acceptance.

2. Who are the unchurched?
   —those who have been judged by the "righteous"
   —the poor, who feel "unqualified"
   —minorities
   —the alienated, who have found other forms of community, acceptance, and equality.
   —the self-sufficient, without enough crises in their lives to prompt a sense of need.
   —those who are in revolt against institutions, who see structures as paralyzing.
   —those without voices in any form of institutional life.
   —those who see intellectual dishonesty in the claims of the Christian faith.

3. How can middle class churches deal with stratification?

The churches must obey Christ's mandate to go out into the world, contacting their own defensiveness, dealing with the total community and refusing to engage in "selective evangelism." They must resist the temptation to flaunt their affluence.

What is Christian community? It is positive responsibility, living for, servanthood. It is an expression of God's living in us, giving us the gift of oneness. All too seldom can the world see the community which ought to characterize the church; but community cannot be shared until it is a reality among us (note the older Baptist terminology of "brother" and "sister"). If community outside the church exists in American society, it is hidden, fractured, disjointed. Within the church, our separated structures inhibit community, for we cannot envision or relate to an "invisible church." Community, to be real, cannot be imposed; it must be indigenous. A theological affirmation: we may think of Christ not as remote divinity, but as our brother, "first born among many brethren."

Family life: Community is important not only among peers but must also be multi-generational. Catholics' Christian Family Movement and Marriage Encounters programs are lay movements for the strenthening of marriage. These involve Biblical insights, worship, and social concerns. One-parent-families are a special concern. Churches can and are providing day care, after school care, admittedly a "Band-Aid," but a necessity.

Women's Concerns: The role of women is changing in Baptist life. Whereas it has been tied up with an auxiliary organization and with missions promotion there are now broader roles and even, for a few, ordination. Catholics are having a difficult time finding an acceptable role for women. The priest has been idealized, and women have accepted secondary roles. Swift change is difficult to adjust to, and will require preparation to avoid over-simplification of the issues. In churches and families, some women are in leadership and resent it because men have abdicated. For women to take greater leadership in the church might be counter productive to male leadership. Women do need satisfaction, having all the psychological mechanisms, related to growth and personality development that men have. Somehow men and women will need to find complementary rather than competitive roles, in which each can make a distinctive contribution.

Prison reform: If we feel helpless considering what ought to be done about prisons, we are only reflecting the helplessness of all those in the prison system. Some are attempting halfway houses, or literacy education programs.

General discussion: Catholics will observe a Holy Year in 1975, calling Christians to reconciliation and renewal. This fits well with the Baptist World Alliance's "Mission of Reconciliation," which culminates in the Stockholm Congress in 1975. Since Nov. 21, 1974, marks the tenth anniversary of the Vatican II decree on ecumenism, perhaps there can be many local ecumenical observances there.

Group 7

Are some issues too explosive for the dialogue? We should listen to each other's areas of concern. Many Christian laymen don't want their clergy to be socially involved. Yet the church and the Christian must judge moral issues in the social order. "Civic Religion" is a problem today. The Church must dialogue with other institutions. The Church should use investments with a view to social responsibility. Does personal relationship to Christ go before any attempt to renovate society? The Church at least can see that issues are discussed in a healing way without calling into question the intelligence and good will of those who disagree with us. Beyond dialogue, how does the Church change the social order? Action and dialogue must go together as we cannot have one without the other. The clergy should dialogue with community organizations and break out of a ghetto. In building community it is necessary to live in the community one is building and not be a commuter as is often the case. Some way should be found to pair or associate rich and poor churches so that they do not become socio-economic ghettos. Many today turn away from social ministry. There must be a balance between social action and personal piety.

Religious values must, primarily, be given in the home. Christians must be concerned about public schools. In our discussion Roman Catholics and Southern Baptists did not divide along denominational lines on aid to church school questions. Some Roman Catholics are opposed to public aid; at least one Southern Baptist favored it.

Group 8, First Session:

Role of the minister and church in reference to the unchurched:

The discussion opened with an appreciative evaluation of the introductory remarks by Paul Gillespie and Robert Berson. The emphasis on bringing people into community was discussed at some length, and became a recurring theme, throughout the discussion.

Several participants, Catholic and Baptist, observed that there is a need of evangelism within our own parishes.

It was admitted by one that the word "evangelism" turns him off. Another commented that evangelism can be "good news" or "bad news." The feeling was expressed that there is too much smugness among evangelicals—especially Catholic charismatics. There was observation that evangelism has often been virtual neglect of concern for the church and growth in discipleship. Some time was given to evaluating weaknesses of approach, and improper motivation. It was emphasized that while methods have often been improper that evangelism is required of the church as a mandate from the Lord.

In consideration of some of the questions suggested by Berson, it was admitted that the unchurched are represented in every segment of society and that the problem of the church reaching them with any meaningful ministry is severely complicated by the social barriers among various segments of society. It was lamented that many geographic areas are virtually untouched by churches content to minister only to their own particular strata of society.

Not much attention was given to the inherent obstacles to certain people having an openness to the gospel (that is their social circumstances, family condition, etc.) but all agreed that in our evangelistic confrontation we often create obstacles by smugness and other unworthy or insensitive attitudes.

In speaking to the subject of reaching those who have emphatically rejected the church it was suggested that there is value, even necessity, in the church recognizing its sin and periodically being called to serious and genuine rededication to Christ and his commission for us to bear witness to him. Such a spirit will result in an attitude of unconditional love to the one outside the community of faith as well as to brothers and sisters in the communion.

It was pointed out that love is the vehicle of evangelism, and that the effectiveness of evangelism is enhanced by the radiation of the love and joy of Christ within the church fellowship. It was noted that the verbalization of the gospel witness is necessary and the whole community of believers should be prepared to bear such witness.

Group 8, Second Session:

The discussion opened with the moderator questioning the political and social conservatism of Southern Baptists. It was pointed out that no theological stance of Southern Baptists necessitates this conservatism in areas of politics and social action.

Several problems were pointed out in getting churches involved in social concerns. One said, Baptists have traditionally hidden behind

local church autonomy to excuse their failure of involvement on a wide scale. Another indicated that a Baptist pastor is sometimes in a most vulnerable position when he takes a stance unpopular in his parish. He has no recourse beyond his congregation. Question was raised about the limitations on a parish priest who may be social action minded who has a bishop highly unsympathetic with his concerns.

It was noted that an atmosphere of desire for ecumenical cooperation in working for social betterment is usually difficult to create in a region where one denomination is in the overwhelming majority, (e.g., Catholics in Rhode Island and Baptists in Tennessee).

The need was seen to create a broadening social concern mentality in our congregations. A Baptist participant asked hopefully if the Catholic church did not have structures to accomplish this. No assurance was forthcoming. In fact, it was pointed out that while the Catholic church has long had its social encyclicals, even the priests have hardly read them, and they rarely filter down to the laity.

It was agreed that both Catholics and Baptists have been too individualistic in their interpretation of the Christian life.

A great deal of time was taken in discussing the necessity of communication. It was observed that our congregations are usually polite and quiet—but their quietness does not necessarily imply they are listening.

The question was raised if those in the group, active in social betterment causes, act as Christians or just as citizens. The response was positive that the role is seen as definite Christian action. One commented: "I would not dare do it without God's wisdom."

One participant cited the analogy of the athletic team trained for the game, indicating that Christians should be thus trained and ready for facing life in the world.

Another agreed with the principle, and pointed out that the church has too often just reflected contemporary culture. Another pointed out that the disadvantaged have only been confronted with a message on how to endure the present and hope for the sweet by and by. One commented that Black Baptists are great to "spiritualize" and bypass social crisis with an easy "let Jesus do it for you." (The same participant had pointed out earlier that many Black Baptists had turned to the Catholic Church being persuaded that it was more concerned for their social welfare.)

It was pointed out several times that we have too departmentalized our religion—separating social concern as a separate area of life, thus taking lightly these responsibilities.

Several in the group cited efforts in ecumenical cooperation in social betterment causes. Probably more time was taken in self-judgment than any other theme. And while it was noted that we are making progress it was also pointed out that this is small comfort to the man who hurts now.

The following suggestions were offered as guidelines for ecumenical efforts in areas of social concern: 1) agree to differ on some points, 2) strive to love, 3) join to serve.

Conclusion

Another milestone in Southern Baptist/Roman Catholic relationships has been reached as a result of this third in a series of regional conferences. We are grateful to all who planned, worked, participated in and attended this conference. We are a little closer to the spirit Christ prayed for during His earthly life: "that all may be one." Our hope and prayer is that the spirit in evidence during these days will grow and develop all of us in the one Body of Christ.

SECTION V

CONCLUSION

Conclusion

The concluding ceremony in the chapel was rendered by the First Rising Mount Zion Baptist Church Choir of Washington, D.C. under the direction of the Rev. Ernest Gibson, Pastor. Participants of the Conference were invited to join in the congregational singing which was spirited and expressive in its content. We are, indeed, grateful to this group and its pastor for their genuinely spiritual contribution to the conclusion of our Northeastern Baptist/Roman Catholic Regional Conference at Marriottsville, Maryland.

SECTION VI

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