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Box 29, Folder 1, Interreligious Affairs Department, 1961-1962.

INTER-RELIGIOUS AFFAIRS

Background Paper for Program Emphasis Discussion

I The Growing "Institutionalization" of Religion

A. Whether or not Americans are becoming more religious, they are becoming more and more religiously identified and affiliated. The percentage of the American population who are members of churches and synagogues is still on the increase. In 1900, thirty-six percent of the American population were church members and in 1940 it was forty-nine per cent; 1950, fifty-seven per cent and 63.4% in 1959. Protestant church membership as a percentage of the total population has remained fairly stable. In 1955, 45.5%, in 1959, 45.2%. The Catholic proportion of the entire population has gone up. In 1955 it was 20.2%, in 1959, 23.9%. The Catholic rate of increase, however, (3.5%) is twice that of the Protestant rate of increase (1.7%).

Some have challenged the accuracy and objectivity of these statistics, pointing out that the information is reported by the various church groups themselves. It is true that the statistics may be questioned, and that different religious groups calculate their membership in different ways: some reporting all baptized members, others reporting only those members who have been confirmed. Nevertheless, the information-gathering procedure has been consistent for the last few years, so the reported increases have some significance.

Other kinds of information -- for example, the amount of money spent on church construction -- corroborate the reported increases in membership.

B. Although religious leaders have traditionally addressed themselves to social action concerns, they have not always had a respectful hearing. Today, the numerical strength of institutionalized religion, plus the fact that religious agencies are expressing their social action concerns in more concrete and informed ways (resolutions on the United Nations, desegregation, right to work laws, etc.) have made institutionalized religion a major influence in the United States. As religious leaders speak out on broader social, economic and political issues, the views of certain religious groups and organizations become increasingly identified with certain political positions. There has emerged what might be called a dominant Catholic "line" and a dominant Protestant "line" on the major "cold war" issues - such as Soviet-American relations, disarmament, nuclear testing, Communist China, Cuba, etc. (A note of caution: there are numerous exceptions to this generalization, and diversity of opinion within each group. The pronouncements of some Protestant groups are closer to the "Catholic" position than that of the National Council of Churches. Some of the editorial comments in "Commonweal" resemble the "Protestant"

Social gospel

*1) Social-cultural
- belonging - voluntary
groups - 1960s
600 - WCCAF
2) Political
- joint terms to them for
- aware their influence
Counts (JFK meeting
with Adlai, JFK letter
to NYT)*

support - Nixon - 100 million Americans

Or. organized

organized

approach to these issues.)

Because of this tendency for religious organizations to represent socio-political positions, attacks on these positions have been extended to attacks on the church groups themselves. The Air Force Manual smear of the National Council of Churches is a case in point; the Council has not yet recovered from this attack, (certain constituent groups are withholding funds). Protestant liberals fear a resurgence of McCarthyism from within their own churches.

C. Another aspect of the growing "institutionalization" of religion is the tendency of Christian religious leaders to seek cooperation from what they consider to be their counterparts among Jews. This has led to closer relationships between organizations like the National Council of Churches and synagogal and rabbinical organizations. This trend raises both ideological and institutional questions for AJC. Ideologically: shall we join the bandwagon and further the image of America as a tri-faith nation or do the dangers of fostering this image outweigh the advantages of "equal time?" Do we have a responsibility to speak for the ideological or agency position? and "secular" Jew? Are these objectives self-contradictory? Institutionally: how may we envisage and formulate

our program to best maintain a cooperative working relationship with organized Christian groups?

anti-clericalism
- Jewish Groups - UAIHC
- USA - RAB
- WJSCA - RCA

fundamentalists - stick to gospel
predetermination
- reactionaries

Reactive, Also
Activist response to
Challenge of open society
(Germany - lay academy
discussion)

UAIHC manual
American welcomes expression
of news: UAIHC manual

- Jewish ideological
Robert Hirsch - Social action
is a method of self-definition
(with some a theology)

Al Roberts - what is this
inter-religious program?
never asked about SOA - that
are religious Jews.

Jewish External basis for religious pluralism & Liberty - Mandelblat

II. Consolidation and Unity

The trend toward consolidation and the preoccupation with unity is increasing among Christian groups. Within Protestantism, 1960 saw a merger of four Lutheran denominations into a larger church, and a proposal on the part of Bishop Pike and Eugene Carson Blake for a merger of four major Protestant denominations. Within Catholicism the forthcoming Ecumenical Council called by Pope John XXIII demonstrates the felt need for the Catholic church to close ranks within its own organization and face up to a number of challenges from without.

Just as there have been noticeable strivings for unity within these two groups, there have also been indications of increasing cooperation between them. The recent visit of the Archbishop of Canterbury to Pope John XXIII was mainly a symbolic gesture, but it was also symptomatic. No one has seriously suggested union between Protestantism and Catholicism, but the emphasis has been on similarities rather than differences, and the atmosphere has warmed considerably. We need only touch briefly on the reasons for this consolidation and cooperation - most of them have been noted before: the loss of many parts of the world as missionary areas; increased competition from the Eastern religions and Islam; the nationalism of many of the newly emerging African and Asian countries which depicts Christianity

as a form of colonialism.

Jews part of popular front

What are the implications for Jews? One the one hand, Christian-Jewish relations might be enhanced by a genuine pluralism both in America and the rest of the world, and as Christians begin to realize that their minority status in the world is here, if not to stay, then for the indefinite future. However, in the

Christian effort to consolidate against what they consider the forces of atheism, materialism, and secularism, traditional Jewish positions on certain issues ^{Church-State, Religion in schools, and to parochial schools.} will be increasingly under attack. For most Christians,

evangelism

the greater problem of Protestant-Catholic approachment completely eclipses the minor question of Jewish-Christian relations. It is true that the Christian leaders of the movement to merge denominations and soften traditional Catholic-Protestant tensions are among the most liberal and enlightened, but the very language of Protestant-Catholic dialogue, with its emphasis on Christian theological concepts often precludes the possibility of any genuine Jewish participation.

Christian-Jewish dialogue
opportunities are real
-theological emphasis
involves return to Scripture
& understanding of
Xan. Jewish background
(Gorden leaflet) 15, 17, 20

III. American Catholicism

In the United States there have been indications of increasing Catholic comfort and identification with American traditions. The election, in 1960, of a Roman Catholic president provided a dramatic illustration of both the numerical growth and the social

acceptance of Roman Catholicism, but the trend to identify Catholic principles with American principles was noticeable before the election and existed independently of it. We note, for example, many articles in Catholic publications claiming that the Declaration of Independence is based more on Catholic thought than Protestant, and that democracy is an inevitable outgrowth of the Catholic understanding of natural law. It is too early to tell whether the election of a Catholic president will, as some observers anticipated, have a liberalizing influence on the American Catholic community as a whole. Some elements within American Catholicism are undoubtedly attempting to combat Catholic self-separatism, defensiveness, and encouraging Catholics to join in our open society and accept fully the implications of democratic process. Others, however, are using this Catholic identification with America to promote the idea that Catholic goals are American goals. In this respect, we note a more aggressive campaign on the part of the hierarchy for parochial school support. The denial of public funds for parochial schools is more and more labeled as anti-Catholic discrimination and second-class citizenship. We must expect this campaign to increase in intensity, and to find some support among people who believe that the enormous needs of education completely overshadow the church-state separation issue. With an increasing percentage

Blanshard fears that Catholics take over America, Non-Catholics become 2nd-class citizens

of Jewish children attending day school, there is a possibility that Jewish parents will welcome tax relief and even outright government aid.

Waltham Orthodox Jews are used Jews

IV Public Morality

Christian church groups are showing an increasing concern for the area of public morality, reflected in campaigns for decent literature, complaints about TV violence, etc. In order to encourage Protestants ^{and Jews} to join in these activities, the Catholic groups have toned down their traditional militancy. Their efforts to work cooperatively with Protestants are showing some success. Jews are also concerned with public morality as they understand it, but their traditional libertarian attitudes and attachment to an open society have for the most part kept them out of the organized efforts to remove certain kinds of books from library shelves or programs from television. There is also the realistic problem that a high proportion of Jews is concentrated in the publishing field and in the communications media. Jews are sometimes accused of laxity, disinterest and even obstructionism.

Bishop Mc Nulty

-Opportunity to be moderating influence (warn against vigilante tactics)

Another aspect of the concern for public morality is the thrust for religion in schools, the desire for some public acknowledgement of the deity, and the attack on secularism. Secularism is held responsible for the decline in morality, and the position held by

most Jewish organizations on these issues often puts them in the direct line of fire.

V. Intergroup and Interreligious Relations

To most church groups, intergroup relations means Negro-white relations. The churches' preoccupation with the involvement in the problems of desegregation, the sit-in and kneel-in movements, etc. are seen as immediate and pressing concerns. Anti-Semitism, while promptly and vigorously deplored in its blatant manifestations (swastika-daubings, synagogue desecrations, Rockwell, etc.) is not considered an overriding concern in terms of church programming and education. There are indications, however, that the entire question of Jewish-Christian relations is assuming more importance for Christian leaders. In 1960, a major Protestant denomination devoted a pamphlet to the subject of anti-Semitism, dealing not only with its political and sociological aspects, but with its possible roots in religious teaching. The same denomination called together an off-the-record meeting of rabbis and Christian leaders to discuss outstanding problems. There has been a quiet, but widespread interest in Dr. Olson's findings among Christian educators and publishers. The controversy surrounding the Oberammergau Passion Play opened certain questions to public consideration in the religious press. The LOOK article by Bishop Pike, the forthcoming publication of Dr. Olson's study, the Eichmann trial, - all create

Religion liberty emphasis
Year - Jan - Jan

opportunities for Christian groups to face up to various aspects of Christian-Jewish relations. Reactions to these events will be important in determining the direction and emphasis of our interreligious program.

VI Israel

The attitude of Christian groups toward Israel has ranged widely. Some fundamentalist and pentacostal denominations have supported Israel because they believe the state's establishment is related to the Second Coming. The Unitarians and Universalists have shown a consistent pro-Arab approach. Major Protestant denominations such as the Methodists and Presbyterians, reflect both pro-and anti-Israel sentiments: the social action professionals are generally pro-Israel, the missionary and refugee relief elements generally support the Arab position. Israel, which has for her own political reasons allied herself firmly with France, will probably fare badly in church circles as church groups attempt to disassociate themselves from the stigma of Western colonialism. An anti-Israel sentiment has been incorporated into the total syndrome of anti-colonialism. It seems likely that Christian groups, eager for the friendship of the African and Asian people, will accept these sentiments.

Israel's ties with Arab-African also viewed suspiciously as counter-missionary free and without strings theological

VII Negro-Jewish Relations

This subject is a total agency concern, only one aspect of which relates to interreligious program. However, as most of the leadership of the Negro fight against segregation and discrimination has come from the Negro churches, there is indication of a need to build relationships with Negro denominations and church leaders.

3/20/61



DRAFT AGENDA, INTERRELIGIOUS ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING, MAY 4, 1962

I. REPORT ON RECENT DEVELOPMENTS IN CHRISTIAN-JEWISH RELATIONS

A. Changes in Catholic atmosphere, reflected in statements by Cardinal Bea, NCCIJ resolution, Chosen People TV program, invitation to Pius XII Center, ETC.

Agape,

B. Protestant relations. ~~We have been less active here.~~ Dr. Olson's program, directed to Protestant educators, has relieved us of many responsibilities. Nevertheless, there is increasing total agency concern with Fundamentalist groups and desire to ~~develop~~ develop a full-scale program regarding these groups.

WCC resolution on anti-Semitism.

meetings with NCC Leadership, joint consultations on religion and public education, shared time, radical right.

II. CHRISTIAN-JEWISH RELATIONS IN THE COMMUNITY

The developments we report have occurred, for the most part, on national and international levels in the upper reaches of church administration. Have they been reflected in interreligious relationships in local communities? ~~We request this information from our members and area directors. Have they noted a change in interreligious relationships? If so, in what direction?~~

Has there been

DISCUSSION

III. QUESTIONS, PROBLEMS AND IMPLICATIONS FOR AMERICAN JEWS

A. Christian self-examination implies similar efforts on the part of Jews. Are we prepared to make such efforts? (How do our textbooks describe events such as the Crusades and the Inquisition? We have a responsibility to teach our children about these tragic events, but at the same time, to be accurate and objective.) *Is there a need to examine Jewish Christians as epitomized in the use of the term, "goy"? Is there a*

attitudes toward Jewish self-segregation developing in the suburbs? in Jewish Country clubs?

B. The increased theological interest in Jews and Judaism has dangers as well as advantages: 1) the temptation to regard "the Jews" as a theological abstraction rather than a living community; 2) Many Christian groups want theological, rather than pragmatic, dialogue. Are Jews prepared for this kind of conversation? Do we want it? (~~Rubenstein, Taubes~~)

Messiah

C. The rationale for increased Christian-Jewish cooperation is often formulated, from the Christian side - particularly the Catholic - in cold-war terminology. Should we be cautious about playing into a demonological view of the East-West conflict?

IV, REMAINING "SORE SPOTS" IN CHRISTIAN-JEWISH RELATIONS

- A. Christian responsibility for the Nazi holocaust. Christians extremely touchy about this, and tend to react defensively to any suggestion ~~that~~ of relationship between Nazi anti-Semitism and Christian teaching about Jews. (e.g. Eichmann coverage in Christian press; America interview and editorial.) Jews must be cautious in formulating ~~the~~ ^{their} viewpoints.
- B. Secularism. Perhaps the greatest issue of misunderstanding. Jews have little understanding of Christian anxiety about secularism; Christians cannot understand Jewish position. ~~Basically different~~ Need for intensive dialogue on this subject.



THE AMERICAN JEWISH COMMITTEE

MEMORANDUM

March 8, 1961

TO:

Dr. H. Tannenbaum
~~Leonard Lion~~

FROM:

Ethel C. Phillips

RE:

"What Research Says About Understanding Inter-
group Relations." Reprinted from NEA Bulletin,
December 1960.

SUBJECT MATTER: Indicated by Title

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CULTURAL differences have long existed in American life. We teachers have used these differences in enriching and adjusting our instruction. However, we know that these differences can cause conflicts and tensions within a community. We must, therefore, seek to conserve the *value* of differences while encouraging our pupils to learn how to live together co-operatively and democratically in American life.

Perhaps this brief review of research related to intergroup relations may help us in our school programs.

Basic Concepts

In intergroup relations one can have difficulty in being objective, even when dealing with research. Each of us has strong emotional attachments to our own racial, ethnic, religious, and other groups. Gradually we learn to realize that differences are not only to be expected, but that they must be respected.

Our biological family—Anthropologists, biologists, and other experts tell us that man belongs to one biological family. The physical differences in human appearance have occurred as adaptations to surroundings. Isolation of groups of people has led to selective repetition of those genes that determine skin color, hair color, eye shape, and the many other variations upon the same basic human theme.

Studies of civilizations miles apart and with no known connections show that again and again man has invented similar instruments and religious symbols. Hence, all men apparently have many similar spiritual and psychological needs and interests.

Group self-esteem—The belief that one's own group is the center of all culture and the base for

Dr. Grambs is lecturer in education, College of Education, University of Maryland, College Park. She is author of the pamphlet, Understanding Intergroup Relations, in the series "What Research Says to the Teacher," published by the NEA's American Educational Research Association and the Department of Classroom Teachers (1960. 32p. 25¢. Stock No. 11-520).

What Research Says About

Understanding Intergroup Relations

JEAN D. GRAMBS

organizing one's life is called "ethnocentrism." This characteristic is found among the most primitive tribes as well as in the more complex societies. We like what we do; we prefer "our own people." Our way of life is *right*; new and strange ways are considered *inferior*.

Although this tendency toward group self-esteem is quite human, it also is based partly upon ignorance. As groups learn about other groups, they discover that no group has a monopoly on superiority.

Man needs a place to stand—Every person wants to belong to and be accepted by a group. When we are accepted as individuals, we feel secure and self-confident. But this sense of security can be affected by the status of the group as a whole.

If a group is considered inferior by all surrounding groups, then the members of the low-rated group lose some of their self-confidence and personal esteem. These downgraded feelings may lead to aggression, hostility, and other offensive behavior toward the members of other groups. Disappointed and frustrated children in the low-rated group may turn their emotions upon the school. Seeking school achievement and getting along with others are types of "conformity" which they often reject.

No group is superior—Although individuals have many differences indicating their superiority in in-

telligence and skill to other individuals, the same does not hold true for groups. There is no such thing as *innate* group superiority.

Studies of civilizations and cultures over many years offer no scientific evidence that in intelligence and innate capacity any group is superior to any other. Distributions of intelligence test scores show extensive overlapping among racial groups. When educational and cultural opportunities are held constant, the differences in IQ scores often disappear.

Relationships are complex—Numerous racial, ethnic, and religious differences are found. Cleavages, however, can occur on many other grounds. The boys of the neighborhood may feel that the girls have advantages; the older children may have hostile feelings toward the younger ones; the recent migrants may be aggrieved about the long-time residents. Consideration of intergroup understanding must be extended to many kinds of group situations.

Some groups are more restricted than others—While there are many types of intergroup relations, some of the most serious problems are found with those groups where restrictions have been heaviest and most repressive. Much of the research has consequently centered upon such groups.

These groups, often in the minority, are usually and readily distin-

guished by color of skin, dress, religious practices, and other characteristics. On certain racial and cultural differences, teachers find the strongest feelings and the most unreasonable difficulties, but also excellent opportunities for understanding intergroup relations.

Guidelines to Practice

Schools cannot ignore the group differences that children bring to school. Although physical differences cannot be erased, social and religious differences can be explained and respected; harmful and unnecessary differences can be modified or minimized.

Teachers must be objective—Without meaning to do so, classroom teachers sometimes favor one group over another. This is one explanation of why girls get fewer failing marks than boys. Favoritism influences often help children from "the best homes" to obtain more school offices than children of minority groups.

Teachers who say, "There are no group differences in our community," should be willing to look for and examine the facts. Even in relatively homogeneous communities there may be concealed differences that would explain periodic group conflicts and pressures upon individual children. When these impair the school's program, they cannot be ignored.

The major factors—perhaps the most important—in intergroup relations are attitudes. Today we have only the beginnings of insight

into attitudes and how they can be changed. Our present knowledge suggests a few points of reference for the classroom teacher:

Healthy group relationships are promoted when invidious comparisons are eliminated. Since many comparisons have little scientific basis, they can be avoided without loss.

Changes in attitudes are also changes in feelings. Facts alone rarely change attitudes. Moral and emotional appeals must be made, since attitudes are usually reflections of feelings.

Individuals are helped to change their attitudes through specific direct experiences. The Chinese are credited with saying that one picture is worth a thousand words. Similarly, a talk by a successful business or professional man from a minority group may be effective in offsetting the cliché that all members of the group are "just naturally lazy and unsuccessful."

Experiencing an intergroup situation does not necessarily affect the attitudes of those involved. Intergroup contacts often must be discussed so that children understand the significance and the importance of differences. When improved behavior results, it should be recognized and approved.

Children should see and learn about minority group individuals who have achieved high social status and prestige. When a minority group member is recognized by the school staff, the children know that teachers are practicing what

they preach.

Surface behavior and under-the-surface feelings may be quite different. Both children and adults learn to practice what is "expected," but learning new ideas and feelings about group relations must involve sincerity of purpose and depth of feeling. Therefore, the teacher is not satisfied with behavior that merely conforms but does not honestly represent true feelings. Verbal conformity can mean little change.

Children and youth need help in acquiring understanding of how it feels to be in the other fellow's shoes. When one tries to think from the other fellow's point of view, he acquires insight into intergroup situations. Role playing may help, but "getting in the other fellow's shoes" is not an easy thing to do.

Teachers can use to advantage even the fights and clashes that disturb and disrupt school situations. These situations cannot be repressed or passed over. Each clash should be examined by the children themselves as to why it happened and what future behavior would be better for all.

Not much about intergroup relations is easy. Both the minority group members and the members of the majority must recognize that each has obligations; it's not a one-way street. The teacher who seeks "to teach" better understanding may be criticized for his efforts. Yet, the field involves many of our most important humanitarian and democratic values.

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