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CHRISTIAN REACTIONS TO THE MIDDLE EAST CRISIS

This is a brief summary of the ways in which the organized Christian community--individual leaders, denominational spokesmen, church associations and organizations, and the religious press--reacted to the crisis in the Mid-East. That crisis, which briefly threatened militarily to involve other parts of the world, was a succession of fast moving events. In a period of ~~less than~~ <sup>about</sup> two weeks, the potential victim--Israel-- had become an unqualified military victor, and the balance of power had shifted radically. The preoccupations and themes expressed in the Christian community similarly shifted with the changing events. <sup>It</sup> Before the outbreak of hostilities, when it appeared that Israel would be the victim of combined Arab aggression, a number of eminent church leaders, <sup>speaking</sup> ~~spoke~~ as individuals, issued individual or joint public statements in behalf of Israel's national integrity and right to the waters of the Gulf of Aqaba. Most notably were a joint statement by 8 leaders (John Bennett, Robert McAfee Brown, Martin Luther King, Franklin Littell, Reinhold Niehbur, Alexander Schmemmann, John Sheerin, Steven Gill Spitswood) calling on "our fellow Americans of all persuasions and groupings and on the Administration to support the independence, integrity and freedom of Israel." (May 28). A similarly worded statement was subscribed to by Cardinal Cushing on June 5th. Cardinal Shehan expressed "the hope that the U N will leave no step untaken to avert the catastrophe of open conflict between Israel and nations of the Arab world," and affirmed, "Israel has a nation has a right to live and to govern unharassed from without. To deny

this is to invite international chaos." (May 29th)

Archbishop Hallinan of Atlanta, Ga. urged that "every force of the civilized world, every means of negotiation, every source of peace will be mustered by the U. S. to protect the statehood of Israel and the freedom of the open seas and waterways." (June 5)

Expressions of support for Israel's position also came at a Washington, D. C. rally, <sup>held</sup> in connection with a Rabbinical Assembly meeting, from Msgr. George Higgins, this information must be confirmed. and a community civil rights leader, Rev. Fauntleroy.

During this period there was, however, a noticeable lack of statements by Christian institutional ~~xxxxxx~~ bodies. An exception was the Catholic Association for International Peace, whose President, William O'Brien, sent telegrams on May 23rd to President Johnson and Secretary of State Rusk urging "every possibly measure, bothin within and outside the U N" to prevent the use of force by any state against the independence and territorial integrity of <sup>other</sup> any state in the Mid-East, <sup>the</sup> and supporting the position that the Gulf of Aqaba is an international waterway.

*Insert 7* *NCC Telegram - Better Statement*  
Joint statements of conscience were also issued by religious leaders in two major communities. Eight prominent Philadelphia religious spokesmen, both Protestant and Roman Catholic, urged multilateral action to protect the existence and integrity of Israel while searching for a compassionate and just solution of the present crisis. (June 1st) Seven Protestant leaders, of varying denominational affiliation, issued a statement from St. Louis (obviously prepared before the outbreak of hostilities but publicly issued on June 6th), deploring "the @bsurd threats to destroy Israel" and

recognize<sup>ing</sup> "Israel's right to use the international waters of the Gulf of Aqaba." While expressing sympathy for the problems of Arabs, the statement asked Arab leaders to recognize Israel for "out of that recognition alone can long-term friendly relations be built between the countries of the Mid-<sup>le</sup>-East."

There were some ~~ex~~amples of thoughtful, and ~~is~~ largely pro Israel Christian editorial opinio<sup>n</sup> during this period. The non denominational Protestant weekly, The Christian Century commented (May 31): "...it must<sup>not</sup> be assumed that Nasser is bluffing; certainly the Israeli government will not make such a naive assumption." And in a later editorial (June 7): "If Nasser's interference with shipping through the ~~st~~raight is not halted by the U N or by the great powers working in concert, certainly Israel will undertake the job herself." The editors considered it "imperative" that the U. S. use its diplomatic influence to keep Israel and Egyptian forces apart and the Gulf of Aqaba open, but cautioned that U. S. force should be applied only in cooperation with other major powers.

The Jesuit weekly, America (June 3) favored the U. S. Commitment "to support<sup>the</sup> territorial integrity of all the nations of the area." While essentially supporting Israel's position, the editors commented on the rapid switch from "dove" positions on ~~EXN~~ Viet Nam to "hawk" positions on Israel, and chided one Jewish organization for what the magazine felt to be an inconsistency in this regard.

After the outbreak of hostilities, and during the relatively brief period of military action, the focus of Christian comment shifted sharply. The immediate concern was for a cessation of the fighting. Thus, on June 5th, Pope Paul VI sent a telegram to U Thant

*declaring himself*

~~saying he was~~ "saddened and concerned" by the outbreak of hostilities and expressing his hope that Jerusalem could be declared an open and inviolable city. (The Pope repeated his appeal for the peace of Jerusalem on June 7th, and it was broadcast in many languages (by Vatican radio.)

Both the World Council of Churches and the National Council of Churches called for a cease fire, even before the U N did so. The N C C 's telegram to President Johnson (June 6) proposed that the U. S. government "continue to make the utmost use of the U N; press for a cease fire; seek negotiation through the U N of all conflicting claims...to establish national and international rights in the Gulf of Aqaba, the right of Arab refugees and the recognition of all of the State of Israel." The World Council of Churches expressed concern for the "fate of refugees of various nationalities in the area and urged its member churches to make the strongest representation to their governments to "bring about a cessation of hostilities and to lay the foundations of a just and durable peace."

The Religious Education Association of the U. S. and Canada called upon the U.S. government and the U N "to do everything humanly possible to negotiate a workable and lasting peace...that will recognize the essential needs of all nations involved." (June 6)

The World Alliance of Reformed and Presbyterian ~~Churches~~ *meeting in Geneva (June 6)* expressed deep concern over the fighting in the Mid-East and asserted that "war has never solved political conflicts."

Archbishop Deardon, President of the U. S. Catholic Bishops Organization, asked for a "crusade of prayer for peace" and expressed the "fervent hope" that the U N would be successful in halting the conflict." ( )

A set of principles "constituting a solid framework for a peaceful settlement" was put forth on June 7th by 15 national organizations, which included Jewish, Catholic and Protestant <sup>groups</sup> associations. Their agreed principles were:

1) International guarantees for the integrity of all states in the area.

2) Free access to the waters of the Gulf of Aqaba.

3) Restoration of a United Nations presence in the area.

Participating organizations included the American Jewish Committee, American for Democratic Action, American Veterans Committee, B'nai B'rith, B'nai B'rith Women, Catholic Association for International Peace and Friends Committee on National Legislation.

Also, the Industrial Union Department, AFLOCIO; National Committee for a Sane Nuclear Policy; National Council of Negro Women; Union of American Hebrew Congregations, Unitarian Universalist Association; Women's International League for Peace and Freedom; the Young Women's Christian Association; and the National Council of Jewish Women.

Two well-known religious leaders, Father Edward Flannery, a specialist in Catholic-Jewish relations and Dr. Edwin Espy, Associate General Secretary of the National Council of Churches, spoke at a June 8th Washington, D. C. rally called by major Jewish organizations. Father Flannery affirmed that "Israel's existence, as a legitimate member of the international community must be preserved and guaranteed and that the U N was the best fitted instrument to achieve these ends. Dr. Espy's statement, which called attention to the telegrams of the National and World Councils of Churches, and

which conveyed the same plea to both Arabs and Jews "for peace with justice and freedom" was never publicly completed at the rally. It was interrupted by the announcement of a cease fire, which ~~announcement~~ set off an enthusiastic demonstration. Occasionally, comments on the Middle Eastern crisis reflected a peculiar religious bias--that is a tendency to view the conflict in religious terms having little to do with the realities of the Middle Eastern situation. Such a comment came from the Diocesan weekly, The XXXX St. Louis Review (6/9/67):

The most onimous aspect of the war in the Midwest is that it is a "holy war" on both sides, a war by the Arabs and fellow Moslems to extinguish Israeli<sup>[sic]</sup> and war by the sons of Abraham against their God's enemies. A war for limited objectives, such as a strip of territory or free passage of a waterway, is limited in scope and negotiable without loss of face. But a holy war is an all-or-nothing war. Compromise with God's enemies is shameful and unpardonable. Negotiation between the principles in this war is therefore impossible.

The only hopeful note, the editor went on to comment, is that Israel and the Arab countries could not continue the war without supplies from the major powers.

As the shooting war subsided and with<sup>it</sup> the immediate threat of a global conflagration, comment from Christian sources as reflected in editorials and articles, took a longer view of the crisis in examining such questions as: Who started the fighting; what was

the impact of the cold war and Viet Nam; How effective--or ineffective--is the United Nations; Where do we go from here. In addition to such comments, however, there was a particular emphasis on certain themes which indicated special preoccupations among church groups. The internationalization of Jerusalem, for example, soon became an overriding concern of the Roman Catholic Church and the object of a vigorous campaign involving representation by the Vatican to all U N member delegations. While Protestant groups did not appear to be as preoccupied with the internationalization of Jerusalem, they expressed an immediate regard for the plight of Arab refugees and set into motion a program of welfare and relief. Concern for the fate of missionary programs and services in the Middle East also became a recurrent theme among some Protestants.

#### The Internationalization of Jerusalem

As previously noted, Pope Paul VI had publicly urged during the period of fighting that Jerusalem remain an open and inviolable city. Shortly <sup>there</sup> after L'Osservatore Romano, the Vatican's daily newspaper, printed an article recalling the Vatican's repeated efforts to have Jerusalem placed under international control, and denying that this objective had been outdated by recent events. Vatican radio publicized the article extensively, broadcasting its text repeatedly in various languages. On June 14th Msgr. Alberto Giovannetti, permanent observer of the Holy See to the U N circulated a note on "Jerusalem and the Holy Places" to all 122 U N member delegations. The memorandum stated the Vatican's conviction "that the only solution which offers a sufficient guarantee for the protection of Jerusalem and its Holy Places is to place that city



and its vicinity under an international regime."

*Leon Etienne* Cardinal Duval, Archbishop of Algiers also urged internationalization of Jerusalem. His statement was publicized in a number of languages by Vatican radio. The appeal also found some echo in the American Catholic press, for example, <sup>the</sup> Criterion (Indianapolis) (June 23).

Archbishop Iakovos, Primate of the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of North and South America, also called for internationalization of Jerusalem. At a later meeting (June 26) in New York, however, the Standing Conference of Orthodox Bishops in the Americas of, which Archbishop Iakovos is chairman, called unanimously for an "internationally guaranteed status" to shrines of all faiths in the Holy Land, without specifically urging the internationalization of the city. The Standing Conference, representing 11 Orthodox Churches, with a total constituency of 6,000,000 persons, also urged Archbishop Iakovos to "take all necessary steps to defend and preserve the traditional and inalienable rights of the Greek Orthodox Patriarchate of Jerusalem"

According to the New York Times (June 19) ~~however~~, world church leaders "reacted coolly" to the proposal that ~~the~~ Jerusalem and its religious shrines be placed under international controls to ensure their safety and the right of access by members of all faiths. A survey of Protestant and Orthodox leaders by correspondents of the New York Times disclosed a general belief that it was "inappropriate for religious groups to back a specific plan."

Most agreed with the Rev. Eugene Carson Blake, General Secretary of the World Council of Churches, who said in Geneva that the status of the city and its Holy Places was primarily a political matter, and that religious interest "could only be raised once there is a

political agreement."

Archbishop Ieronymous, the new Archbishop of Athens, and leader of the Greek Orthodox Church in Greece, said that he would welcome any solution which would absolutely insure a peaceful atmosphere, "around the Holy Places and "their removal from national antagonisms."

Similarly, Archbishop Athenagoras, the Ecumenical Patriarch of Istanbul, who stated, "once a political agreement has been reached by the nations involved, then perhaps the ecclesiastical aspects of the area can be discussed."

The Rev. Constantine Koser, newly elected Brazilian Minister General of the Franciscan Order of Friars Minor, which looks after Christian shrines in the Holy Land, also made it clear at a news conference in Rome that he would be satisfied with adequate Israeli guarantees for access for all faiths.

According to the Times, a representative of the Angelican Church in London said that it had no official opinion on the internationalization question.

Not surprisingly, leaders of the Coptic (Egyptian) Christian community in the United Arab Republic urged the World Council of Churches to oppose Israeli occupation of the Old City of Jerusalem. In a cablegram to the Council's Geneva headquarters--and *apparently* ~~negatively~~ *reflecting* that body's repudiation of the notion of collective Jewish responsibility in the death of Jesus--they urged the World Council of Churches to oppose the occupation of Jerusalem and other Christian Holy Places by "the very people who crucified Christ and deny his resurrection."

The Coptic group also asked the Council to denounce the "Anglo-American aggression" which hide itself behind Israel in an

"attack on Arab lands."

Christian Relief to War Victims

Both Protestants and Catholics responded quickly with appeals for humanitarian assistance to victims of the Middle-Eastern war, and allocated funds for relief and welfare.

Pope Paul VI sent a donation of \$50,000 to aid war victims and announced that a shipment of food and medical supplies would be air lifted to Amman, Jordan (June 12). The World Council of Churches in Geneva appealed to its member churches, including those in Eastern Europe for an initial \$2,000,000 to aid war victims in the Middle-East. The World Council of Churches announced that it was maintaining liason with the Roman Catholic International Caritas which made a similar plea. In New York the church specialists on Mid-Eastern Affairs, appearing on a CBS-TV special program, agreed that American Christians had a particular responsibility to work for peace in the Middle-East by supporting government development <sup>and</sup> ~~and~~ programs <sup>and</sup> ~~and~~ through refugee assistance.

The panelists were Bishop John J. Dougherty, president of Seton Hall University; Dr. Alford Carleton, executive vice-president of the United Church of Christ Board for World Ministry and vice-President of the National Council of Churches' Division of Overseas Ministries; Frank Hunt, an official of the American Friends Service Committee; and Mrs. Cynthia Wedel, associate general secretary of the National Council of Churches for the Division of Christian Life and Ministry.

A special \$1,500,000 appeal to help meet emergency needs arising from the conflict was authorized by the Lutheran World Federation's Executive Committee in Waterloo, Ontario, June 14th.

The American Friends Service Committee made an immediate contribution of \$5,000 to aid refugees of the Middle-East war, and announced plans to send 30,000 lbs. of new and used clothing, medical supplies and other relief materials to refugees of the west bank of the Jordan.

The National Council of Churches formed a 30 member emergency task force to help relieve suffering in the Middle-East. "The National Council of Churches is neither pro Arab or pro Israeli," declared Dr. R. H. Edwin Espy, in announcing the task force. "Its central objective is the establishment of a just and viable peace throughout the Middle-East." Dr. Espy stated that the National Council of Churches sympathizes both with Israeli people who have "suffered anxiety for their national security" and with the Arab people who have "agonized under the fate of a million Palestinian refugees living in adject poverty in the humiliation of military defeat.

The Methodist Committee for Overseas Relief called upon American Methodists for \$250,000 as their part of the World Council of Churches appeal.

While it was apparent that the bulk of relief would go to Arabs, the Christian appeals were non-partisan in nature and the funds are intended to alleviate the distress of peoples of all nationalities and religions.

To what extent did a concern for Arab refugees determine the stance taken by individual Christian leaders or representative organizations on the merits of the Israeli-Arab War? This is difficult to determine since many of the institutional statements did not take a stand on the question of who had major responsibility for the outbreak of hostilities. The Vatican made no <sup>direct</sup> public statement on this matter, but an article in the Vatican newspaper Osservatore della Domenica--signed by the leading editor writer who is generally regarded as having the confidence of the Pope--flatly asserted that Israel started the fighting. Statements by World and National Council of Churches leadership appeared to place the Arab refugee <sup>blem</sup> ~~problem~~ on the same par with the question of Israel's recognition and territorial integrity. In at least two cases, sympathy for the plight of Arabs appeared to color a political judgment against Israel. Both of these were personal statements written by leaders of Protestant denominations, and distributed to pastors and leaders within these denominations.

The Rev. Dana E. Klotzle, Director of the United Nations Office of the Unitarian-Universalist Association, issued a strong personal declaration condemning "unequivicably the apparent expansionist policy of the present Israeli government, which cannot help but lead to more violence and bloodshed in the area." The author condemned "with equal vigor the policy of the Arab leaders to incite their people to violence against Israel." Accusing Israel of excessive nationalism and of a policy based on naked power, Rev. Klotzle urged the internationalization of both the new and old city of Jerusalem, and the establishment of a homeland area for the Palestinian Arabs which would include portions of the original land set aside

by the U N Partition Plan from both Jordan and Israel. He called upon "both Jew and Arab alike to rise above the narrow confines of nationalism..."

Dr. Alfred Carleton emphasized the misery and bitterness of the Arabs in the Middle-East, the need for relief services, and his personal sense of frustration over "the old tragic drama, of war, of misery... Regarding the causes of Arab hostilities Dr. Carleton said:

In the long, long run, of course, they are right that their present plight is the responsibility of the British and the Americans in the sense that the original decision to create in Palestine a national home for the Jews - not to mention a full-blown and aggressive national State of Israel - was an act of Western political and economic invasion into the area which had been indisputably "the Arab World" for well over a thousand years. If in their frustration and bitter disappointment they now turn angrily against us, we should not be surprised!

# **Christian Reactions to the Middle East Crisis**

AMERICAN JEWISH  
ARCHIVES

NEW AGENDA FOR INTERRELIGIOUS DIALOGUE

by Judith Hershcof Banki



THE AMERICAN JEWISH COMMITTEE  
Institute of Human Relations  
165 East 56 Street, New York, N. Y. 10022



## THE AMERICAN JEWISH COMMITTEE

Institute of Human Relations • 165 East 56 Street, New York, N. Y. 10022 • Plaza 1-4000 • Cable Wishcom, New York

November 21, 1967

Dear Colleague:

I am pleased to send you the enclosed publication, "Christian Reactions to the Middle East Crisis: New Agenda for Interreligious Dialogue", prepared by Judith H. Banki, Assistant Director of the Interreligious Affairs Department of the American Jewish Committee.

This document represents an effort to present an objective and balanced analysis of the variety of responses of Catholic and Protestant organizations, individual leaders, and publications to the issues that were raised as a result of the Israeli-Arab crisis from May through July.

In light of the problems that emerged in relation to the Jewish-Christian dialogue, it seemed to us that you might find this document a helpful background paper for deepening your insight and information about these critical issues. Also, you may wish to use this publication as the basis for interreligious dialogue in your community, for sermons, adult education programs, or as thematic material for articles in your religious press or other mass media.

In view of the fact that the Middle East situation will be a significant concern for Christians and Jews in the months ahead, and in light of the implications that this area has had already in deeply affecting Jewish-Christian relations, we have undertaken to sponsor cooperatively with Catholic and Protestant groups institutes, seminars and public meetings at which an opportunity is provided for examining in depth the respective Christian and Jewish understandings of Israel, the Holy Land, and the Arab refugee problems. If you are interested in organizing such an institute, please feel free to be in touch with us. Either through one of our regional offices or through our national staff we will make every effort to be of assistance to you.

Additional copies of this document may be ordered at 25¢ per copy or 100 copies at \$20.00.

Sincerely,

  
Rabbi Marc H. Tanenbaum, Director  
Interreligious Affairs Department

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In late May and early June of 1967, the immediate sympathetic reaction of highly placed spokesmen in the United States Christian community to the State of Israel during the Middle East crisis was cited as an example of how far Christians and Jews had progressed toward mutual understanding; by late July, Christian reaction to the Arab-Israeli war and its immediate aftermath had become the measure of how far they still have to go. Interreligious dialogue has penetrated many barriers of ignorance and misunderstanding, but there are still wide differences between the basic assumptions and preoccupations of organized church groups and the Jewish community.

Anxiety and alarm were the spontaneous and virtually unanimous response of Jews in the United States -- and all over the world -- to a rapid succession of threats to the State of Israel: President Gamal Abdel Nasser's request for withdrawal of the United Nations Emergency Force from Sinai and Sharm El Sheikh on May 16, UN Secretary U Thant's consent on May 18, Nasser's announcement of a blockade of the Straits of Tiran on May 23, and his military agreement on May 30 with an erstwhile enemy, King Hussein of Jordan.

For whatever reasons and with whatever prior assurances or assumptions of support from other powers, President Nasser had deliberately set out to upset the very precarious balance of power in the Middle East and threatened whatever had passed for stability in the area. The Arab states, with a total population of some 100 million, were known to be heavily armed with the most modern equipment, supplied by both Communist and Western sources. Radio Cairo repeatedly broadcast threats of annihilation. Inflammatory tirades issued from Syria, Jordan, other Arab countries. The fate of Israel and its 2 1/2 million inhabitants hung in the balance, and the United Nations seemed powerless to deal with the emergency.

To Jews, the dangers and moral imperatives in this situation were self-evident and inescapable. Whatever their differences in theology, ideology or politics, whether they were Orthodox or secularist, Zionist or non-Zionist, left, right or anywhere between, Jews all over the world rallied to Israel's support in an unprecedented demonstration of unity. And Jews in America looked to their fellow citizens, including Christian leaders and church organizations, for forthright positions on Israel's right to exist as a sovereign state, her right to free passage through the international waters of the Gulf of Aqaba, and the obligation of the United States to honor its commitments to Israel -- preferably through the United Nations, and in concert with other major powers, if this were possible, but unilaterally if necessary.

The following pages offer a representative sampling and summary of Christian reactions to the 1967 Middle East crisis during the 10-week period from mid-May to the end of July.

## The Threat of War

In the tense weeks before the outbreak of hostilities, when it appeared that Israel might become the victim of combined Arab aggression, a number of Catholic, Protestant and Orthodox Christian leaders, as well as several Christian journals of opinion, took clear positions in support of Israel's national integrity and her navigation rights.

A joint statement, published all over the country on May 29, which called upon "our fellow Americans of all persuasions and groupings and on the Administration to support the independence, integrity and freedom of Israel," was signed by the Rev. John C. Bennett, President of Union Theological Seminary; the Rev. Robert McAfee Brown, Professor of Religion at Stanford University; the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., President of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference; Dr. Franklin Littell, President of Iowa Wesleyan College; Dr. Reinhold Niebuhr, Professor emeritus of Theology at Union Theological Seminary; the Rev. Alexander Schmemmann, Dean of St. Vladimir's Russian Orthodox Seminary; Rev. John Sheerin, Editor of The Catholic World; and Bishop Stephen Gill Spotswood of Washington.

In the next few days, similarly forthright statements were issued separately by Richard Cardinal Cushing, Archbishop of Boston; Lawrence Cardinal Shehan, Archbishop of Baltimore; and Archbishop Paul J. Hallinan of Atlanta.

At a May 31 Washington, D. C. rally organized by the Jewish Community Council of Greater Washington, both Msgr. George C. Higgins, Director of the Social Action Department of the U. S. Conference of Catholic Bishops and the Rev. Walter E. Fauntroy, a community civil-rights leader, declared their support for Israel's right of passage through the Gulf of Aqaba.

Although there were a number of open declarations of support from individual Christian leaders during this period, such public statements from Christian institutional bodies were noticeably rare. One of them was a telegram, sent on May 23 to President Johnson and Dean Rusk by Dr. William O'Brien, in his capacity as President of the Catholic Association for International Peace. He urged "every possible measure, both within and outside the UN, to discourage and prevent the threat or use of force by any state against the independence and territorial integrity of any other state in the Middle East," and endorsed the position that the Gulf of Aqaba is an international waterway.

In addition, religious leaders in several large communities issued joint statements of conscience: eight prominent Protestant and Roman Catholic spokesmen in Philadelphia on June 1; the Mid-Mississippi Valley Regional of the Independent Fundamental Churches of America, which represents 17 churches in Greater St. Louis, on May 30; seven St. Louis Protestant leaders of various denominations on June 6; the Catholic Interracial Council and the Commission on Church Unity of the Cleveland Catholic Diocese, and the Greater Cincinnati Interfaith Commission on the same day.

In general, Christian press comment on the May crisis concentrated on the political realities. Discussing the possibility of war in the Middle East, the non-denominational Protestant weekly, The Christian Century, said on May 31: ". . . It must not be assumed that Nasser is bluffing; certainly the Israeli government will not make such a naive assumption." A later editorial declared it "imperative" that the U.S. use its diplomatic influence to keep Israeli and Egyptian forces apart and the Gulf of Aqaba open, but warned that U.S. pressure should be applied only in cooperation with other major powers.

On June 3, the Jesuit weekly, America, favored a U.S. commitment "to support the territorial integrity of all nations of the area." Essentially, the editors backed Israel's position, but went on to remark on the rapid switch by some Jews from a "dove" position on Vietnam to a "hawk" position on Israel, and to chide one Jewish organization in particular for inconsistency.

The reluctance of the two powerful "umbrella" organizations -- the National Council of Churches and the National Conference of Catholic Bishops -- with whom Jews had been carrying on a continuous dialogue for some years, to commit themselves unequivocally on the basic question of Israel's survival, especially in the face of Arab threats to annihilate the whole population, came as a surprise to many Jewish leaders. Neither of these two groups issued any clear-cut statement to this effect during the saber-rattling days in May.

### The Shooting War

From the beginning of the brief military action, most Christian comment was concentrated on appeals for a cease fire, concern for the fate and rights of new refugees and the status of Jerusalem. In a telegram to U Thant on June 5, Pope Paul VI declared himself "saddened and concerned" by the outbreak of war and expressed his hope that Jerusalem could be declared an open and inviolable city.

A telegram from the National Council of Churches to President Johnson on June 6 proposed that the U.S. Government "continue to make the utmost use of the UN; press for a cease fire; seek negotiation through the UN of all conflicting claims . . . to establish national and international rights in the Gulf of Aqaba, the right of Arab refugees and the recognition by all of the State of Israel." The World Council of Churches called attention to the "fate of refugees of various nationalities" in the fighting area and urged its member churches to press their governments to "bring about a cessation of hostilities and to lay the foundations of a just and durable peace."

On the same day, the Religious Education Association of the United States and Canada called upon the two governments and the UN "to do everything humanly possible" toward a peace "that will recognize the essential needs of all nations involved."

And the World Alliance of Reformed and Presbyterian Churches, meeting in Geneva, asserted that "war has never solved political conflicts."

Archbishop Deardon, in his capacity as President of the National Conference of Catholic Bishops, asked on June 8 for a "crusade of prayer for peace" and expressed the "fervent hope" that the UN would be successful in halting the conflict.

The Pope's second appeal for peace in Jerusalem, on June 7, was broadcast in many languages by Vatican Radio.

However, a sharp and unambiguous "Declaration of Moral Principle," signed by Richard Cardinal Cushing and a number of other Catholic and Protestant religious leaders in the Boston area, supported Israel's position:

"None of us can be indifferent or uninvolved in confronting the moral issues inherent in the current conflict in the Middle East. We cannot stand by idly at the possibility of Israel's destruction, of decimating the two and a half million Jewish people. . . . We earnestly pray for a speedy cease fire. The end of hostilities, however, must be followed by a firm and permanent peace: one which will recognize Israel as a viable nation in the community of nations and which will include international guarantees of the territorial integrity of all nations in the Middle East. The peace must also guarantee the right of all nations without exception to free passage through the Suez Canal and the Gulf of Aqaba. . . .

". . . every effort must be made by the United Nations, with the cooperation of the major world powers, to confine the war and bring it to a speedy halt. Any failure of the UN to act promptly still places upon the United States and the other major powers this responsibility for peace."

At a June 8 Washington, D. C. rally for Israel called by major Jewish organizations, Father Edward Flannery, a specialist in Catholic-Jewish relations (and now the Executive Secretary of the Bishops' Subcommittee on Catholic-Jewish Relations), affirmed that "Israel's existence, as a legitimate member of the international community, must be preserved and guaranteed" and that the UN was the best-fitted instrument to achieve these ends. Dr. Edwin Espy, Associate General Secretary of the National Council of Churches, was never able to complete his speech at the rally, for the news of a cease fire set off an explosion of enthusiasm.

Occasionally, Christian spokesmen tended to view the Arab-Israeli conflict as a religious war, and to ignore the political realities in the Middle East. On June 9, The St. Louis Review, a diocesan weekly, gave the most extreme expression to this view:

"The most ominous aspect of the war in the Mideast is that it is a 'holy war' on both sides, a war by the Arabs and fellow Moslems to extinguish Israeli [sic] and war by the sons of Abraham against their God's enemies. A war for limited objectives, such as a strip of territory or free passage of a waterway, is limited in scope and negotiable without loss of face. But a holy war is an all-or-nothing war. Compromise with God's enemies is shameful and unpardonable. Negotiation between the principals in this war is therefore impossible."

The editor added that the only hopeful note in the situation was that the war could not continue without supplies from the major powers.

After the cease fire on June 9 had reduced the threat of a global war, Christian spokesmen began to look more deeply into the causes of the conflict, both immediate and long-range. Who was the aggressor? What were the legitimate territorial claims of the Arabs and Israelis? The historical claims? How did Vietnam and the cold war affect Middle East affairs? How effective -- or ineffective -- is the United Nations? Where do we go from here? Opinions on these questions ran the entire gamut, from those which viewed the State of Israel as an intruder into the Arab world to those which saw Israel's claims as amply justified by history.

Most Catholic and Protestant comment assumed Israel's right to exist -- although some did not. But often this right was equated with the need to solve the Arab refugee problem and the internationalization of Jerusalem. And Israel's retaliation to Arab provocations -- Nasser's dismissal of the United Nations Emergency Force, the blockade of the Gulf of Aqaba, as well as the threats to destroy Israel and its inhabitants -- was sometimes labeled "aggression" and "expansionism." A few statements seemed to express resentment of Israel's very presence in the Middle East, and especially of her military victory, which, it was argued, had created an anti-Western resentment that would severely hinder missionary programs in the Arab nations.

Thus, the Rev. James L. Kelso, a former moderator of the United Presbyterian Church, writing in Christianity Today of July 21, saw Israel as the sole culprit in the Middle East, and the Balfour Declaration as "the major cause of the three wars whereby the Jews have stolen so much of Palestine from the Arabs who have owned it for centuries." He called "this third Jewish war against the Arabs" perhaps the most serious setback to Christendom since the fall of Constantinople in 1453.

The Rev. Henry P. Van Dusen, a past president of the Union Theological Seminary, explained in a letter dated June 26 to The New York Times that Christian leaders had "silenced their judgment on Israel's assault on her Arab neighbors . . . partly lest they be misinterpreted as pro-Arab, which they most certainly are not, but primarily through profound disquiet over Israel's actions and ambitions. . . ." He went on to assert:

"All persons who seek to view the Middle East problem with honesty and objectivity stand aghast at Israel's onslaught, the most violent, ruthless (and successful) aggression since Hitler's blitzkrieg across Western Europe in the summer of 1940, aiming not at victory but at annihilation -- the very objective proclaimed by Nasser and his allies which had drawn support to Israel. "

This letter elicited a sharp rejoinder from one of Dr. Van Dusen's former students, the Rev. A. Roy Eckhardt, Chairman of the Department of Religion at Lehigh University, who protested that the parallel of Nazis with Israelis was an "unspeakable distortion of the facts. " Such a parallel, he declared, was:

"... to call black white, to label as 'aggressors' the targets of aggression, and to identify as 'annihilationists' those who barely escaped being annihilated by a foe pledged to turning them into corpses, and who, after their own victory, now manifest an almost incredible restraint and readiness to deal righteously with their would-be slayers. "

In addition, Dr. Eckhardt wondered whether:

"... perhaps the only eventuality that would mutually satisfy Communist, Arab and Christian detractors of Jews for the latter's 'aggression' would be for Jews to consent to lie down and be slaughtered. At least this would fulfill one side of the traditional yearning of Christendom. . . . "

The noted Biblical scholar, Dr. Frederick C. Grant, declared that "no nation has a historical claim to the land of Israel that can even be compared with that of modern Israel. " In the June 18 issue of The Witness, an independent Episcopal weekly, he denied that the land "has always belonged to the Arabs, " countering that "there have always been Jews in Palestine -- ever since there were Jews anywhere. "

Most Christian spokesmen, however, took no stand in support of either side, but their emphasis on certain issues revealed the problems church groups were primarily worried about. The internationalization of Jerusalem soon became an overriding concern of the Holy See and the goal of a vigorous campaign by the Vatican among all the United Nations member delegations. Protestant groups seemed less preoccupied with the internationalization of Jerusalem but they, like the Catholics, stressed free access to the holy places. And both groups immediately initiated relief programs for the Arab refugees.

On July 12, the Executive Committee of the General Board of the National Council of Churches adopted an extensive resolution which had been prepared by a task force of 40, including experts on international affairs, the Middle East overseas missions and Christian social action. The Council declared that it could not "condone by silence" Israel's territorial expansion by armed forces or approve her annexation of the Jordanian portions of Jerusalem. But it also

said that recognition of Israel by the entire international community was "indispensable to peace," and called for early talks between the belligerents. Among the other necessary steps toward peace, the Council included increased effort to solve the refugee problem, for which Israel, the Arab states and other nations share the responsibility; full scale economic development; and free access by all nations to the Gulf of Aqaba and the Suez Canal. The resolution suggested the establishment of a research institute where the best minds in the Middle East could try to solve their problems in a continuing dialogue.

### The Internationalization of Jerusalem

As previously noted, Pope Paul VI had urged that Jerusalem remain an open, inviolable city during the shooting war. Shortly afterwards, an article in L'Osservatore Romano, the Vatican daily, argued that the Israelis' military victory had in no way reduced the importance of placing Jerusalem under international control. This was widely publicized in the world press and broadcast repeatedly, in several languages, over Vatican Radio. On June 14, Msgr. Alberto Giovannetti, permanent observer of the Holy See to the United Nations, circulated a note on "Jerusalem and the Holy Places" to all 122 member delegations. Internationalization of "that city and its vicinity," the memorandum declared, was "the only solution" which offered sufficient protection of Jerusalem and the holy places.

The Vatican appeal found some echo in the American Catholic press. The Criterion (Indianapolis) said on June 23 that "Jerusalem does not belong to the Israelis or to the Jordanians. It belongs to the world. . . . Logically, the city should be completely neutralized, declared an international city under the unshakable guardianship of an international body. The obvious [body] . . . is the United Nations."

The Pilot (Boston), which on June 24 had found Israel's offer to place the holy places under international supervision "reassuring," on July 8 turned to favoring UN administration. But "for the rest," the editors went on, "Arab intransigence must give way to a more realistic posture and accept the fact of Israel and its continued peaceful existence as a state in the Middle East."

In the same issue, Cardinal Cushing urged that Jerusalem be above politics. "Nothing less than a truly international enclave can satisfy the conscience of the world in regard to the sacred shrines and their environment."

But American Catholic opinion was not unanimously for internationalization. On July 20, The Georgia Bulletin, a diocesan weekly, argued that "those who are now so concerned about free access [to the holy places] have been silent for 19 years." The call to internationalize Jerusalem was "not only 19 years too late, it ignore[d] the history of the Jews."

The Religious News Service reported on July 18 that Rabbi Hayim Donin

of Southfield, Michigan had publicly questioned the rationale behind Vatican pressure on this issue: Since Israel had already offered to internationalize the holy places, why was the Church "so much more upset by the thought of Israel's control of Jerusalem than of Jordanian control?" He suggested that the Vatican was still following the theological teaching that the defeat of the Jews by the Romans and the destruction of Jerusalem in the year 70 C.E. were divine punishment for the Jews' stubborn refusal to accept Christianity -- an idea that ought to be laid to rest "as a dangerous myth."

RNS reported on the same day that Archbishop Iakovos, Primate of the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of North and South America, had also called for internationalization of Jerusalem. A week later, on June 26, the Standing Conference of Orthodox Bishops in the Americas, of which Archbishop Iakovos is chairman, called unanimously for an "internationally guaranteed status" to shrines of all faiths, without specifically urging the internationalization of the city. (The Standing Conference represents 11 Orthodox Churches, with a total constituency of 6,000,000 persons.)

On the other hand, The New York Times reported on June 19 that world church leaders had "reacted coolly" to the proposal for international control. Times correspondents found a general consensus among Protestant and Orthodox leaders that it was "inappropriate for religious groups to back a specific plan." Most of them agreed with the General Secretary of the World Council of Churches, the Rev. Eugene Carson Blake, who, speaking from the Council's Geneva headquarters, declared on June 20 that the status of Jerusalem and its holy places was primarily a political matter and that religious questions "could only be raised once there is a political agreement." (Not surprisingly, Coptic Christian leaders in the United Arab Republic had protested Israel's occupation of the Old City. In a cablegram on June 19 to the World Council, they passed over this organization's repudiation of the notion of collective Jewish responsibility for the death of Jesus, and pressed for a stand against the occupation of Jerusalem and the holy places by "the very people who crucified Christ and deny his resurrection." They requested a denunciation of the "Anglo-American aggression" which hid behind Israel's "attack on Arab lands.")

Archbishop Ieronymous, the new Archbishop of Athens and leader of the Greek Orthodox Church in Greece, welcomed "any solution which would absolutely insure a peaceful atmosphere" around the holy places and "their removal from national antagonisms." Archbishop Athenagoras, the Ecumenical Patriarch of Istanbul, took a similar position.

The Rev. Constantine Koser, newly elected Brazilian Minister General of the Franciscan Order of Friars Minor, which oversees Christian shrines in the Holy Land, also made it clear at a news conference in Rome that he would be satisfied with adequate Israeli guarantees of access for all faiths.

And, again according to The New York Times, an Anglican representative in London said that his church had no official opinion on internationalization.



Later, however, Anglican Archbishop Frederick Donald Coggan of York, addressing the House of Lords on his return from a visit to the U.S. and Canada, proposed the internationalization of a large area of land, including Jerusalem and perhaps Bethlehem. According to an RNS dispatch dated July 3, he said that peace in the Middle East, and perhaps the whole world, might depend on the Israeli victors' magnanimity toward the defeated nations.

The National Council of Churches resolution of July 12, cited above, urged an "international presence in Jerusalem, to preserve the peace and integrity of the city, foster the welfare of its inhabitants and protect its holy shrines with full rights of access to all."

On July 12, The Christian Century, recalling Jesus' lament over the Holy City, said that "bitterness and quarrels over Jerusalem remain; agony also remains." Asserting that Jordan was wrong in refusing to recognize Israel, and in confiscating areas of Jerusalem established as international zones and prohibiting Jews from worshipping and praying at the Wailing Wall, the Century nevertheless contended that annexation by Israel would pile wrong on wrong. While the editors viewed an internationalized Jerusalem as preferable to one united by Israeli force, they proposed a third solution:

"[it] would be even better if Israel and Jordan devised a system by which a united city could be mutually administered and other nations were excluded from all control of Jerusalem. Such a system would require Jordan to enter into diplomatic relations with Israel and would open the door to further cooperation between two states . . . that have overlapping interests. . . . We understand Israel's unwillingness to surrender any of the Arab lands it has captured until the Arab states acknowledge Israel's existence, its legitimacy and its integrity as a state. We agree that some of the borders . . . should be readjusted to give Israel the security it has not had during the past score years. But we also believe that Israel's unilateral annexation of Old Jerusalem plants depth charges that will be exploding for the next hundred years."

A group of 16 distinguished Christian seminary presidents and professors declared their support for unification of Jerusalem under Israeli rule in a New York Times advertisement on July 12. "For Christians, to acknowledge the necessity of Judaism is to acknowledge that Judaism presupposes inextricable ties with the land of Israel and the city of David, without which Judaism cannot be truly itself," they stated. They pointed out that the artificial division of Jerusalem, which for 20 years had "resulted in a denial of access to their holy places for all Jews and for Israeli Arabs of the Moslem faith," and limited access to Christian shrines by Israeli Christians as well, "did not elicit significant protests on the part of the religious leaders of the world." They continued:

"We see no justification in proposals which seek once again to destroy the unity which has been restored to Jerusalem. This unity is the

natural condition of the Holy City, and now once again assures the world's religious peoples the freedom of worship at the shrines. . . .

" . . . the sanctity and protection of the holy places of all denominations have been assured by the Government of Israel, whose record over the last twenty years . . . inspires confidence that the interests of all religions will be faithfully honored. This confidence is further strengthened by Israel's offer to place the holy places under independent denominational supervision. "

The signatories noted that a new opportunity had arisen to come to grips with the Arab refugee problem and urged that Israel and the Arab countries take initiatives "to eliminate once and for all this human suffering, [in] . . . an overall settlement . . . through direct negotiations. "

Dr. Howard Schomer, an official in the National Council of Churches Department of Overseas Ministries, made his rejoinder in a letter to the 16 signatories of this statement, which was released publicly on July 17. Arguing that only internationalization of the whole city could satisfy both Jewish and Moslem historical and emotional ties to the shrines, he expressed the dilemma that confronted most Christian institutional bodies:

"We are keenly aware that the precious Jewish-Christian dialogue is in some jeopardy at this time and requires of Christians special sensitivity and courage. But we are also aware that the Orthodox and Protestant Christians of the Middle East are subject to all of the painful pressures that grip the general Arab population, plus the peculiar dangers inherent in their minority status. We are determined to keep faith with both our fellow Christians in the Middle East and our Jewish brethren there and here. "

#### Christian Relief to War Victims

Both Protestants and Catholics made immediate appeals for humanitarian assistance to victims of the Middle East war, and allocated funds for relief and welfare.

On June 12, Paul VI sent \$50,000 for aid to war victims and announced an airlift shipment of food and medical supplies to Amman, Jordan. The World Council of Churches appealed to its member churches, including those in Eastern Europe, for an initial \$2,000,000, and several denominational groups pledged support. The Council announced that it was maintaining liaison with the Roman Catholic International Caritas, which had made a similar plea. In New York, church specialists on Middle East affairs, appearing on a CBS-TV special program, agreed that American Christians had a special responsibility to work for peace in the region through refugee assistance and support of government development-aid programs.

While these appeals were largely non-partisan, and the funds intended to alleviate "distress of peoples of all nationalities and religions," it was apparent that the bulk of relief was for displaced Arabs.\*

It is difficult to assess the effect of this concern for Arab refugees on the stands taken by individual Christian leaders or representative organizations on the issues in the Israeli-Arab conflict. But in at least two cases, sympathy for the plight of Arabs appeared to determine a political judgment. Both were personal statements by leaders of Protestant denominations, but both were widely distributed to pastors and leaders within these denominations.

The Rev. Dana E. Klotzle, Director of the United Nations office of the Unitarian-Universalist Association, condemned "unequivocally the apparent expansionist policy of the present Israeli government, which cannot help but lead to more violence and bloodshed in the area." He also accused Israel of excessive nationalism and of a naked power policy. Dr. Klotzle condemned "with equal vigor the policy of the Arab leaders to incite their people to violence against Israel." He recommended the internationalization of the new and old parts of Jerusalem, as well as the establishment of a homeland area for the Palestinian Arabs which would include some of the territory set aside by the 1947 UN Partition Plan. Until 1967, this land was in both Jordan and Israel. And he called upon "both Jew and Arab alike to rise above the narrow confines of nationalism. . . ."

Dr. Alford Carleton, Executive Vice-President of the United Church of Christ Board for Homeland Ministries, emphasized the misery and bitterness of the Arabs in the Middle East, the need for relief services, and his personal sense of frustration over "the old tragic drama of war. . . ." In an open letter to pastors and leaders of his church, he discussed the sources of Arab resentment of the West:

"In the long, long run, of course, they are right that their present plight is the responsibility of the British and the Americans in the sense that the original decision to create in Palestine a national home for the Jews -- not to mention a full-blown and aggressive national State of Israel -- was an act of Western political and economic invasion into the area which had been indisputably 'the Arab World' for well over a thousand years. If in their frustration and bitter disappointment they now turn angrily against us, we should not be surprised!"

Dr. R. Park Johnson, Acting Secretary for the Middle East of the Commission on Ecumenical Missions and Relations of the United Presbyterian

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\* The plight of Jews in Arab nations, thousands of whom were imprisoned or otherwise persecuted during the same period, while less widely known, was a matter of public record. However, it received little attention in Christian circles.

Church in the U. S. A., called on June 30 for an understanding of "the deep passions on both sides" and warned that Christians should not identify too closely with Zionist groups if they were concerned about an Arab-Israeli reconciliation. He said he had prepared his statement for the information of Commission members rather than for adoption, but warned that "the willingness of many American Christians [to lend their avowed or implicit support to pro-Israel statements or public meetings] has not gone unrecognized by the Arab people. It has contributed to the sense of frustration and . . . anti-American emotions of many Arabs, both Moslems and Christians, both political leaders and common people. "

### Direct Negotiations

Church organizations and leaders issued many statements expressing their humanitarian concern for the plight of Arab refugees, and some said that Arab recognition of the State of Israel was really contingent upon a settlement of this problem. Only a few public statements, however, dealt specifically with Israel's long-standing demand for face-to-face talks with her Arab neighbors.

The Protestant Council of the City of New York on July 15 called for "direct negotiations . . . based upon the legal existence of Israel and the desire by both parties to establish a permanent peace. " In addition, the Council recommended immediate steps toward exchange of prisoners, aid to displaced persons, a Middle East common market and a halt to the provision of arms to governments in the area.

On June 23, RNS reported that Dr. Franklin Clark Fry, Chairman of the World Council of Churches Central and Executive Committees, and President of the Lutheran Church in America, had declared for direct negotiations. Interviewed in Canada, he said it would be a mistake for Israel to annex conquered territories without negotiation, but also urged that the Arab states recognize Israel's national sovereignty to help bring about a general peace settlement. Internationalization of Jerusalem was an ideal, but utopian, solution, he declared, and he doubted that either side would agree to it.

Although the National Council of Churches' July 7 "Resolution on the Crisis in the Middle East" was critical of Israel's "territorial expansion by armed force, " it did take an unambiguous position in favor of direct negotiations:

"Indispensable to peace in the Middle East is acceptance by the entire international community of the State of Israel. . . . Early talks between the belligerents with or without the good offices, conciliation or mediation of a third party are encouraged. "

In a June 30 statement signed by President Carroll L. Shuster and General Secretary Forrest C. Weir, and mailed to 2,800 people in the Los Angeles area, the Council of Churches in Southern California called upon "Israel and the Arab Nations to meet at the conference table" as a step toward

permanent peace, "unrestricted access and protection" of the holy places and efforts by religious, governmental and welfare institutions to alleviate the plight of displaced persons in the Middle East.

The Los Angeles Times of July 29 published the full text of a "Statement of Religious Conscience" signed by some 150 Protestant, Roman Catholic and Jewish clergymen in the Southwest. In one of the few declarations that gave first priority to "the right of Israel and the Jewish people to exist in a sovereign state," the signatories listed the requirements for a "permanent and just settlement" of Middle East problems. Warning against "the world catastrophe of renewed conflict," they stressed the importance of "peaceful settlement of territorial disputes and other matters of common concern through direct negotiation between interested nations."

There were some declarations by clergymen and editorials in the Christian press that discussed the question of direct negotiations, as well as other problems raised by the conflict, in moral terms. On June 16, The Providence Visitor, Roman Catholic diocesan weekly for Rhode Island, took a stand on Israel's side:

"As a universal moral issue, the evidence is overwhelming that the initiation of hostilities was engendered by the United Arab Republic. ...

"The problems . . . which lie ahead pose difficulties almost as vexatious as the war itself. . . . Little empathy is needed to imagine the prevailing Jewish state of mind. To return to the original lines of demarcation could easily be regarded as a waiting period for the U. A. R. to build up another military machine."

And later:

"Israel's swift victory over the aggression initiated by the forces of the U. A. R. has been circumscribed by a morass of delays and double-talk. Arab provocation was beyond question; military resolution on the part of Israel was rapid, comprehensive, and most unusual in military history, compassionate. In fact, the humanitarian attention lavished upon the defeated . . . is seemingly without historical parallel. Why then, are such subtle pockets of opposition at work? One wonders why attempts at stabilizing the situation in the Middle East appear to be tinged with a certain regret over the outcome. ...

"What is truly appalling is the absence of moral declaration on the part of responsible powers in the West . . . which has never been noted for conspicuous reticence in branding aggressors in the past. The present silence is difficult to comprehend. In view of . . . the history of our century, it could be construed as somewhat frightening."

The Commonweal, a liberal lay-Catholic weekly, said on June 16: "Whatever short-term policies Washington might adopt to avert disaster, ultimately it must be fully committed to Israel's survival." And on June 23 the editors hoped also "that after the first flush of victory, the voices of moderation [would be] heeded in Israel." And, they concluded:

"On the one hand, international pressure and a decent regard for the opinion of mankind will urge Israel against clinging to every inch of territory it has conquered. On the other hand, after months and years of threatening Israel with extermination, the Arab nations can hardly expect that Israel will give up the margin of safety it has now purchased by force of arms, unless this concession is accompanied by a realistic peace treaty and credible guarantees of Israel's security."

The Jesuit journal, America, said on June 17 that "the problem beyond the problem" was the cold war: The purpose of the Soviet Union was to exploit tensions and create complications for the United States while we are deeply involved in Southeast Asia. On June 24, the magazine enumerated the lessons of the Middle East conflict: First, that "the UN is still far from realizing its purpose as a world peace keeping organization;" and second, that "negotiation in place of war is easier talked about than achieved."

"The price for ultimate peace in the Middle East," the magazine declared, would "come high -- perhaps prohibitively high in the thinking of each of the parties. But the price must be paid." Right or wrong, each side would have to reckon with the feelings and point of view of the other as fact: Israel must recognize the Arab view that the refugees are "people who have unjustly lost their homeland"; and the Arab world must recognize that Israel is a "homeland for Jews who have no other."

### The Arab-Israeli War and Christian-Jewish Dialogue

Before war broke out in the Middle East, numerous public statements by eminent Catholic, Protestant and Orthodox leaders, as well as the extraordinary support for Israel's position registered in public opinion polls, encouraged an expectation of general Christian backing: Rabbi Marc H. Tanenbaum, Director of Interreligious Affairs of the American Jewish Committee, considered them to be "a reflection of Jewish-Christian support that has developed in the years since Vatican Council II."

But it soon became apparent that, despite these individual statements, Christian groups were hesitating to make official commitments concerning issues that Jews -- and indeed most Americans, according to a Gallup poll -- considered basic in the Middle East crisis. Their silence on the threat to Israel's survival, and especially the later declarations by several Christian leaders that the recognition of Israel's sovereignty was contingent upon the solution of other problems, aroused the resentment of many Jewish spokesmen.

Accusations and counter-accusations, aired both privately and in public, soon exposed a thorny issue that will have to be faced in future Christian-Jewish dialogue.

Rabbi Balfour Brickner, Director of the Commission of Interfaith Activities of American Reform Judaism, speaking before the Central Conference of American Rabbis in Los Angeles on June 22, said that the "organized church seemed unable to take a strong stand on what it considered to be a political issue." But, he added, "the survival of the Jewish people is not a political issue." He charged that the church "by its silence, by peaceful calls for peace, suggesting that the matter be placed in the lap of a then particularly paralyzed United Nations -- also failed the cause of world peace." And, finally, he said that the American Jewish Committee's early estimate of Christian support was "an exaggerated oversimplification."

Rabbi Arthur Hertzberg, in his June 14 column for The National Catholic Reporter, similarly called attention to the silence of both the Protestant and Catholic "formal establishments."

As reported by RNS on June 27, Rabbi Pesach Z. Levovitz, President of the Orthodox Rabbinical Council of America, declared that official Christian reaction to the crisis testified to the "essential inadequacy" of the dialogue. Because the ecumenical movement had not awakened "the ethical conscience and spiritual foundations of the Christian community in rising to the overwhelming peril to Israel's very survival," he called on Jewish leaders and organizations to "reassess and review the value of their participation" in dialogue programs.

These charges did not go unanswered. On June 30, Msgr. George Higgins, a widely syndicated columnist in the American Catholic press, took Rabbis Brickner and Hertzberg to task for "arguing from the premise that the Israeli-Arab war was a religious, not to say a 'holy' war." Himself a strong supporter of Israel, he felt that most American Catholics were pro-Israel too, "but on their own terms." And he countercharged that Jewish pressure for statements of support was a form of "ecumenical blackmail."

Rabbi Hertzberg replied that "no Jew, and certainly not I, ever said that Israel's battle was a 'holy' war. . . . On the contrary, it was the Arab side which was using such rhetoric. . . ." He agreed that "Jews have been pushing their Christian colleagues very hard," but asked whether it was "terribly immoral to ask the major Christian communions to join with us" in speaking out for the right of Israel to survive.

Rabbi Marc Tanenbaum, speaking at the annual meeting of the Religious Newswriters Association on July 7, also criticized "the failure of the 'diplomatic' institutions of Christendom to speak an unequivocal word in defense of the preservation of the Jewish people." Discussion had been confined, in the past, to problems in the diaspora, but "no future Jewish-Christian dialogue

will take place without Jews insisting upon the confrontation on the part of Christians of the profound historical, religious, cultural and liturgical meaning of the land of Israel and of Jerusalem to the Jewish people," he said.

The Christian Century entered the discussion on July 12. The long editorial cited above devoted some space to the arguments of Rabbis Brickner and Levovitz. While pleading with Christians "to remember the temper of the times and to understand the mood of a people who believe -- and who were encouraged by the Arabs to believe -- that they are once more threatened by genocide," the editors declared that "Christians will certainly postpone decision about Israel's territorial integrity until the Israelis and the Arabs have both had their say. They will not sign a blank check." Taking particular issue with Rabbi Levovitz, the Century stated: "If interfaith dialogue must cease until all Christians become Zionists, then, of course, there will be no dialogue. . . . This is the time to increase and deepen the Jewish-Christian dialogue, not to suspend it."

The July 1-15 issue of the Methodist publication, Concern, explained that the "few Fall leaves" in "this Indian summer of general good will" between Christians and Jews in America were partially due to "the widespread lack of understanding on the part of Christians of the solidarity of the Jewish people. Jews tend to think of themselves as Jews in a way [that] most Christians do not think of themselves as Christians." Whatever the divisions within the Jewish community over political Zionism, the magazine continued, the recent crisis produced renewed Jewish unity. "In the same crisis, however, a unity of view did not occur between Christians and Jews, even between those who had cooperated in social action ventures frequently in the past."

The magazine went on to explain why Jews were so disappointed in public statements by the National Council of Churches, which discouraged unilateral action and urged "impartial judgment" by the UN at the time of the greatest threat to Israel. Given the obvious weakness of the UN at that time, "Jewish leaders believed that such statements . . . were little more than abandonment of the Jews to their own resources." The editors concluded:

"The time has come for both Christians and Jews to recognize that on certain issues each operates from his own set of presuppositions, which are not necessarily shared by the other. . . . While Christians may not be able to participate existentially in the community that is Judaism, they must be able to understand what that community means to Jews. And Jews must be able to understand that Christians are never going to allow genocide of the Jews to mar human history again, even though they may not see eye to eye on Middle Eastern issues. We cannot become Jews, but we must insist on the freedom of Jews to live fully, including so to live in Israel, a recognized national state.

"Peace is far from secure in the Middle East. Until it is, Christians and Jews must work together in the United States to effect it, without a deep sense of injury arising from their honest differences."



## Conclusion

Perhaps the basic point at issue between the organized Jewish and Christian communities was whether support of Israel's survival -- the survival of the population as well as the juridical state -- constituted a clear-cut moral commitment. Jews certainly saw it that way, and viewed such a commitment as the starting point for any discussion of political solutions or problems arising from the war. It was the unwillingness of most church organizations to declare themselves on this key question which aroused the resentment of Jewish spokesmen. Jews did not expect unanimous Christian support for every policy decision of the State of Israel. What they did expect was an outpouring of protest at the threats to annihilate human beings -- the Jews of Israel -- and an affirmation of the right to defend themselves and their nation. The relative silence of the churches on this matter, combined with later remonstrances regarding Israel's "territorial expansion," was inexplicable to Jews, particularly when it seemed clear that the overwhelming majority of Americans supported Israel's position. (A July Harris poll indicated that 82% of the American people believed that Israel's existence as a sovereign state should be formally accepted by the Arab states; 88% believed Israel should be guaranteed passage through the Gulf of Aqaba; 86% felt Israel should have passage through the Suez Canal and 79% opposed UN condemnation of Israel as the aggressor in the war, with 62% rejecting Israel's withdrawal from occupied territory as a precondition to negotiations.) Christian spokesmen, on their part, seemed perplexed by the intensity of the Jewish response.

Several factors help to explain the unwillingness of Christian groups to take an unequivocal stand on either side in the Arab-Israeli conflict. First, they apparently evaluated Arab threats to annihilate the Israeli population as rodomontade and propaganda, whereas the Jews, in whose memory the European holocaust is still painfully vivid, took them very seriously indeed -- especially since the Arabs' enormous supply of Soviet armor provided the means to carry out these threats. Second, the incredibly swift and decisive victory of the Israeli forces placed the Arab nations in the underdog position. (In several communities, Christian representatives who were scheduled to appear at emergency rallies for Israel withdrew after the military victory.) Third, Christian church groups have strong ties and responsibilities in the Middle East -- institutional, educational and philanthropic -- and constituencies in many Arab nations. And some Christian leaders felt that an open pro-Israel declaration would jeopardize not only their institutional interests, but their hopes to play a conciliatory role. For example, Roland Huff, Director of Promotion for the Disciples of Christ Week of Compassion relief offering, warned ministers not to take sides because, ". . . before all the facts are assessed, hasty alignments can be detrimental."

But, as many observers have noted, disagreement between Christians and Jews on specific solutions to the Middle East problem is not the heart of the matter. Certainly most Christians, as well as Jews, favor a guarantee of Israel's survival; and most Jews, as well as Christians, want to relieve the

suffering of displaced Arabs and to assure free access to the holy shrines. But because the two communities look at the crisis from different viewpoints, they see these problems in different orders of priority. The question that divides them is where to break into the vicious cycle that has bound the Middle East in continuous tension for 20 years. Many Christian leaders believe that settlement of the refugee problem, the status of Jerusalem and the strengthening of the United Nations are the primary objectives, and that recognition of Israel's sovereignty is contingent upon, or secondary to, these goals. Most Jews feel that there can be no lasting solution to Middle East problems before the Arab nations come to terms with Israel's existence, and they contend that Israel cannot, or should not, relinquish the conquered territories without some assurance from the Arab states and the international community that there will be no recurrence of the conditions that led up to the war.

The gap between these two positions may not be very wide, but it does not appear to be narrowing. Moreover, it has been deepened by a new awareness of the basically different approaches of the Christian and Jewish communities to some crucial problems. It was something of a shock to both Christian and Jewish participants in the interreligious dialogue to discover that perhaps they did not take the same things for granted. As spokesmen of both groups have noted, the dialogue had not prepared Christians for the Jews' passionate demonstration of peoplehood and attachment to Israel. And that sudden demonstration has directed attention to some of the unexplored theological issues that influence, directly or indirectly, political attitudes toward the State of Israel.

We do not here refer to statements in which the theological content was open and explicit -- statements which, in fact, viewed the Arab-Israeli war as fulfillment of prophecy. Such utterances were rare: (An example was a statement by a Protestant minister, Dr. Harold Sala, broadcast on station KBBI, June 14: "What has just taken place is consistent with what the Bible says will occur in the end of time preceding the second coming of Christ.") The overwhelming majority of comments by church spokesmen dealt with the conflict as a secular phenomenon, and a few specifically disavowed Biblical connotations. (Dr. R. Park Johnson, whose statement was cited earlier, declared: "Present political and military events in the Middle East cannot be properly interpreted as a realization of the prophetic messages in the Bible about the people of Israel as an instrument of God's purposes of justice and mercy for all nations under the rule of God.")

Jews had the growing impression, however, that Israel was being judged by Christian groups somewhat differently from the way any other nation-state confronted by similar circumstances would be judged, and some concluded that an unexplored theological terrain underlay some of the discussion, no matter how secular the terminology. They noted, for example, that some of the same Christian groups who are sympathetic to the nationalism of the emerging African and Asian states are less kindly disposed to Jewish nationalism. Similarly, many who argue for an understanding of the positive implications of black nationalism in America are discomfited by manifestations of Jewish

peoplehood. The significance of this persistent sense of peoplehood has yet to be fully explored in the deepening dialogue between Christians and Jews, but it is clear that some Christians regard it as a kind of religious atavism, a tribalistic regression from the universalism of Jewish religious thought at its purest. According to this view, the "mission of Israel" is to be a witnessing people throughout the world, and to tie this mission to a piece of land is to degrade it. Whether or not such a viewpoint is seen by Jews as a "Christian" reading of Jewish history, it is obvious that theological considerations, ranging from eschatology to the demythologizing of religion, are at work here.

No doubt the interfaith dialogue will survive the tensions created by the Middle East crisis. But if it is to reach beyond surface differences to the underlying essentials separating religious groups today, clearly the ideas and feelings of Jews and Christians about Israel, both the land and the people -- with all the religious, emotional and political connotations this word carries for both traditions -- will be on the dialogue agenda for some time to come.



SUGGESTED READING\*

American Reactions to the Six-Day War: A Commentary Report, including "Israel and the Intellectuals," by Robert Alter; "Israel and American Jewry," by Arthur Hertzberg; "In the Light of Israel's Victory," by Milton Himmelfarb; "The American Left and Israel," by Martin Peretz. 1967. 32 pp. \$1.00.

The Arab Refugee Problem and the United Nations. George E. Gruen. 1967. 12 pp. 20¢.

"The Arabs of Palestine." Martha Gellhorn. Reprinted from The Atlantic. October 1961. 24 pp. 10¢.

Children of One Father. A selected annotated bibliography of pamphlets and reprints on Jewish-Christian relations. 1966. 28 pp. 25¢.

Crisis in the Middle East. Questions and answers on the issues underlying the outbreak of hostilities in June. 1967. 12 pp. 20¢.

A Guide to Interreligious Dialogue. Ground rules for interfaith discussions and selected discussion topics. 1966. 24 pp. 50¢.

"Israel: Land of Unlimited Impossibilities." Barbara Tuchman. Reprinted from The Saturday Evening Post. 1967. 6 pp. 10¢.

The Many Faces of Anti-Semitism. Religious, economic, social, political, psychological origins of a classic prejudice. 1967. 64 pp. 75¢.

"Mideast's Refugees: Victims or a Hope?" Martha Gellhorn. Reprinted from The Los Angeles Times. August 1967. 6 pp. 10¢.

"New Helpmate for New Nations." Albert Maisel. Israel's technical assistance programs for the new African nations. Reprinted from Reader's Digest. November 1961. 4 pp. 10¢.

The Situation of Jewish Communities in Arab Countries. Mimeo. 1967. 5 pp. Single copy free.

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\* The materials above are all available from the American Jewish Committee. A Publications Catalogue, listing more than 200 titles distributed by the American Jewish Committee, is available on request.



Mrs. Judith Hershcopf Banki is assistant director  
of the Interreligious Affairs Department  
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## Christianity Threatened in Israel?

An Examination of Archbishop Ryan's Charges

By JOHN OESTERREICHER

IN THE SPRING OF 1971, Archbishop Ryan of Anchorage pleaded with the bishops of the United States that they help save Christianity in Israel. Immediately, his plea was given or leaked to the press; in the fall of 1972, it appeared again in the anti-Zionist periodical *The Link*. In offering his statement for publication, Archbishop Ryan has entered the arena of open discussion. He must, therefore, expect, even welcome a reply to his ominous predictions. Having just returned from a trip to Israel and investigated as much as I could, the problem of "the possible extinction of an effective Christian presence in the Holy Land" (p. 2),<sup>1</sup> I feel in conscience bound to give my view on the Archbishop's concern.

Arab Christians have left and will continue to leave Israel, the Archbishop holds, so that soon "Bishops and Priests of the Catholic and Orthodox Churches [will] preside over historic—but empty—museums" (p. 9). I cannot imagine a follower of Jesus who did not care whether or not Christians would and could go on living in the land of Abraham, their father in faith, but I do not think that his primary interest would be in the *number* of Christians to be found in Israel. Yet, throughout his brief, Archbishop Ryan seems to be pre-

occupied with the quantity rather than the quality of Christian life. Its true measure is not crowded churches but unselfish service.

### The Hidden Problem

TRUST I WILL not be misunderstood. I do not suggest that we look stoically forward to an ever increasing number of empty churches in Israel or anywhere else. What I wish to say is that no lament or clamor—"Speak up and speak now" is Archbishop Ryan's appeal to the bishops (p. 22)—will fill churches, unless the worship be so designed as to make the people part of it.

I do not pretend to any firsthand knowledge of the religious life of Arab communities. Yet, on my last visit to Israel in October 1972, sisters and priests who possess that experience have given me this impression of Latin parishes in Israel: In most of them, the celebration of the Eucharist has not benefited from the liturgical renewal the Council initiated. There is little or no lay participation, except in paraliturgical devotions like the Palm Sunday procession. Catechetical instruction is not rooted in the Scriptures or concerned with the problems of this day; it still follows old patterns which do not give the faithful, beyond the motivation

of their hearts, that intellectual understanding needed to withstand the onslaught of modern unbelief.

In Jerusalem, I discussed life under Israeli rule with a number of Arabs. Only one, a Latin Catholic whose home in the Old City I was privileged to visit, mentioned the religious situation. We had hardly been introduced to one another when he expressed his determination to leave for the United States. As one of the reasons for this move, he cited the alleged fact that, since East Jerusalem had become part of Israel, the religious life was no longer what it had been before. Obstacles were put in the way of Christian worship, he maintained. I asked at once for some concrete proof; the only instance my host was able to offer was an alleged change of the procession that seeks to retrace Jesus' triumphant entry into the City on the Sunday before His passion. When East Jerusalem was in Jordan, my host declared, the Procession was most beautiful, lasting from one to six o'clock. All this was different now, he maintained; but he made no attempt to tell what had changed.

I felt that little would be gained by pressing him further for I could not help but mistrust his whole attitude and thus his story. When I checked it later with Christian friends who had lived in East Jerusalem for many years, I learned that the Palm Sunday procession now was the same as before. Still starting at Bethpage, it moves through El-Tur, Gethsemane, and St. Stephen's Gate to St. Anne's Monastery. It begins, not at one, but at two-thirty. Though lasting for quite some time, it has never taken five hours, unless one uses, as my Arab host obviously had, the portal-to-portal principle of modern working men that includes the hours spent at the procession as well as the time needed to get from one's house to the procession's point of departure and, again,

that from the terminal point back to one's home.

In recalling the conversation, I do not accuse my Arab host of lying, rather do I think that prejudice, not to say antagonism, so obscured his vision that the shape of things had become blurred. This brings to mind the response of an influential Latin Catholic priest to my question about the present relations between the State of Israel and the Church. "They are good," he said, "one big difficulty, however, is the mentality of Arab Catholics." If I may add my own interpretation, Arab Christians are a small minority; they see themselves squeezed in between two huge blocks: Jews and Muslims. My host, who gave the impression of being unhappy about the religious atmosphere surrounding him, also complained about the financial straits he was in. Though his income is, according to Israeli standards, quite comfortable—2,400 Israeli pounds per month—he has a large family of thirteen to feed. When I suggested that he change his position, he replied that he now worked for Christian proprietors but would never do so for Jews or—here he was even more vehement—for Muslims. Yet in the same breath, he declared that, once in the United States, he would open an Oriental restaurant in Miami Beach! How he could manage this—if, at present, he lived from hand to mouth and his future clientele would in all probability be Jewish—is a bit puzzling.

What may look like a political problem, is fundamentally a pastoral one. If the Arab faithful so easily fall prey to their resentments and yield to dreams of "more money," this is a task for priests and bishops. If it were true that Arab Christians are leaving Jerusalem *en masse*, then, I fear, the shepherds would not have done their duty. If something goes wrong with our lives, is it not healthier to look first for the ad-



verse forces within, and then for possible culprits outside?

#### Despair or Hope

A SERIOUS EXAMINATION OF conscience on the pastoral responsibilities of the Church in Israel and on the execution of these responsibilities would help all concerned a thousand times more than the exercise in hyperbolic speech Archbishop Ryan engages in. He makes his own the characterization of the alleged exodus of Christians from Israel as a "distressing stampede without hope or joy" (p. 17). These words are originally those of the Melchite Archbishop of Galilee, Joseph Raya, who, no matter what he treats, prefers impassioned speech to soberness. On my last trip across Israel and the West Bank, I have found many different moods and attitudes among Arabs. Nowhere have I witnessed anything even slightly resembling panic.

There is one Christian community in Israel that flourishes more than ever: the Armenian. The better socio-economic standard—it is three times as high as it was under the Jordanian administration—the security of weekly wages, the rights of workers who are no longer at the mercy of their employers, all this has not estranged them from things spiritual. On the contrary, as one of their bishops told me, church attendance is greater than ever; there is no emigration today, there are even some who are returning; there is a steady increase in vocations; a new theological seminary and a new biblical institute are being built—to be used by Armenians from all over the world.

When I realized how well the Armenian Church has fared under Israeli rule, I wondered if the different histories of the Armenian and Arab peoples did not account for their different developments. Armenians were the first people in modern times to suffer genocide, at

the hands of the Turks. It may be this experience that has made them, or at least their leaders, particularly sensitive, indeed sympathetic, to Israeli aspirations as well as achievements. Arabic speaking peoples were not massacred by the Ottoman rulers as were the Armenians, but neglected, harassed, and at times brutally oppressed. It may be this past experience, together with the anti-modern orientation of Islamic culture, that has taken from Arabs the gift to respond to a new situation. Could it be that, at least in part, they project their hostile feelings against the Turks of yesteryear onto the Israelis of today, whose several victories may make them look, to Arab eyes, very much like their old masters, even though in reality there is no resemblance at all? I do not know.

But this I do know: There is no reason for despair. Christianity is not doomed in Israel, unless it commits suicide. If pastors helped their parishioners form an enlightened conscience; if they shielded the latter against the spell of bombastic oratory; if they made the faithful face the real world instead of fleeing into a land of dreams; if they assisted them in becoming, not subservient but cooperative citizens, the Church will not only survive but grow in spirit and thus in stature.

I trust that those responsible for the future of the Church will rise above past errors—among which a triumphalist attitude is not the least—to new heights. I trust that they will be responsive to the offer of no less a man than Abba Eban, Israel's Foreign Minister who, in the summer of 1971, stated in the *Knesset*, the country's parliament, the ideas that guide the policy of the national and municipal governments regarding Jerusalem:

The City is open to constructive initiative of Jews, Christians, and Muslims the world over in the furtherance of its de-

velopment, especially of its cultural and spiritual assets, and in increasing the number of institutions and enterprises testifying to the City's historical uniqueness and special mission of promoting faith, progress, and peace. . . .

Our policy is: safeguarding the religious, cultural, and social life of the City's population and of those who enter its gates, including Christian, Muslim, and other pilgrims. One may hope that all those to whom the wellbeing of Jerusalem is dear will fully appreciate these gains . . . as well as the intention to continue to work in this direction, that harmony and mutual respect may reign in Jerusalem among its inhabitants and communities.<sup>2</sup>

### The Witnesses

**S**MALL WONDER THAT Archbishop Ryan pays little attention to statements like the above. He has been closely associated with the Catholic Near East Welfare Association, an organization that has not distinguished itself by a spirit of fairness, much less of affection, for the people and state of Israel. Still, I am amazed that the Archbishop would so compromise himself as to number among his authorities on what he, with Archbishop Raya, calls "a distressing stampede without hope or joy," men like the Superior of the *Lebanese Maronite Order*, the Cardinal-Archbishop of *Algeria*, the President of the Reformed Church of the *same country* and still others who live outside Israel and are, therefore, unable to have first-hand knowledge on the shift of population in Israel.

Archbishop Ryan also cites the Anglican Primate, with his See in *Canterbury*—but not the Anglican Archbishop of Jerusalem!—pastors living in *Jordan*, the Coptic Patriarch of *Egypt*, the Melchite Patriarch Maximos V, residing in *Damascus*, and the indomitable Fr. Joseph L. Ryan, S.J. of these *United States*. All these "witnesses" have no im-

mediate experience of the problem but rely solely on hearsay. That a Cardinal-Patriarch who lives in Cairo, under the watchful eyes of President Sadat and his police, should be a dispassionate witness—only the most gullible person would assume.

The story of Patriarch Maximos V is even stranger. While he was still Archbishop of Galilee, he, together with his priests, joined the *Histadrut*, the Israeli Federation of Labor, a most unusual act for a bishop.<sup>3</sup> More than that, he submitted to one of the preparatory commissions of the Second Vatican Council a proposal for a *Decretum de Judaeis*, so radical that it eclipsed all other suggestions. Unsparingly, he listed all the past sins of Christendom toward the Jews and gave detailed rules for a reform of the Church's thought and action that might be unfair or harmful to the Jewish people. As soon as the Arabic speaking fathers of the Council declared themselves, one after another, against the contemplated decree on the Jews, the Archbishop, who before seemed determined to right old wrongs, dropped into an embarrassed silence, which he maintained throughout the Council.

As to Father Ryan, he is called "an experienced and scholarly Arabist and former academic Dean of the Jesuits' Baghdad College in Iraq" (p. 16). This is an artful euphemism for an educator who, having served with distinction for years, was expelled by a regime hostile to Christian education. Nowhere in Archbishop Ryan's brief is there the slightest hint of repressive measures against Church institutions by the various Islamic nations. Yet, the Archbishop speaks alarmingly of an Israeli law under consideration that will permit the administration in the occupied areas "to approve, or disapprove, teachers in private schools and even to close such schools for reasons of 'security' "

(p. 13). The law, he adds, conveniently omits a definition of "what the government means by 'security'" (*ibid.*).

This aside, with its innuendoes, tells more of the Archbishop, the nature of his concern as well as of his knowledge, than he realizes. To put security between quotation marks displays either prejudice or unfamiliarity with the actual situation in the Middle East. Archbishop Ryan cannot cite a single case of Israeli government interference in Christian education, nor any encroachment upon the legitimate exercise of a teacher's work, and yet he casts a shadow on the goodwill of Israel's government. In fact, the Israeli Ministry of Education has scrupulously upheld the freedom of Catholic schools.

How the Archbishop's aspersion contrasts with the tribute by the Greek Orthodox Patriarch, Benedict II! When on May 12, 1972, the Russian Orthodox Patriarch Pimen visited Israel, the Greek Patriarch said in his address of welcome:

We now live in the State of Israel. It is our duty to acknowledge that, from the very start, the State has shown absolute respect for the status quo of the Holy Places, for . . . pilgrimages, monasteries, churches, the clergy and the people, for our rights and privileges. It has been ready to heed our concerns and respond to our demands regarding the Sacred Shrines, the Patriarchate itself, its Christian people, as well as others.<sup>4</sup>

True, this encomium makes no specific reference to Christian schools, but it is so all-encompassing as to include their freedom.

I cannot close this section on witnesses without mentioning a very significant event. Though it has no immediate connection with educational problems either, it testifies to the sincerity of the Israeli government, which Archbishop Ryan seems to doubt. During the last century, the French Assumptionists built

a hospice outside the City walls. The recent growth of an Israeli hotel industry, on the one hand, and the lack of modern conveniences in the hospice, on the other, led to a point when that once useful enterprise no longer paid for itself. Nor were the Assumptionist Fathers able to carry the institution as a shelter for homeless people or any other worthwhile purpose. They decided, therefore, to sell the property. The Hebrew University was interested in acquiring it as a residence hall for its students. *Keren Kayemeth le-Yisrael*, the "Jewish National Fund," which is usually responsible for the redemption and development of uncultivated soil, acted as the legal purchaser. The contract was signed and the University ready to take possession.

Arab Christians complained that by this sale they would "again be abandoned to the Jews," whereupon the Holy See intervened, contesting the validity of the purchase before an Israeli court. An ironical situation emerged. So far, the Vatican has not accorded diplomatic recognition to Israel; yet, by its suit, it dealt with an Israeli institution as a legal entity. The challenge was based upon Canon Law which does not permit the sale of Church property, without the consent of the Holy See. In Israel, Canon Law regulates questions of personal status for Catholics, marriage for instance, but it is not applicable to real estate matters. Had the suit gone through, the Holy See would have lost; the court might even have disqualified itself. Even had the case been taken all the way to the International Court of Justice, the Holy See could not have won. Hence, as a gesture of goodwill, the Israeli government settled the litigation out of court. Its Minister of Justice intervened, the contract was revoked, and the property returned to its former owner.<sup>5</sup> This turn of events has

given rise to bad blood among some Jews and Christians; worse still, it has not earned Israel the honest acknowledgment of its more than friendly conduct toward the Church by men like Archbishop Ryan.

#### Facts and Figures

**A**RCHBISHOP RYAN ERRS and thus misinforms his readers, not only by some of his expressed statements, but also by the many things he leaves unsaid. Those for whom the Archbishop's charges are the first piece of information about emigration from and within the Middle East, will undoubtedly come to the wrong conclusion that it entered the area with the founding of the State of Israel. Population change is not a new demographic phenomenon in the Middle East but a fact of life that has been going on for a great many years. The greatest number of Christians to leave their native countries were those from Syria and Egypt. Again, not so long ago, the majority of Lebanese were Christians; today, because of their constant exodus and a larger birth-rate among Muslims, the latter are presumed to have surpassed the former in numbers. (I say "presumed" because the Lebanese government has deliberately avoided the taking of a census; thus no reliable figures exist.)

Even more telling is the demographic situation of Jerusalem at the time of, and after, the annexation of the Old City by Transjordan. In 1948, at the end of the British Mandate, there were 25,000 Christians in the City. In 1946, two years before the mandate was terminated, Jerusalem's population included over 31,000 Christians. The sharp decline was caused by Arab disorders, which broke out on November 30, 1947, shortly after the United Nations had decided to partition Palestine. The extensive fighting that followed—the shelling of Jerusalem by Arab irregulars and

by the Transjordanian Arab Legion, in those days still led by British officers—caused many Christian families to flee to nearby Ramallah and Bethlehem. Predominantly Christian towns, they offered security. Moreover, numerous British Christian families left for home—their work for the Mandatory Administration no longer being needed. All this was due to the turn of events; in other words, the shift of the Christian population during those years was in no way manipulated.

Quite different were the circumstances of later changes. I have already said that a count of the Christian population in 1948 yielded the figure of 25,000. By 1961, their number had been lowered to 12,934; by 1967, to 11,234. The reasons for this drop of the Christian population under Jordanian rule are simple, though not pleasant. The ruling clique in Amman followed a determined pro-Islamic and anti-Christian policy. Jobs were generally given to Muslims; Christian applicants were definitely discriminated against. As a rule, Christian institutions were not allowed to acquire real estate, not to speak of other repressive measures. The story of a blooming Christian life under Jordanian rule is thus the daydream of men who would like to rewrite the history of Arab-Christian relations.

The present figure for Christians inhabiting Jerusalem is given by some as 11,500 by others as 11,000. Interestingly, the lower estimate is an official one,<sup>6</sup> while the slightly higher one is favored by Christian writers who have recently treated the topic.<sup>7</sup> This proves to me that Israeli authorities are not inclined to load figures in their favor. Yet, whether one estimates the Christian population of Jerusalem as 11,000 or 11,500, it seems certain that their number has become more or less stable. True, Christians have left Jerusalem since its reunification, but their leaving

has been offset by those rejoining their families, thanks to Israel's reunion plan. No matter how it happened, the fact is that in the last few years the number of Christians in Jerusalem has been quite constant. In the words of Pastor Krupp, a representative member of *Aktion Sühnezeichen*, the "Work of Reconciliation" by German Christians:

Shortly before World War I, there are twice as many Moslems. During that war, the Turks expelled a large number of Christians and Jews. From the beginning of the British Mandate up to the splitting of Jerusalem into two, Christians and Moslems are about equal in number. Under the Hashemite rule, the picture changes radically in favor of the Moslems. From 1967 onwards, the number of Christians remains more or less steady.<sup>8</sup>

This calm evaluation sharply contradicts Archbishop Ryan's alarming description.

#### The Conspiracy

ARCHBISHOP RYAN IS NOT content with describing the demographic facts and problems of Jerusalem as he sees them, but introduces into the discussion the spectre of an Israeli conspiracy against a living Church. He begins the history of Israel's "plot" to deprive Christians of their living space by declaring that "Zionism tore up the Arabs' 700-year-old deed to Palestine . . ." (p. 6). Quite apart from the fact that Zionism is an abstraction, which cannot act, the first Zionist settlers bought the land they wished to till. That the parcels available were the least worthwhile, that they were rocky or swampy, and that they had to be purchased at exorbitant prices, at times from absentee owners, is part of the just cited "evidence" that the Palestinian inhabitants were victimized! Moreover, some of the land on which the latter lived was not owned by them but

by their Ottoman rulers. May I assume that the Archbishop learned these facts only after he wrote his appeal to the bishops of the United States? In the reprint of his brief by *The Link*, the clearly circumscribed "700-year-old deed" has been quietly transformed into an "historic deed."

A second step in Israel's attempt to strangle Christian life is—I am following the Archbishop's argument—the Arab-Jewish wars, which Israel won and which allowed that country to extend "its borders a bit further—this last time to include Jerusalem" (p. 7). This is not entirely true. After the Sinai campaign in 1956, Israel returned to the armistice lines of 1947, because the "peace terms" negotiated by Dag Hammarskjöld guaranteed Israel freedom of shipping and the destruction of terrorist bases in the Gaza strip. Moreover, the "Eisenhower doctrine" committed the United States to the protection of all Middle Eastern states against aggression and to Israel's unhindered use of the Strait of Tiran. I think I should note here that Israel's disappointing experience with both these guarantees—not forgetting the precipitous withdrawal of the United Nations Emergency Force by Secretary General U Thant, in May 1967—is the reason for its present intransigence: it insists on real peace negotiations and firm settlements before it will withdraw from the territories it now holds. But the Archbishop's inaccurate recollection of events is not as important as is his resort to Aesopian language. In his presentation, the Arab-Jewish wars were never started, they always "ensued."

The third step of what—in an interpretation of Archbishop Ryan's view—I have called Israel's "conspiracy" is to "dominate a city as holy to Christianity and Islam as it is to Judaism" (p. 10). Though the importance of Jerusalem for the three faiths is not on

the same level, I will not argue that point. I rather ask why the Archbishop considers Israel's rule *a priori* detrimental, when he obviously has no objection to Jordanian rule? After having alluded to the United Nations resolution on Jerusalem as an enclave which was to be surrounded entirely by Arab territory—a proposal, incidentally, that the Arab nations rejected as much as the Jewish spokesmen—he writes:

Admittedly, Israel conquered half of Jerusalem in 1948 ["Conquered" is hardly the right word. West Jerusalem was, ever since Jewish neighborhoods were created outside the Walled City in the late nineteenth century, overwhelmingly Jewish. There was no need for Israelis to conquer what was already theirs. By its control of West Jerusalem, Israel merely maintained the *status quo ante bellum*.—JMO] and the rest in 1967 [Here reference should have been made to the late Prime Minister Eshkol's plea that Jordan abstain from all hostilities as well as to his warning that should Jordan enter the war, it would have only itself to blame for the consequences—JMO]. Admittedly, Israel named West Jerusalem [No, the whole of Jerusalem—JMO] the capital of Israel. Admittedly Israel officially annexed the Jordanian half of Jerusalem in 1967 (p. 10).

To speak of "Israel's annexation" and the "Jordanian half of Jerusalem," without even hinting that in 1950 Jordan annexed "its" half of Jerusalem and did so very much against the will of the Arab League, is not objective reporting, particularly if only the United Nations' condemnation of Jerusalem's reunification in 1967 is emphasized. When one realizes, as Archbishop Ryan surely does, how arbitrary United Nations decisions have become—they refuse, for instance, to condemn fatal attacks by terrorists even on non-Israeli victims but are ever ready to denounce defensive measures by the Israeli army against the terrorists' hiding places—

the moral passion with which the Archbishop underlines this condemnation appears a bit shopworn.

In reading the phrase, Israel "named" Jerusalem as its capital, I am reminded of a retort by Mayor Kollek made in a slightly different context. Questioned on the "judaization" of Jerusalem by Archbishop Ryan, he is said to have answered that the blame should be put on King David (p. 15). It is entirely legitimate when Israelis speak of the reunification of the Holy City and reject the term annexation for, with the exception of the short period of seventeen years of Jordanian control, the City has never been cut into two sectors. It had always been one.

The fourth stage in Israel's "conspiracy" to do away with the Christian presence is the town planning for Jerusalem: "... buildings are being constructed on land which is not Israeli territory, on land which Israel has been expressly and repeatedly forbidden to occupy or use, and which in many instances Israel has expropriated, often without compensation, from Arabs" (p. 10). I cannot help wondering why this sudden concern. I do not remember that Archbishop Ryan ever expressed compassion for the hundreds of thousands of Jewish refugees or expellees from Arab countries, who had to leave their houses and all their earthly goods behind, without the least compensation. (The sum paid as recompense to those in Israel who had to be evacuated in order to make room for more and better housing is four million Israeli pounds). Nor do I remember that Archbishop Ryan raised his voice when the Jordanian army dynamited all synagogues and institutes of Jewish learning in the Old City, nor when they rid themselves of all its Jewish inhabitants, who at the beginning of this century numbered 15,000. The Israeli authorities have,

therefore, considered it one of their first tasks to rebuild the Jewish Quarter.

Again, Israel has not only abolished the artificial division of Jerusalem, it has also removed the "markers" that showed the dismemberment of Jerusalem to be a symbol of death. Where before there were minefields, there are now parks. It is not a bad city administration that substitutes living and life-giving trees for deadly explosives. Speaking of trees—symbols of life, indeed of a life lived according to His will (see Ps 1)—at the time Jordan occupied East Jerusalem, no parks or children's playgrounds brought beauty or joy to the inhabitants. Today six parks and four playgrounds grace that part of the City. One of the most outstanding features of the reconstruction of Jerusalem under Mayor Kollek is the Green Belt along the Walls of the Old City. The design is such as not to distract attention from the ancient Wall. Wherever there is an incline, the part next to the wall will be covered with local strains of grass, wild flowers, and low shrubs. Farther down, olive, fig, and carob trees will be planted, while at the bottom of the slope tall cypresses will grow. Even now, one can see the first signs of this National Park.

Obviously, this has made no impression on Archbishop Ryan: He prefers to speak about the ominous Master Plan and the even more ominous "campaign" to "judaize" Jerusalem (p. 15). First, there is no Master Plan properly speaking, no law that has to be enforced; that designation really refers to a set of building guidelines, rather flexible and open to revision whenever such a change seems desirable or necessary. Second, to speak of a campaign to judaize the City makes little sense. Its present Jewish population is about quadruple that of the non-Jewish. In fact, Jews have been in the majority for at least a hundred years. All this the

Archbishop does not seem to know. The reason may be quite simple. Before going to Jerusalem, he apparently stops first at Beirut and Amman. When he gets to the Holy City, he has already received his information, but, alas, the information is not correct.

### Legality

THE ARCHBISHOP questions the legality of Jerusalem's venture to build houses; he likes to cite the Fourth Geneva Convention which regulates the policy of an occupying power toward the population under its rule. Israeli authorities would, I assume, deny that its prohibitions are applicable to the prevailing situation. After all, they firmly believe that all Jerusalem is theirs; in other words, they are not an occupying power of a city that is basically Jewish, its universal meaning notwithstanding. In acquiring over 4,000 acres for building purposes, the Government and Municipality based themselves on the Land Ordinance of 1943 regulating the acquisition of land for public purposes—an ordinance that goes back to the time of the British Mandate.<sup>10</sup> Despite its adherence to the rule of law, Israel never forgets that human needs come first. It must have been in this spirit that Mayor Kollek is said to have reacted to Archbishop Ryan's demand for a justification of Israel's policy in these words: "I am not a lawyer. I am the mayor of a living city" (p. 12).

It is impossible to review the entire program of urban renewal in this article, but I think I ought to single out a few items. There are, for instance, the Wadi Joz workshops and garages, a cluster of ugly, rundown buildings, an eyesore so bad that, I assume, it is not shown to many tourists. These workshops and garages are being moved to different locations, while the land on which they stood will provide space for Arab residences. Another resettlement

project is in the Beit Hanina district. It may be worth noting that the contractor as well as the architect belong to well-known Arab families. The Municipality is at present trying to have Arab citizens engage in cooperative housing projects, for which it is offering them the same financial assistance it gives to Jews.

In his statement before the Security Council, to which I referred before, Ambassador Tekoah declared that of the owners of the land appropriated for the common good on the basis of the Acquisition Ordinance, 1,800 were Arabs and 2,140 Jews. Manifestly, Jewish proprietors were more affected than Arab ones. Ambassador Tekoah also made clear that great care was taken to acquire only vacant land; still, 270 Jewish-owned and 35 Arab-owned structures had to be taken over. The latter were inhabited by 40 families with 240 members. The former were occupied partially by stores and workshops with living quarters for another 300 families. All the owners, Arabs as well as Jews, were fully compensated and the tenants given new quarters.<sup>11</sup>

### Prejudice

ARCHBISHOP RYAN will not set great store by the Ambassador's statement, I suspect, for "amid bundles of statements, summaries, rebuttals and clippings" (p. 8) his eyes were fastened only on those that seem (I emphasize "seem") to support his charges. He quotes, for instance, Shimon Peres, the Minister of Immigration, as stating that "the essential thing" about the urban renewal plan "is that it be a plan for the population of a united city with a numerous, stable, and permanent Jewish majority" (*ibid.*). As I have pointed out before, this majority is not something to be created, as the Archbishop suggests again and again, but a fact. Moreover, the quote above is not taken

from an official publication but from an aide-mémoire of the Apostolic Delegate. With all due respect to Archbishop Laghi, I do not think that he can be considered an authentic interpreter of the mind of an Israeli Minister.

No doubt, Archbishop Ryan considers himself objective and fair but, I am sorry to say, his prejudice emerges, time and again. To pick one of the most telling examples: "In search of Commandos, Arab houses are bulldozed into rubble—nearly 800 between 1967 and 1971 and hundreds more since" (p. 14). Prior to this, he spoke of "Jewish terrorists" who took an aggressive stance against the Mandatory Power and rightly remarks that their "terrorism was never officially [that is, by the Jewish leadership—JMO] condoned and was largely the work of outlawed extremists" (p. 6). Yet, when mentioning Palestinian terrorists, he calls them by that glorifying name "commandos," even though lately many of them have switched their goal: It is no longer the "liberation of Palestine" but some vague world revolution.<sup>12</sup> No "make-up" can hide the ugly face of all terrorism: murder. To glamorize it is to make oneself an accomplice.

Archbishop Ryan shudders at the thought of homes razed to the ground—so do I—but I wish he had said what the Israeli Defense Forces ought to do instead. Since the terrorists avoid open warfare, what other means does the Israeli army have in dealing with the terrorists than to smoke them out of their nests through bombing raids or by demolishing houses whose owners have given them shelter? A house destroyed can be rebuilt, but not a life. I beg the Archbishop not to forget that the Israelis, even in the face of all the perils surrounding them, have abolished the death penalty. When compared with the hanging of alleged or real spies in Baghdad, to the cheering, dancing, and



clapping of the crowds, or with the obscene decree of Libya's strong man that the ancient Koranic punishment of cutting off the right hand of a thief will no longer be done with the help of an ordinary ax but through modern surgery with its accompanying anaesthetics; when compared with these measures, the demolition of houses, from which all living beings have been evacuated, appears humane.

I will not dwell on the point that these demolitions seem to have become a thing of the past; having been driven from Jordan by King Hussein, the terrorists no longer operate on the West Bank. Still, is it not strange that the Archbishop objects to the destruction involved in the Israeli treatment of accomplices to crimes, though in the days when such a voice was needed, he did not speak out against Jordan's successful attempt to rid Old Jerusalem, not only of Jewish inhabitants but also of every remembrance of the onetime Jewish presence, by destroying houses, synagogues, even cemeteries?

#### The Motive

AT THE BEGINNING of his plea with the bishops of the United States, Archbishop Ryan fears that "an effective Christian presence in the Holy Land" may be extinguished (p. 2). A few pages later, his apprehension is that the "Church in future time [will] be accused of condoning injustice to the peoples of Islam" (*sic*) (p. 4). Again, the Archbishop speaks of the shock he felt when he saw "buildings so tall, so modern, and so dominating that they destroy the entire character of this beautiful city" (p. 9), even though pages later he admits that these housing developments "are not . . . unattractive at all" (p. 19). He also laments that the "many pleasurable and inspiring moments admiring the ancient golden walls. . . , the timeless

beauty of those hills" (*ibid.*) have come to an end.

This motley of concerns, this shift of problems, is confusing. Which is the real motivation for the Archbishop's cry of appeal: the threat to the Church, the possible accusation by Islamic peoples, or his aesthetic pleasure? I wonder, too, whether the Jerusalem of which Archbishop Ryan speaks and the Jerusalem I have seen are one and the same city. He tells how, one morning, he stood before the Shepherd Hotel and looked with shock at the high-rise apartments on the northeastern hills of Jerusalem, as he felt their timeless beauty and their biblical character gone (p. 9). I must confess that I have never been near the Shepherd Hotel, much less seen the view it affords the visitor. All I know about it is that it is a four-star hotel, much closer to Giv'at Shapiro or "French Hill" than any other. It is, therefore, not the best spot from which to judge the situation.

I have called the structures in question, as does Archbishop Ryan, high-rise apartments, though this name may be misleading, particularly to Americans. The tall apartment buildings in my own neighborhood are 21 or 22 stories high, the buildings on "French Hill" only seven; their total height is about 75 feet. I have seen them from nearby and from a distance. No doubt, they are not ravishingly beautiful, but clean and honest—unlike a pseudo-gothic church. The stone used for these and similar houses is taken from the surrounding hills; quite often the stone has a reddish tinge and always a certain warmth. I have in my possession a number of photographs. On one, 6 x 7" in size, the buildings are seen in full and appear 2½" high; on another, taken from the Old City, the background is so hazy that the buildings in the distance do not stand out. On still another, 7 x 9½", taken with an excellent

lens from Abu Tor in Southern Jerusalem, the buildings on French Hill measure one-eighth of an inch! On a photograph,  $3\frac{1}{2} \times 3\frac{1}{2}$ ", which a friend of mine took with an ordinary camera, the allegedly repulsive skyline is really no more than a line. To my mind, one therefore cannot speak, as the Archbishop does, of "huge clusters of buildings, so tall, so modern and so dominating that they destroy the entire character of this beautiful city" (p. 9).

### The Real Violation

**B**UT THIS is not all. If Archbishop Ryan is so deeply interested in the biblical character of Jerusalem, how is it that the ugly forest of TV antennas that covers the Old City does not jar on his sense of beauty? (The Municipality has plans to remove them out of sight.) How come he has nothing to say of the noisy and smelly bazaars in the *Via Dolorosa*, the jostling and bargaining that hardly enhances the spiritual atmosphere of the Road of Sorrows? (Thank God that the street urchins and adult peddlers who gave one not a moment's peace have been removed from the street!) The most perplexing part of Archbishop Ryan's present clamor is the fact that he was silent when the Jordanian government, with the financial assistance of Pan American Airways, built the most offensive building in all of Jerusalem, the Hotel Intercontinental. Describing itself as the "hotel of luxuries," it nonetheless stands on the Mount of Olives.

David went up that hill, barefoot, continually weeping over the rebellion of his son Absalom (2 Sam 15:30). There, Jesus shed tears at the thought of the approaching destruction of His beloved Jerusalem (Lk 19:41-44). There, He foresaw—in anguish—His own passion and fought the hardest and most fruitful inner fight ever fought (Lk 22:39-42). There, He was betrayed,

and from there, He mounted into heaven, that is, entered a new mode of existence, a dimension of life unknown to our senses (Acts 1:12). Finally, according to Jewish tradition, it is from the Mount of Olives that the righteous will rise. Hence, pious Jews have always wanted to be buried there, and it is this venerable cemetery which was ravaged in the course of Jordan's construction of a road to the hotel.

If there be a "sacrosanct hill"—a title Archbishop Ryan gives, of all things, to "French Hill"—it is the Mount of Olives. And it is precisely on that hill—which is not, like those on which the contested structures stand, about three miles from the Walled City but immediately adjacent to it—that this plush hotel was erected. And no one in (then Jordanian) Jerusalem, Amman, Beirut, Damascus, or Cairo, no one in Rome, Geneva, Washington, or elsewhere raised his voice against this "incongruity."

As I said before, the modern buildings on Giv'at Shapiro and on the other northeastern hills are straightforward architecture; the Hotel Intercontinental, however, has a fake "oriental" look, its roof being adorned with seven arches. "Seven Arches" has no mystical or poetic significance. In fact, it is most "prosaic," the hotel's nightclub having been named after these arches. In the evenings, they are illumined to invite customers. It is these glaring lights, and not any apartment buildings, that dominate Jerusalem, at least at night, and change its character. If I read the Archbishop's biography right, he was in the Middle East when the hotel went up, but remained mute. Since I want to believe in his sincerity as well as his sensitivity to the glory that is Jerusalem, I cannot help asking myself why he clamors now when he acquiesced in the atrocity that is called Hotel Intercontinental?

Israelis are matter-of-fact people and thus give the impression that they are less vulnerable than others. The Archbishop may, therefore, consider it right to speak out against them, but feels that he must throw a gentle veil over the acts of the Jordanian authorities. As is their custom, Arabs may always have treated him with exquisite courtesy—a courtesy so refined that it makes the recipient a lasting debtor, if not a prisoner. I trust that this is the reason for his stance. For I would hate to think that the Archbishop's present protest springs from the stubborn theologoumenon—one contrary to the spirit of Vatican II—that Jews are till the end of time under the wrath of God and, therefore, divinely barred from the Land of their Fathers. When I said, "I would hate to think," I meant it. Too many Christians who take an anti-Israeli position, are unconsciously guided by that stereotype. For stereotypes die hard.

#### A Final Appeal

FROM ALL I have written, it ought to be clear that I hold Archbishop Ryan's charges totally unjustified, particularly the one that Israeli authorities threaten the existence of Christianity in the land of its birth. Hence, I have considered it my duty to defend them against his accusation. Still, I have not written these lines merely to protect them. They hardly need my defense. They have survived other accusations—they will survive this one, too.

I have written my reply mainly to guard the integrity of the Church. For anyone who imputes to the State of Israel an evil scheme to destroy Christian existence there, joins unwittingly the medieval slanderers who accused Jews of poisoning wells or killing Christian children in order to use their blood for the baking of *matzot*. Again, any Christian, high or low, who sees in the rebuilding of the Jewish state no

more than a political feat, and not God's hand at work, cannot read the signs of the times and may well sin against God's design.

I do not wish to imply that the Israeli government and the administration of Jerusalem are above criticism—no human institution is flawless. But there is one area in which the Israeli authorities cannot be faulted: their relation to churches. The wrongs Christendom has inflicted upon the Jewish people are many more than I care to remember. Let me recall only one event, the founding of the Latin Kingdom by the Crusaders. They inaugurated it by singing the *Te Deum* in the Church of the Resurrection. Prior to this, they had massacred the Muslim and Jewish population of Jerusalem. For three days in a row, they sacked the City. The streets flowed with blood, while corpses piled up to decay there.<sup>18</sup> In the face of such perversion, may a bishop dare accuse and make demands? Among the latter is this one: "... Christianity does not—cannot—accept the ethnic domination of, or the political sovereignty of, one religion over others" (p. 20). Archbishop Ryan does not need me to tell him that history will never bear out his statement.

Jews have not forgotten the horrors of the past, yet the Israeli authorities have acted as if they had not happened. They have been, not only fair to Christians, but generous, an attitude for which they deserve not slander but gratitude. Christianity is not doomed in Israel unless it dooms itself. Here I must say a word about the small group of Christians—Jewish and non-Jewish—who worship in Hebrew. Archbishop Ryan does not seem to know or to consider them worth mentioning. I am sure if he ever went to Our Lady of Sion in Ein Karem or the House of Isaiah in Jerusalem and listened to the Hebrew prayers and the chant, he would gather

hope. If all Israeli Christians really sought to live as Christians, the Christian presence could be alive to a never dreamed-of measure. I pray that the Church—the entire Church—will value her God-given opportunity to live in

the midst of Jews, in humility and justice, in faith and love, in a spirit of kinship and cooperation.

JOHN OESTERREICHER is the Director of the Institute of Judaean-Christian Studies at Seton Hall University.

#### Footnotes

1. All references to Archbishop Ryan's sayings are to his original typescript, "Some Thoughts on Jerusalem," mailed to the American Catholic Bishops.

2. Cf. "Christian Gains in Jerusalem," *The Jerusalem Post Weekly*, July 19, 1971.

3. That the Melchite clergy was granted trade union privileges is not exactly a sign of Israeli mistreatment of Arab Christians.

4. From an unpublished report by the Israeli Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

5. Gabriel Grossman, O.P., "Die Kirchen Gottes im heutigen Israel," *Freiburger Rundbrief*, XXII (1971), p. 38.

6. See *Facts About Israel 1972*, Israeli Ministry of Foreign Affairs, p. 54.

7. See Abbot Laurentius Klein, O.S.B., "The Emigration of Christians from the Holy Land," *Das Heilige Land* (July 1971); Michael Krupp, "Christian Emigration. . . ." *Christian News from Israel*, XXIII, 1 (1972), and Ori Stendal, "Christians in Jerusalem," *Christian News from Israel*, XXII, 2 (1971).

8. *Christian News from Israel*, XXIII, 1 (1972), p. 16.

9. Lately, the United Nations went even further in displaying its impotence as well as the irresponsibility of most of its member nations. On December 18, 1972, the General Assembly approved a resolution on terrorism prepared by its Legal Committee by an overwhelming majority, consisting of the Arab states, most African nations, of India, China, Russia and its satellites. The resolution hedged on that terrorism which plagues the world today demanding no measures for its suppression but instead the study—yes, the study!—of its underlying causes. The language of the resolution is such as to suggest, in the words of the British representative, the legitimate character of "recourse to violence . . . in the exercise of the right to self-determination." An Austrian delegate denounced the resolution with bitterness: "The philosophy expressed here is that the end justifies the means. We

cannot accept this philosophy. We have lived through the suffering brought by this kind of philosophy." (*The New York Times*, December 12 and 18, 1972).

10. See Ambassador Yosef Tekoah's statement before the United Nations Security Council, Sept. 16, 1971, *Provisional Verbatim Record*, S/PV 1580, p. 17.

11. Tekoah, *loc. cit.*, pp. 18–20.

12. As a matter of record, the "liberation of Palestine" never was the real aim of Arab terrorists. "Liberation" was always but a screen for the massacre of Jews. Murderous attacks on Jews by Arabs have a long history. They go back to the twenties and thirties and thus preceded the establishment of the State of Israel by decades. (For a brief survey of the history of Arab violence against Jews, see "The Tradition of Arab Terror in the Holy Land," in: *West Asian Affairs*, published by The Society for Parliamentary Studies, New Delhi, Summer, 1969). In recent years, the hostility against Israel and the Jewish people has been extended toward society in general, including all Arab states ruled by non-revolutionary governments. Lately, the "Palestinian" terrorists have been assured of the support of all Arab Leftists, the Communist parties of the Soviet Union, Poland, East Germany, Hungary, Bulgaria, Rumania, Yugoslavia, the Vietcong, the Tupamaros, and other "guerrilla" organizations. (See "New Front Set Up For Palestinians," *The New York Times*, December 3, 1972). The carnage at Lod Airport on May 30, 1972, when a Japanese extremist splinter group with the grandiloquent name "The Unified Red Army" machine-gunned innocent pilgrims, proves the involvement of non-Arab revolutionaries in the "Palestinian" cause. That "cause" has now become an attempt to unhinge the world.

13. See, among other works on this period, the most recent: Joshua Prawer, *The World of the Crusades* (London-Jerusalem: Weidenfeld, 1972), p. 27.

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Christian Visitors to Israel Program  
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## The Middle East

# A reconciling role for Christians

Christians should work for reconciliation in the Middle East, says Father Charles Angell, SA, editor of *Ecumenical Trends* magazine. Speaking at a conference on the role of the Christian churches in the Middle East, held April 14-15 at the Graymoor Ecumenical Institute in Garrison, New York, Father Angell asked: "As Christians do we have any agenda, any role, any distinctive contribution to make in the Middle East or are we simply the fellow-traveling appendages of other people's causes?" Among his conclusions: "...The time has come for Christians to say quite clearly here in America that they will support those on both sides, both Israelis and Palestinians, who work for the emergence of two self-determining states, Israel and Palestine. At the same time we should oppose those who demand all for one side or the other." Father Angell is associate director of the Graymoor Ecumenical Institute. He has traveled in the Middle East several times. The prepared text of his address follows.

There are two groups of Christians in the world today who for the most part don't speak to

each other. There are those who are sympathetic to the aspirations and the needs of the Palestinian Arabs and who alert their fellow Christians to the tragedy that has befallen this dispersed people. In the name of Christian conscience they demand justice. Then there are those Christians who are acutely sympathetic to the needs of Jews all over the world who have survived the greatest holocaust of modern times for a national homeland, a refuge and a place of resurrection. Reviewing the long history of Christian anti-Semitism in the pages of history, these Christians demand justice. And these two groups of committed and sincere Christians frequently refuse to even speak to each other.

It has been my experience after some eight years of rather close contact with the Middle East that a Christian who becomes concerned with the problems of this area is assigned by the contending parties to one camp or the other. Each time I come home I am asked: "Who are you for? The Arabs or the Jews?" I find myself under constant pressure to sign this or that declaration and failure to do

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# origins

**NE documentary service**

Catholic Relief Services has reconfirmed its offer to the new government of South Vietnam to provide relief assistance. The overseas aid agency reopened negotiations with the government through the CRS offices in Geneva. CRS says it has offered to airlift a cargo of food to Da-nang for infants. The agency said it would forego its right to on-the-spot supervision during the emergency but without prejudicing its rights to the same should it be possible to work out a longer-range relief and development program.

The Evansville, Ind., priests' senate has rejected a proposal for a nine per cent increase in priests' salaries. The increase would be inappropriate in light of the high levels of unemployment in the United States now, they said. The increase would have raised the base salary for the priests from \$2515 to \$2740. "The senate wanted to give witness to our concern for those out of work and having economic problems," said Father David Kissle, senate president.

A 10 per cent increase in retirement benefits for lay employees of the St. Louis Archdiocese has been approved. Retirees will now receive \$4.40 each month for each year of active service with the archdiocese. The maximum benefit will now be \$154 a month. The increase was made possible by a special grant from the Archdiocesan Development Fund "over and above the premiums paid by parishes." No payments to the retirement fund

are made by lay employees.

A national commission created by an act of Congress to study ethical, legal and medical aspects of experimentation on human subjects has recommended an immediate end to the ban on federally funded fetal experimentation. The National Commission for the Protection of Human Subjects of Biomedical and Behavioral Research also recommended guidelines for regulating the fetal experimentation. The commission called for establishment of a continuing national ethics review board to act as an appeals court on special cases of experimentation. But some observers expressed reservations about establishment of such a review board unless the board itself is given guidelines.

The pastor and the council of an Anglican parish in London, England, have asked their bishop to ordain a woman deacon to the priesthood. For seven years the woman deacon has been responsible for much of the parish's work. The pastor, the Rev. Paul Oestreicher, has often been away on business in his capacity as president of the English section of Amnesty International, an organization working for the release of "prisoners of conscience." The question of the ordination will be considered at an Anglican Synod in July. The synod will be asked whether there are fundamental theological objections to the ordination of women and whether the ordination of women is opportune today.

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May 21-22: Consultation on Religion and the Bicentennial. Sponsors: American Revolution Bicentennial Administration (official U.S. agency) and Project FORWARD '76 (a bicentennial project of the Interfaith Center, 475 Riverside Drive, New York City). Washington, D.C.

May 26-June 8: The Washington Mission Seminar for Furloughed Missionaries and New Missionaries. Sponsor: U.S. Catholic Mission Council. Washington, D.C.

May 27-30: Symposium: "Celebrating the Word." Sponsor: Canadian Liturgical Society. McMaster University. Hamilton, Ont., Canada

May 30-June 1: Workshop for Formation Personnel. Sponsors: Maryknoll, Leadership Conference for Women Religious and National Sisters Formation Conference. Theme: "Formation and Mission." Maryknoll, N.Y.

\* June 1-3: National Consultation of Catholic, Protestant, Evangelical, Jewish and Black Educators. Sponsor: American Jewish Congress. Theme: "Faith Without Prejudice: Religion and the Teaching of Human Relations." Fordyce House. St. Louis Univ. St. Louis, Mo.

June 1-5: 4th Annual Catholic Health Assembly. Sponsor: Catholic Hospital Association. San Francisco Hilton Hotel. San Francisco, Calif.

June 1-6: Symposium: "Gaudium et Spes: the Second Decade." Sponsor: CU Department of Theology. Topics: Women and the Church, International Affairs, Marriage and the Family, The Economy. Catholic University Washington, D.C.

\* June 6-8: Workshop for Major Superiors. Sponsors: U.S. Catholic Mission Council, Leadership Conference of Major Superiors of Men. Theme: "Leadership and Evangelization: Humanization of Relationships and Structures." Mercy Center, Cincinnati, Ohio.

\* June 8-11: Conference on the Church and the Holocaust. Sponsor: International Conference of Christians and Jews. Hamburg, Germany.

\* June 8-13: First Hospital-Chaplains Supervisors Workshop. Sponsor: National Association of Catholic Chaplains. St. Louis, Mo.

\* June 8-13: 2nd Biennial Conference of National Federation of Spiritual Directors. Theme: "Implosion of the Spirit: Explosion of the Message." St. Thomas Seminary, Denver, Colo.

\* signifies new listing



**ANGELL**—*continued from front page*

so brings the charge that I am guilty of a conspiracy of silence. Frequently it is difficult even to maintain contact with fellow Christians whose views in this area differ, under the general norm that my enemy's friend is my enemy also.

This division of Christians along partisan lines is true here in this country. By and large those Christians involved in dialogue with Jews tend to be sharply separated from those who have been traditionally involved in relief work among Arabs. I have heard it said that New Testament biblical scholars tend to favor Arabs. (I have not discovered a satisfactory reason for this.) I believe this division runs down through all of our American churches. In the Middle East this division has reached such proportions that I can report from first-hand experience a number of cases where religious orders of my own church have had to found two separate establishments in the Jerusalem area because its members of divergent loyalties would not even live in the same house despite their lifelong commitment not only to common apostolate but personal brotherhood.

#### Is There a Christian Agenda?

All of this leads me to ask today a very simple question: As Christians do we have any agenda, any role, any distinctive contribution to make in the Middle East or are we simply the fellow-traveling appendages of other people's causes? Are we a religious force in our own right, or are we simply manipulated as individuals in the campaigns of others? If we have a role, what is it?

One frequently hears in the Middle East that Christians of that area feel that they are being ground to dust between the two millstones of Arab nationalism, largely inspired by Islam, and Zionism. This, by the way, is the basic reason for the flight of Christians from the area and the resultant fears that our churches there will become empty museums rather than living centers of viable Christian communities. As a matter of fact some of the most extreme and fanatical of the so-called Arab terrorists have been Christian Arabs who were desperately trying to prove their right to exist in a largely Islamic milieu.

I have sometimes wondered as I look at the various Christian communities of the Middle East if most of them are not perhaps simply high water marks of previous political incursions into the area. The Byzantines represent traces of the great Eastern Roman Empire. The Latins recall the Crusaders with later marks for French diplomacy of the 19th century and Italian in the 20th. The Lutherans came with the Berlin to Bagdad railway. The Anglicans with Allenby. Will the real native Christians please stand up?

As Christians what are we really interested in here? Traditionally we have fought over shrines and holy places, and yet, with due respect, I would have to say that if this motley collection of ecclesiastical bric-a-brac constitutes the sum total of our involvement in that area, the prize is not worth the contest. Sitting in the church of the Holy Sepulcher today, even now that it is being partially restored by the occupying churches who, thank God, are finally cooperating to some extent, I have the distinct impression that this monument serves more as a graphic demonstration of man's disorder rather than God's design.

Surely it is the people of the area who are holy. How can land itself without people be holy? Surely our interest there must at least be concerned with our fellow Christians, the living temples of the Holy Spirit. I must report to you that Christians of that area are deeply offended as tourist buses roar past their villages on the way to shrines. Their Occidental fellow Christians seem to view them only in the roles of waiter and guide. Their heritage, their spirituality, their aspirations, their fellowship are treated with contempt by the majority of so-called Christian pilgrims. Those who take the time and trouble to accept their gracious invitations of hospitality find that we have so much to learn from them.

No, it is people who are important, not just shrines. And yet, surely it is not possible to be Christian if we simply are interested in our own. And this leads me to my major thesis: it is impossible for a Christian to be concerned for anything less than all of the people of the Middle East. To be concerned only about Israelis and ignore the needs of the Arabs, or vice versa, cannot be called a Christian concern. It is all or nothing.

If Christianity is genuine, it must work, as its founder did, for reconciliation. Is it possible to think of a genuinely Christian partisan if one takes the term to mean the total exclusion of any group from one's concern?

If as a Christian we feel that we have a basic mission of reconciliation in this area, how might we exercise this vocation? Should we assume a "neutral" stance and remain coolly indifferent to the claims of both sides? Should we despite our past failures in the area, pass ourselves off in the role of referee? Should we succumb to the temptation to call down curses on both houses as a result of our frustration? No. To be concerned for all will necessitate a Way of the Cross for us. I think that we will have to say things which will undoubtedly anger both sides. May I quickly run down my personal catalogue of unwelcomed statements in the devout hope that I will have a few friends left at its conclusion?

*In January 1975, the Vatican's Commission for Religious Relations with the Jews issued guidelines and suggestions for Jewish-Christian relations. The new guidelines called for a deepening of relations between Christians and Jews through such means as prayer in common, "real" dialogue that respects religious convictions and collaboration in the struggle for peace and justice at local, national and international levels. The document appeared on p. 463 of the current volume of Origins.*

*The new guidelines were the subject of much comment—positive and negative—in both the Jewish and Christian communities. For a sampling of the reaction, see also in the current volume:*

*\* An overview of the guidelines by Cardinal Jan Willebrands, p. 468;*

*\* A commentary by Rabbi Marc Tanenbaum, p. 469;*

*\* A discussion of the implications of the new guidelines by Father Edward Flannery, p. 471;*

*\* A statement by the International Jewish Committee for Inter-religious Consultations, p. 471;*

*\* Pope Paul's address to the Liaison Committee Between the Catholic Church and World Judaism, p. 489.*

At their annual meeting in Washington, D.C. in November, 1973, the U.S. bishops adopted a resolution on the Middle East which urged a comprehensive political solution to the Arab-Israeli conflict. Such a solution, said the bishops, should include the following six elements:

1. Recognition of Israel's right to exist as a sovereign state with secure boundaries;
  2. Recognition of the rights of the Palestinian Arabs, including their partnership in any negotiations, acceptance of their right to a state and compensation for past losses by Israel and all those responsible for the 1948 partition plan;
  3. Acceptance as the basis for negotiations by all parties involved of the stipulations set forth by the U.N. Security Council in Nov. 1967;
  4. Recognition of the need for "continued restraint and continuing responsible diplomatic involvement" by the Soviet Union and the United States;
  5. Continuing reliance on the United Nations;
  6. Insured access to the city of Jerusalem through a form of international guarantee and the assurance of Jerusalem's continued existence as a religiously pluralist community with equal protection of the religious and civil rights of all citizens.
- The text of the bishops' resolution appeared on p. 352 of volume 3 of *Origins*.

When I returned from the area in 1969, I wrote in conjunction with Dr. Martin Bailey of *AD* magazine a joint editorial which denounced the partisan abuse of holy scripture in that area. I have had the sad experience of personally hearing Arab bishops argue that Israel can have no right to exist because Jews have been cursed by God to wander over the face of the earth. Likewise there are both religious and secular elements in Israel, a minority I believe, who argue that only Jews have the right in the entire area from the Jordan west to the sea and that all non-Jews there can exist only at the benign sufferance of the divinely constituted landlords. In recent years some Jewish religious leaders in Israel have suggested that it is treason for a Jew to sell any land to a non-Jew. In my opinion the use of the Bible to establish political sovereignty or personal ownership is counter-productive to any solution of the problem. You cannot go to a peace conference armed with Bibles. Conferences are for negotiation, not scriptural exegesis.

*"If I do not support the state of Israel as a result of biblical exegesis, I wish to make clear that I do support it on other grounds....By any definition of modern national legitimacy, the state of Israel has as much if not more right to exist than any other nation on the earth..."*

#### The Recent Vatican Guidelines

The recent Vatican guidelines on Jewish-Roman Catholic relations have suggested a helpful insight into this matter. I say this despite the recent understandable criticisms that the document did not refer to the relationship of modern Jews to the land of Israel. The guidelines suggest that Roman Catholics should try to understand the Jews in terms of their own self-definition whether or not that definition is fully understood or accepted by Roman Catholics. I think it is important for us as Christians to realize that there will be a wide divergence of interpretation between Christians and Jews as to the biblical significance of the modern state of Israel. As a matter of fact, I am sure that there will be a wide divergence among Christians, just as I know that there are many attitudes expressed in Israeli society.

Just as I reject the use of scriptures to establish political boundaries in the Middle East, I must say that I also find most offensive the attitude of some evangelical Christians who see the struggling people of modern Israel as convenient firebrands to

ignite the conflagration of their long-awaited Armageddon. Imagine all of those hopes and aspirations, all of those sacrifices, all of that yearning being nothing but the prelude to a new, final universal holocaust! Where is the concern of these Christians for people? Are they only interested in biblical prophecies, and do they not constitute some kind of armchair incendiaries?

If I do not support the state of Israel as a result of biblical exegesis I wish to make clear that I do support it on other grounds. If I might be allowed a personal note, and one which gives me, quite frankly, personal pride, I defended the right of Israel to exist at PLO Headquarters in Amman, Jordan, at the beginning of the Jordanian civil war.

By any definition of modern national legitimacy, the state of Israel has as much if not more right to exist than any other nation on the face of the earth, in terms of historic association with the land, the clear identity of its people, humanitarian need, the right of conquest, the contributions of its society. If Israel has no right to exist by whatever argument, there is no modern nation state that has the right to put up its flag and the entire world will be exposed to an endless maelstrom of chaotic controversy under the banner of "Who got there first?" Will the last person alive please take down that banner? Once an Arab shouted at me in a public meeting in Jerusalem, "You as a priest should know who got there first! Who gave the keys of the city to King David? It was Melchizedek and he was an Arab!"

But what state of Israel is it whose existence should be recognized? The 1948 Israel? The 1956 Israel? The 1967 Israel? The 1975 Israel? If my recognition of the right of Israel to exist is based upon the inalienable right of a people to self-determination, can I deny the right of Palestinians to self-determination? I sometimes think that Palestinian nationalism is a kind of Zionism without Jews. The success of the one has led to the emergence of the other. Golda Meir used to ask who the Palestinians were, and I think a partial answer would be: Palestinians are a dispersed people just like you who have carefully studied the principles of your life and are applying them to their own.

Let us suggest for a moment, contrary to my convictions, that Israelis have a human rather than a divine right to live in the old Palestine Mandate, that every right, even a divine right, has to be exercised in such a way that the inalienable rights of others are in some way recognized. Is it not true that there are two peoples in the Israel-Palestine area whose rights must somehow be jointly recognized? Is it not true that despite whatever feelings they themselves may have, history seems to have inextricably bound them together so that the one cannot flourish

without the other? I think that it is even true now that the open bridges policy of the Israeli authorities has led to the economic interdependence of the two peoples. Whatever political solution emerges, surely the economic interdependence of both sides should not only be maintained but encouraged.

Rather than speak of territorial rights over designated geographical areas, I would prefer to speak of the rights of peoples to self-determination. I believe that where Jews are a clear majority in a given area their right to national self-determination should be recognized. I believe the same should be said of Palestinians where they constitute a clear majority. I would hope that there would be minorities on both sides, Jews living in Arab areas enjoying civil equality, as well as Arabs living within areas of Israeli sovereignty. The moral health of any state can be judged by its treatment of its minorities.

There are therefore two prime requisites for peace in this area: the withdrawal of Israeli forces from those areas populated by Arabs who do not wish to live under occupation and the establishment of at least minimal security prerequisites for the resulting smaller area occupied by Israel. These are the goals, and I would want to be the first to admit that the goals are far clearer to me than the means to achieve them. I have a horror of meddling clergymen who pontificate about matters outside their competence. I am not a military analyst, and yet the time has come when those who feel legitimate concern for this area cannot offer indiscriminate support to either side.

And while I am speaking of the impossibility of indiscriminate support, may I add a word about collective guilt? Guilt, it seems to me, is primarily an individual matter. I am responsible for my own sins of commission and omission. I was a powerless teenager when the holocaust took place and therefore I must refuse to accept any personal moral responsibility for this tragedy.

What I *must* do as a Christian is to erase from the life of my church any vestiges of anti-Semitism, not primarily for the sake of Jews but for the sake of the integrity of the church itself. I must act not out of some vague guilt, certainly not from some neurotic self-hatred, not from some emotional response and certainly not because of the clever manipulation of propagandists who might seek to exploit guilt feelings for their own ends. I must seek justice because of my own agenda of reconciliation as a Christian.

It seems to me that some, and I emphasize only *some*, of the Christian support of the state of Israel has arisen out of an unwholesome and emotional guilt complex which results in an indiscriminate

knee-jerk support for every act of the secular government of Israel. Like all civil governments in the hands of frail humans, that government has its good and bad days.

I am even more concerned about some, and again I emphasize *some*, of the Christian support of Palestinian nationalism. Some of it arises from rank anti-Semitism, a childish and simplistic application of Third World liberation theories to an exceedingly complex situation, an anti-Christian and even anti-human adulation of indiscriminate terrorism which rather should be viewed as an attack on the very basis of all civilized life of whatever brand. It is incredible that some Christians, including agencies, could remain apparently indifferent to scenes of the most outrageous barbarity. There is an ugly barbarism afoot today, and if the church is supposed to be a counter culture, I can think of no better adversary.

I cannot denounce the indiscriminate violence of Palestinians without also saying that I cannot support the continuance of the occupation by Israel of those areas populated by Arabs who seek-determination. In 1970 I had occasion to address the national meeting of the American Jewish Committee. I said at that time that I feared that the continued occupation of the territories would erode support for the state of Israel abroad and contaminate the moral vigor of Israeli society at home. I must repeat that view at this time and add that there is considerable evidence to suggest that in the last five years, as Israel depends more and more on Arab labor to do its chores, its society moves further and further away from the socialist ideals of its Zionist founders. Occupation is not partnership.

Therefore the time has come for Christians to say quite clearly here in America that they will support those on both sides, both Israelis and Palestinians, who work for the emergence of two self-determining states, Israel and Palestine. At the same time we should oppose those who demand all for one side or the other. We should oppose the *Likud* program for a greater Israel to the exclusion of all Palestinian rights west of the Jordan, just as we should refuse to offer any support to the PLO until that day when it clearly recognizes the right of self-determination to those three million Israelis who have consistently registered their demand for their own Zionist state.

In doing this we will run up against acrimonious opposition from maximalists on both sides. Yet if my travels in the area have taught me anything, it is that there is no one Israeli opinion or one Palestinian opinion on anything. In Israel-Palestine one finds a wise variety, a spectrum of views on both sides, while here in America one tends to find that the diaspora of each side are more intransigent and inflexible than many, and I

hope most, of their fellows at home. We may find that a discriminating Christian position here will find more sympathy among Israelis and Palestinians in the Middle East than here in the United States.

I choose to believe that the vast majority of Israelis and Palestinians sincerely desire a settlement of this conflict. If Christianity means anything, if it has any validity, any worth, surely we as Christians must have something to offer in the very cradle of our religion. Is it just to be shrine dusters? Just to be camp followers of foreign colonial invasions? Or is it rather to give the witness, no matter how small and faint, to reconciliation and concern for all people?

Might it not be that because of our

very minority status as Christians in a largely Islamic-Jewish area, a minority status new to us as Christians, we might find that shorn of our establishment privileges we are better able to respond to that Spirit which dwells within us? Might we not find it perhaps helpful not only to others, but even primarily helpful to ourselves to learn to live the demands of our Christian calling as a small and weak minority supported only by that Spirit? And finally, can we fail to strive for the peace of Jerusalem, that holy city which is for us Christians that earthly model of the heavenly kingdom where all people live together in peace? If as Christians we fail in Jerusalem could we possibly succeed anywhere?¶

## JERUSALEM / HAVE CHRISTIANS AMERICAN MISSED THE MESSAGE? ARCHIVES

*Christians in Jerusalem often present a divisive image, says Melkite-rite Archbishop Joseph Raya, former archbishop of Acre, a diocese whose seat is in Haifa in Israel. Christians fight and compete for the holy places, he explains, even though "the whole point of our religion is that the tomb is empty!" The archbishop spoke at the Graymoor Ecumenical Center during a conference April 14-15 on the role of the Christian churches in the Middle East. If holy places in Jerusalem serve to divide Christians, he said, the divisions are based on a misunderstanding of the role of "place" in Christian faith. "Where is the sacred space where Christ meets the believer?" he asked. "It is in the assembly of the community 'wherever' that community meets in his name." Archbishop Raya told the Graymoor conference that, "We, the professional Christians of the Holy Land have been a witness to power, to authority, to prestige, to buildings, to programs and to privilege for centuries, and we have failed." He recommended a number of ways in which he feels Christians in the Holy Land might project a better image. An excerpt from his prepared text follows.*

Jerusalem for the Jews is the symbol of their very existence as a nation and as a religion under God. It is the place in which they struggle and compete for the honor of possessing a few feet of ground in which their bodies can be placed at their death. When it comes to Jerusalem there is no difference between an orthodox, a reformed, a conservative, a liberal, or even an unbelieving Jew! Jerusalem is the Sion of God and no Jew disputes this.

When once I asked a well known

socialist Jewish leader why, as a non-believing Jew, he was so tenaciously attached to Jerusalem, he answered: "When it comes to Jerusalem, we're all religious." Here my contention is that a Christian who follows the teaching and will of Christ should help them regain, occupy and exercise their full right of worship in Jerusalem.

The Jew believes that the holy city of Jerusalem is the center of the world. Each and every Jew bows his head in respect and devotion when he stands by the Western (wailing) Wall. In that place all Jews are united in God's love. Here God reveals all the splendor of his glory that can be perceived in this life. Here their differences melt away and disappear.

As they stand together, God's love and their common history blend them into one, and all grudges, hatreds, disputes, differences of religious outlook or political view are forgotten. The place works its effect on them. God is dwelling among his people. A Christian should rejoice in this gift of God to his people and help them to realize it in their life.

The same things can be said of the Moslems when they go to the mosque of Al Aksa. There they are reminded of the pilgrimage of their prophet Mohammed to this very spot. The story is told of an angel of the Lord who brought Mohammed to the place where there now stands the mosque of Al Aksa. (Some interpreters say that this is an actual happening, others that it was a vision in a dream by which God wished to show the importance of Jerusalem.)

The mosque in Jerusalem is considered by Islam to be the third holy

### QUOTE FROM A PAST TEXT OF CURRENT INTEREST:

"For Jerusalem is the 'Holy City' of the Christian world and at the same time the center of the love and centuries-old longings of that people whom God has mysteriously forechosen, signifying in them 'his' people, in whom we recognize ourselves; it is dear likewise to the large religious family of Islam. How much we desire that Jerusalem, instead of being the object of continuing strife, may become the crossroads of fraternal encounter for all those who believe in one God and the symbol of peace for the peoples of the Holy Land and for all the peoples of the Middle East."

(From the address to the cardinals in Rome by Pope Paul VI, in *Origins*, the current volume, p. 489.)

place after Mecca and Medina. It is sufficient once to have seen the crowds gathered in that mosque and all around it, and at the Dome of the Rock, to experience how for Moslems this is a moment of entering into the "fear of the Lord." The people at prayer melt together in a unity of praise. Their very presence in this holy place fills their hearts with awe and a sense of God's presence under whose wings all find equal refuge and equality with one another. The place becomes a source of unity and love. God is seen among his people.

### Christian Witness and the Holy Shrines

I will speak later about the beauty of the Holy Land for the Christian believer in comparison with our brothers the Jews and the Moslems. I wish to ask a question about the very nature of our Christian witness in the holy city. What has our so-called devotion to the holy places of the gospel done for ourselves, and for the *witness* we are meant to give to the world?

At the Holy Sepulchre by order and authority of Rome and of the Latin patriarch of Jerusalem, there is affixed until this very hour on the wall of the Catholic Church sacristy for all to see and read that "no Oriental Catholic is permitted to celebrate the divine liturgy in any of the four major shrines of the Holy Land." This is a "status quo" with its origins in a disgraceful history of Western Christian diplomacy.

Isn't it true that most of the story of Catholic presence there is marked by wars and bloodshed, by disputes and wranglings, by political maneuvering and jealous attachment? Golgotha, place of that most sacred event of Christianity, the crucifixion, historically (again "status quo") has been divided into two sections—one Orthodox, Eastern and one Latin, Western. The latter, within the last generation, had to destroy the whole outlook of harmony and unity by their interior decoration. They filled the walls and even the floors with mosaics of foreign design in order to emphasize the distinction and separation of our churches.

While we are so busy fighting, especially with one another, don't we bring shame and disgrace on the name of Christ, whose presence and suffering and death and resurrection is the only reason that we can call these places holy at all? Jesus came to preach a message of love and peace, and we are so busy worrying about places that we forget what he came to teach us, and we make others forget it also.

But the problem is deeper, I think. Doesn't the fact that the holy places of our religion serve to divide us rather than unite us, as the holy places of the Jews and the Moslems unite them, prove to us that we do not take seriously the fact of our faith? We

destroy the message of Christ by our lust for power.

Where is the sacred space where Christ meets the believer? It is in the assembly of the community *wherever* that community meets in his name. Wherever Christians meet in love for one another and for all others in union with Jesus, there is the place of the resurrection. The whole point of our religion is that the tomb is empty! Why do we fight over it? Why do we have to stir up the whole political machine of the world in order to obtain a certain political administrative position in Jerusalem? We should give up a historical right for the sake of the gospel and be only an instrument of reconciliation.

At the time of Constantine the Great and under the influence of his mother, Helena, Jerusalem became a mysterious magnet attracting the hearts of Christian believers from all over the world. But what we see there now is not one mother church. We do not see the marvelous unity of love that embraces all Christian varieties in which each Christian is proud of the achievements of his brothers. We rather see groups of Christians afraid of each other, reflecting and enhancing the divisions that are the scandal of Christianity the world over.

We see monks and priests, Catholics and non-Catholics, fighting over a place near the Holy Sepulchre where they can put down their candlesticks. It is not only that we shock people by our attachment to a place; deeper than that, we have misunderstood the very role of place in the Christian faith, and our responsibility for making place, any place, holy.

We know from our tradition that the first Christians built shrines at the places they identified with incidents in the life of Christ. It is significant that in nearly all these places what was built was a place of *prayer*, not a place of liturgical cult, or grandiose show.

Furthermore, under the influence of the Roman Empire and the pagan factors present in it, enthusiasm for the places which had known the presence of Christ underwent in the West the influence of magical ideas, which were intensified later by the simple fetishistic faith of the Crusaders. Some of these ideas are with us yet, and it should be the duty of the shepherds of the church to heal their flocks of these notions, even at the risk of losing some financial support for the shrines.

What I am saying is this: the pilgrimages to the shrines in Jerusalem as we know them today in our Christian society are a counter-witness to the simplicity, the spirituality, the poverty, the sincere love taught by the gospel. The Franciscans have the historical right or "status quo" to make their procession on the eve of Christmas to

The apostolic exhortation of Pope Paul VI on "The Church in the Holy Land," mentioned in the text on this page, appeared in *Origins*, Vol. 3, pp. 665ff.

The Vatican's guidelines for Jewish-Christian relations, also mentioned in the text here, appeared in *Origins*, current volume, pp. 463f.

the humble grotto of Bethlehem surrounded and saluted by soldiers on foot presenting arms, by mounted policemen on prize stallions, by the whole array of the state army. "This is a Christian right." They never relent from this "right." A Jewish Army man asked me once: "Do you know how much this display costs the state? What do they need it for?"

The jealousy with which each Christian group guards and promotes its shrines or its part of a shrine is exactly the opposite of the message being given out by the bell sounding in the tower of a church with a cross on its top calling people to prayer, not to some blind instinct that their mere presence in a place will confer some benefit upon them. The efforts we spend in

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*"It is not only that we shock people by our attachment to a place; deeper than that, we have misunderstood the very role of place in the Christian faith, and our responsibility for making place, any place, holy."*

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arousing the emotions of the world by asking for power over Jerusalem is a scandal.

The fact of our disputes and arguments over what we consider holy ought to make us reconsider what we have become used to calling our "rights" in the Holy Land. If we cannot make the exercise of these "rights" a means of bringing people to a deeper union with Christ and with one another, then we should give up these "rights," yielding them up for the sake of others. If the church is to be truly Catholic—that is, universal—then it must give up those things which make it small and narrow and cause others to become the same. The church must abide by the injunction of Jesus: "If your right eye should cause you to sin, tear it out and throw it away" (Mt. 5:28). If something in the life of the church is causing it to sin, it must be torn out and thrown away.

If we should arouse any emotions, and this is the political side of the question on which I will not insist, we should honor our Christ and work to make his people and his family regain their religious dignity in Jerusalem and in the entire Holy Land and be only an instrument of reconciliation.

Our brothers, the Moslems, should not be offended. They too would honor their Koran and their great people by admitting the source of their inspiration, which is Judaism. Jerusalem has been and still is and will always be, no matter, the "first of the

two other directions" (*Woola l' Koublataine*). It is only a direction. Al Aksa is the "third of the two First Mosques" (*Thalithou l' Haramine*). Mecca and Medina are in the heart and center of the Moslem world. Nowadays, in these our times, the plane that could take the Moslem to Jerusalem, could as easily take him to Mecca or Medina, which are the most important. I am not saying they should give up Jerusalem or the mosque there. It is only to encourage a spirit of reconciliation, and today the Catholic Church should play that role of reconciliation.

### The Care of Peoples, Not Places

And now, I would like to discuss this same subject from a slightly different point of view. I would like to express my reaction to the apostolic exhortation issued by Pope Paul VI on March 25, 1974. The subject of this exhortation was, as is well known, "The Increased Needs of the Church in the Holy Land." As a former shepherd of God's flock in the Holy Land, where I was archbishop of Galilee, I would like to share my reflections:

1. His Holiness, the Pope, has openly declared to the whole world that he cares more for the Christian people who live in the Holy Land than for the shrines. He said of these people: "Were their presence to cease, the shrines would be without the warmth of this living witness and the Christian holy places of Jerusalem and the Holy Land would become like museums." We agree with all our heart with this preoccupation of the Holy Father, first and foremost, for the people of the Holy Land.

2. The apostolic exhortation confides the distribution of the collected funds to the Franciscan fathers, the friars, who following the example of their founder, Saint Francis of Assisi, have kept the Holy Land in their hearts and have earned the title of Guardians of the Holy Places. History can attest to the generosity and courage of many of these men who have risked and even lost their lives in order to preserve for the Christian people access to the places venerated by tradition as connected with various incidents in the life of Jesus.

I have already expressed myself clearly enough, I think, on the dangers and tragedies that have been incurred by a quasi-magical understanding of these places in generations of Christians who have not been taught or who have not practiced the teaching of their faith regarding the mystery of place in the Christian world vision. With this faith, our devotion to the holy places is free and beautiful. Without this outlook, it is a stumbling block.

However, I question the choice of the Franciscan fathers as being the ones to distribute the funds sent to the people of the Holy Land by their brothers and sisters

throughout the world. My objections here are based on a twofold consideration: first, that of the nature of the exercise of charity, and second, the nature of the Franciscan vocation in the Holy Land.

Charity between brothers is never the simple handing out of material goods. As an old proverb has it: "Bread given without love is poison." It would be much more in keeping with the intention of the collection, which is for the *people* of the Holy Land, if they had formed part of a committee along with others to determine the real needs of those who live there and work to alleviate them. Such a committee would have been a great ecumenical opportunity to involve all the Christians in the Holy Land in being concerned about each other, and how best to help one another. A need for unity in the world at large and in the Holy Land in particular could have been served by such a committee.

The Christians of Israel need more than anything else to be built up in their *dignity* and to know they are esteemed and loved by their fellows throughout the world. They are not the wards of others who happen to possess more of this world's goods; they are brothers. Similar collections in the past have been for the humiliation of the Christians of the Holy Land or for the building of enormous basilicas at the cost of millions of dollars. These basilicas are only for the Western pilgrims who have enough basilicas in their own respective countries.

The Franciscans have the care of many of the shrines in the Holy Land and that is their vocation there. Is there not a proof that in administering these funds, that the only worth of the Christians who live there is that they add "local color" for the visiting pilgrims? Such a situation is the very antithesis of what the Pope already declared to be his principal preoccupation. The Christians of the Holy Land have been despoiled of a human and Christian dignity that has to be recognized.

The Franciscans ought not to be agents for the distribution of such funds. It contradicts their vocation of poverty and their vocation to preserve the dignity of the holy places. The Western church has given us much in giving us such devoted guardians of the Christian shrines. This vocation of the Franciscans has been marred through a long and sad history that makes them appear as superior rich visitors rather than as "little brothers," the *fratres minores*, that their founder envisioned them to be. The long and shameful practice of the past to "buy" souls to the Latin rite and call them "converts." The people of the Holy Land have not forgotten the saying which is still on their lips: "*Lateen Tolma*" (Bread Latins). Why repeat the same situation?

The Christians of the Holy Land must

reject any way of acting that smacks of paternalism, of a mere "hand-out." And here it must be made clear that for the most part the "Christians" that I am referring to are the foreign Christians, the professional Christians. There are no religious communities in the Holy Land which are of Palestinian origin. All, virtually all, of the religious orders, both of priests and of nuns, are from foreign countries, have their novitiates in foreign countries. No religious order has ever encouraged the Palestinian Christians to form their own Eastern religious communities.

These foreign professional Christians are not only backed by the power and wealth of the West, but also take advantage of tax exemptions, special travel permissions and special discounts on most of their purchases. In almost every way they present an aura of wealth and power to the local Christians, who "use" them not out of greed, but out of necessity. When people are poor and their children are hungry, they seldom have the leisure to reflect upon the long range consequences of taking a gift, no matter how it is offered.

However, the sad lesson of history in the Holy Land should warn all of us against perpetuating a manner of acting and an attitude which has kept giver and receiver apart as "benefactor" and "needy" rather than bring them together as brothers. There are too many broken spirits, too much irresponsibility that comes from being denied the dignity of cooperating as human beings and being made instead the object of "charity." To make a man rich at the price of his dignity, is to make him poorer than he was before.

We, the professional Christians of the Holy Land have been a witness to power, to authority, to prestige, to buildings, to programs and to privilege for centuries and we have failed. It is time to humble ourselves before the people of the East who gave us the prophets, who gave us the scriptures, who gave us the Christ himself; it is time to humble ourselves before them to learn their language (perhaps one out of every 50 missionaries in the Holy Land speaks Arabic, the language of the Christians), to steep ourselves in the culture, so that the church may be incarnated in the people rather than imposed upon them. It is time that we open our eyes and ears to learn, rather than our mouths to teach. It is time that we become friends, rather than patrons, brothers rather than competitors. It is time that we live as though we believed in the resurrection rather than to live as though we owned the truth.

We have established the power of the church and stripped her of her flesh. There can be no reconciliation until the church is ready to ask forgiveness.

In conclusion may I simply say that in

QUOTE FROM A PAST TEXT OF CURRENT INTEREST:

*"In order to promote dialogue, it is important to understand, as we begin to grapple with this question, that Christians and Jews will have a different view of the religious significance of Israel. I do not believe, however, that the Jewish community would ever demand that the Christian community agree with its religious convictions any more than we would demand that you agree with our theology.*

*"But what you do expect, and what we should give you, is a real understanding of and a genuine respect for your beliefs in this matter. Insensitivity on our part to your convictions would be inexcusable."*

*(From, "The Land of Israel," by Archbishop Joseph Bernardin, excerpt from his address to the University of Cincinnati Faculty Council on Jewish Affairs; in the current volume of Origins, p. 598.)*

spite of all the evidence to the contrary, I believe that the Holy Land is called to holiness. In spite of all the evidence to the contrary, I believe that God is more powerful than security; that love is more powerful than hatred; that good is more powerful than evil; that prayer is more powerful than selfishness; that hearts are more holy than shrines. In spite of all the evidence to the contrary, I believe that the gospels are true, and that living the gospels is the realization of all that the human heart longs for.

The glory of the incarnation was an

incomparable explosion of love that made every human being incomprehensibly glorious. The resurrection transformed every living thing into glory. The ascension deified the entire universe, and so permeated every grain of matter with the glory of God that it can be an object of awe.

In the light of that glory I believe that we of the Holy Land, and we of the church, and we of every race, Jewish, Arab and every other, that we of every nation and of every religious faith, may throw off whatever binds us or blinds us and look at one another and say "My brother, my life, my joy."<sup>¶</sup>

## Church & World

# Preaching/the Dilemmas

## AMERICAN JEWISH

*The church has a role to play in the promotion of world justice. But, more specifically, what role do homilists have in the promotion of world justice? Father Avery Dulles, SJ, discussed that question in an address April 16 to a workshop on preaching and social justice sponsored by the Archdiocesan Holy Year Office in Washington, D.C. Ordinarily a homilist should abstain "from imposing any one solution to a controversial question as the only one that a Christian can legitimately endorse," Father Dulles said. Also, homilists should "be on guard against fanning the flames of the materialism so rampant in our culture," by making it seem as if those who have not received justice in this world have "missed the goal for which they were created." However, there are situations in which homilists can take very specific positions on issues. On the following pages, Origins publishes an excerpt from Father Dulles' text.*

All of you in this room, I feel certain, are aware in some general way of the importance of preaching and promoting the social doctrines of the church; otherwise you would not be here. The problem is not so much *whether* to communicate a sense of social responsibility as *how* to do so.

Generally speaking, priests who try to use their position to advocate political and social programs meet with a great deal of opposition. Often they find that attendance at religious services and revenues from church collections decrease in proportion to the degree that they insist on social issues. The difficulties of the priest, especially in the

parish situation, can be aptly summarized in the form of two dilemmas, which I shall label the spiritual vs. the secular and the general vs. the particular.<sup>1</sup>

The first of these dilemmas has to do with the fundamental mission of the church. According to a very traditional opinion, Christ came into the world not to promote material progress but to save souls, not to give the bread that perishes but that which endures to eternal life. The mission of the church is accordingly a spiritual one. Recognizing what is legitimate in this approach, Vatican II in its pastoral constitution declared: "Christ...gave his church no proper mission in the political, economic or social order. The purpose he set before her is a religious one."

At some periods in history, the church did in fact take over certain functions that more properly pertain to civil agencies. Popes and bishops became excessively involved in secular affairs. In modern times, especially in countries such as our own, a clear separation between church and state has been achieved. Without applauding all the conclusions that ardent secularists draw from the separation, most of us would probably agree that the separation itself is sound and necessary. We do not want to go back to the era of prince-bishops or forward to an era of bishop-presidents.

Having a positive appreciation for the distinction of functions, the faithful, when they go to Mass on Sunday, do not expect to be lectured on politics and economics. They do not feel that the church is truly competent in this sphere. Even if a particular priest happens to be a skilled political scientist or economist, they do not expect him to hold forth on these subjects when preaching at Mass.

See also in the current volume of *Origins* the text entitled "A Self-Evaluation Tool for Homilists," by Father Robert Kinast; pp. 266ff.



They are in church for a different purpose—namely to raise their minds and hearts to God. Turning aside for the moment from the daily grind of practical decision-making, they wish to be refreshed and strengthened by the word of God and by the sacraments. Especially in public worship, the faithful feel the need to focus on the transcendent, the divine and to see their own lives in this larger framework.

Worship is important to most people not because it tells them what their judgment ought to be on questions of politics, economics, or the like, but because it enables them to make contact with the source and goal that gives meaning to their own lives and to the world in which they live. The church, they feel, points the way to eternal salvation and gives them a sense of communion with God. They would agree, no doubt, that church teaching can contribute a dimension that is very important for concrete decision making in secular areas, but they do not expect the church by itself to provide solutions to the political, social, or economic problems that arise in every time and place.

My colleague Father Charles E. Curran has some very balanced counsel that seems worthy of quotation at this point:

“The word of God and the church are not the only or even the primary elements present in the attempts to bring about a more human and moral life for men existing in the world today. There is a new type of triumphalism which has crept into some Catholic theology and Catholic life. Some seem to think that the word of God and the church exist primarily as the leading agent of social change. The primary task of the church does not consist in the changes wrought in society, although the church will always have an interest in this precisely because of the relevance of the word of God as lived and preached for all the situations of human existence.

“We cannot forget that there are many other individuals and groups with a competency and a responsibility to play a role in making and keeping human life more human. The word of God and those who gather together to be nourished by the word and work of Jesus do have a role to play in this area of bringing about a better society and working here for the building up of the kingdom, but this is not the primary function of the church, nor is the church the only group working in this particular area. One must resist the temptation to make the church the sole or the primary contributor to the moral renewal of society.”<sup>2</sup>

Let me add yet another caution to those already mentioned. An excessive

concentration on social action, while well intended, might involve a certain implicit or latent heresy. It might seem to imply that final salvation, which it is the church's essential mission to preach and to promote, could not be attained without the elimination of social evils.

According to the Christian revelation, as I interpret it, God offers in Christ a salvation that can be attained by the weak as well as by the strong, by the poor as well as the rich, by slaves as well as those who are civilly free. The church may and must lament the sufferings of the hungry and the oppressed but it would not be true to its principles if it regarded these evils as the ultimate catastrophe.

The example of Jesus tells us that material poverty and subjection to persecution are compatible with being rich in the sight of God. If the church were to insist too exclusively on social and economic betterment it could easily obscure the true character of Christian hope. We believe in a God who can save those whom the world mistreats and slanders. As priests we must continue to teach, as Jesus did, that the poor who bear their sufferings patiently are more blessed than the rich who oppress them. We should never speak of social benefits in such a way as to make it appear that those who receive them are already blessed in this life and that those who lack them have missed the goal for which they were created.

In making these points I am deliberately opposing what I understand to be the view of certain liberation theologians who are, in my opinion, over influenced by Marxist determinism. One author of this school, after describing what he calls the sinful structures of oppression, goes on to write: “As a consequence, we must say that liberation from sin cannot be direct but must be mediated through political and historical liberation.”<sup>3</sup>

These words, read in the proper context, may admit of some legitimate interpretation, but to me they seem to suggest that a person cannot be absolved from sin unless he also receives political and social emancipation. This is contrary to my understanding of the gospel, which promises abundant grace and consolation to those who suffer poverty and injustice. By implying that liberation from sin is dependent on social, economic or political liberation we would be counseling despair to those who have no prospects of receiving justice or prosperity on earth. This, I take it, is directly contrary to what Jesus teaches in the Beatitudes and elsewhere. His theme is: great is your reward in heaven.

I would insist, then, that in preaching social justice we must be on guard against fanning the flames of the materialism so rampant in our culture. We must have the

See also in *Origins*:  
\* *Politics in the Pulpit?*, by Bishop Ernest Primeau, Vol. 1, p. 243;  
\* *Politics and Preaching*, by Msgr. George Higgins, Vol. 2, p. 207;  
\* *The Priest as Politician*, texts by Archbishop Joseph McGucken and Father Eugene Boyle regarding 1974 suspension of Father Boyle's preaching faculties, Vol. 3, p. 556f.

**Statement on Vietnam**, by Archbishop Joseph Bernardin of Cincinnati, president of the U.S. Catholic Conference. On May 6, as *Origins* went to press, Archbishop Bernardin issued this statement:  
“The war in Vietnam is over. The human suffering of the war (continued in the following margin)

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goes on. It is natural that we should wish to put the war behind us. But it is inconceivable that we should turn our backs on the suffering which continues.

"Thousands of people have fled their homes in Southeast Asia. Many have already come to our country, and many more will soon come. They call out to our Christian compassion and our commitment to American ideals. We must respond.

"Negative reactions voiced by some Americans to this new group of suffering human beings are dismaying but in some ways understandable. Our economy is under strain. Unemployment is high. The refugees are a living reminder of a tragic episode—the Vietnam war—which many would prefer to forget. The racism which has stained our national life before colors and distorts the manner in which some perceive these refugees.

"Such reactions can be understood but they cannot be accepted. They must not be allowed to impede the generosity which the present emergency demands of us.

"There is reason to believe that the anxieties expressed so far represent exaggerated and unfounded fears concerning the impact which the coming of the refugees is likely to have on our national life and economy. Their number is very small in relation to our total population. Every effort will be made to disperse them throughout the country instead of concentrating them in a few areas. Furthermore, preliminary government surveys indicate that these are predominantly family units, and the proportion of wo-

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courage to believe and confess that nothing can separate us from the love of God extended to us in Jesus Christ—neither death nor life nor persecution nor famine nor nakedness nor peril nor the sword. These words of Paul in the eighth chapter of Romans can be a great comfort to those who cannot expect to enjoy gratifications in this life.

In preaching without compromise the doctrine of Jesus, we need not fear that we will be charged with allying ourselves with oppressors by promising a "pie in the sky" to the oppressed. We shall have to make it quite clear that the present social structures are to be subjected to ruthless criticism, and changed if necessary for the sake of justice. Those who oppress their fellow humans, we must warn, have every reason to fear the judgment of the Lord who in Jesus has made himself the friend of the poor. There is no real opposition, therefore, between the spiritual import of the Christian message and the urgency of practicing social justice.

The second dilemma facing the Christian preacher is the necessity of choosing between stating general principles and giving specific applications. If he sticks to generalities he makes little impression on his audience, who find his message too abstract and academic. No one will reject the bidding to be considerate toward the poor and oppressed, provided that he is not told what particular actions such considerateness must entail. By confining himself to abstractions, the preacher might even antagonize those who want to insist on concrete applications. On the other hand it is extremely perilous to descend to the advocacy of specific programs, such as burning draft cards, busing and voting for particular political candidates.

The reasons against getting very specific are easy to see. For one thing, there is the question of competence. The church, as we have already said, has no proper mission or competence in the political, social, or economic order. This is not to deny, of course, that Christians have a serious responsibility to animate the sociopolitical order with the spirit of the gospel—a mandate recognized by Vatican II in many texts (e.g., *Gaudium et Spes*, art. 42; *Apostolicam actuositatem*, art. 2). But to give specific answers to specific problems in the name of the gospel itself is quite another matter. The Christian warrants (such as the Bible and conciliar definitions) rarely impose a clear answer to such questions.

Generally the Christian who wishes to arrive at a clear answer is compelled to make use of disciplines in which his Christian faith does not give him any special skills. He relies on his training as a sociologist, a political scientist, an economist, or whatever. This is true of the

individual Christian and of the official church, which, by common admission, has no infallibility in sociopolitical matters. Hence there is always the possibility that other Christians, no less committed to the gospel, might reach different answers.

The pastoral constitution, *Gaudium et Spes* (art. 43), treats this problem very prudently. After pointing out the error of countenancing any split between a person's faith and the sphere of daily living, the Council goes on to say that while pastors may often be a source of spiritual insight, the laity ought not to imagine that the pastors are experts in all matters or that their mission is to be able to give concrete answers to secular questions.

"Often enough the Christian view of things will itself suggest some specific solution in certain circumstances. Yet it happens rather frequently, and legitimately so, that with equal sincerity some of the faithful will disagree with others on a given matter. Even against the intentions of their proponents, however, solutions proposed on one side or another may easily be confused by many people with the gospel message. Hence it is necessary for people to remember that no one is allowed in the aforementioned situations to appropriate the church's authority for his opinion."

These principles would seem applicable to the conduct of the clergy in almost any situation in which they might appear to represent the church. Even greater care, however, is necessary when one is preaching in a liturgical context. In such circumstances the priest is specially clothed with authority. He is expected to present not his own personal views but a theologically sound interpretation of the word of God.

From the pulpit he is in no position to develop a lengthy or subtle argument, to list the pros and cons, to refute the opposing positions, to supply facts, figures, and documentation. He generally has to keep fairly close to the biblical text and to speak to the heart in a way that facilitates participation in sacramental worship. If he takes strong positions on controversial questions, the congregation will legitimately feel resentful, since they have no opportunity to answer back or even to express their disagreement.

By speaking out strongly on a divisive issue, the preacher would risk disrupting the atmosphere of worship. He would create rifts in the congregation on matters that might not be necessarily and evidently bound up with Christian revelation. Even if the preacher were correct in his social stand, the congregation might be unable to perceive the correctness of his stance, and might understandably be alienated.

All of these considerations, I believe, make it imperative to approach divisive social issue with great tact and caution, but there is no need to go to the opposite extreme of mouthing empty generalities.

For one thing, it is always proper to educate the faithful in the approved social doctrine of the church. The documents of Vatican II and the social encyclicals take what may be called a middle ground between ethical generalities and prudential specifics. John Bennett, from a Protestant point of view, has put this matter well:

"As a teacher of students who are expecting to preach, who are not themselves to be makers of political or social policy, I have been interested in finding out what kind of ethical guidance it is appropriate for ministers to include in preaching or for the church as church to provide its members...."

"It is important to have some designation of objectives or judgments which have a particular reference to our concrete situation, which are determiners of policy and yet which are not identical with the most concrete policy which is the immediate guide to action...The corporate teaching of the church on controversial social issues is seldom more specific than the projection of so-called 'middle axioms' but if these do become a part of the mind of the church it becomes possible for it more effectively to encourage its members and many voluntary groups to experiment with the support of specific policies."<sup>4</sup>

Paul Ramsey, who cites these words of Bennett with approval, says that the church may properly give directions or perspectives rather than specific directives; it may give decision and action-oriented teachings. As a model of such teachings he points to Vatican II's pastoral constitution, *Gaudium et Spes*.

Bearing in mind the differences between pulpit preaching and classroom instruction, the priest could appropriately bring into his sermons certain materials derived from Vatican II and from the social encyclicals. In this way, without stepping out of his role of representing the official church, he could come closer to the preoccupations of the faithful than if he remained in the stratosphere of ethical generalities.

While ordinarily abstaining from imposing any one solution to a controversial question as the only one that a Christian can legitimately endorse, the preacher should not hesitate to indicate the importance of taking

a particular stand in accordance with the Christian understanding of life. He must encourage the laity, in particular, to enter into the arena in which particular solutions triumph over others. Too many Catholics, as we have said, stand aside from involvement in the social and political struggles by which policies are formed. It is ordinarily the role of the laity to work in this arena, guided by the principles of revelation.

When a priest is publicly treating a divisive question, even from the pulpit, it may on occasion be proper for him to indicate what course of action seems to him personally most consonant with the gospel. The priest, after all, is a man and a citizen. He has a right to his own opinions and is not expected, in our society, to keep his opinions a secret.

If in the course of a sermon he indicates how he feels about a given housing project, or a given piece of legislation, or the legitimacy of our military involvement in some foreign conflict, this is not necessarily out of place. But great care must be taken not to give the impression that others who take a different stand are necessarily worse Christians.

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*"All of these considerations, I believe, make it imperative to approach divisive social issues with great tact and caution, but there is no need to go to the opposite extreme of mouthing empty generalities."*

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There are, I believe, extreme situations in which one and only one political position can be consonant with the gospel. An example might be the Nazi genocide practiced against the Jews. It seems clear to me that there could not be two legitimate Christian positions on this issue.

If it is evident that to vote for a given candidate or a given law indicates a lack of commitment to Christian principles, the church can officially condemn such action, and may be obliged to do so. In such cases, the message should be clearly preached from every pulpit in the land, and no one should accuse the church of undue interference in politics.

There seems to be a wide consensus today among Catholics that such is the case with regard to the recent Supreme Court decisions regarding abortion, though there is not the same degree of consensus as to what particular strategies the church should adopt to improve the legal situation.

In the same connection, one may speak of crisis situations in which, because of

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men and children is high. It is most unlikely that there will be an extremely large number of Southeast Asian men in this group to add significantly to competition for jobs.

"Some sacrifices will be required of us of course. The coming of the refugees underlines the need for programs and policies to reduce the impact of economic difficulties upon the most vulnerable among us, be they Americans or newly arrived Southeast Asians. With concerted effort on the part of both the public and the private sectors in America, however, what needs to be done can and will be done.

"In line with our longstanding national commitment to voluntarism, voluntary agencies, especially religious ones, will play a central role in the refugee resettlement program which is now beginning. Since World War II the Catholic Church has been responsible for the resettlement of one million persons in the United States; in the past eight years alone, Migration and Refugee Services of the United States Catholic Conference has assisted half a million. In similar crises in the past--Hungary, Czechoslovakia, Cuba--Catholic agencies at the national and diocesan levels have resettled well over half the total number of refugees. We stand ready and willing to perform the same service now.

"The urgent, immediate need is for homes and jobs for the refugees. It is intolerable to think that these people, many of whom have already suffered greatly, should have to

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live a day longer than necessary in the primitive conditions of hastily improvised camps and tent cities. Their movement into American communities must begin as quickly as possible. As it occurs, they must be greeted warmly and given the help they need to begin their new lives among us. They need material assistance, but they also need our acceptance and our love.

"American Catholics have special motives for generosity. In many cases our own parents, grandparents, or great-grandparents came to this country from other lands, often in circumstances of suffering and deprivation not unlike those experienced by the refugees from Southeast Asia. Here they found opportunity for a new start. We are the beneficiaries of the generosity they enjoyed. We can be no less generous in our turn.

"We know, too, that many of the refugees have fled their land out of fear of oppression because of their faith. So did the forebears of many of us. It is now for us to enable them to enjoy the blessing of religious liberty which we are fortunate enough to take for granted for ourselves.

"Finally, we believe firmly that our response to the refugees is a mirror of our love of God. Jesus tells us that what we do for the needy, we do for him. "I was a stranger and you welcomed me. . . . As often as you did it for one of my least brothers, you did it for me." (Mt. 25, 35-40).

"As Catholics, as Americans, and as human beings we recognize in the refugees a duty and a privilege, and above all an opportunity for loving service."

the vital issues at stake, the church may find it necessary to intervene vigorously in a corporate manner even though it is not absolutely clear that only the position recommended by the church is compatible with a full Christian commitment. I would suppose that the efforts of the church in Portugal today to oppose the Communist Party might fall into this category.

In general, I think that the church should be very hesitant to take an official corporate stand on divisive political issues, because the price to be paid for unsuccessful intervention is often very high. We may recall in this connection the longterm effects of the Catholic opposition to Queen Elizabeth the First of England.

Finally, it may be pointed out that the priest has many means at his disposal for educating the social conscience of his parishioners. The Sunday sermon, as we have indicated, should be used for this purpose only rarely and with great restraint. Where he feels it important to arouse the conscience of his parishioners on a burning social issue, the priest can easily set up a forum or lecture program in which such issues are discussed by competent experts under conditions that allow for debate. Every effort should be made to involve parishioners who have special knowledge of political and social questions in projects that help the community to respond to the issues in a thoroughly Christian manner.

The priest, likewise, is expected to assume his responsibilities as a citizen. In our country he will be expected to vote, and he will rarely be criticized if, under informal circumstances, he lets it be known how he is voting and why. He should also try to make good use of the time when he is not actually engaged in parish duties to keep up his own education, to participate in community projects, to join associations that discuss questions of foreign and domestic social policy and to support public interest groups. In a city like Washington there are almost countless opportunities for this sort of thing.

The question of the life style of the priest is a very delicate one, but because of its close connection with the preaching of social justice the question cannot be entirely avoided here. Since a person inevitably communicates by what he does as well as by what he says, the manner in which the priest is seen to live can either reinforce or undermine the message he is committed to preach. In general, the lifestyle of the priest should embody, even more conspicuously than that of the ordinary lay Christian, the theological virtues of faith, hope, and charity. He should try to live in moderation and simplicity and in solidarity with the people whom he serves.

It would be desirable, I suppose, if some priests who felt the call and the mission

were to identify voluntarily with the poor and share the same kind of housing and food available to the poor. But I do not think it possible or necessary for all priests to practice this form of heroism. In general they should have a form of life that enables them to be reasonably content in their vocation and to do their work—to have the privacy they need for study and prayer, to deal with the kinds of people they have to relate to and to give a measure of edification.

Beyond these very general principles, I would not attempt to go. It is up to diocesan and religious priests, in their respective communities, to discuss seriously whether their life style is helping or interfering with their service of the gospel and to make in common the decisions they consider appropriate.¶

#### FOOTNOTES:

1. I have already referred to these two dilemmas in my testimony at the Bicentennial Justice Hearing in Washington, D.C. See *Origins* IV/35 (Feb. 20, 1975) 548-51.

2. "Preaching the Word and Specific Moral Problems," *The Jurist* 32/3 (Summer 1972) 361f.; reprinted in Curran's *The Crisis of Priestly Ministry*. (Notre Dame: Fides, 1972).

3. Philip E. Berryman, "Latin American Liberation Theology," *Theological Studies* 34 (1973), p. 387.

4. Quoted in Ramsey, Paul, *Who Speaks for the Church?* (Nashville: Abingdon, 1967), p. 14-15.

# secularization/implications for individuals

One of the implications of secularization is that the individual Christian's role of bringing Christian values to bear on society grows in importance, Bishop James S. Rausch said during an address in Cincinnati May 4. Another implication can be found in the institutional church's changed role vis-a-vis society's values. It is "no longer possible to suppose that institutional religion will have precisely the same impact on society as in the past or that, specifically, organized religion will be able to insert Christian values into the fabric of society in the same degree and in the same way as at some times in the past," the bishop explained. He added, "I do not mean to suggest by this that institutional religion in our times has become an anachronism..." What has happened is that "the secularization process has had a deep and lasting impact on the values question." The U.S. Catholic Conference general secretary, addressed the Cincinnati Council of Catholic Laity. An excerpt from his text follows.

If these are neither the best nor the worst times in history, they are at least different and distinct. If we wish to live as effective moral agents today, it is an important part of our task to comprehend this difference and distinctness.

There are difficulties and dangers in such an effort, not least the danger of oversimplification. It is tempting to try to remove the painful complexity of reality by sweeping all the data of human life and experience into a single category, viewing everything through the lens of a single idea—and, if necessary, dismissing as irrelevant whatever perversely refuses to be categorized. This is typified in characterizations of this as the "Age of" something or other.

Poets are entitled to such metaphorical generalization; but the rest of us are well advised to

grapple with the disconcerting complexities and ambiguities of things-as-they are.

I trust, then, that I will not violate my own rule if I refer in particular to one contemporary phenomenon which has a powerful bearing on the question of Christian values in today's society: the phenomenon of secularization.

It is not my intention to suggest that everything we see happening in relation to values or, for that matter, in relation to society is attributable to secularization. I simply propose to you that the secularization process has had a deep and lasting impact on the values question—an impact we need surely take into consideration in assessing our own role and responsibility.

A great deal has been said and written about secularization in recent years. For example, I need only refer to Harvey Cox's much discussed book of the 1960s, *The Secular City*, and to the outpouring of debate and dialogue which it prompted. The debate has died down since then, and the ability to make facile references to the *secular city* is no longer the touchstone of being *au courant* in religious circles. This is all to the good. The phenomenon of secularization persists. Now that the *secular* is no longer a fad, we are in a position to discuss secularization more soberly, without the necessity of staking out a simplistic position either *for* it or *against* it.

We are also in a position to make some of the clarifications and distinctions which are necessary for intelligent reflection on the subject: the distinction, for example, between secularization and secularism. They are not the same, but semantic confusion of words has quite naturally led to a confusion of ideas. A useful brief discussion of secularization was provided by Cardinal John Dearden of Detroit, in a paper on *Secularization and Evangelization*, presented at last fall's

international Synod of Bishops. He distinguishes three levels of meaning associated with the term secularization, as follows:

*Historically:* secularization refers to a socio-cultural process through which religious institutions have lost many functions which they previously fulfilled, while new institutions have arisen to assume these functions;

*Philosophically:* secularization as an historical process must be distinguished from the worldview of secularism which restricts the meaning of personal and social life to a closed universe, impervious either to divine intervention or to transcendent reference;

*Sociologically:* secularization refers to the result of the historical process; the product is a society in which religion has a special function but not the dominant cultural or political position.

As Christians and Catholics, we readily conclude that secularism is incompatible with our faith. Put simply, we are *against* it. But the matter is different with respect to secularization. Being *for* it or *against* it would be about as meaningful as being *for* or *against* the 20th century—or the 12th, for that matter. It is a fact of history. This is not a counsel of despair; it is merely a statement of how things are.

To a great extent, secularization provides the context within which our lives as individual Christians and the life of the church as a community and an institution must be lived today. I see little to be gained by either celebrating or deploring this; we can put our time to better use by reflecting on its implications for our individual lives and the life of the church. Permit me to suggest a few.

### Implications of Secularization

One implication of secularization is that one must today be either a true Christian or no Christian. The possibility of *cultural* Christianity becomes increasingly remote as the process of secularization goes on.

The structures of a secularized society simply do not provide motivation for anyone to be a Christian: one's identity as a Christian in no way proceeds from one's identity as a member of such a society, and there is no question of looking to such a society to turn people into Christians. People will either find the roots of their Christian identity elsewhere, or they will not find them at all.

If this is true, something extremely important follows from it with respect to morality and moral values. We cannot look to a society well along in the process of secularization to impose Christian morality as such on us. Certainly one hopes that the structures and laws of such a society will reflect and embody Christian moral values in appropriate ways; and that, at the very least, such a society will not seek to impose some other species of morality on us. But these are different matters, to which I will return a little later.

As for ourselves, morality will be the morality we choose as individuals; either we will interiorize our commitment to Christian moral values and make them truly our own, or we are likely, morally speaking, not to be Christian at all.

A further implication of secularization concerns the relationship of the institutional church to civil society. This might be expressed in many different ways, but however it is expressed, it means at least this: that it is no longer possible to suppose that institutional religion will have precisely the same impact on society as in the past or that, specifically, organized religion will be able to insert Christian values into the fabric of society in the same degree and in the same way as at some times in the past.

I do not mean to suggest by this that institutional religion in our times has become an anachronism or an irrelevance in relation to civil society, although

of course this is a thesis put forward by some.

My view, rather, is that as secularization has taken hold in society, the role of institutional religion vis-a-vis society has changed, as has the role of the individual Christian. It does not necessarily follow that Christian values will have less impact on society today than in the past, but it does follow with a rather strict necessity that the way in which they will have their impact must be considerably different from some other periods in history.

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*“ . . . As secularization has taken hold in society, the role of institutional religion vis-a-vis society has changed, as has the role of the individual Christian.”*

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In such circumstances, the insertion of Christian values into the life of society becomes to a high degree a task and responsibility of the individual Christian. I say this at the risk of seeming to state a truism; this theme has been sounded often before. Yet if one reflects upon the implications of secularization, the truism is seen to be a rather startling truth. The church is only one among many institutions seeking to exert an influence on civil laws and public policy. It is entirely appropriate for it to do so. But it does so in competition—benign, one hopes—with many other institutions and groups. Sometimes it will be successful; sometimes not. In any case, it becomes increasingly important that individual Christians not rely solely on the *clout* of the institutional church to effect the penetration of society by Christian values; rather, they must seize the initiative themselves, carrying with them into their roles in society their commitment to Christian morality.

As for the institutional church, its task in these circumstances seems to me to lie primarily in two areas. The first is the education, formation and

support of individual Christians in their efforts to apply Christian values to the issues of secular society. I would emphasize in a special way the supportive function of the church, for it seems patently clear that maintaining and vigorously applying Christian values are not easy for the individual believer in a society where so many forces seem to militate against religious belief and morality. In such times the individual more than ever stands in need of the assistance of a supportive community of faith and worship—stands in need, that is, of the church.

The church's second task in these circumstances, I believe, is that of giving prophetic witness to Christian values. Aware of its own faults and failings and striving constantly to remedy these, the church must nevertheless not hesitate to speak out on behalf of the values it espouses. It must do so even at the risk of making itself unpopular: of seeming to be either old-fashioned—*irrelevant*, as we say today—or hopelessly idealistic and unrealistic. Indeed, in respect to different issues, the church may at the same time be criticized for both failings. While we should not be complacent in the face of such criticism, neither should we be deterred by the fact of criticism alone. We can in fact take it for granted that, if the church is doing what it should do in our times, the criticism is inevitable. ¶

# Speak Up

## Another side

Once again I must register a disagreement with a column by Fr. Albert Nevins. In his Sept. 3 piece, "Christians and Israelis," Father paints a dark picture indeed of Israeli treatment of its Arab and Muslim citizens. I think it only fair to your readers to point out there is another side to the picture.

Father Nevins states, for example, that there are "less than 500" Arabs at Hebrew University. He neglects to mention, as Msgr. George Higgins has pointed out in his own nationally-syndicated column, "The Yardstick," that there are some 500 Arab educational institutions in Israel, with 150,000 students. On the West Bank one institution, Bethlehem University, though only recently founded, already has more than 600 Christian and Moslem students registered for the present academic year. Israel's Arab citizens, he should also know, have a higher per capita income than its Jewish, "Sephardic" citizens, most of whom live in Israel because they were forced out of Arab countries.

The lone "instance" that Father Nevins can think of a Christian being "denied citizenship" is simply not true. The man (it is a famous case) was granted citizenship, though not under the Law of Return.

Finally, Father Nevins, while rightly upset by the Israeli Missionary Law, which was a bad one when written, might have informed his readers that the Israeli Attorney General, the Minister of Justice and the Minister of Religious Affairs have all issued unambiguous statements clarifying the law to the point where it cannot be used against any Christian charitable, educational or religious institution.

Dr. Eugene Fisher  
Executive Secretary

Secretariat for Catholic-Jewish Relations  
National Conference of Catholic Bishops  
Washington, D.C.

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# odds and ends

by FATHER ALBERT J. NEVINS, M.M. ←

Christians and Israel. There is confusion in the minds of some over the recent support of Lebanese Christians by Israel. Several letters to us have suggested that the action of Israel in behalf of the Lebanese Christians shows that Israel prefers Christianity to Islam. This may or may not be true but neither I nor the writers have any way of knowing it. What is more certain, however, is that the decision of Israel to give support to the Lebanese Christians was in no way a religious decision but a purely political one, made in Israel's best interest. First, the Israelis seek a buffer zone between themselves and the PLO (Moslem Lebanese) and the Christians provide this. Second, the Israelis are concerned with the Syrian presence in Lebanon and they view the Syrian action against the Christians as a Syrian attempt to flank the Golan Heights and gain a strategic betterment of military position against Israel. So the Israeli moves were made with these two points as decisive.

One gets a better view of Israeli attitudes to Christianity by looking at conditions inside Israel. Officially, the Israeli stance is one of tolerance but beneath the surface there are many discriminations which concern Christian leadership in Israel. I have been told by high religious officials that Israeli policy seems to be that of forcing young Christians to leave the country. Of the 16,000 students at Hebrew University, less than 500 are Arabs. Young Christians told me that one difficulty for them is that all classes are conducted in Hebrew, a language many refuse to learn. I suppose for political reasons. There are added problems for West Bank Arabs who are not Israeli citizens. To counteract this situation the Church brought in the Christian Brothers and began Bethlehem University. But even an Arab with education finds it difficult to get a job commensurate with his or her education because of the Israeli security which must be passed for employment. The result is that educated Christians leave the Holy Land for lack of opportunity. Some believe this is what Israel wants to accomplish.

There are other problems of getting citizenship and there is one instance that comes to mind where a Christian was denied cit-

izenship, even though his parents were Jews. Many difficulties are placed in the way of Christians acquiring property rights. These discriminations which exist in Israel proper are much more intense in the occupied zones.

There is considerable concern now among Christian leadership over a new Israeli law which makes it a criminal offense, punishable by up to five years in prison, to give money or something of value that would persuade another to change religion. The law was pushed through the Knisset by the ultra-orthodox Agudat Party, despite the fact that there are few Jewish conversions a year - six in 1976. The law is worded vaguely and the fear is that it could be applied to legitimate charity. For example, it could be argued that a student in a Christian school who converted to Christianity did so because of the value of the education he received. Both the student and teachers would be subject to the penalties of the law if it was applied. Of even more concern are the activities of Catholic relief agencies, such as the Catholic Near East Welfare Association. This group is well represented among needy Arabs in Israel and gives support to schools, both elementary and advanced, to clinics and direct relief, all of which could be considered inducements to conversion, even though they are not given for this purpose. The law is so bad that it has even raised the concern of Jews in the United States. Rabbi Marc Tanenbaum, an official of the American Jewish Committee and a leading spokesman for Jewish interests in the United States, issued a statement which said in part: "The Christian community should know that many influential Jewish leaders both in Israel and the United States share their concerns and strongly oppose the law."

Catholics have not made official protests over the law but a number of Protestant leaders have. One Baptist leader said that the law would prevent the free distribution of Bibles. Lutheran spokesman remarked: "The very term 'anti-Semitism' provoke abhorrence. It is too bad 'anti Christianity' does not have the same reaction." Most Christian leaders look upon the law as violation of Christian civil liberties but there is no movement so far for its repeal. ■

MSGR. GEORGE G. HIGGINS

**Bias Denied**

I must respectfully disagree with a recent piece about Israel written by fellow columnist and longtime friend, Father Albert Nevins, editor of Our Sunday Visitor. I do so as a member of the advisory committee of the National Conference of Catholic Bishops, (NCCB) Secretariat for Catholic-Jewish Relations.

In his column of Sept. 3 in Our Sunday Visitor, Father Nevins accuses Israel of large-scale and rather cynical discrimination against its Arab citizens and against Christians in particular. This discrimination, he states, is "much more intense in the occupied zones." He also says that there is an official "Israeli policy" aimed at forcing young Christians to leave the country.

The facts, as I know them, do not bear out these statements. While there is indeed a tendency in the Christian community, especially among the young and the well educated, to emigrate to Europe or the United States in search of economic advancement, this trend was well under way long before the state of Israel came into being in 1948. Moreover the same trend exists among Christians throughout the entire Middle East, not just in Israel.

Israel recognizes that it needs all the skilled people it can get and accordingly has gone to ex-

traordinary lengths to provide educational opportunities for its Arab citizens. There are some 500 Arab educational institutions in Israel, with more than 150,000 students, who have full say in their choice of curriculum. Ninety percent of Arab children under the age of 14 attend school, compared with only 45 percent before the state of Israel was established. Arabs have full citizenship (the Israeli Parliament has five Arab members) and are found in all major political parties. Their per capita income is substantially higher than that of Arabs in surrounding countries and, in fact, higher than that of Jewish Israelis of Sephardic origin. More than half of the Arabs who are employed are in white collar positions.

I also must disagree with Father Nevins' treatment of the now famous case of Father Daniel, a Carmelite monk who came to Israel in 1958 and shortly thereafter applied for citizenship. Since his parents are Jewish, Father Daniel made his claim for citizenship under the Law of Return, which grants automatic citizenship to all Jews. While the Supreme Court ruled against this claim, Father Daniel was granted citizenship under normal procedures such as apply in most countries in the world. The issue was never citizenship, but only procedure.

Finally, Father Nevins tells only half the story concerning the Israeli "missionary law," which was, as he says, pushed through the Israeli Parliament by the Agudat Party at a time when opponents of the bill were napping. Americans, of all people, in the light of our own political experience, ought to be the first to understand how this sort of maneuvering can take place in a democratic society.

Contrary to Father Nevins' statement, Catholic officials in Israel did express their opposition to the "missionary law." Father Nevins also ignores the response by Shmuel Tamir, the Israeli minister of justice, to the protest sent by the American Jewish Committee after inquiries by the Secretariat for Catholic-Jewish Relations of the NCCB and other Christian groups.

The reply clarified the language of the bill in such a way that it can never be construed as referring to the activities of Christian religions or charitable agencies such as the Catholic Near East Welfare Association. Tamir declared that "there is no intention whatsoever on the part of the Israeli government to restrict in any way the religious freedom of the Christian community or any other community in Israel or to impede them from the pursuit of normal educational and philanthropic activities."

## EEC LEADERS SUPPORT CARTER'S CALL FOR PALESTINIAN HOMELAND

By Maurice Samuelson

LONDON, June 30 (JTA)--Leaders of the nine European Economic Community (EEC) countries last night put their full weight behind President Carter's call for the creation of a Palestinian homeland, urged Israel to recognize the "legitimate rights" of the Palestinian people and said the Palestinians should be represented in Middle East peace negotiations "in an appropriate manner to be worked out in consultation between the parties concerned."

In a major political statement at the EEC's summit meeting in London, the text of which was issued by British Prime Minister James Callaghan, the nine also said Israel should give up territory occupied since 1967 while the Arabs should recognize Israel's right to secure and recognized boundaries. After referring to the Middle East's "critical" situation, the statement said it was "crucial" that there should be early and successful negotiations towards a just and lasting peace.

The nine affirmed their belief that "a solution will be possible only if the legitimate right of the Palestinian people to give effective expression to its national identity is translated into fact, which would take into account the need for a homeland for the Palestinian people."

"They consider that representatives of the parties to the conflict, including the Palestinian people, must participate in the negotiations in an appropriate manner to be worked out in consultation between all the parties concerned."

"In the context of an overall settlement, Israel must be ready to recognize the legitimate rights of the Palestinian people: equally, the Arab side must be ready to recognize the right of Israel to live in peace in secure and recognized boundaries."

### Seen As New Major Step

The nine reaffirmed their previous Middle East declarations of 1973 and 1976, based on UN Security Council Resolutions 242 and 338, and offered to contribute "to the extent that the parties wish" towards finding a settlement and putting it into effect. They welcomed all the efforts which had been made so far to end the conflict. There was a gloomy reaction to the statement in Israeli diplomatic circles here last night. One official said tartly: "It's a nice statement if you happen to be a Palestinian."

In fact, it contains little that has not previously been said in the name of the EEC. Nevertheless, coming at a summit of all the leaders of the European community, the statement is a major new step in Middle East diplomacy. The document was, in fact, transmitted to the U.S. government before its publication.

It was drawn up, too, in the light of the change of Israel's government. A passage in the document urging "realistic" and "constructive" approaches to a settlement, was seen here as a sign of European disapproval of Israeli Premier Menachem Begin's policies over the West Bank and the issue of Palestinian rights.

## PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH ASSEMBLY DEFEATS PRO-PLO RESOLUTION

PHILADELPHIA, June 30 (JTA)--The 189th Gen-

eral Assembly of the United Presbyterian Church today decisively defeated a resolution calling on the United States to recognize the Palestine Liberation Organization and adopted, instead, a minority resolution proposed from the Assembly floor urging the U.S. "to reaffirm its commitments to Israel." The resolution, supported by a majority of the 2000 delegates also called for "peace negotiations in a manner consistent with the principles of the United Nations Security Council Resolution 242."

The action was immediately hailed by Rabbi Marc H. Tanenbaum, director of the American Jewish Committee's Interreligious Affairs Department, and James Rudin, assistant director, "as a significant contribution to the spirit of reason and moderation in the current public understanding of the complex problem of Israel and her Arab neighbors."

The original resolution which sought to legitimize the PLO as the "acknowledged spokesperson for the Palestinians" and to devise "means to include the PLO in the negotiations" for a Middle East peace settlement, was drafted by the United Presbyterian Church's Middle East professional staff with the support of missionaries from Egypt, Jordan, Syria and Lebanon. The missionaries attended the Assembly mainly to press for their resolution.

However, it was bitterly contested by Presbyterian delegates from the U.S. who are sympathetic to Israel and maintain close friendships with Jews in their local communities. As a result of their intervention, the pro-PLO draft was defeated by a 75 percent vote.

The statement by Tanenbaum and Rudin said that "the fact that nearly 75 percent of the delegates adopted a minority resolution after hearing interventions that urged Presbyterian Church support for 'secure and recognized boundaries for Israel' means that Israel and the Jewish people have many friends among Presbyterian men and women throughout the length and breadth of our country."

## TERRORISTS HIT DRUZE VILLAGE

TEL AVIV, June 30 (JTA)--Terrorists attacked a Druze village in Fatahland near the slopes of Mt. Hermon today injuring three Druze villagers. An Israeli patrol brought them to a hospital. One was flown by helicopter later to Rambam Hospital in Haifa. The Druze were apparently suspected by the terrorists of collaborating with Israel.

## CARTER REAFFIRMS U.S. WILL NOT IMPOSE SOLUTIONS IN THE MIDEAST

WASHINGTON, June 30 (JTA)--President Carter said today that the "specifics" in the Middle East dispute have been discussed "adequately" in public and the Administration will "refrain from additional comments on specifics" prior to the visit here July 19-20 of Premier Menachem Begin. The President also reiterated that the United States "has no solution to impose" on parties to the dispute.

Carter's comments were made in response to a question at a press conference on criticism by Sen. Jacob K. Javits (R.N.Y.) and others that the

Administration has been too specific on its ideas for a solution and has been pressuring Israel. Carter said that it had been "good" to have an open discussion on the issues so that Israel and the Arab states can have a better "understanding" of each other's views. He said the U.S. position was that of a mediator and it would be effective in this role only to the "degree both sides trust us."

But Carter stressed again that the U.S. will "never" abandon its "commitment to Israel and I have made this clear to every Arab leader" with whom he has met. The President said he was "looking forward" to Begin's visit and expected it to be "friendly and constructive and also instructive, for him and for me." The question on the Mideast, the only one at the press conference, also asked Carter what he would do if American Jews supported Begin rather than him. He ignored this in his response.

Immediately following Carter's press conference, the Republican Congressional leaders, at a Capitol Hill press conference of their own, issued a statement accusing the Administration of endangering the "considerable degree of success" achieved by the Ford-Kissinger diplomacy in the Middle East. The statement was read by John J. Rhodes of Arizona who was accompanied by Senate Minority Leader Howard Baker of Tennessee. They also rapped Monday's State Department policy statement.

Referring to the question addressed to Carter this morning as to what he would do if the American Jewish community supported Begin rather than himself, Baker and Rhodes defended the Jewish community against any implications of disloyalty. Rhodes said, "I think the only differences any of us have is the matter of accomplishment of the result which is to procure a situation in the Middle East in which Israel can survive in peace." Baker said that "Most of the concern expressed in the Jewish community is not that Israel will not be favored by American foreign policy but rather that the Carter Administration's foreign policy is jeopardizing peace."

#### Democrats Support U.S. Mideast Moves

Meanwhile, Republican criticism of the Administration's Middle East statement was offset in some measure by a broadly worded letter of support to Carter signed by nine Democratic Senators, among them Israel's staunchest supporters in the Senate. The letter, issued yesterday, assured the President that "You do have strong support in the Senate for your efforts to help Israel and the Arab nations to secure a genuine and lasting peace."

However, the letter cautioned the President not to alter "our historical commitment" to Israel; a commitment to a comprehensive peace including acts "to normalize relations" between the nations of the Mideast; establishment of mutually accepted and secure borders; and "a fair and permanent solution of the problems of the Palestinians."

The letter endorsed "your view that peace cannot be imposed from the outside and that the United States does not intend to present the nations involved with a plan or a timetable or a map." The signatories included Sens. Hubert H. Humphrey, Majority Leader Robert C. Byrd, John Sparkman, chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, Abraham Ribicoff and Edward M. Kennedy.

#### BEGIN: STATE DEP'T. STATEMENT IS BAD IN CONTENT AND INTENT

TEL AVIV, June 30 (JTA)--Premier Menachem Begin characterized the American State Department's statement on the Middle East as bad in content and intent in a speech to industrialists here last

night. But he added that, as sometimes happens, good for Israel may emerge from the bad. He hinted that he possessed information to support that remark which he could not divulge.

Begin said he was preparing for his visit to Washington next month with the trepidation of a Jew preparing for the Day of Atonement. He said he prayed for a successful outcome of his meetings with President Carter. Beyond that, the Premier made no further political remarks. He spoke at length on economic matters to manufacturers attending the Industrial Awards Dinner at the Tel Aviv Hilton Hotel.

In an unrelated development, organizers of the Zionist Organization of America's convention here expressed disappointment that for the first time the Democratic Party has not responded to the ZOA's invitation to send a senior representative to address the gathering.

Leon Ilutovitz, national executive director of the ZOA recalled that last year the convention was addressed by Vice President Walter Mondale who was, at the time Senator from Minnesota. This year the ZOA invited Sen. Robert Dole (R. Kan.) who was President Ford's Vice Presidential running mate, to be the keynote speaker.

#### LAWYER FOR NEO-NAZI GROUP SAYS JULY 4 RALLY IN SKOKIE IS OFF

CHICAGO, June 30 (JTA)--The attorney for a group of neo-Nazis said in Circuit Court yesterday that his clients would not march on July 4 in Skokie--a heavily Jewish-populated suburb--in violation of a standing injunction. Attorney David Goldberger, of the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) made the statement to Judge Archibald J. Carey Jr. during a hearing on another suit against his client, Nazi leader Frank Collin.

That suit, seeking a permanent injunction against Nazi marches in Skokie, was filed by Sol Goldstein, one of several thousand Holocaust survivors living in Skokie. It is a class suit contending that the survivors would suffer "severe emotional distress" if the Nazi march was held.

The standing injunction against the march was secured by Skokie officials on April 28 on grounds that violence would take place between the openly anti-Semitic, racist Nazis and Skokie's large Jewish population. That case is to be argued in Appellate Court July 8 under a U.S. Supreme Court order that the injunction either be lifted or that the appeal be expedited.

Skokie, on June 28, also refused the Nazis permission to march on July 4 under a recently passed ordinance prohibiting marches by people wearing military-style uniforms "repugnant" to village residents. The Nazis had refused to march in civilian clothes.

#### Counter-Moves In The Offing

Goldstein, a former president of the local Holocaust survivors group, is a board member of the Jewish Federation and Jewish United Fund (JUF) of Metropolitan Chicago. He also heads a special committee of the JUF's Public Affairs Committee created to frame the community's response to Nazi plans. Goldstein's attorney, Jerome Torshen, advised Judge Carey that even if the Skokie ordinance was declared illegal and the injunction lifted, the Nazis should not be permitted to march until all litigation in the matter is resolved.

As matters now stand, the Nazis probably will not appear in Skokie July 4. However, enraged Jewish residents, Black groups and left-wing

and other anti-Nazi organizations have stated that they will turn out in force and use force to stop the Nazis if they show up. The JUF's Public Affairs Committee's special committee has urged people not to counter-demonstrate. The committee intends to organize a "patriotic American rally" at the Mayer Kaplan Jewish Community Center in Skokie on July 4 as a "positive form of expression."

#### JEWISH GROUP CALLS ON EAST GERMANY TO PAY COMPENSATION TO NAZI VICTIMS

AMSTERDAM, June 30 (JTA)--The Conference on Jewish Material Claims Against Germany has called on the government of East Germany to pay compensation to the surviving victims of Nazi persecution wherever they may be. The call was contained in a resolution adopted at a meeting of the Conference here marking the 25th anniversary of the signing of reparations and indemnification agreements with the Federal Republic of West Germany. The meeting closed last week.

The resolution was addressed to the German Democratic Republic (GDR) and to Erich Honecker, First Secretary of the GDR's Socialist Unity Party. It urged the GDR to recognize its humanitarian obligations to the survivors of Nazi ghettos and concentration camps. Dr. Nahum Goldmann, president of the Conference which represents 23 national and international Jewish organizations, noted that the GDR inherited about one-third of the territory and assets of the Third Reich but has consistently refused to recognize any legal or moral responsibility for Nazi crimes.

"We hope that the leadership of the German Democratic Republic, some of whom were incarcerated in Nazi concentration camps, will finally recognize the moral imperative of our claims and promptly proceed to negotiate a fair and equitable settlement," Goldmann said.

#### Situation In West Germany

The Conference also dealt with the historic reparations agreements with West Germany, negotiated in Holland in 1952, which provided the Claims Conference with DM 450 million for the relief, rehabilitation and resettlement of Jewish victims of the Nazi era. The Bonn government also agreed to enact legislation that would compensate Nazi victims directly for personal injuries and losses arising from Nazi persecution.

At the same time, Israel and West Germany concluded a reparations pact by which Germany paid DM 3 billion in goods and services to Israel over a period of 12-14 years as compensation for the absorption by Israel of Jewish survivors. Dr. Goldmann noted that "The German Federal Republic has conscientiously discharged its financial obligations to Israel and the Claims Conference."

Dr. Ernst Katzenstein, the Claims Conference representative in Germany since 1956, reported: "Significant commitments still await implementation in the years ahead and the Claims Conference will continue to follow closely future developments to make certain that the rights of Nazi victims under existing and future laws are properly protected."

Saul Kagan, treasurer of the Claims Conference and its executive secretary from 1951-1961, said, "Claims Conference allocations in excess of \$110,000,000 aided communities and organizations in 40 countries throughout the world." Over the years, he continued, "more than 200,000 individuals benefitted from Conference grants in the field of relief and economic rehabilitation; over 480 capital projects in 29 countries, including schools, community and youth centers, homes for the aged,

children's and youth homes were undertaken with Conference aid."

#### APA DENOUNCES NEWS RELEASE AS A FRAUDULENT DOCUMENT

By Brian Lipsitz

NEW YORK, June 30 (JTA)--A statement purporting to express the view of the American Psychiatric Association that Jews are not wanted in that organization has been denounced as fraudulent by the APA's spokesman in whose name the statement was released.

A press release sent to several Jewish newspapers said: "The American Psychiatric Association has again expressed its dedication to an 'ethnic balance' by voicing its determination to 'reduce the number of psychiatrists of Jewish extraction within our ranks... Recent allegations of Nazism and anti-Semitism are completely unfounded. We simply do not need any more Jews as members of the APA. We have all kinds of Jews.'" The statement was attributed to Robert Robinson, director of public affairs for the APA.

Contacted by the Jewish Telegraphic Agency at the APA's national headquarters in Washington, Robinson said: "That news release... is nothing but a piece of malicious fraud manufactured out of whole cloth by someone of nefarious intent." He added: "I have never heard of the agency and to my knowledge have never talked to any representative of it, and if I had talked to any such person I would have talked in exactly the opposite view to what I am accused of saying. There is no Jewish problem in this association. I have never in all my 29 years here heard anyone refer to 'ethnic balance' as a problem."

#### Agency Is Not Known

The news release was sent out by an organization identified on the release as "S. L. Associates" of San Francisco, 537 Jones Street, P.O. B. 564. The JTA tried to contact the agency but a San Francisco telephone operator said it was not listed in the phone book. Several Jewish leaders of the San Francisco community, contacted by the JTA, said they had never heard of the agency.

The press release also said: "Adding to the tension are several prominent Jewish psychiatrists who have circulated a letter to what they called 'Eastern psychiatric voices' claiming that the APA Nazi-like position is supported by other Nazi sources in the APA. One such member claims that there is a very strong intention to 'do whatever is necessary to close out Jewish membership entirely.'"

Robinson told the JTA, "We have many Jewish members though I do not know the number and I don't think anyone else does. No one cares. We are anti-racist, anti-fascist, anti-discrimination, and so on. Many of our leading people are of the Jewish faith... It is patently incredible that I could be of anti-Semitic orientation and be in my present position all these years. I hope all who see that malicious press release will recognize it for what it is." \* \* \*

NEW YORK (JTA)--The National Conference on Soviet Jewry said Thursday it has learned that the appeal of Dr. Iosif Begun who had been sentenced to two years in exile on charges of "parasitism," has been rejected by the Soviet authorities. Begun, who was dismissed from work soon after applying to emigrate is expected to be hospitalized soon, as he has been on a hunger strike, protesting the charge and the sentence which was handed down by a Soviet court last month. The appeal was held behind closed doors.

## BEHIND THE HEADLINES NEW ECONOMIC POLICY DEBATED

By Yitzhak Shargil

TEL AVIV, June 30 (JTA)--Israelis who feared that a Likud-led government would dismantle Israel's planned economy and replace it with unfettered laissez-faire capitalism--to the delight of businessmen and the detriment of workers--are learning that just the opposite may be true. The new government, in fact, is advocating tighter controls on the economy, at least for a year or two to get the country out of its severe fiscal crisis. To fight inflation it proposes freezes on prices, wages, profits and taxes.

Not all Likud members agree with this program. But the most vehement attacks to date have come not from the Labor opposition but from Israel's Manufacturers Association, the group of industrialists and businessmen who, it was widely claimed, salivated at the prospect of a Likud election victory.

Addressing the Association's annual meeting Tuesday night, its president Avraham Shavit, railed against freezes of any kind. Israel is on the verge of bankruptcy, he declared and our national leaders are calling for a freeze, the antithesis of change. Are we to mark time, to stand still at the point of economic collapse, or are we to face up to our problems and take steps to solve them, he asked.

Shavit warned that a freeze of profits would deter potential investors. In his opinion, the solution was to reduce taxes on industry so that it could accumulate capital for investment in expansion. Within two or three years, he said, Israel could double its industrial production and exports. He also called for subsidized credits to business and industry. Everything in this country is subsidized from birth to death and now the government proposes to make credit more expensive for business, Shavit complained. He said the manufacturers were the very basis and backbone of the country's economy and, in fact, it is industry that provides the means to subsidize the rest of the country.

### Advances Series Of Proposals

Shavit denounced the inflated bureaucracy and opposed planned unemployment as a means of fighting inflation, a course advocated by the conservative American economist Milton Friedman who Likud wants to invite as an economic advisor. Shavit contended that there was hidden unemployment, meaning workers in service areas who do not produce anything tangible.

He said industry could absorb another 28,000 workers and proposed that those in the service fields be retrained and sent to work in factories. It is the lack of manpower in industry that prevents Israel from responding to industrial demands on world markets, Shavit said.

Shavit also called on Histadrut industrial enterprises, which include some of the largest in Israel, to join the Manufacturers Association. Industry belongs to no one but to the Jewish nation, he said. He decried the proposed five-day week (Israelis have always worked six days) and said that if it were possible he would prefer a 14-day week. He said he would seek a meeting with Histadrut Secretary General Yeruham Meshel to plan a new infra-structure and possibly to fire workers to make them mobile and increase productivity.

### Hopes For A Five-Day Week

Finance Minister Simcha Ehrlich, Likud's economic mentor, was far more moderate than Shavit and seemed to be on the defensive when he addressed the manufacturers yesterday. He called the five-day

week a dream toward which Israel should strive but conceded that it was not practicable in the near future. Although it was Ehrlich who invited Friedman, he said Likud did not consider planned unemployment as a remedy for inflation.

Another speaker for the government, Minister of Commerce, Industry and Tourism Yigal Hurwitz, agreed with Shavit that a general freeze of the economy would hurt investments. He said that he and the Finance Minister would investigate the problem of incentives for tourism. He also said that the question of subsidies for foodstuffs and capital should be re-examined. According to Hurwitz, basic foodstuffs should receive government subsidies but there was no justification for artificially lowering the prices of expensive cheeses because they are made from milk which is subsidized. He said that subsidies for capital should be limited to export industries.

### TERRORIST GETS LIFE SENTENCE; 8 TERRORIST CELLS FOUND ON WEST BANK

TEL AVIV, June 30 (JTA)--A military tribunal this week imposed a life sentence on a terrorist held responsible for the booby-trapped refrigerator which exploded in Jerusalem's Zion Square July 1975 killing 14 persons. The court said that Ahmed Haj-Jabara, a member of El Fatah who was briefed in Damascus before planting the bomb, must spend the first 10 years of his sentence at hard labor.

Meanwhile, the army announced that it has uncovered eight more terrorist cells on the West Bank and has detained 64 persons. Five of the cells were Fatah groups, two from the Palestine National Front and one from the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine.

The army said that one Fatah group was uncovered in the Jordan Valley village of Einaja after a clash with an Israeli army unit and was found to be smuggling arms and explosives from Jordan to the West Bank. One group in Ramallah placed explosives in several places and another group in Kalkilya had been setting telephone poles afire. Arms, explosives and detonation devices had been found in possession of the people held by the security forces.

### MEMORIAL FOUNDATION FOR JEWISH CULTURE ADOPTS \$1,367M BUDGET

AMSTERDAM, June 30 (JTA)--The Board of Trustees of the Memorial Foundation for Jewish Culture approved an allocation of \$1,367,000 for a variety of cultural programs in more than 15 countries at its annual meeting here last week. These programs include doctoral scholarships to prepare future scholars, teachers and rabbis; fellowships to aid and encourage research scholars, writers and artists; support for special training programs for rabbis, educators and Jewish communal workers; and allocations for programs to document and commemorate the Holocaust.

Dr. Nahum Goldmann was re-elected Foundation president and Dr. Solomon Gaon and Philip M. Klutznick were elected vice-presidents. The Foundation's board comprises representatives of 48 international and national Jewish cultural and religious organizations which reflect all the major trends in contemporary Jewish life.

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TEL AVIV (JTA)--Philip Stollman of Detroit was re-elected Wednesday as chairman of the board of trustees of Bar Ilan University.

**American Reaction to the Middle East Situation:  
The Reaction of the Churches \***

**A. ROY ECKARDT**

**Lehigh University**

A practical device for analyzing and appraising the reaction of the American churches to the Middle East situation is to concentrate upon attitudes to Israel. My plan is to offer, first, some orientation to the subject; second, a review of attitudes expressed within Christian circles; and, third, some ways of accounting for these attitudes.

**I**

Beginning in May, 1967, a marked crisis developed in Jewish-Christian relations in our country, and this has continued to the present. The resulting tensions have involved two related foci: on the one hand, a failure, and often a refusal, by many church bodies and churchmen to support Israel amidst the ongoing threat to her existence, together with considerable pro-Arab sentiment among these same parties; and, on the other hand, the American Jewish community's existential oneness with the Israeli cause, and that community's con-

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\* An address before the Second Annual Conference of American Professors for Peace in the Middle East, Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Cambridge, Mass., February 15-16, 1969.

sequent disappointment over, and opposition to, the Christian response. By contrast, my impression from recent conversations in Israel is that most Israelis have not been terribly excited over where the American churches stand -- with one qualification: The people of Israel are fully aware of the political importance of the churches in the United States and elsewhere. To offer my first gross simplification: The American Jew tends to be a moralist; the Israeli Jew tends to be a political man. For the one, the gospel of Hosea is paramount; for the other, the gospel of Hobbes has proven a grim necessity.

I rather doubt that my assigned topic would gain much of a place on the program were this type conference being held in Israel. Amnon Rubenstein wrote very recently of Israeli scorn of preachments from abroad -- even by friends of Israel.<sup>1</sup> Many of the references I shall cite are not exempt from that kind of response -- if not scorn, then justified indifference and, once in a while, laughter.

The fact remains that most American Jewish leaders are concerned and have been taken aback by what is for them a moral lapse within the churches. Accordingly, we would be irresponsible if we ignored this state of affairs. In January, 1969, a rabbi in New York City entitled his sabbath sermon, "Preparing for a Second Holocaust: The Christian Response to the Middle East Crisis." I have myself been very critical of the churches. But in the interests of fairness, I may refer to three analyses that seek a more balanced view: one by Marc H. Tanenbaum and two by Judith H. Banki.<sup>2</sup>

Rabbi Tanenbaum emphasized and documented two points: (1) that



for the most part the substantial numbers of American citizens who have supported and sympathized with the Israeli cause are, after all, Christians; and (2) that significant numbers of prominent and influential Catholic, Protestant, and Orthodox Christian leaders and journals of opinion have spoken out for Israel's right to exist as a sovereign state in freedom from Arab belligerency. Precisely because Rabbi Tanenbaum and Mrs. Banki are authoritative analysts and take the prevailing position they do, their own disclaimers about the extent of Christian advocacy become that much more significant. For example, Rabbi Tanenbaum wrote that "Jewish leaders directed their most valid, serious and justifiable criticism at the 'establishment' institutions of the Catholic and Protestant churches. . . .When the U. S. Conference of Catholic Bishops [finally issued a statement on June 8, 1967], it asked for 'a crusade of prayer for peace'. . . . In the face of what appeared to most Jews as the imminent prospect of another Auschwitz, [such] rhetoric, with its echo of the . . . flight into pietism by Christian leaders in Nazi Germany, contributed to a pervading sense of gloom in American Jewry.

"Nor were the statements of the National Council of Churches [the Protestant and Orthodox body] . . .[ a] reinforcement for Jews or for Israel. In [a telegram to the President, Council officials] appeared to equate Israel's right to exist with the need to resolve the Arab refugee problem. In their July 7 resolution, the National Council of Churches contributed to the moral confusion of cause and effect by labeling Israel's retaliation to Arab provocations 'aggression'

and 'expansionism.'"<sup>3</sup>

To add one point to Marc Tanenbaum's response, a visitor from another world could read from end to end the National Council of Churches' lengthy Resolution on the Middle East and never learn that the Arab world had anything whatsoever to do with bringing about the Six Day War. Christian documents are as revealing for what they omit as for what they say. The National Council statement was completely silent at such points as Israel's chronic need for defensible borders, her navigation rights, and the role of the Soviet Union in fomenting Arab aggression.

"The major preoccupation of Christian church groups" -- I cite Mrs. Banki now -- "appeared to be concern for [new and old] Arab refugees, strengthening of the U.N., and frequently the internationalization of Jerusalem. Often, the question of Israel's national integrity -- indeed even of her survival -- seemed secondary to [these other] concerns.

"In short, despite support of Israel by individual Christians, Jewish spokesmen had the impression that a number of Christian. . . groups considered Israel expendable and its survival a negotiable item on the agenda of international relations."<sup>4</sup>

## II

Next let us consider and illustrate the major points of view advanced within representative Christian materials.<sup>5</sup>

1. The issue of Israel's right to live. Since the Six Day War, Christian opinion has ranged from the claim that Israel is an illicit

intruder into the Arab world to the affirmation that Israel's integrity is justified upon one or another ground: historical, moral, or religious.

Early in the crisis Richard Cardinal Cushing and a number of Catholic and Protestant leaders in the Boston area declared: "We cannot stand idly by at the possibility of Israel's destruction, of [the decimation of] two and a half million Jewish people. . . ." <sup>6</sup> Contrariwise, Alford Carleton, an official of the United Church of Christ, wrote an open letter to pastors and leaders of his church asserting that the creation of the Jewish national home -- "not to mention [the] aggressive national State of Israel -- was an act of Western political and economic invasion" into an area that "had been indisputably 'the Arab world' for well over a thousand years." <sup>7</sup> But the noted New Testament scholar, Frederick C. Grant, attested in The Witness, an independent weekly of the Episcopal Church, that "no nation has a historical claim to the land of Israel that can even be compared with that of modern Israel." It is simply false to say that the land "has always belonged to the Arabs. . . . [There have been Jews in Palestine] ever since there were Jews anywhere." <sup>8</sup>

Writing in Christianity Today, a widely-circulated evangelical journal, James L. Kelso, former moderator of the United Presbyterian Church and a longtime archaeologist in the Middle East, labeled the Balfour Declaration "the major cause of the three wars whereby the Jews have stolen so much of Palestine from the Arabs who have owned it for centuries," and he identified Israel as the sole culprit in

the current Middle East conflict.<sup>9</sup>

The most influential Protestant publication in this country, The Christian Century, reacted as follows to a rabbi's proposal that interfaith discussion is contingent upon support by Christian leadership of the territorial and political integrity of Israel: "If interfaith dialogue must cease until all Christians become Zionists, then, of course, there will be no dialogue" -- as if the rabbi <sup>were</sup> ~~was~~ proposing that Christians become "Zionists." The editors also found "appalling" the adverse evaluations that had been made of the Christian community for its neutral position on the Arab-Israeli conflict.<sup>10</sup>

Intrinsic to the advocacy of Israel's integrity is the issue of direct negotiations, in the sense that these will constitute minimal recognition of the nation's sovereignty. Here I have found only a few instances of unambiguous Christian backing. Thus, in a "Statement of Conscience" distributed by the Institute of Judaeo-Christian Studies, two Catholic scholars, John M. Oesterreicher and Edward H. Flannery, strongly supported the Israeli stand on this question.<sup>11</sup> On the general issue of Israel's right to live, the stated position within the Roman Catholic Church in the United States has been more positive than that within Protestant and Orthodox quarters.<sup>12</sup> True, at the time of the War the National Conference of Catholic Bishops, along with the National Council of Churches, did not commit itself unequivocally on Israel's survival.<sup>13</sup> However, two recent pronouncements are noteworthy. Last November the Secretariat for Catholic-Jewish Relations affirmed: "The fundamental issue is that of Israel's

right to exist and develop in peace. If this basic issue is settled, the solution of all other important issues, including that of the refugees, will be greatly facilitated."<sup>14</sup> And on January 5, 1969 the Division of World Justice and Peace of the United States Catholic Conference stated: "Those who wish to bring peace and justice to this troubled area must begin with . . . two facts:" Israel's existence as a state; and the need for effective help permanently to relieve the sufferings of "refugees on both sides."<sup>15</sup>

2. The comparative moral standing of Israelis and Arabs. To James L. Kelso, for whom Israelis look upon Arabs as dogs, there must be Christian solidarity in the face of "Israel's crimes against Arab Christians." And it is an equal or greater horror for Christians to sanction crimes against Arab Muslims. Kelso added that the Arabs, along with the Jews, should have been evangelized.<sup>16</sup> Christians, he seems to be suggesting, do not commit crimes. Horace D. Hummel of the Lutheran School of Theology, Chicago, pointed out: "It is no secret that the vast majority of Christian intellectuals who have worked in the Arab world as archaeologists or the like champion the Arab cause. . . ." The language they use is suggestive of that used in the Vietnam issue: "the unquestionable good of Arab nationalism and self-determination as thwarted by Israeli imperialism or aggression; Israel even becomes a fascist and racist state, guilty of genocide, of all things!"<sup>17</sup>

The generalization is sometimes made that reputedly "liberal" Christians are more ready to recognize the moral caliber of Israel

than are reputedly "conservative" Christians. This is not accurate. Many Christian fundamentalists are firmly anti-Communist, and this has tended to lead some of them, at least by implication, to appreciate Israel's moral stature, particularly since the Soviet Union has become so greatly opposed to Israel. On the other hand, in the "liberal" camp Dana E. Klotzle, Director of the United Nations office of the Unitarian-Universalist Association, condemned unequivocally what he called the evident "expansionist policy of the Israeli government," and he accused Israel of excessive nationalism and a naked power policy -- although unlike most Christian spokesmen, Klotzle also condemned the policy of Arab leaders "to incite their people to violence against Israel."<sup>18</sup> Henry P. Van Dusen, former president of a noted liberal Protestant seminary, compared Israel's military successes in 1967 with Hitler's Blitzkrieg across Western Europe "aiming not at victory but at annihilation."<sup>19</sup> By contrast, the Catholic publication Providence Visitor attested that the compassionate element in Israel's military action and the humanitarian attention lavished upon her defeated foes appears to be "without historical parallel."<sup>20</sup> I have not found a single American Catholic statement expressive of the rancor toward Israel that suffuses many Protestant statements.

Charges against Israel of "aggression," "expansionism," "imperialism," "militancy," and "overreaction" -- accusations that are of course plentiful in extra-religious circles, and Arab and Communist circles -- are by no means absent among churchmen, even where Arab

provocations are fully admitted. Such accusations are very seldom answered. Here is one that was: When in the family magazine Presbyterian Life Willard G. Oxtoby of Yale University sought 'a la Arnold Toynbee to draw moral parallels between Israeli treatment of Arabs and Nazi treatment of Jews, a fellow Presbyterian, Noel Freedman of San Francisco Theological Seminary, found the comparison at once "vicious and odious."<sup>21</sup> We may add here that Israelis have been especially repelled by repeated demands by Christian spokesmen (as by others, including the esteemed New York Times) that Israel ought to be magnanimous to her Arab foes. The Christian Century dared to insist, for example, that the new burden and "advantage" of Israel "should be handled without arrogance and with great restraint and wisdom."<sup>22</sup> In general, The Christian Century has been quite ambivalent toward Israel. It keeps wanting to do something with her, to refashion her. In a recent editorial, curiously titled "To Zionists, with Love," the editors counseled wariness of "uncritical combinations of religious faith and political loyalty," the kind of combination to be found among "some of you Zionists. . . ." After protesting their support of Israel's existence, the editors went on to allege Israel's role in igniting the June War, her repeated defiance of and scorn for the U. N., and the ascendancy of hawks in the Israeli body politic.<sup>23</sup>

3. The sufferings of refugees and others. This item requires particular attention. The heaviest concentration of criticism of Israel among Protestant spokesmen -- in contrast to Catholic spokesmen -- has involved commitment to one side in the refugee question.

As of September, 1968 the general outlook of the National Council of Churches' leadership that we noted earlier had not changed; if anything, it had become more pro-Arab. Last July the Council sent a three-man study team of clergymen to the Middle East, with instructions to concentrate upon the refugee situation.<sup>24</sup> The investigators reported that their "inquiries regarding the causes for continuing flight of Arabs from occupied territory revealed" the belief and fear that "territorial expansion is an integral part" of Israel's policy, and will mean a "further squeezing out of the Arabs"; great economic insecurity; threats to the Arab way of life through "the imposition of destructive alien elements of European culture"; and pressures upon people to leave.

The deputation alleged that there was great disillusionment with the American Christian community on the part of Middle Eastern Christians, and elaborated as follows: "Western nations out of a sense of guilt for the persecution of Jews in Europe created the State of Israel, and thus contributed toward the persecution of Arabs, forcing them from . . . their land." "For twenty years Israel has been permitted to ignore the resolutions of the United Nations aimed at justice for the dispossessed Arabs. . . ." "Since the War the United Nations has been virtually powerless in dealing with either the 1948 situation or the present situation, largely through the failure of the United States to give full support to United Nations resolutions. . . ." "The ineffectiveness of the United Nations and the failure of the United States 'must be due' either to support of the churches for



Israel or to their neutral, ineffective stance. . . ." "Therefore, it appears to many Christians in the Middle East that Western Christians in the United States, despite relief programs and acts of mercy, have betrayed them in their struggle for justice."<sup>25</sup>

Incredible as it may sound, the reader, studying this lengthy Report from start to finish, is given no indication whatsoever either of the Arab world's interest in destroying Israel or of the plight of Jewish refugees -- this in a document devoted to the refugee question and one that describes itself as endeavoring "to maintain objectivity throughout."<sup>26</sup> At the NCC Board's Houston meeting last September, the Report did not go entirely unopposed. It was challenged by David Hunter, deputy general secretary of the Council, and by A. Dudley Ward, a Methodist official. Hunter emphasized the severely pro-Arab bias of the findings and insisted that the National Council not take sides in this way. Ward labeled the Report "distorted" for failing to attend to the political factors behind the refugees' conditions. He said that if the churches had supported the recognition of Israel over the past two decades and had raised questions about the alliances of such a nation as Egypt, they would be in a position now to carry on objective debate about the refugee problem. But despite these pleas for objectivity and fairness, the Board received the Report and transmitted it for study to the National Council's thirty-three member churches.<sup>27</sup>

Almost no churchmen have contended for the other side of the refugee issue.<sup>28</sup> Mrs. Banki summed up the general state of affairs

in the churches this way: Concern for the Arab refugees is quite understandable; many Jews share it. But many Christians write and talk as though Israel was alone responsible for their plight, without any reference to Arab aggression and the policy that has kept the refugees suffering in camps. These Christians ignore the thousands of Jewish refugees from Arab lands and the increased suffering and persecution of Jews in those countries.<sup>29</sup>

I may mention one partially compensating sentiment. Occasionally, it is asserted in the churches that Christians have a peculiar moral obligation to Jews and hence to Israel. Thus, the Lutheran theologian Aarne Siirala said that he felt ashamed when a rabbi friend had to plead for support from the Christian community in the face of the threat to Israel since no initiative had come from the Christian side. Siirala wrote that he heard in the request "an authentic concern to break the traditional Christian silence and indifference toward the fate" of Jews. It is the "inner contradictions and conflicts of the Western Christian world that have produced anti-Semitism. . . ."<sup>30</sup>

This compensating sentiment further appears in our final item reviewing expressed attitudes.

4. The religious factor. As would be anticipated, specifically religious types of affirmation have sustained conflicting points of view.

One influence here is a new readiness among some Christian churchmen to project themselves in some way into the faith of Judaism and into Jewish self-understanding, especially into the meaning and signi-

ficance of Jewish peoplehood. A number of Protestant leaders published an advertisement in The New York Times that read in part: "For Christians, to acknowledge the necessity of Judaism is to acknowledge that Judaism presupposes inextricable ties with the land of Israel and the city of David, without which Judaism cannot be truly itself."<sup>31</sup> The editor of the Lutheran Forum expressed the matter incisively: For most Jews, to destroy Israel would be equivalent to "taking Christ out of Christianity."<sup>32</sup> The editor of Sheed and Ward, Philip Scharper, confessed: "I was reminded again and again in Israel of the ancient prophecy of Ezekiel when he saw the valley filled with dry bones restored to life at God's command. . . . Twenty years ago, six million Jews lay dead in Europe, and the spared but scattered remnant seemed, to the eyes of human vision, helpless and, perhaps, doomed. . . . Yet in that time the State of Israel was born and the impossible took place. . . . The people were summoned from their graves and were brought into their own land. Was it indeed that the Lord had spoken and performed it?"

"We Christians may not believe so but we must, at least, try to understand why so many Jews both within and without Israel look upon this State as God's reply to a people's faith," finding "that God is faithful to His promises and that the calls of God to the people of Israel are 'irrevocable.'"<sup>33</sup>

I should be the last to want to spoil these compelling words, but I do venture to add -- and I think Dr. Scharper would not be upset -- that a really fulfilled empathy must also extend to the

thousands who live for Israel but simply cannot accede to a theological rendering of the Israeli story -- not to mention those Jews and Christians who are entirely committed to a theological outlook but who cannot believe that history acts to validate faith.

It would be totally misleading to conclude that the religious factor necessarily supplies Christian support for Israel while extra-religious arguments do not. On the contrary, religion is often among the weightiest of obstacles. R. Park Johnson, an ecumenical missions official of the United Presbyterian Church, U. S. A., expressed a viewpoint quite opposed to Philip Scharper's. Johnson asked that American Christians avoid "superficial identification of the modern secular national state of Israel with the historic ancient Hebrew nation. Present political and military events in the Middle East cannot be properly interpreted as a realization of the prophetic messages in the Bible about the people of Israel as an instrument of God's purposes of justice and mercy for all nations under the rule of God."<sup>34</sup> And the Church Herald, official organ of the Reformed Church in America, after denouncing Christians who, it said, condone Israel's persecutions of Arabs, asserted, "The Christian Church also has something at stake in the Middle East. It is not the free access to the holy places in Jerusalem, but the evangelization of Jew and Muslim alike, and their conversion to Jesus Christ."<sup>35</sup>

Often the religious authentication of Israel expressed by Christians is only provisional, and what is given with one hand is taken away with the other. Thus, an article in the evangelical monthly

Eternity, after proposing that if God has begun resettling the sons of Isaac in Israel the sons of Ishmael can scarcely dislodge them, nevertheless cautioned that it was not "in faith" that Jews have returned to their promised land. But tomorrow the Jews will "look upon Him whom they pierced," and the nation "will be converted in a day."<sup>36</sup>

If a charge of biblical literalism is often made against Zionism in some Christian circles,<sup>37</sup> the presence of biblical literalism among Christians can also sustain opposition to Israel.

### III

Are there ways to account for Christian attitudes to Israel, and particularly the widespread indifference and hostility to the Israeli side? The search for motivations is much more difficult than a simple description of expressed points of view -- and it moves us into controversy. Yet it would be naive to equate the conscious and public reasons put forward in Christian quarters with deeper urges or causes.

An overall factor is the measure of uncertainty within the Christian community. It is understandable that on such an enormously complex issue many Christians and their leaders should not know what to say or do. Evidently some churchmen have just not believed that the Arab detractors of Israel could or would destroy her. Such points as these are hardly the only ways to explain widespread Christian neutralism, but they are not irrelevant. There has been some avoidance of moral commitment by church representatives on the ground that the

Middle East conflict is essentially a power issue. It is not true, however, that institutional bodies must inevitably temporize or compromise, and fail to commit themselves morally within the power-political sphere. The General Board of the National Council of Churches has twice deplored the Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia, despite the opposite view among churchmen in East European countries. The survival of Israel is not one more political issue; it is a moral issue. And it is a religious issue in the sense that it involves ultimate human meanings.

There is, furthermore, the stubborn hope that the Christian church may somehow fill a conciliatory role between Arab and Jew. You and I may doubt this possibility. But what may appear to be a moral failure to us can have moral intent behind it.

The concern for peace is of undoubted import, if one is to believe a great many petitions and pronouncements. Expressed fears of renewed warfare and, indeed, of a world conflagration have been compounded by the worsening tensions of very recent weeks. Yet it is surely unjust to imply that those churchmen who plead for the Israeli cause are insensitive to the explosive state of affairs in the Middle East. Many such churchmen will insist that the surest guarantee of war is the refusal to acknowledge Israel's rights. Curiously, most Christian groups have seemed unable to concern themselves with the threat to peace in the Arab plan to destroy Israel. Along this line, repeated Christian appeals to the decisions and intervention of the United Nations have been a grievous affront to Jews and Israelis, because

the U. N. has been a disastrous and evil influence in the present conflict.

It appears plausible to suggest that potentially pro-Israeli voices have been muted by the severe opposition in the churches to United States' participation in the Vietnamese war as well as by recent isolationist influences. There is also the abiding pacifist tradition within Protestantism, an ideal that seems put into question by the popular image of Israel. On the other hand, Christian pacifists can hardly be honestly enthused over behavior in Arab circles.

The influence of church interests and ties in the Middle East is undeniable. This is readily admitted by such a pro-Arab writer as Willard Oxtoby, who stated concerning his own denomination: Presbyterians "have for a century invested in the educational resources of Syria, Lebanon and Egypt; the good will built up over a century can vanish overnight if Americans close their ears to the Arab side. . . ."38 There are today some 4,000,000 Christians in the Middle East.<sup>39</sup>

The response to the 1967 crisis on the part of the Standing Conference of Orthodox Bishops in the Americas was to seek to insure that "the traditional and inalienable rights of the Greek Orthodox Patriarchate of Jerusalem" be defended and preserved, and that "the shrines of all faiths in the Holy Land be given an internationally guaranteed status. . . ."40

Many Arab Christians and some non-Christians have been trained in schools and colleges founded and supported by American missionary enterprise. A number have been helped by clinics, hospitals, and

philanthropic institutions. Much apprehension is expressed over the future of the Christian church in the Middle East.<sup>41</sup> There is some tendency in the Arab nations to identify their Christian minorities with alien Western interests. Arab hostility to Americans is numbered among the serious obstacles to the Christian cause. Concern is voiced for the welfare and security of Christians in the Arab states.<sup>42</sup> It is sometimes claimed that "the substantial numbers of Catholic institutions in Arab countries. . .make the Vatican susceptible to diplomatic pressure" -- although not necessarily American Catholic leadership.<sup>43</sup>

In seeking to comprehend the motivations beneath the words and actions of the Christian community, we face a dilemma: The more popular and plausible the explanation, the less does it seem to bring us to the heart of the matter<sup>44</sup>; while the greater the depth of the interpretation, the more difficult and maybe even impossible is its demonstration.

The elements we have just noted -- to which can be added the contention that Christians simply lack understanding of the depth of Jewish feeling for Israel and of the solidarity of Jewish peoplehood -- hardly provide a convincing or complete explanation, and they may even mislead us. They may, for example, tempt us to the utopian conclusion that once Christians are sufficiently educated, their whole attitude will change. I put it to you that while the "plausible" interpretations may help to account for Christian uncertainty and silence, and perhaps even Christian fears, they scarcely explain the



marked ambivalence toward Israel that pervades the churches. We say to Israel: "Be good. Be righteous. Be better than anybody. But you are bad. You are unrighteous. You are worse than everybody. You ought to be saints, but you are going to be devils."

What is to be made of the out-and-out hostility of many Christians -- and of their double standard? We have not referred as yet to the "double standard," although we have intimated its presence. Everyone is talking about it these days, but, to my knowledge, few are asking: Why is there such a thing?

Christian circles are certainly not free of the "double standard." The Christian world has challenged no other nation's right to exist in the way it has that of Israel. Of what other people is that right called into question? We have said to Israel, "If you are good to the refugees, we just may accept you." When has this been told to the Arab world? Why do churchmen constantly lecture Israel on how she must behave? Why have so many Christian spokesmen condemned Israel for her alleged territorial expansion, and not arraigned the Arab nations for their relentless program to harass and annihilate Israel? Why have Protestant, Catholic, and Orthodox representatives castigated the Israelis for reunifying Jerusalem, and found no sin in Jordan for her original conquest of the Old City and for abuses of religious freedom there?<sup>45</sup>

Why was it that Christian leaders, including Pope Paul, deplored the raid on the Beirut Airport in December, 1968 and denounced Israel for it, after having said nothing of the terrorist attack in Athens,

or of other recent acts of violence and terror against Israel?<sup>46</sup> Why did officials of the National Council of Churches go out of their way to commend the American Government for joining in the rebuke of Israel in the U. N. Security Council for the Beirut raid?

One might reply that Christian behavior is simply reminiscent or repetitious of the world's behavior, and the world as a whole is hostile to Israel. The Christian community is part of the world. But this reply is not convincing. It only raises other questions: Does the church always follow the world? Has the church no independent vantage point? At the very least, the lesson in the "double standard," respecting Christians who practice it, is the essential refutation of their claim to be pursuing a morally equitable course in the matter before us. Their claim is a deceit.

Again, has the church been imitating the world, or has the world been learning more and more to be der Stellvertreter, the representative, of historic Christendom? The traditional and entrenched Christian stand on the Jewish people has been: You may either convert or leave or die. The eternal war against the Jew makes strange bedfellows -- or are they really so strange? The Arab detractors would never suffer to convert Jews, although there is a kind of conversion implied: a conversion to statelessness. And the detractors do represent the other two alternatives: Israeli Jews may leave -- they may go to Germany or Britain or someplace -- or stay to fight and die.

The nations of the world and the Arab collaborators have become the latter-day instruments of historic Christendom's conspiracy to

destroy the Jewish people.

Somewhat more circumspectly, we may set down three simple propositions:

1. Today's American Christian community focuses infinitely more upon Israeli sins than upon Arab sins.
2. Such behavior is, to say the least, incapable of truthful justification.
3. It makes sense to suggest, therefore, that the Christian community is being conditioned by impulses that lie beneath the surface.

These impulses are abetted by certain ideological influences. At the center of traditional Christian teaching and deep within the Christian psyche looms the myth that the Jewish people have been cast forth from their land because of their transgressions, especially for rejecting "their" Messiah, and that they cannot be restored to wholeness unless and until they repent of their evil and acknowledge divine truth.

The very concept or symbol "Israel" is an aggravating factor. Historically and ideologically, the Christian church is celebrated as the "new Israel." For example, right at the climax of a recent report of a National Council of Churches' conference, a report concerned with hopes and fears in the Holy Land, there appears the expression, "the Church as the Israel of God."<sup>47</sup> There is the rub. The old Israel failed. It is accursed. God has raised up a new and better instrument to do his work.

There is also the Christian dichotomy of "sacred" and "profane," of "religious" and "worldly," an impossible distinction for most Jews. The church's mind has been severely conditioned by a dualism of "matter" and "spirit," in contrast to a Hebraic insistence upon the sacred unity of life. Is not Israel -- the Christian dualist asks -- a woefully secular state, and, accordingly, is not something seriously lacking in her spiritually? One way the Christian conscience seeks to remove the "worldly Zionists" from the sphere of its obligations is, in effect, to read them out of Judaism.<sup>48</sup>

For its part, Christendom has never won through to a reconciliation with secularity. Accordingly, all through the modern period the church has been burdened by an idealistic universalism inherently distrustful of life's particularities. The church is caught between an advocacy of religiousness (though of course a religiousness inseparable from anti-Judaism) and an apolitical universalism (in implicit opposition to Israel as a secular state). On both these grounds, the religious and the universalistic, we encounter a failure or refusal to take seriously the Jewish people in their Israeli dimension, to accept them on their own terms. Is not Israel a case of nationalist, and even tribalist, regression?

The kind of ideological structure we are observing is connected with many practical issues -- such as the fabrication that the "holy places" are somehow "above politics," beyond the sovereignty of the people of Israel, including even the capital of the nation. Here is suggested much of the hidden motivation behind recurrent demands within

the Christian community, Protestant and Catholic, for the so-called internationalization of Jerusalem.<sup>49</sup> That demand exemplifies the imperialism of Christian universalism. (In point of fact Israel has guaranteed complete religious freedom in all of Jerusalem and the sanctity and protection of all "holy places," including a readiness to place them under independent denominational supervision.) Who would dream of applying the notion of internationalization to such cities as Damascus or Rome or Geneva? To this day, the Vatican has not recognized the State of Israel. There is no such place as "Israel" apparently; there is only "Palestine"! In the last resort -- we Christians are saying -- Israel is not in fact the property of Israel.

Finally, Christian anti-Zionism is the new Christian anti-Semitism. Time precludes a full exposition of this theme. It is in many respects an inference from much of the analysis. In principle, there is little reason to expect that Christian denigration and persecution of Jews over so long a history should not be revived in Christian policies and behavior regarding the Zionist ideal and the reestablishment of the State of Israel -- in the "Holy Land" of all places! The anti-Zionist stance of many nations and peoples appears inexplicable apart from the age-old influence of anti-Judaism and anti-Semitism within Western and Eastern Christendom.

A certain straw man has recently been circulating in our midst. Reputedly, any criticism of Israel is called an "anti-Semitic" act. Yet where in truth has a Jewish or Israeli spokesman insinuated any

such thing? The most relentless critics of Israel are Israelis. Many churchmen give evidence of deliberately confusing the issue of Israel's right to survive with the demand (in actuality, a fabrication) that Israel's every act or policy be approved. Furthermore, the theological truism that no people's right to their land can be absolute readily becomes an ideological weapon for denying Israel's legitimate claims. This weapon is seen to be illicit by virtue of the fact that the critic is tacitly granting absolute rights to Israel's enemies. Support for Israel would become unwarranted absolutization only if it meant blind sanction of everything the nation does.

A repeated warning is heard these days: "In your anti-Zionism never let anyone accuse you of anti-Jewishness or anti-Semitism." The ardor and the pervasiveness of this counsel incline me (as a Christian, and therefore a suspicious man) to smell a rat. Anti-Semitism may be a highly complex phenomenon but its essence is quite elementary. It entails Judenfeindschaft, enmity toward the Jewish people. The real question is a simple one: How can a man not be an anti-Semite if he opposes Israel's right to live, or consorts with would-be destroyers of Israel? There is no way to be against Israel without being anti-Semitic.

I want to call your attention to an essay by Edward H. Flannery, entitled "Anti-Zionism and the Christian Psyche." Father Flannery's thesis is that the similarity of reaction in Christendom to the Holocaust and to the emergence of the State of Israel is "symptomatic . . .

of determinative unconscious forces; specifically, of an unrecognized antipathy [to] the Jewish people." The Holocaust and the State of Israel are at opposite poles in the existence of Jews. "One is its nadir; the other, its zenith: Israel prostrate and Israel triumphant." Yet even though the stimuli are poles apart, the response is single: apathy-hostility. Such an inappropriate affect can hardly come from rational sources. The very multiplicity of the indictments of Zionism by Christians conceals unrecognized motivations. "A certain vague uneasiness attends the idea of Jews restored to Palestine, and to Jerusalem in particular. This uneasiness may serve as the subliminal foundation for a Christian anti-Zionism and as the dynamics [behind] the various 'reasons' supplied for disfavoring the State of Israel . . . ." The Christian death-wish for Jews finds a new actualization.<sup>50</sup>

Father Flannery stressed the need for caution and tentativeness in this type of conclusion. I cannot think of a more essential or timely subject for collaborative research among the social sciences, depth psychology, and theology than the whole phenomenon of Christian anti-Zionism. You who are scientists will insist that we cannot build upon the absence of data. But we are not without data. We have 1900 years of Christian contempt for Jews and Judaism. And we have some formidable evidence from contemporary behavior in the churches right in our midst.

I should like to close on a moral note rather than a purely psychological one.

First, for most Jews, and some Christians, the primary question is not the mere perpetuation of a state as a juridical entity but the

survival and welfare of the Israeli population as human beings. The place of the visible state comes to the fore as a function of the human question, and for that reason it cannot be denied. When I say "the Israeli population," I do not mean only Jews. It is not impossible that a frenzied Arab slaughter in Israel would entail little if any practical distinction between Jews and those Arabs who have, after all, become full Israeli citizens.

Second, in so far as Christian denigration of Israel cannot be divorced either from certain ongoing Christian dogmas and ideology or from historic Christian acts of hostility toward Jews, the responsibility of Israeli Jews and the Jewish world may become clear. Responsible action will be determined by decisions respecting the force and changeability of Christian belief and Christian behavior. There is, I judge, little in the history of dominant Christian attitudes to Israel since 1948, and particularly since 1967, to warrant the conclusion that the Christian world, and the American Christian community in particular, has changed or will change. This state of affairs may inspire Israelis and others sympathetic to Israel to persist in a resolutely political stance, to foster structures of power that help make the negative attitudes within the churches increasingly inconsequential to the moral necessities of Israel's survival and well being. This course is commended, not just in the name of Israel but in the name of the Arab peoples and of humanity. From that perspective, we are brought back to one note hinted at in the beginning: the irrelevance of the churches.



## NOTES

<sup>1</sup> Amnon Rubenstein, "'Damn Everybody' Sums Up The Angry Mood of Israel," The New York Times Magazine, Feb. 9, 1969.

<sup>2</sup> Marc H. Tanenbaum, "Israel's Hour of Need and the Jewish-Christian Dialogue," Conservative Judaism, Winter, 1968, pp. 1-18; Judith H. Banki, Christian Reactions to the Middle East Crisis, New York: The American Jewish Committee, 1967; Banki, "Emerging Issues in Jewish-Christian Relations," The Dialogue (published by the National Conference of Christians and Jews), Oct., 1968, pp. 1-9. The coverage of the first two studies was limited almost exclusively to the mid-months of 1967; the third extended into mid-1968.

<sup>3</sup> Tanenbaum, pp. 7-8. The last reference is to the "Resolution on the Crisis in the Middle East" put forth by the Executive Committee of the National Council of Churches, July 7, 1967. The Resolution hewed to the familiar line of tying the founding of the State of Israel in 1948 to the plight of the Arab refugees. It continued: "Among the few who have heard" the cries of the refugees "have been Arab leaders, outraged at the establishment of Israel in the first place and fearful of her future expansion." The Council charged Israel with "significant responsibility" for solving the refugee problem, and then added that "the Arab states and other members of the international community" must share responsibility. The Resolution was totally silent on Jewish refugees and on the condition of Jews in Arab countries. Respecting the plight of Israel, here is the relevant passage: "For a genera-

tion the world has heard politically inspired threats of a war of extermination against Israel. It has heard answering threats of retaliation by Israel. The consequences speak for themselves. During this period we Christians have said little or done little to seek assurances for Israel that extermination would not be her fate. We have called on neither the Arab states nor Israel to abandon warfare as the means for settlement of conflicting national interests. . . ."

The Resolution's partial sympathy for Israel and the point that a condition of peace is acceptance of Israel "by the entire international community" were offset by such passages as "the National Council of Churches cannot condone by silence territorial expansion by armed force" and "we cannot approve Israel's unilateral annexation of the Jordanian portions of Jerusalem." The Council seemed to imply that Israel should somehow be criticized for indicating that she would defend herself against attack. The Resolution totally ignored the fact that the "Jordanian portions of Jerusalem" were the consequence of armed conquest by Jordan.

<sup>4</sup> Banki, "Emerging Issues. . . .," p. 3.

<sup>5</sup> We may keep in mind that Christian spokesmen are by no means free of a readiness to distort facts. For example, in Presbyterian Life Willard G. Oxtoby refused to grant any reason for the "Israeli take-over of the Old City of Jerusalem and the Western portion of Jordan" since "surely Jordan had posed no serious threats to Israel's economy and trade." This distortion was answered by Rabbi Solomon S. Bernards: "Oxtoby forgets that a few days before war broke out, Jordan

had joined Egypt in a war alliance -- and that prior to June 5, Israeli leaders had specifically requested Jordan not to attack Jerusalem, to which Jordan responded by shelling the city at once." Again, Oxtoby claimed that American Christians and Jews practice a double standard: "Arabs could be judged bloodthirsty from their rhetoric no matter how little they could actually do, while Israel could do no wrong no matter how far its conquests exceeded its provocation." Bernards' rejoinder was that this "overlooks entirely the record of Arab terrorist attacks on towns and settlements over the past fifty years, the pogroms against Jews in Arab lands and the vast military preparations of Egypt in the Sinai Desert prior to the war" (Bernards, "The Arab-Israel Crisis and the American Christian Response," The Lutheran Quarterly, [Aug., 1968], 270-271). Revealingly, very few Christian analysts have seen fit to correct misrepresentations of fact. In Theology Today this charge appeared: "Christians have been chided and criticized" by Jews "for not enthusiastically supporting the swift and brilliant Israeli victory over Arab threats to their national existence ("Christianity and the Israeli-Arab World," in "The Church and the World" by E. G. Homrighausen, Theology Today, [Oct., 1967], 375). This wording constitutes a falsification. Where has there appeared an instance of a statement warranting any such accusation against Jews? The issue was not at all one of applauding the Israeli victory. It was one of concern over the terrible possibility of Israel's extermination before the hostilities began. This response in Theology Today almost seems to be saying that Israel's real offense was its

refusal to die.

<sup>6</sup> Cited in Banki, Christian Reactions . . . , p. 4. As early as May 23, 1967, the President of the Catholic Association for International Peace sent a telegram to President Johnson and Secretary of State Rusk urging the United States to "take every possible measure . . . to discourage and prevent the threat or use of force by any state against the independence and territorial integrity of any other state in the Middle East." David R. Hunter, deputy general secretary of the National Council of Churches, contended: "I think Jews in this country are quite right in denouncing Christian churches for silence during the threats of genocide" (as cited in "Review of the Week," The New York Times, Dec. 31, 1967). Philip Scharper affirmed: "The fact that the threat of genocide was raised. . . should have evoked more than a shrug of the collective Christian shoulder. One cannot but wonder if the same response of no-response would have been given if the threat to annihilate the enemy had come from the Knesset and Tel Aviv. . . ("Israel, the Modern State, and Contemporary Christian Points of View," Andover Newton Quarterly [March, 1968], 242).

<sup>7</sup> Cited in Banki, Christian Reactions. . . , p. 11.

<sup>8</sup> The Witness, June 18, 1967, as cited in Banki, Christian Reactions. . . , p. 6. Some 150 ministers, priests and rabbis from the Southwest issued one of the few declarations that gave first priority to "the right of Israel and the Jewish people to exist as a sovereign state" (The Los Angeles Times, July 29, 1967).

<sup>9</sup> James L. Kelso, in Christianity Today, July 21, 1967, as cited in Banki, Christian Reactions. . . , p. 5.

<sup>10</sup> The Christian Century, editorial "Israel and the Christian Dilemma," July 12, 1967, p. 884. This publication's insistence upon employing the term "Zionist" is an interesting anachronism. It is not wholly unlike the use of "abolitionist" to identify someone in a situation where slavery has already been abolished.

<sup>11</sup> John M. Oesterreicher and Edward H. Flannery, "A Statement of Conscience," The Institute of Judaeo-Christian Studies, Seton Hall University, South Orange, N. J., Nov. 17, 1967. The Protestant Council of New York City called for direct negotiations "based upon recognition of the legal existence of Israel. . . ." (June 15, 1967, as cited in Bernards, p. 264).

<sup>12</sup> I am aware of the lament by Catholics at an international symposium meeting in Strasbourg in July, 1967, that "at the moment when the Jewish people in Israel were endangered to the utmost. . . so few Catholic voices were raised against the threat of genocide."

<sup>13</sup> Banki, Christian Reactions. . . , p. 3.

<sup>14</sup> Press Release from the Secretariat for Catholic-Jewish Relations, Seton Hall University, South Orange, N. J., Nov. 22, 1968.

<sup>15</sup> Statement on the Middle East by the Division of World Justice and Peace of the United States Catholic Conference, Jan. 5, 1969 (mimeographed); italics added.

<sup>16</sup> James L. Kelso, as cited in Bernards, p. 269.

<sup>17</sup> Horace D. Hummel in "Symposium: Lutheran Reactions to the Arab-Israel War," Lutheran Quarterly, Aug., 1968, pp. 279-80.

<sup>18</sup> As cited in Banki, Christian Reactions. . . , p. 11.

19 Henry P. Van Dusen, letter to The New York Times, July 7, 1967.

20 As cited in Banki, Christian Reactions. . . , p. 13.

21 As cited in Bernards, pp. 271, 272.

22 The Christian Century, editorial "Israel and the Christian Dilemma," July 12, 1967, p. 883.

23 The Christian Century, editorial "To Zionists, with Love," Oct. 9, 1968, pp. 1263-64. At the time of the original crisis in May-June, 1967, The Christian Century editors contended that "Arab recalcitrance and belligerence" tilted their "sympathies sharply toward Israel." But they also maintained that Jewish criticisms "erroneously assume that Christian commitment to Judaism and to Israel requires hostility to Arabs" (editorial "Israel and the Christian Dilemma," July 12, 1967, pp. 883, 884). No documentation was offered to support this charge. The editors also described the accession of East Jerusalem as "war booty" (editorial "Israel Annexes Old Jerusalem," July 12, 1967, p. 884). The Christian Century has time and again opened its pages to persons bitterly hostile to Israel.

24 The members were Raymond E. Maxwell (Episcopal Church), Edwin M. Luidens (Reformed Church in America), and Rodney A. Sundberg (United Presbyterian Church).

25 Report of Deputation to the Middle East, July 19-31, 1968, National Council of Churches, pp. 5, 8-9 (mimeographed).

26 Ibid., p. 3.

27 "Report on Middle East Sparks Controversy at NCC meeting,"

Religious News Service release, Houston, Texas, Sept. 18, 1968. On Jan. 3, 1969 the president and the general secretary of the National Council of Churches urged four steps in aid of "compassion, justice and peace" in the Middle East: support for the U. N. Security Council Resolution of Nov. 22, 1967; the return of West Bank refugees to their homes; increased U. S. contribution to the United Nations Relief and Works Agency; and this new item: "Mindful of reports of continued persecution of Jews in some countries of the Middle East, we protest and affirm that each person and association should be assured of adequate legal safeguards for the protection of their rights." The most extreme and malignantly anti-Israeli presentation of the refugee problem was that of A. C. Forrest, editor of The United Church Observer, family magazine of the United Church of Canada, that country's largest Protestant denomination. A "special issue" of the publication appeared on Oct. 1, 1967. One page heading read in huge type "INJUSTICE" and the subheading stated, "In her present policies Israel stands condemned before the world." I select just two from among the many allegations: We condemn "the treatment of the Arab people in occupied territory in the weeks that followed the war and the harsh, inhumane treatment of the refugees now, and the 19-year-old record of inhumanity to Palestinian refugees." "For another 200,000 homeless -- and if Israeli policies remain the same they are going to stay homeless -- the future seems grim again in the Holy Land." Forrest's "report" was reproduced with varying degrees of editing, through a syndicated arrangement, in a number of the largest denominational publications in the United

States, and thus falls within our delimited subject. These publications included Church and Home, The Episcopalian, The Lutheran, Presbyterian Life, Presbyterian Survey, Together, and the United Church Herald. For example, in Together (Methodist) much of the anti-Israeli slander was edited out. Still, no comments were appended concerning Jewish refugees.

<sup>28</sup> The Jesuit journal America, which took the position that the plight of the refugees is at the heart of the Middle Eastern conflict, listed as part of the price for ultimate peace Israeli recognition of the Arab view that the refugees "have unjustly lost their homeland," although it went on to say that the Arab world must recognize that Israel is "a homeland for Jews who have no other" (June 24, 1967) as cited in Banki, Christian Reactions. . . , p. 14). The declaration of the interfaith group from the Southwest (see note 8) spoke not alone of "the rights of suffering Arab refugees" but of "the plight of persecuted Jewish minorities whose human rights have been jeopardized in some Arab lands" (The Los Angeles Times, July 29, 1967).

<sup>29</sup> Banki, "Emerging Issues. . .," p. 4.

<sup>30</sup> Aarne Siirala, in "Symposium: Lutheran Reactions to the Arab-Israel War," Lutheran Quarterly, Aug., 1968, pp. 285, 286.

<sup>31</sup> The New York Times, July 12, 1967. These spokesmen went on: "Theologically, it is this dimension to the religion of Judaism which leads us to support the reunification of the city of Jerusalem."

<sup>32</sup> Glenn C. Stone, in "Symposium: Lutheran Reactions to the Arab-Israel War," Lutheran Quarterly, Aug., 1968, p. 284.



- 33 Scharper, pp. 244-45.
- 34 As cited in Bernards, p. 265.
- 35 Church Herald, Sept. 8, 1967, as cited in Bernards, pp. 272-73.
- 36 Eternity, July, 1967, as cited in Bernards, p. 272.
- 37 A columnist in the Methodist publication Concern wrote: "Christians and Jews in the United States have a very serious obligation to reject the biblical literalism that lies behind political zionism. . ." (June 15, 1967, p. 9).
- 38 Willard G. Oxtoby, July 1, 1967, as cited in Bernards, pp. 271-72
- 39 In today's Israel, Christians number about 72,000, some 12,000 of whom are in East Jerusalem. The principal groups include Greek Catholics (23,000), Greek Orthodox (17,000), Latins (11,000), Maronites (3,000), and Protestants (2,000). Some 30,000 Christians live in the "West Bank" area (Facts About Israel, 1968, Jerusalem: Ministry for Foreign Affairs, Information Division, p. 70). According to one estimate, the Christian population in the Middle East is no more than one half the 1900 figure (Alford Carleton, "Christian Alternatives in the Middle East," unpublished).
- 40 June 24, 1967, as reported in Newsletter, Committee on the Church and the Jewish People, World Council of Churches, Dec., 1967, p.9.
- 41 At their 1967 Convention, Southern Baptists voiced much more concern for their missionaries in Arab lands than they did for the fate of Israel (Newsweek, July 3, 1967, p. 73).
- 42 This may be more of an admission than some realize. Such fears would hardly be forthcoming respecting Christians inside Israel.

43 "Review of the Week," The New York Times, Jan. 5, 1969.

In January, 1969 Rabbi Marc H. Tanenbaum of the American Jewish Committee warned of a covert, unprecedented, and highly skillful campaign by Arabs to penetrate the "institutional systems of the American Catholic and Protestant churches with propaganda that is not only blatantly anti-Israel and anti-Zionist but also, in many cases, virulently anti-Semitic." One example is a leaflet providing a Muslim version of the medieval blood libel charge and a revival of the "Protocols of the Elders of Zion." A primary resource center for the campaign is Lebanon, where many Christian groups and leaders are collaborating in the effort (Statement before the New York Chapter, American Jewish Committee, Jan. 12, 1969, mimeographed).

44 The underdog-top dog transition vis-à-vis Israel and the Arab nations in June of 1967, in so far as it can be talked about at all, does not appear as a very significant factor in changing differing expressions of Christian opinion.

45 Cf. Oesterreicher and Flannery: "When the Jordanians held the Old City, they closed the border so that no Israeli Jew or Arab could visit any of his holy places; they destroyed 35 out of 36 synagogues; they used tombstones from the ancient Jewish cemetery on the Mount of Olives to pave the footpaths and latrines of the Arab Legion camp in Bethany. To cede the Old City to Jordan would be for Israelis to participate in those acts of impiety" ("A Statement of Conscience").

46 Cf. "On World Reaction to Developments in the Middle East:

A Statement by Rabbi Jacob P. Rudin, President of the Synagogue Council of America," The Christian Century, Jan. 22, 1969, p. 110; Arthur J. Lelyveld, "Christian Morality and Arab Terrorism: An American Jewish Congress Statement," Congress Bi-Weekly, Jan. 13, 1969, p. 2. On Jan. 28, 1969 the Pope did deplore the public hangings in Baghdad of fourteen Iraqi "spies," nine of whom were Jews. James Feron surmised that this appeal and a subsequent one to the Jordanian authorities seeking clemency for two Christian Arabs were perhaps connected with the bitter criticism of the Pope by Israeli leaders following upon the raid on the Beirut Airport in December, 1968 (The New York Times, Feb. 1, 1969). An interesting variation on the "double standard" was a joint Methodist-Quaker seminar on current social issues arranged for high school students at the United Nations on Dec. 11, 1968. The single speaker on "Zionism and the Middle East Problem" was a representative of the American Council for Judaism, an uncompromisingly anti-Zionist group.

<sup>47</sup> L. Humphrey Walz, "Hopes vs. Fears in the Holy Land," Social Action and Social Progress, Jan.-Feb., 1968, p. 19.

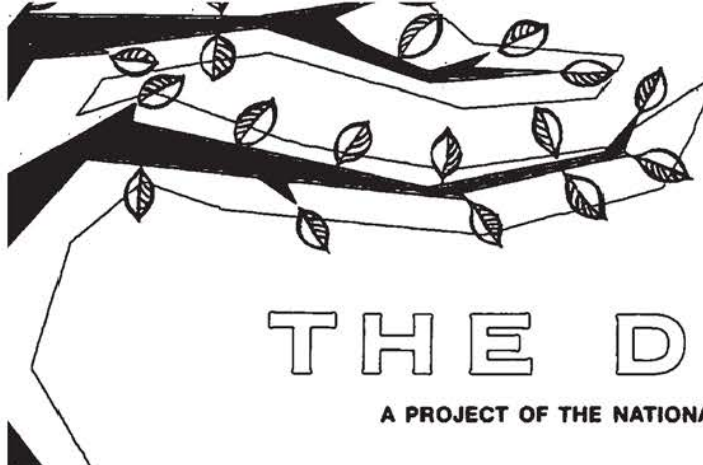
<sup>48</sup> A. Roy and Alice L. Eckardt, "Again, Silence in the Churches. II. Christian and Arab Ideology," The Christian Century, Aug. 2, 1967, p. 993.

<sup>49</sup> In January, 1968 Pope Paul reiterated in an address to the Roman Curia his contention that places specifically identified with the life of Christ should be internationalized, i.e., protected by formal agreements guaranteed by international authority. The Pope's

statement contradicted reports that he had given up the idea of internationalization and was prepared to sanction full Israeli responsibility for the maintenance of the holy places. However, the Pope had apparently abandoned the idea of internationalizing the entire area (as reported in Newsletter, Committee on the Church and the Jewish People, World Council of Churches, Feb., 1968, p. 12).

<sup>50</sup> Edward H. Flannery, "Anti-Zionism and the Christian Psyche," a paper prepared for the International Conference of Christians and Jews, Toronto, Sept. 2-6, 1968 (mimeographed).





*A Muslim, a Christian and a Jew speak on...*

**THE ROLE OF RELIGION  
IN PROMOTING PEACE IN  
THE MIDDLE EAST**

# THE DIALOGUE

A PROJECT OF THE NATIONAL CONFERENCE OF CHRISTIANS AND JEWS

## EDITOR'S NOTE

In April, 1979 the Tulsa, Oklahoma office of the National Conference of Christians and Jews, in cooperation with the Commission on Inter-Religious Affairs of the American Zionist Federation, co-sponsored a conference on "The Promise of the Holy Land: Zion and Zionism".\* During the conference three eminent scholars: DR. A. MUHSIN EL BIALI (Director of the Islamic Center of Los Angeles); DR. A. ROY ECKARDT (Chairman, Department of Religious Studies, Lehigh University); and RABBI DR. ARTHUR HERTZBERG (Past President of the American Jewish Congress); participated in a panel discussion on "The Role of Religion in Promoting Peace in the Middle East". It is with pleasure that we present their edited remarks in this issue of *The Dialogue*.

We gratefully acknowledge the help of Dr. Chaim Plotzker, Director of the AZF Commission; Mrs. Polly Bowen, Regional Director, Tulsa NCCJ; and Mrs. Yolanda Charney, Community Relations Coordinator, Tulsa Jewish Community Council; whose cooperation and assistance made this issue of *The Dialogue* possible. We also wish to express our appreciation for the efforts of conference co-chairmen Dr. William J. Wiseman (Senior Pastor, First Presbyterian Church in Tulsa) and Rabbi Charles P. Sherman (Temple Israel, Tulsa).

—Ann Perrin  
Editor

\*Additional co-sponsoring organizations: Tulsa University Department of Religion, Tulsa Metropolitan Ministry, Tulsa Jewish Community Council, Tulsa Metropolitan Area Religious Educators.

## INTRODUCTORY REMARKS:

### RABBI ARTHUR KAHN CONGREGATION B'NAI EMUNAH, TULSA

We are meeting here for a panel discussion under the rubric "The Promise of the Holy Land". I think all of you are familiar, in one language or another, with what is probably the best known blessing or benediction in the world—at least our Western World—the one that is generally described as the three-fold blessing found in the Book of Numbers, Chapter 6. It reads, in part, "May the Lord cause His countenance to shine upon you and grant you peace". It closes in the Hebrew with the word "Shalom". Obviously, Shalom is the summit, the apex, the climax of that blessing. I think that most of us here have been deeply moved by the fact that for the first time in over twenty-five years, an Israeli vessel is traversing the

Suez canal. It is a happy coincidence that on the very day that we meet before this interfaith conference, the world's public media—audio, visual, and literary—is focusing upon this historic event. To see that scene on television this morning; to see that ship on the Egyptian canal; to see the congenial exchange of greetings and pleasantries between the Israeli captain and the Egyptian canal official, was one of the most beautiful manifestations of the first step toward real Shalom and Salam that we could hope for. Let us look upon it as a happy omen.

I mention that blessing for another reason. We've had with us last night and today three distinguished gentlemen, scholars of the Christian, Jewish and Muslim faiths, appearing before us and speaking on a subject which is of such concern to us. This certainly manifests a three-fold blessing.

Briefly, I would like to review the biographies of the three principals of our conference. Dr. A. Roy Eckardt is an outstanding scholar, Professor and Chairman of the Department of Religious Studies at Lehigh University, author of numerous scholarly articles and a number of very important books. Together with his wife Alice he is now in the process of preparing a book which I think has a very auspicious title: *A Long Night's Journey Into The Day*. It's been a long night, ladies and gentlemen, thirty years; and hopefully that journey is ending in the day in the light of peace.

Rabbi Arthur Hertzberg was ordained by the Jewish Theological Seminary of New York, received his doctorate in history at Columbia University, and was for over six years the president of one of America's most distinguished Jewish organizations, the American Jewish Congress. He is currently Adjunct Professor of History at Columbia University; an outstanding scholar and lecturer; and the rabbi for over 20 years of Temple Emmanuel of Englewood, New Jersey.

Dr. A. Muhsin el Biali received his doctorate from the American University of Washington, D.C., has occupied many important posts in scholarship and lectureship, has written extensively and is heading the Islamic Center of Los Angeles.

In the somewhat more informal spirit of this panel session we would like, generally speaking, to address ourselves to this problem, the issue or the question: "The Role of Religion in Promoting Peace in the Middle East". I would like to pose a question and ask the panel to respond in order. Since we unfortunately and so often find that religious commitments can be a divisive rather than a unifying factor in the quest for various ideals,

opportunities and goals, how then, and what then, can the role of religion be in promoting peace in the Middle East where religious feeling, religious commitment, religious involvement often runs so very deeply and profoundly?

I would like to ask Dr. el Biali to be the first to respond to this question. Being the youngest of the three speakers, he reminds me of another Egyptian of nearly three thousand years ago who was a Hebrew. The Bible tells us that he was called: "Avrech". Our midrashic tradition interprets this as meaning that Joseph was aged in wisdom but young in years. Having read the biography of this fine young scholar from Egypt, he may not be a Hebrew but certainly he fits that description of Joseph of old. My pleasure, then, to call upon Dr. el Biali.

\* \* \*

**PANEL RESPONSE:  
DR. A. MUHSIN EL BIALI**

Since we have a very limited time and we have been talking of this last night and today, I'm going to limit myself to a few brief remarks.

Speaking of the role of religion in promoting peace in the Middle East, I would like to define for you the meaning of the word "Islam". Islam is an Arabic word. It has two roots. The first word root is salam, the second is astrim. Salam is an all encompassing term. It means peace of an individual; peace that emanates from the heart of the individual believer by believing in One Supreme Being. Once a person believes in God, in One God who has no partners or counterparts, then he has established peace within himself. But this is not enough in his life. This peace must be extended to include family relationships. It has to be established within the home by one's being kind to parents and by being kind and loving toward brothers and sisters. Then peace is further extended to the immediate neighborhood by being kind and neighborly toward the seven neighbors to the right and the seven neighbors to the left, regardless of religion, ethnicity or language. Any neighbor who might be in need must be helped by his able Muslim neighbor. Neighborhood or the neighbor or the idea of being neighborly has been enshrined in Islam and in the Holy Koran, so much so that early Muslims have taught that neighbors might be entitled to a portion of a man's inheritance. But the idea of peace does not stop at that. It goes on to cover the national society in which we live and to which we belong.

How can one establish peace within one's own society? By defending the society against would-be aggressors from the outside. War, in Islam, is a defensive mechanism. It is not an offensive one. War is only made sacred in the defense of the Muslim nation—but not to engage in political aggrandizement or to occupy or to expand at the expense, the agony and sadness of others. Finally, on the international level Islam seeks peace by not imposing its own code on non-Muslims. The only way Islam can communicate with non-Muslims is by inviting their attention to the idea and the ideals of worshiping One Supreme Being. It is up to my interlocutors either to heed my invitation or to reject it. And it is up to God Himself either to forgive or punish. but I have delivered my message and have borne witness to my own faith and, in fact, my interlocutor has also been witness to my own

testimony of Islam. That is the meaning of peace, Salam, in Islam.

The second root word, astrim, means submission to the will of God. That means that Muslims, whether conscious of it or not, whether aware of it or not, must consider at all times that Almighty God is watching over their action and deeds even if they are alone. If a person is alone God is a second in Islam. If he is in the company of one, two, God is a third. Three, God is a fourth. He listens to the secrets and even the thoughts and ideas that have not as yet been articulated by the individual. There is no escape from God. For this reason, and because of this realization, a Muslim must abide by the ethical and moral code set forth by Almighty God Himself.

After defining the word Islam it goes without saying that the main point of Islam in the world is to establish peace, World peace. And right here I have to alert you to one thing. Please do not confuse the history of the Muslim peoples as a reflection of Islam itself; because wars that have been waged in the name of Islam were motivated by political considerations. They were not inspired by Islam; they were not sanctioned by Islam. In our Koran, in so many verses, we would in general expound, "If they incline toward peace, so you should also incline toward peace." God calls Himself a God of Peace. Among His attributes is peace. That is the whole idea.

Islam is very much akin to both Judaism and Christianity. I must say in all candidness and sincerity, in terms of theology Islam and Judaism are almost identical because they are based on the undefiled concept of monotheism; of the worship of One Supreme Being. We have been apart for so many centuries. We have been kept, more or less, under the pain of unfamiliarity, living in the shadow of ignorance, not knowing exactly where each one of us stood. I think it's high time for Christians, Jews and Muslims to realize that they worship the same God; they serve the same God. We have the same purpose. We adhere to the same ethical and moral fiber, and we try to attain the same ideals and goals. If this should happen, and it must happen, then it can only happen if we open our hearts and minds and have human compassion and passion.

\* \* \*

**PANEL RESPONSE:  
DR. A. ROY ECKARDT**

When I first saw the topic, "The Role of Religion in Promoting Peace in the Middle East", I decided that the committee has to be kidding, or maybe has a good sense of satire. Or that perhaps there was a misprint on the program. I was very sure that the subject was meant to read: "The Role of Religion in Promoting War in the Middle East", which would be the actual situation. But I have been advised that the topic as announced is correct.

The presupposition of my remarks is that peace in the Middle East, as anywhere in the world, tends to be associated with, and to be made possible by, mutual self-interest, and not primarily by religion. A corrective that I think would do us all a lot of good would be a strong dose of Reinhold Niebuhr. Generally speaking, religion has a tendency to lead people in two opposite directions: toward sympathy for other human beings, and toward

hostility toward other human beings. It appears to me that there is little, if any, evidence for concluding that religion is fulfilling the first of these functions in the Middle East. Why is this? The fundamental reason why religion tends not to promote peace between human collectivities but instead aggravates conflict between them was touched upon in my paper earlier today; I venture now to repeat a point I made at that time, and then I will elaborate on it a little bit by means of some examples. The overall contention is that religion usually fosters sympathy for other people within personal, non-threatening situations; but religion generates hostility toward other people within collective, group-threatening situations.

The desecularizing of political claims is an essential of peace among nations because this helps to temper the imperious pretensions and uncompromising character of theological assertion. This is especially a problem in the Middle East where religion remains a massive, even an increasing obstacle to a final settlement. The line goes, "We are simply obeying the divine will and decree. How dare you accuse us of selfish interests!" In contrast to this unyielding posture, the essence of political-secular procedures is the art of compromise. To put it more simply, the reason that religious claims are so dangerous, and they are extremely dangerous, is that they try to justify themselves on the basis of God's will. The way they come out is as follows: "We don't really want anything for ourselves; it is *God* who wants us to want this." Fortunately, in strictly political reasoning and behaviour, the situation is quite different. God is not used as an excuse in order to justify and to foster one's own interest.

None of this is to imply that political figures do not utilize religion for ideological purposes. I have brought along a whole string of Biblical and Koranic quotations that were resorted to by Carter, Begin and Sadat in conjunction with the recent three-way negotiations. Religion does get used by politicians. But despite the fact that the politician utilizes religious sources and often tries to justify what he is doing on the basis of religious argument, he is not able to resort to the claim that he is representing the will of God when it comes to the actual nitty-gritty of political bargaining. This is very fortunate, because otherwise we would have a war-of-all-against-all produced by religion.

I offer now a few examples of the questionability of religion from a moral and political standpoint. The first of these is the theologizing of the State of Israel by a movement called the Gush Emunim for a greater Israel. This movement is behind many of the Jewish settlements upon the West Bank. The argument put forward by these people is, in effect, "God gave us all of Judea and Samaria." Fortunately for peace in the Middle East and in the world the Israeli government cannot afford to operate primarily on the basis of such a theocratic claim.

A second example is the present insistence within Saudi Arabia and in other Arab states that Jerusalem belongs, in an absolutist sense, to Muslims. How so? Because it is a sacred city, and its sacredness is linked to the will of Allah. Within the Muslim tradition there is a conviction that once a land has been taken for Allah and dedicated to Allah, it is sacrilegious to abandon it. Here, then, is another case of intractibility at the point of religio-

political claims. It parallels very closely the theocratic claim within Judaism that was just mentioned. And again fortunately for the Middle East and the world, the regime of President Sadat (despite the fact that he is a devout Muslim) is not operating on the basis of Islamic theological or theocratic claims. This is how Egypt has been able to make peace with Israel, by overcoming the theocratic pretensions within Islam.

Finally, we might consider the Christian side. The Christian situation differs from the theocratic pretensions within Judaism and Islam simply because the Church is not making strictly political claims in the region of the Middle East (unlike the time of the Crusader Kingdom, for example). This means that when Christian churchmen speak on our subject in ways that are analogous to or parallel to the two ways I have enumerated, the tendency is for them to engage in negativistic judgments about one or the other side, Jewish or Muslim, Israeli or Arab. It is well known that the dominant proclivity within the Christian church has been one of anti-Zionism. In fact, the most forceful embodiment of Christian anti-Semitism in the world today is Christian anti-Zionism. Thus an international conference of Christians meeting in Beirut several years ago demanded the total disappearance of what it called "Zionist structures", a euphemism for the destruction of the State of Israel. Once more, religion was having a humanly destructive effect.

All in all, whether we concentrate upon Judaism, upon Islam, or upon Christianity, *and while we remain at the political level*, there appears a fundamental contribution to conflict and war rather than to peace. This is one of the major reasons why politics is so much more moral than religion.

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**PANEL RESPONSE:  
RABBI DR. ARTHUR HERTZBERG**

I am in a rather interesting and peculiar position. If I had spoken second I would essentially have said what Roy Eckhardt said. I have such notes in front of me and let me read them to you. There are two theological traditions: one is universal and the second is the theological tradition of each community, as involved in its own destiny and its own will. Theological absolutes cannot make peace. Note, for example, the irreconcilable differences between Gush Emunim and the Saudis on Jerusalem. The various religious traditions should not try to make other people act in their various plays.

I read you these notes just in order to establish that if Dr. Eckhardt and I had reversed order, my remarks would not have been far different from his. But listening to him, I've begun to wonder whether we were, both of us, totally correct.

Let me approach the issues from another angle. I think that we, the religious moderates, are allowing the hardline conservatives to preempt the role of spokesmen of true religion and, often, to justify hardline politics in the name of religion. Those who speak, as men and women within the religious tradition, for political moderation cannot permit this. Those of us who think in terms of civility insist that we and not the hardliners are the voice of our various religious traditions.

Was Hillel less than authentic when, in the first century B.C., even though there was enough political power in the Jewish community under King Herod to start a war for the reconquest of the totality of the Holy Land, he encouraged no such effort? Is the only spokesman for the truth of the Jewish religious tradition at this moment the aged Rabbi Kuk, who urges his disciples to sit-in permanently on the West Bank? Am I to presume that Martin Buber and Judah Magnes are religious irrelevances—or the Sephardic Chief Rabbi Ovodiah Yossef, who has ruled against the annexationists?

The kind of people sitting in this room have come here out of the feeling that somehow or other we want to be Jewish, Christian and Muslim, and we don't want to be that in the theme of warring exclusivities, or by running inquisitions, either within our communities or against each other. But I'd like to make a theological suggestion, and not in disagreement with anything that Dr. Eckardt said or that I would have said, if the roles had been reversed. There is no existing theology (except Roy Eckardt's suggestion of "two covenants", one with Jews and one with Christians) which in theoretical terms explains to Christians why they are not busy running a mission to the Jews here in Tulsa. Certainly, Christians such as you who are in this room are still theologically committed to do it. You are still believers in the idea that it would be better if the four rabbis in this room saw the truth, and not their own truth, but *the* truth.

Nonetheless, we are living out in America, right now, something for which in fifty years we will perhaps have a theology. We are living out what I call immanent theology, the theology of something which we are announcing by our lives for which theories will be forthcoming later. I cannot believe that theologians shape events. I think theologies are kind of footnotes, or program notes, to what is going on in life.

By way of historical example, let me ask: Were any of you in Amsterdam at the first meeting of the World Council of Churches after the Holocaust? Do you remember what was stated in Amsterdam in 1946? There was a profound act of contrition there for the Holocaust—but do you know what the end of that statement was? The assembled churches said: We owe a responsibility in contrition for the Holocaust to bring the Jewish people our most precious gift, evangelism: to redouble Christianity's evangelical efforts, to bring Jews to Jesus. Most Christians today have no theoretical way of saying that this is wrong. But I insist here, in the hall of a distinguished Presbyterian Church, that there is not a Christian sitting in this room who, I suspect, would regard that statement today, as a response to the Holocaust, as anything less than an absurdity. Even though it is theologically quite exact, you at least feel that

the very first thing that the Holocaust requires is an act of love, not an act of evangelism, even though evangelism is perfectly in order, theologically.

I think what is going on in the Middle East is that we are beginning to move in the same direction. Something has happened; some ice is broken. Sadat undoubtedly performed a profound theological act. He broke some molds, and that is indeed possible within the several religious traditions. Never mind the Muslim notion that any land to which Islam comes cannot be given up; never mind the Christian notion that the return of the Jews must have something to do with the "Second Coming"; never mind the Jewish notion that not an inch of the soil of the land of the twelve tribes is alienable. Somehow or other we are in the process of finding within the several traditions other meanings and more space.

What I would really say, therefore, picking up both the points that have been made, or both of the attitudes that have been reflected, is in two parts: I do not think that religion should get out of the way, but that theologies should get out of the way. I am for religion and against theology. Secondly, we ought to make a very clear distinction between our own religion as that which motivates us, and the dangers of using that religion as the script by which we make others behave to suit us.

That is, of course, another way of saying what Dr. Eckardt has been saying all morning, and that is, for me: My religion motivates me to be involved in the land of Israel. It does not, however, grant me the right to impose my maximalist desires and to presume that other people have to accept them. We must make clear the distinction, within religion itself, between what we hear as internal—the interior music of our various traditions—and what we come together with in the common marketplace, where we have to act as equals and where the only religious principles are such very modest ones: What is hateful to you, don't do to anyone else.

I don't think that we can either import religion into the Middle Eastern conflict or get rid of it. I think we have somehow or other to tame the tigers of exclusivity, of "I am right and you are wrong"—the notion that my revelation entitles me to the whole truth and you'd better watch out.

We ought to be able to leave something to God. I think we ought to get it out of our heads that the end of days is coming. We ought to get it out of our heads that we are God's appointed messengers. We are simply humble tillers in His vineyard. We ought to leave some of our most grandiloquent ideas about ourselves—about human destiny—till the end of days, at which point we will find out whether it's the "Second Coming" or the coming of the Messiah. Maybe Moses, Jesus and Mohammed, and perhaps, the Buddha, will be there to greet us together. Thank you.

