MS-603: Rabbi Marc H. Tanenbaum Collection, 1945-1992.

Series A: Writings and Addresses. 1947-1991

Box 2, Folder 1, "Ecumenism, Pluralism, Judaism and AJC'ism", 1967.

3101 Clifton Ave, Cincinnati, Ohio 45220
(513) 221-1875 phone, (513) 221-7812 fax
americanjewisharchives.org

AJC STAFF RETREAT

ECUMENISM, PLURALISM, JUDAISM AND AJC'ISM

Marc H. Tanenbaum

"The extent of AJC's participation in interfaith religious and secular activities in the light of involvement of religious organizations of other faiths in social action and in the light also of the programs of Jewish synagogal agencies".

The only generalization that can safely be made about the present interreligious scene is that it is not safe to generalize. The American churches are a vast and complex phenomenon. As soon as one makes almost any generalization about them, one must be prepared to add an immediate qualification which says almost exactly the opposite.

Thus, one of the ablest Catholic sociologists, Father Andrew Greeley, writes in his well-documented study on American Catholicism after Vatican Council II,

"The United States is virtually the only industrial country in the Western world where the vast majority of the population maintains a formal religious affiliation and goes to church with some frequency; nor is there any evidence, despite the secularcity enthusiasts, that there is a trend away from the religious affiliation in American Society." (p. 16, The Hesitant Pilgrim, Sheed and Ward).

For substantiating evidence that backs his proposition, Father Greeley could easily cite the findings contained in a survey for Newsweek magazine (March 20, 1967) on "How U. S. Catholics View Their Church?" which reported:

"Fully 50 percent find their religion the most important part of their lives. Three out of four Catholics interviewed attend Mass every Sunday and Holy Day, as Church law requires, and nearly 25% say they attend more frequently."

How does one square that data with that published by George Gallup? (April 12, 1967):

"A majority of people today, 57 percent, say religion is "losing" its influence on American life. Exactly ten years ago, the proportion holding this view was only one-fourth as large, 14 percent. This represents one of the most dramatic shifts in surveys of American life."

In his tables comparing the latest views with those recorded in 1957, the change in the proportion who say religion is "losing" its influence is virtually the same for Catholics and for Protestants (across age levels, sexes, and level of education):

	1957	1967
Protestant	17	60
Catholic	7	48

With regard to church attendance, generally regarded as one of the more reliable indices of commitment to religion (certainly for Christian forms of religion), Mr. Gallup reports results that also appear to contradict those of Mr. Harris:

"While the overall percentage of adults attending worship in an average week has declined five percent since 1958 when it reached a high of 49 percent, the number of adults in their twenties

who regularly attend has declined eleven percent, for a total of 37 percent attending in this 21-29 year age group." (In the form of the Harris report that I saw, Harris did not provide a breakdown of the attendance according to age group, but did indicate that one in two of U. S. Catholics regularly attends Sunday worship, and that 72% of the group under 35 "vehemently favor" the liturgical revisions of the Mass).

Gallup adds that the respondents in this age group "easily identified the rejection of the religious institution by adults in their twenties with the youth rebellion against insincerity and phoniness among regular worshipers as indicated by their lack of strong convictions on moral issues such as the Vietnam War and racial integration."

This last reference is to another Gallup study issued in January 1967, entitled "Churchgoers in Middle of Mainstream". Briefly stated, Gallup found that "there are no significant differences in opinion between church-attending and non-church-attending adults on major issues involving moral questions such as capital punishment, American military involvement in Vietnam, open housing, and school integration."

In the appendix that I have attached to this paper I have sought to document the wide range of views and practices that are to be found on the various and often conflicting levels on the Christian side of the interreligious scene, focusing on (a) the "New Breed"of progressive Protestant seminarians, "the future leaders" of American Protestantism; (b) the present

leadership of the National Council of Churches as revealed in an NCC self-study; (c) a cross-section view of one of the "typical middle-class" Protestant denominations, the United Church of Christ; and (d) the major findings of the Harris Poll on the 46-million member American Catholic Church.

After examining all this data (and some other not reported on here, such as the self-study of Episcopalian women, the United Presbyterians, etc.), we need to ask - what are some of the implications for our understanding of the present interreligious scene, and in particular, for the Jewish community and AJC?

While it is difficult to find order and consistency for a situation whose dominant characteristics are variety and movement, the data can be used to support quite different conclusions:

(1) that the level of religious practice of a given population is much more the product of their socio-economic level than the effects of the organized church (and synagogue). The religion of the churches - and undoubtedly of the synagogues - and their members has become so much a "mirror image" of their communities and national culture that its influence is imperceptible and, perhaps, non-existent;

(2) that the religion of the majority of the churches and synagogues and their members are profoundly irrelevant to the real and increasingly complex world and its multiplying problems;

(3) that there is more active religious concern in America today than is commonly supposed, but the social witness of the Christian and Jewish communities today is mainly in the hands of a

small minority of the whole communities. These progressive and mainly professional Christians and Jews represent the advanced positions of progressive Christianity and Judaism (or Christendom and Jewry), and are still far ahead of the bulk of their mass memberships.

Evidence is available in the form of case instances and surveys, some of these to be found in the appendix, which give some degree of substance to these conclusions. It may now be in order to elaborate on some of the broader meaning of these conclusions:

There can be no question that the churches of America (and in other parts of the world, especially Europe and Latin America) are going through a crisis of change. There is obviously considerable unrest, discontent, controversy, friction, occasional bitter outbursts.

What is critical in this crisis of change - and I will argue that it is critical in special ways for Jews as it is for the Christians themselves - is whether it is a <u>crisis of decline</u> or a crisis of growth. A body of Jewish opinion has developed in recent years, located mainly in the traditional Orthodox Jewish community but with strong echoes in the Conservative and Reform Jewish communities, that has judged all the ferment in the Christian community as a sign of decay and decline. The Roman Catholic Church, the bastion of Christian orthodoxy and to the Jewish mind <u>the</u> arch-Christian church, appears to be falling apart

before our eyes. The popular mind finds the signs both alarming and fascinating -- nuns forsaking their convents to become lay presidents of colleges or social workers, prominent priest-theologians violating their vows of chastity to give up their better quarters for better halves, Protestant professors of religion writing books of theology to argue the case for the death of God, et cetera. All this ferment and change has compelled many Jews to confront their own deep ambivalence toward Christianity and especially Roman Catholicism, and much of the highly emotional and vehement debate that has taken place indicates in the Jewish community, unfortunately, how very little is known factually about what is happening within the Christian world in some balanced perspective, as well as about what is happening between Christians and Jews on the various serious levels of their encounter.

Probably the most articulate spokesman of this point of view which has adjudged the present Christian situation as one of decline is the Orthodox rabbi and professor, Dr. Eliezer Berkovitz. In an article in Judaism, and in subsequent writings and speeches, he has asserted that we are now living in "a post-Christian world", that "Christianity is a sinking ship" and therefore he sees no reason why any self-respecting Jew should want either to help bail out this sinking vessel, or to be associated with it in any way. Further, he argues, in light of the historic record of Christian anti-Semitism, the Jewish-

Christian dialogues have little effect other than to "whitewash a criminal past".

Like many other Jews who know something about the horrendous sufferings of our people in the Christian West, I have much respect for Dr. Berkovitz's passion and identification with the plight of Jewry. Having lost large, precious limbs from my family tree to Russian Orthodox pogromniks and then to the Nazis, I feel little need for instruction about this chapter of demonic history. Nor do I believe that it is altogether seemly for any Jews to appear to claim a monopoly on the knowledte of that miserable past; much worse, to achieve notoreity and publicity by using that past so freely in public discourse so that "Auschwitz" and the "six million" become cheapened as debating points, or as techniques for manipulating the Christian conscience for easy verbal contritions that are not the result of anguished soul-searching and moral conversion. That tendency to invoke freely the memory of our martyred brother even in so-called defense of Jewish dignity in itself can become, and often has become, an act of blasphemy.

More serious for an understanding of our problem is my conviction that Dr. Berkovitz and those who share his views badly misunderstand the present realities of the Christian situation, and derive proposals for Jewish policy and statesmanship that are positively misleading and, in the last analysis, potentially destructive of the Jewish position, including that of the State of Israel.

The use of the terms "post-Christian society" and "diaspora Christianity" to describe the present plight of the Western Christian communities and their predicaments in the non-Western world are obviously not original conceptions of Dr. Berkovitz and his school of opinion. Ironically, these terms, used in both theological and sociological analysis, achieved currency in the intellectual vocabulary primarily through the writings of the German Jesuit theologian, Father Karl Rahner, mainly in his books "The Christian Commitment" and "The Christian of the Future".

It is very much to the point to underscore that Rahner's analysis and conclusions about the Christian situation are based first, on the experience of the Catholic (and Christian) churches in Germany and generally on the continent; and second, his categories are derived without modification from Max Weber and Ernst Troeltsch, whose typologies allowed only for "established churches" or "sects".

From his theoretical studies and his actual experience on the continent, Rahner concluded that the Church (or churches) were healthy and effective when they operated in the established church pattern through which they dominated the structures and institutions of society. The alternative to the established church was that of becoming a sect, withdrawn from the mainstream of society and having influence only through the individual witness of a handful of besieged laity. A sect might in time become a church. A church might decline into a sect. This

sociological frame provided for no alternatives. (Rahner's way out of this bind is to redefine the church of the 20th century in mystical terms - "The Church is the sacrament of the salvation of the world". The majority of mankind who are not Christians are brought into contact with grace that is dispensed by the Church which is present to them in the diaspora, and thereby "anonymous Christianity" is "at work in innumerable ways through the natural virtues of kindness, love, fidelity to conscience even in those who have never yet expressly invoked it." A cynic might regard that formulation as an extremely subtle form of spiritual imperialism...)

Using Rahner's categories of "church" and "sect" to examine the present Christian situation, it takes no great wisdom to predict that Berkovitz (and others like him) must come to Rahner's judgment of doom, "post-Christian world," "diaspora Christianity". Rahner's response to that picture of Christian plight is to try to help Christians transcend reality by mystical flights into unreality, and by cultivating metaphorical formula that will buffer sensitive consciences against the harsh pressures of reality. Berkovitz' response is not dissimilar - he calls upon Jews to withdraw from that doomed reality, and to preserve in some mystical isolation our metaphysical Jewish purity from Christian contamination.

There is no need to document here our awareness of the seriousness of the problems that Christianity and Christendom face. Elsewhere we have documented in great detail how radically changed is the situation of the 20th century Christendom as compared with its status from the 4th century down to the French Revolution - the population explosion, the challenge of communism and ideological atheism, the rise of new nationalisms in Asia and Africa and their rejection of the Christian West, the moribund situation of Christian minorities in the Middle East, etc. (see David Danzig's articles in Commentary, my articles in Torah and Gospel, Worldview, the Sister Formation Bulletin.)

It apparently did not enter Rahner's (nor Berkovitz') mind be-

tween the diaspora (sect) and establishment there exists the pluralistic multi-denominational society of the United States, which is not a compromise, not a temporary phase, but a more or less permanent solution of the relationship between religion and society. There are other issues to be raised about certain tendencies toward "quasi-official multi-denominational establishmentarianism" (as Greeley terms it), but in respect to our question an objective assessment of the crisis of change would be faulty if it did not take heavily into account what is happening in Christian society in the United States, and the meaning of those developments for the international Christian situation.

Andrew Greeley, the priest-sociologist who is generally recognized as a first-rate, competent social scientist, summarized the results of his studies conducted at the National Opinion Research Center at the University of Chicago of the changes American Catholicism has undergone since Vatican Council II. Balancing the evidence of decline in the Catholic community against the evidence of growth, he concludes that "American Catholicism is on the verge of its greatest age".

Greeley adds: "The pains of the present crisis are birth pains, or, if you wish, the growing pains of adolescence. It is not a diaspora that is ahead of us, but a new golden age; we are not a sect, but a denomination. And this denomination will have increasing

influence on American life and culture."

Among the evidences that Greeley adduces to substantiate his viewpoint are the following:

- The ecumenical movement, which was virtually nonexistent in this country in 1960, is proceeding at a frantic pace, and diocesan ecumenical commissions are springing up all over the country. Even if one concedes that the pace of progress will be slow, a projection of the last two or three years into the next decade would certainly indicate dramatic, almost breathtaking change in the Church - change that can only be for the better.

- The coming intellectual and cultural flowering of American Catholicism. One-fifth of the June 1961 graduates studying for a PhD in the top twelve graduate schools are church-going Catholics. I have not the slightest doubt, says Greeley, that they will be first-rate scholars and that within 20 years many of them will be senior faculty members in the upper reaches of American education. Talented young artists and writers in their twenties will also achieve eminence, he predicts, and will not leave the Church as did Fitzgerald, O'Hara, and Farrell.

- A particular intellectual development will be the growth of an American theology, with younger Scripture and dogma scholars coming home from training in Europe with a desire not only to bring to the United States the very best of European theological insights,

but also a firm resolution to develop uniquely American insights that in turn may some day influence European theology with new and refreshing American perspectives and experience.

- Despite the weaknesses that are so patent, there are profound and dynamic forces for growth in Catholic education. Research studies disclose that "the overwhelming majority of Catholic parents are in favor of parochial schools" and it is clear that they are not going out of business. Further, research indicates that graduates of Catholic schools are better integrated into the larger society than Catholics who did not attend such schools.

_ The "new breed" of seminarians and young clergy who, Greeley claims, are going to shake up "the ecclesiastical system" and then take it over.

- The lay-mission movements and the new concern for the inner city. To devote a year or two of one's life to volunteer work has become so popular and well received that it is now regarded a solid advantage on anyone's record when he is looking for a job. Young Catholics are becoming concerned about the inner city from which their families have fled, and with this concern come attitudes toward the race question that would have been unthinkable among the upper middle class five or ten years ago.

- Attitudes toward race are changing, and research data indicate

that the best predictor of change is the stand a respondent's cleric has taken on the question. As the Church's stand on race becomes firmer and more obvious, there will be even greater change.

- The influence of good Catholic publications such as Commonweal, the National Catholic Reporter, the Critic and Continuum is on the increase and is being read by all levels of decision-makers in the Church.

- The quality of books published by Catholic firms will also improve.

- The fraternal use of authority will gradually replace the paternalistic as the collegial principle becomes operative in the Church.

- The growth in sympathetic relations between the Catholics and non-Catholics.

Greeley concludes with the assertion, "the golden age I foresee will be much less than perfect and will be attained only through hard work and much suffering. ..It can be delayed, it can be postponed, it can be weakened, but I do not think it can be prevented. I cannot conceive of anything happening that could turn this crisis of growth into a crisis of decline."

Assuming that Greeley is over-optimistic, and perhaps propagandistic in the most subtle evangelistic sense, I am persuaded from everything that my colleagues, Judith Banki and Stuart Gottlieb, report to me from their experience in the field, and from my own personal study and observation, that most of what Greeley describes as happening in the Catholic community is much more diffuse and complicated, yet there are strong parallels to be found in the Protestant growth, especially in the elite circles of denominational leaders, younger clergy and scholars, and seminarians. Southern Protestantism, long the most rigid and caste-ridden community within American Christendom, is also showing some signs of ferment and change in these directions toward openness and social relevance although the culture lag is profound and often terribly exasperating in light of the pace of social change and human need.

The conclusions that I come to from the foregoing are something like the Following:

First, if by "post-Christian era" we mean post-establishment of the Christian churches, then we may use the term as descriptive of a by-gone period of Church history. If we face the reality of the present ferment and growth within the Christian community, especially the Catholic, as profiled by Greeley, Fichter and others, then we are obliged to come to a radically contrary conclusion; namely, that the Christian leadership and those whom they influence show signs of greater intellectual vitality and social relevance than at any time since perhaps the apostolic period of the Church.

Second, the influence of the American Catholic church is increasing dramatically in the international councils of Catholicism. The American Catholic attitudes toward religious liberty, the role of the laity, ecumenism andpluralism that were repudiated as "American heresies" by the Vatican in the 19th and early 20th centuries have become incorporated as the official policies of the Catholic Church through the actions of Vatican Council II (see the Declaration of Religious Liberty, the Church and the Modern World, Non-Christian Religions - even with their compromises and tortured rhetoric, these represent major steps forward toward religious and cultural co-existence). Similarly, the National Council of Churches has become a potent influence in the World Council of Churches, symbolized by the designation of Eugene Carson Blake as its executive leader.

Third, despite the evidence of the studies contained in the appendix, and from public experience, that the masses of church-attending Christians do not accept moral leadership necessarily from their churchmen on social issues - such as the race question - that same survey evidence and experience makes it equally clear that the overwhelming majority of Catholic and Protestant liberal leadership is strongly committed to participating in programs of social change and human welfare, both here and abroad.

The NCC leadership study conducted among delegates at the 1966 Miami Assembly gave clear evidence of this strong commitment of Protestant leadership to liberal and international causes. On

the question of the current rate of progress toward racial integration in the U.S., 67% thought it not fast enough, while 24% thought it about right, with just 6% thinking the pace "too fast". There was near unanimity on the contribution of the United Nations to peace - a factor that needs to be kept in mind in examining the disparate Protestant and Jewish leadership responses to the role of the United Nations during the recent Israel-Arab crisis.

The implications of this development within Catholic and Protestant national and international church bodies is profound, in my judgment, for an understanding of the new structures that are available for assisting and guiding social change domestically and overseas. There are also vital meanings for the situations of Jews both in the U.S. and in Europe, Israel, and Latin America, and I fear that these serious matters have been avoided by the anti-Jewish-Christian dialogue group, whose views, were they to prevail as Jewish policy, would do great damage to the security and status of the Jewish people. What are these implications, general and particular?

It is a basic AJC tenet that Jews have a stake in a stable society, and that Jewish welfare is inextricably linked with the welfare and peace of the general community. (Jeremiah was an early advocate of that tenet in his admonition to the Jews exiled in Babylonia: pray for the welfare of the city in which you reside,

for in its peace lies your peace.) The evidence is overwhelming and mounts daily that Catholic and Protestant leaders and the agencies they command are becoming vital centers for social action on the American scene. Catholic priests and nuns, Protestant ministers and seminarians are operating programs for community organization in some 44 ghettos and slum areas in the United States, constituting one of the most effective presences of the white community in the Negro centers of turmoil. Project Equality was a Catholic lay initiative. The Episcopal Church has just committed itself to spend $3 million annually for at least the next three years to help Negroes organize themselves in their struggle against poverty and deprivation. The list could be lengthened enormously.

Overseas, the Vatican has created a Secretariat for Justice and Peace that involves some of the best Catholic minds in the world, like Lady Barbara Ward Jackson, Francois Houtart, etc., for the purpose of mobilizing global Catholic support in an effort to close the gap between the have and have-not nations, to advance economic development, to combat hunger, illiteracy and disease. The World Council of Churches, which has pioneered in this area of the church and society, has established a parallel commission. During the past year the Vatican and the World Council of Churches have held joint meetings of these social action bodies in order to plan common strategy and programs for social reconstruction and economic development projects, especially in Latin America, Africa and Asia. The seriousness of the commitment of the Catholic Church to these social justice objectives is reflected, for example, in the recent decision of the American Catholic hierarchy to devote ten percent of its annual income to support of economic development programs in Latin America and to deploy ten percent of Catholic manpower - priests, nuns, and lay volunteers - to implement this work.

The potential importance of the role the churches in helping the social revolutions in the underdeveloped countries is attested to by a statement from Vice President Hubert H. Humphrey, and echoed by Latin American

specialists, that the Alliance for Progress program will succeed or fail to the degree that the Catholic Church in South America makes it work for the people through its enormous parish structure, the most reliable agency in many communities for by-passing oligarchies and reaching the people.

The case can be made, therefore, for the crucial role that Christian leadership has to play in helping to achieve economic, social, and political stability in the third world. The importance of that stability for the Jews in Latin America should be altogether obvious. The Tacuara movement and the Arab-Nazi alliances are less likely to maraud against the Jews of Argentina in a society that leans increasingly toward social responsibility, and in which a Catholic church moves away from its medieval moorings and leans more to the Vatican Council policies.

What is less obvious, and yet of decisive importance for us, is to be aware that the growing role of the American Catholic Church in Latin America opens the new possibility that the American experience in pluralism, with the enlarged acceptance of Jews in the mainstream of society, as well as the American Catholic commitment to combat anti-Semitism, can be more effectively brought to bear by friendly U.S. Catholic authorities operating there than can be realized by Jews themselves. Our work with Catholics here who serve on the Vatican and the American Catholic secretariats on Peace and Justice and on CICOP demonstrate that these are real possibilities. But we have only begun to explore them, and I believe this question requires much more

careful and systematic thought than we have thus far given it.

This growth in the Christian ecumenical work in social development in Africa and Asia holds important implications for the State of Israel. As is known, Israel has been carrying out a very successful program of technical assistance in some 27 new nations in Asia and Africa. The effectiveness of this Israeli mission to the nations is reflected in the friendly support that Israel has received from a number of these countries during the United Nations.

debates over the Middle East crisis. The economic ties that have been forged with many of these Asian and African nations have also helped Israel leap over the economic barriers that the Arab nations have tried to erect. Reflecting on all this from the perspective of Jewish-Christian relations, it would seem that it is a matter of paramount pragmatic importance that some communication take place between the Jews of Israel and the Catholics and Protestants on these two commissions dealing with peace and justice in these countries. A pan-Christian program of technical assistance that does not take into account the Israeli presence and extensive programs in these underdeveloped nations could conceivably collide, do irreparable damage to Israel's interests, not to speak of the confusion and harm that could be done to the recipient nation's themselves. To my knowledge, no effective exchange of views and strategies between Israel and the Vatican and World Council of Churches' secretariats has taken place thus far. At the last major international WCCC conference on the church and society, only one Jewish representative was present. He did not represent Israel, and in fact had very little to do with Jewish-Christian relations altogether.

A parallel problem also exists in the growth the Catholic and Protestant ecumenical program in inner city ministry and urban training programs in the United States, which up to the present

moment is virtually free of meaningful Jewish involvement. There are a few exceptions - in Chicago, Los Angeles - and Irving Levine's, Harry Fleischman's, and our own work with IFCO may help repair the breach. As it stands now, we face a situation in which Christian leaders are living and working in the ghettos in service to the Negroes and Puerto Ricans, and Jews are present either as merchants who are resented or Jewish professionals are bused in for their daily work and then commute back to their suburban homes. There are profound implications for us in this situation, in terms of Christian attitudes toward Jews (the Christians increasingly appear to have become the bearers of prophetic passion for social justice, and this may do more to clinch their classic claim to be "the new Israel" than much of our theological dueling.) There are also implications in this situation for how we respond to the rise of Negro anti-Semitism, especially that increasingly menacing form that appears to be developing as an article of faith in the ideological credo of black nationalists and militants who are appropriating anti-Zionism and anti-Semitism as they seek to align themselves with Peking-Arab-wars of national liberation alliance. What is an appropriate role for Jews as Jews in the ghettos in concert with Christians needs a great deal of clarification, especially in light of the above considerations. What role we ought to expect Christian leaders and Negro leaders to play in doing something real about

these recurrent manifestations of anti-Semitism needs more discussion than we have given to it thus far.

To return to our larger theme, I would hope some of the above data would prove to be persuasive enough with the anti-dialogue element in the Jewish community to convince them to abandon the slogans and cliches of "post-Christian society" and "diaspora Christianity" as realistic depictions of the present Christian position. These emotive expressions and generalizations give Jews a false illusion of what is happening in the real world, and leads to erroneous judgments as to what should be appropriate Jewish ways of relating to what is actually happening.

The confusion is compounded when these anti-dialogue people aver that they have no objections to joint social action with Christians, but are opposed solely to theological dialogues. If the Christian ship is sinking, then why social action, any more than theological dialogue? And this brings me to my next point.

Fourth, the notion that Jews can engage in sustained social action programs with Christians and avoid theological discussions is as false and misleading as the other propositions about "post-Christianity". How solid and reliable can a relationship with a Christian be in the field of social action if he harbors in his being the classic Christian images of Jews and Judaism. What is the relevance of Jewish social action to a Christian who continues to

believe that Judaism is solely preparatio evangelica, that Pharaisa-ism and legalism is the most characteristic expression of Judaism, and that Jewish claims to truth and value are error?

One needs only to point to the American Catholic Bishops' guidelines to Catholic-Jewish relations as an illustration of what substantial advances the Catholic leadership has made in recent years in abandoning their mythologies and stereotypes about Jews and Judaism. The guidelines' injunction to Catholics that they are not to use the dialogue for proselytization purposes, the call upon Catholic educators and scholars to teach their students about "the complex and living reality of Judaism after the first century," the mandate to combat anti-Semitic attitudes and behavior on all levels of Catholic life and society - these are advances that no Jew would have thought possible five years ago. Each of these new insights as reflected in the guidelines - and in the new textbooks, teachers' manuals, teachers' institutes, seminary institutes, adult education courses, publications, mass media of the churches - are directly attributable to theological dialogues, and other religious discussions. If AJC and other Jewish agencies had followed the Orthodox advice and withdrew from the opportunities for theological discussions, I am persuaded that we would have been judged derelict in our leadership responsibilities.

Increasingly, responsible Orthodox leadership has come to recognize the benefits of such Jewish-Christian dialogues, and one hears more and more voices saying that they have no objection to "controlled dialogues of competent scholars"; their anxiety is about lay dialogues which bring unbelieving Christians and unbelieving Jews together to trade mutual ignorances. This is a valid concern, which we share. The recommendation that flows from this is for our regional offices to sponsor more "prelude to dialogue" institutes in cooperation with local bureaus of adult Jewish education, as we have done with some success in Chicago, Los Angeles, and elsewhere. (There are implications in this prelude to dialogue program for AJC's Jewish Communal Affairs program which need to be explored.)

Before we leave this matter, I want to set on the record my deep concern over some present aspects of our interreligious affairs work. We have achieved a great deal by any objective standard. But working in the field, and reading the literature that comes out from Christian publishing houses, one is simply staggered by how incredible is the ignorance that the vast majority of Christians, both clergy and lay, have about the Jews. It is probably only matched by the ignorance that Jews have of themselves.

I am saying that we have only begun to scratch the surface, and must not let our achievements thus far give us a false sense of euphoria. The perplexingly inadequate response of the Christian leadership to the plight of Israel simply brought into critical focus how far we have yet to go in bringing even the most favorably disposed Christian leaders to a beginning understanding of the Jewish-self-understanding. (Father Edward Duff, a thoughtful Jesuit writer, has written me, "the solidarity of American Jews with Israel ...is not appreciated, not least because it has never (so far as I know) been adequately explicated.")

The foregoing is a prelude to my proposing for your consideration the following:

1) AJC needs to give serious consideration to the need for expanding our interreligious work both in depth and in extent, especially in light of the openness in the Christian world today. This may mean more staff to specialize in given areas - such as the fundamentalists, specialized work with Christian publishing houses

making much greater use of our area offices and perhaps increasing their staff specialists in this field;

2) An immediate need to provide for a program of literature and publications, audio-visual aids, curriculum materials, for all levels of Christian education - elementary, secondary schools, teacher training institutes, seminaries, colleges, universities, adult education groups. This material should seek to interpret the positive dimensions of Jewish-Christian relations, as well as identifying the negative influences of Christian teaching that contribute to anti-Semitism. Our materials must include a new emphasis of the relationship of Jewry to Israel. AJC as an agency ought to face the fact that we are woefully inadequate in this area, and need some concentrated work to help meet a growing need.

3) There is a growing body of research data on the sociology of religion, the relationship of religion to prejudice, etc., much of it being sponsored by church bodies themselves. Some of the findings, such as the NCC self-study challenges the findings on Christian anti-Semitism of the Glock-Stark study. We need to find a way to feed these studies and their findings into our deliberations in a more effective way, because they have important bearing on our work. In general, I believe that there is need to conduct some serious research of our own on the relationship of religion to prejudice, since there is so much confusion and contradictory claims; viz., Glock-Stark vs. Gordon Allport. A proposal from Prof. Otto Klineberg for such a study is before us, and I would urge we give it the most serious consideration

4) We need an internal Jewish consultation on the meaning of the Christian reaction to the plight of Israel in its pre-June 5 days. Bert Gold has urged that we organize a consultation of Jewish scholars to consider this question and see if we can help sort out some of the issues of Israel as secular reality, messianic fulfilment?eschatological? Such a consultation would help us in our work in interpreting this question with Christian groups.

5) In part, the relationship of Church groups on a peer-to-peer basis with Synagogal and Rabbinic bodies has contributed, in my judgment, to the Christian perception of the Jewish community as a Jewish form of ecclesia, the rabbi as a Jewish pastor, and the synagogue as a Jewish parish. The Jewish community has derived some obvious benefits from being represented in the American consciousness as "one of the Big Three" Religions of America. The Israel crisis, which left Christian leaders totally baffled by the phenomenom of Jewish peoplehood which the Synagogue in itself has not articulated, raises the question of whether the risks of facing the truth of the Jewish community as it exists do not outweigh the benefits that have been gained from using the Synagogue in its public relations dimensions? Perhaps the most viable formula for representing the Jewish communal reality is to revert to the form of Vaad Arbah Ha'aratzot in which Rabbis and lay leaders served as a joint body that represented the Jewish totality together before the government instead of the

Synagogue Council formula which emphasizes the "sacramental" aspect of Jewish existence at the expense of peoplehood. A Rabbi serving as chairman of the NCRAC or the Presidents' Conference reflects the Jewish thing more accurately than most of the other formulae we presently have available. Obviously, we need to do a lot of thinking and dialoguing.

September 21, 1967

ITEM A

Skandalon is a quarterly for Protestant seminary students and faculty associated with the Student Interracial Ministry, an experimental project of the National Council of Churches set up to give "the witness of the church in urban life". The lead article in its winter 1967 issue devoted to the "urban church" is entitled, "The Death of Religion and the Rebirth of the Church." The article, written by a Seminary student working in Southwest Georgia, contains these sentences:

"The churches represent one of the bulwarks of slavery, and religion is their instrument of control. Because we believe this statement to be true, it is our intention to battle the current manifestation of church in the form of churches, and to attack the churches' traditional concept of the clergy.

"The members (of the church) are those who see no distinction between the sacred and the secular in that only the secular has the potential of becoming sacred..

"As a scattered community, the members (of the church) are involved completely in all aspects of life - economic, political, social, cultural - for the purpose of creating a society in which all men treat one another with love and respect. Its members accept the necessity of using power in order to bring about such a society.

"The church recognizes no value distinctions between clergy and laity - any distinction made is one of function. In fact, the

term "clergy" should be abolished, as it carries a connotation of special favor with God contrary to our conception of the Church ... There are no sacred offices which can be administered only by so-called clergy; the church's symbolic acts may be performed by all knowledgeable members. ...Our goal is the removal of the need for a special office of ministry.

"The 'temporary' office of ministry must not center around preaching, but rather around education, community service, and involvement in society. This involvement must result from the realization that all social-political-economic orders are relative and not absolute, and therefore should be altered or destroyed if they no longer benefit man. This means no government, no church, no religious wardrobe is ultimate. The job of the ministry is to call into question all systems that enslave humanity."

ITEM B

Over a span of nine years the National Council of Churches has conducted its own questionaire surveys of delegates and other Protestant attendants at the Council's Triennial Assemblies. In its 1966 survey, a total of 521 persons, 96% of whom represented the major national denominations affiliated with the NCC and 2% local church councils, were asked to respond the question "How do you feel about the current rate of progress toward racial integration in the U. S. ? Is it too fast - not fast enough - about right?"

In sharp contrast to the usually negative but fluctuating white U. S. opinion on this question over the three years from 1963 to 1966, the Miami (1966) and the Philadelphia (1964 Assembly) were in substantial agreement. Eight percent at Philadelphia, just

6 percent at Miami three years later thought the pace "too fast"; 69% at Philadelphia, 67% at Miami thought it not fast enough and 20 percent at Philadelphia, 24% at Miami thought it about right.

The gulf separating the delegates from average white opinion in the United States was great in 1963, greater in 1966. In each year, NEWSWEEK published the findings of Louis Harris' national samplings (Oct. 21, 1963; Aug. 22, 1966). In 1963 64% of white Americans thought the pace of Negro advance "too fast"; in 1966, 70% thought so. Almost no Negroes in either year accepted the "too fast" description of their progress. In 1966, "nearly half of the rank-and-file Negroes and a heft 82% of the Negro leadership sample, think the pace of the revolution is far too slow."

ITEM C

The United Church of Christ, whose leadership has been identified in the National Council of Churches' surveys as being "theologically liberal left", has conducted a sociological study of a cross-section of its membership. The study, entitled, "The Parishioners: A Sociological Interpretation", seeks to describe the religious orientation and social outlook of a sample of its church members, "who possess the dominant characteristics of middle class society". Following is a summary of some of the study's salient findings:

1. "We would characterize the dominant style of church participation which emerges from our data as one which centers around the nuclear family (i.e., made up of married couples with

children), with the church primarily serving the privatized needs of these families. ...The most frequently given reason for joining their present church was 'for the sake of my children'. The majority look to the church for most help in such areas as strengthening their personal faith and raising their children properly. They see their minister primarily as a leader of worship, comforter of the sick and bereaved and worker with children and youth.

"Conversely, one of the least frequently given reasons for joining the church was because it was 'a place to serve others'. Church boards were mentioned three times more frequently than social action groups as being very important aspects of the church program. The lowest order of priority was given to the church helping the parishioner to understand his 'daily work as a Christian vocation' and to become 'aware of the needs of others in my community".

2. The majority of the respondents hold a strong commitment to personal morality which has traditionally characterized American Protestantism. The social-ethical dimention of the Christian's life, by contrast, is on a much lower level of priority.

3. The prophetic role of the minister (i.e., working for social justice) ranked relatively low in the white parishioners perception of how his minister used his time, but it ranked first

with the Negro church participants.

4. There is a wide gulf which separates beliefs from action. While 86% of our sample of white parishioners believed that "all men are created equal in the sight of God," the majority expressed varying degrees of social distance toward ethnic and racial groups, and most evident in relation to Negroes.

5. The denominational label carried by the local church was felt to be a "very important" reason for joining by four out of ten parishioners. In a time when "ecumenicity" dominates the style of the religious dialogue in the public sector, and when some of the major Protestant denominations are engaged in a "Consultation on Church Union," this finding seems to suggest no massive ferment at the parish level for ecumenicity. Ecumenical education at the parish level appears to be a major need.

ITEM D

"What do the 50 million Catholics (46,864,910, according to the 1967 Official Catholic Directory) think of their church at this time of soul-searching change?" Louis Harris conducted a survey for Newsweek magazine and in his report "How U . S. Catholics View Their Church" (March 20,1967) came to the conclusions:

1. Fully 50 percent find their religion the most important part of their lives (three out of four Catholics interviewed by Harris researchersattend Mass every Sunday and Holy Day, as Church law requires, and nearly 25% say they attend more frequently);

2. By most convertional standards, U. S. Catholics are deeply faithful, but at the same time more than one-third of the respondents defy church law and practice birth control. (Seven out

of ten Catholics want the church to lift its ban; one Catholic in 3 now uses the pill or a mechanical contraceptive).

3. Half the U. S. Catholic population opposes the church's stringent laws against divorce. (A majority - 65% - say they would like to see the Pope provide annulments allowing remarriage for the innocent party).

4. Though Catholics are accustomed to a celibate clergy, nearly half of them - 48% - feel that preists ought be allowed to marry. (The National Association for Pastoral Renewal, an organization of parish priests founded in 1966, is vigorously pressing petitions to the Pope and the American hierarchy for the right to "optional celibacy", breaking with an 800-year-old church tradition).

5. Fifty-nine percent of Catholics support the church in its stand against abortion. But an equal number said they would approve abortion for a mother of young children if her life were in danger from another pregnancy. Thus the Catholic laity parts company with the hierarchy's total opposition to abortion.

6. Three out of four Catholics applaud the general trend toward change. The more liberal wing consists of college-educated and those under 35; these two groups dramatically outdistance the others in favoring more unconventional ideas, involving the modification of traditional laws that most separate them from other Christians. However, many Catholics find some reforms hard to swallow, for example, the decision to drop Friday abstinence is approved by only 41%, and halfof all Catholics still eat fish rather than meat on Friday.

7. U. S. CATHOLICS DRAW SHARP LINES BETWEEN WHAT THEY WILL AND WILL NOT ACCEPT FROM PRIESTS AS MORAL DIRECTIVES. A scant 5% say they would accept as morally binding their pastor's choice on political candidates. (By contrast, seven of ten said they would feel bound by the pastor's remarks on abortion laws, and more than half - 55% - would feel morally bound to follow their priests' judgment on what books to read or avoid.) BUT ONLY 21% FEEL EQUALLY BOUND TO RESPECT A PRIEST'S EXHORATION TO INTEGRATE THEIR NEIGHBORHOODS. IN FACT, NEARLY HALF - 46% - SEE NO SIN IN REFUSING TO RECEIVE HOLY COMMUNION FROM A NEGRO PRIEST.

These findings, Harris points out, indicates that in addition to moving away from the moral standards of the hierarchy, U. S. Catholics seem to be unusually confused about their own image of church authority. He underscores the point by noting, that "four Catholics in ten believe that everything the Pope says is law - a far cry from the very limited authority that church doctrine itself grants to the Supreme Pontiff."