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TEXT OF ADDRESS BY RABBI MARC H. TANENBAUM, NATIONAL INTERRELIGIOUS
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Interreligious Relations in Global Perspective

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The dominant reality of our present age is the growth of virtual interdependence between the nations and peoples of the earth. The increased dependence of technologically advanced nations on developing nations for oil and other raw materials and natural resources; the dependence of developing nations on developed nations for food, fertilizer and technology, especially desperate in the face of growing loss of lives through malnutrition and famine; the vulnerability of the international monetary system to manipulation by countries which gain sudden access to large financial resources; the impact of satellite communications and instant mobility on the consciousness of peoples throughout the world -- all these factors testify to the transformation of the planet to a "global city" (cf. Prof. Z. Brzezinski, Dr. A.T. Van Leeuwen, etc.).

This growing "planetization" of the human condition has been studied, analyzed, and evaluated from a variety of perspectives and disciplines -- political science, political economics, historical studies, comparative anthropology, social sciences. It is quite remarkable, in some ways incredible, that very little to my knowledge has been written about this vital subject from an interreligious perspective. There are, of course, studies written by Christian and Islamic missionary-historians but it seems to me that much of that material

which I have read, while often instructive and valuable, is limited by a missionary's bias -- that is, crudely put, what can we learn about other cultures and religions that will help us to convert them.

The Jewish community, which -- for better or for worse -- has neither a policy nor a program for proselytization, has to my knowledge virtually ignored as a field of serious, sustained inquiry the area of interreligious relations in its international aspects. There are of course scholars of Jewish commitment who have carried out studies and researches of an independent character in Asian-African studies, or Islamic studies, or Latin American studies, or comparative religion or the history of religions -- but there has been little effort expended to make systematic connections between the findings of that scholarship and the Jewish institutions which make policy and carry out programs that affect and are affected by such international concerns. A few fine essays have been written recently by several Jewish scholars on "Judaism and the World Community," but these have tended to be quite abstract and theoretical and devoid of reference to empirical data.

That lack, which diminishes the effectiveness of both the scholars and the Jewish organizations with international programs and staffs, should not be left unattended for much longer, for too much of Jewish thought and Jewish existence is at stake. The issues involved are both conceptual and practical, and fall into categories such as these:

First, Judaism has a serious contribution to make to the urgent task of developing a theology and ideology that affirms the unity of the human family while acknowledging the legitimacy and value of religious and cultural difference as a positive good. The significance of that contribution should not be minimized, especially in the face of other religious options that left uncritiqued would tend to reduce to second-class status the distinctive Jewish presence in the world. In July, an International Congress on Evangelism will be held in Lausanne, Switzerland, whose theme is "To Call the Globe To Christ," a translation of Key '73's theme on the global scale.¹

First, there needs to be developed in Jewish life a keener understanding and appreciation of the rootedness of political mystiques and ideological movements in theologies and religious worldviews. As Prof. Norman Cohn has effectively demonstrated in his classic study, The Pursuit of the Millennium, contemporary political and ideological movements that openly avow themselves to be secular or even anti-religious are frequently degenerated or camouflaged forms of religious mythos and religious behavior, assuming a caricatured expression of religious fanaticism.

"For but one example," Dr. Cohn observes, "we need only refer to the mythological structure of communism and its eschatological content. Marx takes over and continues one of the great eschatological myths of the Asiatic-Mediterranean world -- the redeeming world of the just (the chosen, the

¹ "Key '73, an Interim Report," compiled by Judith H. Banki, assistant inter-religious affairs director of the American Jewish Committee, documents the major developments of the national American dialogue over this year-long campaign "To Call the Continent to Christ." (Copies available from the Interreligious Affairs Department of the AJC.)

anointed, the innocent, the messenger: in our day, the proletariat) whose sufferings are destined to change the ontological status of the world. In fact, Marx's classless society and the consequent disappearance of historical tensions find their closest precedent in the myth of the Golden Age that many traditions put at the beginning and the end of history. Marx enriched this venerable myth by a whole Judeo-Christian messianic ideology; on the one hand, the prophetic and soteriological function that he attributes to the proletariat; on the other, the final battle between Good and Evil which is easily comparable to the apocalyptic battle between Christ and Anti-Christ, followed by the total victory of the former. It is even significant that Marx takes over for his own purposes the Judeo-Christian eschatological hope of an absolute end in history; in this he differs from other historicistic philosophers (Croce and Ortega y Gasset, for example); for whom the tensions of history are co-substantial with the human condition and therefore can never be completely done away with."

Communists and Nazis, Dr. Cohn, observes, have been at one in their murderous hatred of the Liberals and Socialists and reformers of every kind --and the reason for this is that Communists no less than Nazis have been obsessed by the vision of a prodigious "final decisive struggle" in which "a chosen people" will destroy a world tyranny and thereby inaugurate a new epoch of world history. The Nazi ideology was frankly obscurantist and atavistic. In the Nazi apocalypse the Aryan race was to purify the earth by annihilating the Jewish people, in the Communist apocalypse the bourgeoisie is to be exterminated by the proletariat.

While a variety of influences shaped the emergence of modern political theory in American democracy, the importance of the Reformation, the Puritan dissenters, and New England theology in the formation of the basic American principles of liberty and equality is difficult to exaggerate. (See. English Democratic Ideas, by G.P. Gooch; Paths of American Thought, by A.M. Schlesinger Jr. and Morton White.

Similarly, the critical influence of Eastern religions -- Hinduism, Buddhism, Islam, Confucianism, among others -- on shaping the attitudes of millions of people toward society, history, social change, and pluralism cannot be overestimated.

The foregoing is simply to suggest that any serious Jewish -- and generally humanistic -- effort to participate in thinking through a world view and helping to develop a conception of world community and pluralism that will assist the peoples and nations of the world through the present international turmoil of transition must perforce engage in a monumental study-action program of an interdisciplinary character -- one of whose central features will involve an in-depth examination of the salient influences of various religious attitudes and behavior patterns on ideological and political theories and systems, and consequently, on intergroup relations on a global scale.

Second, Judaism has a serious.....(the sentence doesn't follow -- text is missing here)..... a world Synod of Catholic Bishops will meet in Rome to launch a program on "The Evangelization of the World." It goes without saying that in an open world community, groups as persons have the freedom to proclaim

their version of the truth as they see it. By the same token, Judaism has a right to set forth its vision of the unity of the human family, and to provide a constructive criticism of those world-views which may be inimical to Jewish interest and perhaps those of other communities. As a vital religious faith and culture, I believe its teachers and leaders would be remiss in their obligations were they to fail to take an active part in such emerging global dialogues.

Given the fact that some of these "evangelical" conceptions of unifying the human family are "exclusivistic" -- that is, claim for themselves monopolies of salvation and deny the claims of Judaism and other valid world religions to truth and value, there is more than a theoretical issue involved in the Jewish community's setting forth its worldview. The teachings of Judaism that all men and women, of all faiths and groups, have "a share in the world to come" provided they observe the fundamental moral and ethical values (i.e., the "Seven Commandments of Noah") would constitute an essential balance to imperialist theologies and ideologies, and would enrich the global dialogue on pluralism.¹ On a defensive level, which responsible Jewish leadership has never scanted as a menial or trivial duty, it would signal determined or insensitive evangelical leaders of other faiths that Jews resent being perceived as candidates for conversion, and insist on a fundamental respect for Judaism as a living, vital faith to its adherents who require as a precondition for dialogue and basic human relationship that it be appreciated in its own terms. Christianity and

¹ See "Some Current Anthologies and World Community," (Theology Digest, 1973); "Religious Education in the Future Tense," (Relations Education Journal 197_); and "Judaism, Ecumenism and Pluralism," (Speaking of God Today, Fortress Press, 1974) by this author.

Islam, daughter faiths of Judaism, need to be reminded periodically that "Honor thy father and mother" is a fundamental article of the Ten Commandments of Sacred Scripture to which they profess fealty and commitment.

Those who are cynical about the usefulness of such an undertaking might well ponder the fact that the Jewish insistence on the clarification of the intentions of the Key 73 campaign ("To Call the Nation to Christ in 1973") toward the Jewish community did result in a series of significant statements by Christian leaders, many of whom for the first time declared that they had abandoned the proselytization of Jews as an evangelical goal. Among them was Dr. Billy Graham who told me forthrightly that "the covenant of God with Israel is permanent, forever." (See the study "Key 73: An Interim Report". This study contains a number of similar clarifications of theological positions by Christian leaders in many parts of the United States as a result of our national dialogue on this question.)

On another level, the presentation by Jewish scholars of Jewish views on the building of world community at a series of seminars with leaders of the World Council of Churches resulted in a number of key World Council leaders literally appropriating as their own the Jewish view of pluralism as "a community of communities" -- a significant departure from earlier views that consistently emanated from their World Board of Mission and Evangelism.

Third, Judaism which historically has staked its reason for being on the central affirmation that the Jewish people is a covenanted community with a task

of redemption in the world, continues to labor for the realization of a messianic age characterized by an end to hatred and bloodshed and by the achievement of universal peace, justice, and fraternity. If those are to be more than pietistic slogans, Jews are obligated to seek to promote those objectives in the actual interrelationships between nations and peoples. While the political and economic aspects of those objectives are appropriately and primarily the responsibilities of governments and inter-governmental agencies, from the perspective of a major religious-ethnic community the pursuit of such goals necessarily involves the Jewish community in a task of applying its ideals and values in relationship with other world religious communities.

Presupposed in that task is: (a) having knowledge about who those religious communities are, what they believe, what they are about in the world, their programs and activities; and (b) what their actual interrelationships are; and (c) what are the implications of that knowledge or information for Jewish policy-making and program.

What follows is a modest and very tentative attempt to sketch out that interreligious terrain on an international scale, with special reference to the "Third World" (for reasons that will be specified):

A - The Interreligious Scene on the International Arena

It will come as a shock to some, especially of a secularist bias, to learn that religious communities constitute the largest bodies of organization of the nearly 4 billion people who constitute the human family today. Without ignoring

or underestimating for a moment the diversity or the creedal and other conflicts that frequently divide these bodies, within themselves as well as between themselves, from the point of view of sociological data that fact is of profound importance, especially with regard to the question of the unity and pluralism of the human community. No profession, trade, fraternal association, nor academic discipline has the social instruments available to it to reach so many millions of human beings as do the variety of religious bodies on the world scene. Since religious communities are generally based on a search for the meaning of human existence and express values, aspirations, and deep feelings through symbols and group rituals, no other human institutions can mobilize the emotional commitments of their adherents -- for evil purposes as well as for good, as I shall indicate later -- as do the various world religious bodies.

To be specific, let us consider these world totals of religious populations:¹

Total Christian.....	1,024,105,500
Roman Catholic.....	577,633,500
Eastern Orthodox.....	123,185,000

¹ Britannica Book of the Year 1973. [Statistics of the world's religions are very rough approximations. Few religions attempt to keep accurate statistical records; Protestants and Catholics employ different methods of counting members. All persons of whatever age who have received baptism in the Catholic Church are counted as members, whereas in most Protestant Churches only those who "join" its church are numbered. The total Jewish population includes members of the Jewish community, whether or not related to the synagogue. The compiling of statistics is further complicated by the fact that in China one may be at the same time a Confucian, a Taoist and a Buddhist. In Japan, one may be both a Buddhist and a Shintoist. Nevertheless, the statistics are useful even as approximations in giving a picture of the religious communities of the world as organizing centers of large segments of the human community.]

Protestant.....	333,288,000
Jewish.....	13,989,650
Muslims.....	528,879,500
Confucianists.....	305,455,000
Buddhist.....	267,665,000
Hindu.....	477,658,500
Shinto.....	60,085,000
Taoist.....	51,883,000
Zoroastrian.....	180,000
TOTAL.....	2,729,902,150

An undertaking to promote the unity of the human family from a pluralist perspective must take practically into account these diverse and major religious communities, and seek to find ways to engage them in meaningful dialogue and relationship. The recent "Dialogue of Men of Living Faiths" held at Sri Lanka under the sponsorship of the World Council of Churches -- in which representatives of the world Jewish community took part for the first time -- is an important stage in that global process of promoting interreligious relationship. Bilateral and trilateral dialogues promoted by the several Vatican secretariats is another important development. The November 1970 Internal Colloquium on "Religion, Land, Nation, People," co-sponsored by the American Jewish Committee and the Hebrew University and held at the Truman Peace Center in Jerusalem, was a significant Jewish initiative that sought to involve representatives from most of the major religious communities of Europe, Asia, Africa, the Middle East,

Latin America and North America. (See Proceedings edited by this writer and Professor Zwi Werblowsky of Hebrew University, the co-chairmen of the colloquium).

RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN THE WORLD'S RELIGIOUS-ETHNIC GROUPS

As one scans even cursorily the world scene, it is evident that even as they have been the centers of promoting understanding and mutual trust, religious-ethnic communities are frequently the source of mutual hostility. Religion appears to be a powerful factor contributing to or employed by antagonists in virtually every major political and ideological conflict in the world today. In the recent India-Pakistan-Bangladesh conflict, Hinduism and Islam were prominent forces undergirding conflict. In Ireland, Catholicism and Protestantism are at the center of the nationalist struggles. In Nigeria, the Sudan, Uganda, the Philippines, Islam and Christianity were and are significant factors in promoting bloodshed and massacres. Religious beliefs linked with cultural and linguistic differences became the basis of serious group tensions or strife in Belgium, the Tyrol, Yugoslavia (Serbs and Croats), and Canada. In the Middle East, Judaism, Christianity and Islam are ever-present influences affecting the course of hostilities.

From the American Jewish Committee's pioneering studies of religious teachings used by Catholics, Protestants, and Jews, in the United States, Italy, Spain, France, Switzerland, Canada, Belgium, Latin America, and a preliminary study of Germany university materials, it is evident to us that in the Western Christian and Jewish teaching process a critical feature of religious pedagogy

is the underlying ambivalence that each religious community communicates about those outside one's own group. A love-hate quality seems to be characteristic of each of the Western major faiths in its perception of others, and for centuries preaching and teaching have tended to emphasize the "hateful" or "negative" or "rejection" side of relating to others. From a general reading of Islamic materials, it is apparent that the same ambivalence also is present toward non-Muslims.

It would be a most useful undertaking for concerned persons to study systematically the teaching materials of other major Oriental religions as well as Western religious and ethnic groups in terms of their interreligious or intergroup content. The practical human implications of such studies can be profound. During the Nigerian-Biafran conflict, we became aware of the conditioning that Yoruba ditties that spoke of Christian Ibos in demonic terms had on creating an atmosphere among Nigerian troops for decimating Ibos. In Ireland, we watched Catholic and Protestant children on television speak with hatred and contempt toward each other using the emotive vocabulary of religion - "damned Papists," the "lousy Prods." In the Middle East, textbooks used by Palestinian refugee children, paid for by UNRWA, have helped train a whole generation of children to feel and behave toward Israeli children as if they were the devil incarnate. Such teaching, when undergirded by deeply-felt theologies of belief systems of exclusiveness and monopolies of salvation are literally lethal in their national and international consequences, and ought not to be minimized as a substantial force for reinforcing hostility between groups and thereby inhibiting universal understanding and reconciliation.

The extremely positive experiences of the American Jewish Committee, which has pioneered in such interreligious and intergroup studies and in programming based on their findings encourages us to see our work as a potential model to be imitated on a global scale. After 2,000 years of Christian hatred of Jews that resulted in pogroms, massacres, inquisitions, and Auschwitz, Christians and Jews are collaborating today in many parts of the world in a major process to purify teachings and preachings about each other, and the results thus far are impressive. While not undervaluing for a moment, the magnitude and complexity of the task on an international basis, its importance for world peace and building world community are of such grave consequence that responsible people have no alternative but to address themselves to its achievement as a fundamental moral and human obligation.

IMPLICATIONS FOR THE JEWISH COMMUNITY

In the context of this international scene, there is a particular set of Jewish interests that call for examination. To state a complex matter simply, the emergence of the Arab nations as major economic and political powers as a result of the energy crisis has raised serious problems obviously for the Jewish people of Israel, but also for the world Jewish community. Those interests are vitally related to the attitudes of Islam and Christianity to Judaism and the Jewish people.

At the center of the new complex of Arab power sits King Faisal of Saudi Arabia, and it is now evident that his obsessive anti-Semitism and anti-Judaism have become deeply troubling to the Jewish community. The fact that King Faisal

has available billions of dollars with which to publish in numerous foreign languages such anti-Semitic diatribes as the discredited "Protocols of the Elders of Zion," "Mein Kampf" by Adolph Hitler, the anti-Semitic anthology, "Les Juifs," among other tracts, and to distribute these to the far corners of the earth has lifted up the potential for poisoning the atmosphere to unprecedented levels. (See AJC Interreligious Study of "Political and Religious Anti-Semitism").

King Faisal, whose religious title is "Protector of Islam," declared his position on the Jewish people during an interview in November 1973, and again in a speech a month later.

The Jews are accursed by God through the prophets...They have deviated from the teachings of Moses and have attempted to murder Jesus Christ ...They have no connection or right to have any presence in Jerusalem. The Wailing Wall is a structure they weep against, another wall can be built for them to weep against.

We know from reports made available to us from the director of our AJC European office, Abe Karlikow, and from other sources, that Islam, traditionally associated in many minds with the Arab world and those black Africans on the southern fringe of the Sahara desert, is today probably the fastest growing of Africa's many religions and ideologies. Scarcely a week passes without some fresh evidence to suggest that Islam is thrusting ever deeper into black Africa.

In the years since independence came to the majority of African states, Islam has had a number of advantages over other religions. First, the political and intellectual climate has been very propitious: in an atmosphere of post-colonial, anti-Western nationalism, the Moslem religion, because of its non-

western and non-white origins, and current following, has possessed obvious advantages over the various brands of Christianity. There are some 16 countries in Africa with predominantly Moslem populations numbering about 142,000,000 adherents, half of them south of the Sahara (see attached list of Muslim countries.) Ten of the 16 contain Christian populations of more than 500,000 -- Algeria, Chad, Egypt, Gambia, Mali, Morocco, Nigeria, Senegal and Sudan.

In Asia, there are approximately 376,269,000 Muslims.

In South America, 85,000 Muslims.

In North America, 200,000.

In Oceania (New Zealand, and Australia) 525,000

There are some 24 countries in Africa, with predominantly Christian populations number some 85 million adherents. Of this total, some 41 million are Roman Catholic (estimates vary), 26 million are Protestant; 16 million are Orthodox and Coptic; more than 7,500,000 are Independent Christian bodies which are growing rapidly. (7 of the 24 "Christian" countries have Muslim populations number more than 500,000 each - Cameroons (500,000), Ethiopia (5 million), Ghana (500,000), Ivory Coast (1 million); Malagasay (500,000); Malawi (500,000), Mozambique (500,000), Southwest Africa (3.1 million).

Altogether, there are between 45-50 million Catholics in Asia out of a total population of nearly 2 billion, i.e. about 2%.

[The Christians, however great their following or appeal, have been saddled with associations with the colonial-missionary past. This helps explain the tremendous growth of independent breakaway African Christian churches.]

The spread of Islam has also been helped by money from some of the Arab states, one can see this as a factor likely to grow in importance; for while once it was western Europe's wealth which lent so much force to Christian Evangelism, now the oil price boom is spurring Islamic conversions.

On March 29, 1974, a Lutheran expert on Islam, Dr. Gunnar Hasselbatt reported in Ethiopia that an influx of missionary funds from Arab oil-producing nations, namely, Saudi Arabia, Egypt, Libya, Algeria, and Tunisia, is flowing into Eastern and Sub-Sahara Africa and could greatly increase the size and status of the Muslim community across Africa. Until the oil producing nations came into international prominence and began to realize large profits from sales to industrial lands, Muslim missionaries lacked the financial backing that Christian workers received from Europe and America. That seems to be changing. Efforts to convert Ugandan army officers to Islam are noted in Kampala. The rapid development of Muslim schools, orphanages, water projects, and agricultural centers is reported in other areas. Ethiopian sheiks are trying to obtain teachers of Arabic from Arab countries. The funds, he said, would help to boost the morale of the Moslem believers, for whom more services could be provided free of charge. (Religious News Service, 1974)

Islam is spreading not only in Africa but even into the heartland of Roman Catholicism. Rome, for the first time in its history, is to have a mosque. The Moslem community has been pressing one for years, and Mussolini would have liked one in the 1930s to back his so-called championship of Islam, but the Vatican always objected. In January 1974, the Vatican intimated that the veto would be waived, provided that Rome's special character as the center of Roman Catholicism was respected. There is a report that a Tunisian architect is designing a mosque with seven minarets, one for each of the hills of Rome - and the cost will be about \$20 million, much of it paid for by Saudi Arabia.

The Italian press has been reporting that a Moslem religious offensive is underway in black Africa. One report speaks of hundred of Moslem missionaries criss-crossing the continent, reciting the Koran, opening schools and promising wives, concubines, and all the good things that Libyan money can buy. However exaggerated they may be, Islam is without a doubt a live force, as can be seen from the conversion of President Bongo of Gabon (500,000 Christian population) or from the thousands of pilgrims who throng many African airports awaiting transport for the annual hadj to Mecca.

Colonel Qadafi of Libya, besides providing financial aid, has begun attacking Christianity in public ways. On a visit to Uganda in early March he told Makerere university students that Christianity came to Africa as a machination of imperialism and not as a heavenly message. (This has to be balanced by the fact that Libyan Prime Minister Abdussualam Jalloud recently visited Rome during which he has a one and half hour meeting with Pope Paul and expressed interest in exchanging diplomatic representatives.)

INFORMED OBSERVERS BELIEVE THAT MUCH OF THE SERIOUS INTEREST IN SPREADING ISLAM COMES FROM SAUDI ARABIA, AND HAS BEEN UNDER WAY FOR SOME YEARS, KING FEISAL, FOR EXAMPLE, VISITED UGANDA, CHAD, SENEGAL, MAURITANIA AND NIGER IN 1972.

The progress of Islam is arousing some concern in the Vatican, and the subject was considered at the last annual assembly of the Congregation for the Evangelization of Peoples. Those deliberations, we learn, included the following concerns:

- in areas where Islam was the official religion, its attitude was one of rigidity toward the Church, which was identified with Western powers.
- in certain other areas, Islam was advancing rapidly, in rivalry with Christian communities.
- there were reports of a "holy war" backed by large sums of money, in the distant southern Philippines - with implications that these efforts were other than religious.
- an examination of the conversion and pilgrimage to Mecca of certain African rulers.

- The allocation of "immense sums" by certain oil-rich Arab countries often for pressures of a political character.

The greatest Moslem pressure at present is in Chad, Dahomey, Ivory Coast, Nigeria, Senegal, Sudan, Ethiopia, Tanzania, and Uganda.

It is here of interest to note that Israel's relations with these countries have been subjected to these Moslem pressures, resulting in breaking of relations and the ending of Israel's technical assistance programs. This has affected Israel's program of helping to grow cotton and pharmaceuticals in Ethiopia (5 million Christians, 5 million Muslims), Gabon (500,000 Christians whose President Bongo converted to Islam; Israel ran shipping program), Ghana (2 million Christians, 500,000 Muslims, President Nkrumah had leased two state farms to Israel; in 1965, Ghana was Israel's best customer); Ivory Coast (1 million Christians; 1 million Muslims; Israel ran agricultural program, built \$50 million African Riviera program); Kenya (2,500,000 Christians; President Jomo Kenyatta, spoke of the "good example of Israel"), Tanzania (3,500,000 Christians; a socialist country, while critical of Israel, requested aid in building cooperative agricultural settlements - the ujamaa, also sought Israel's technical assistance; Guinea (2,400,000 Christians, 1,600,00 Moslems, broke relations with Israel); Mali (2,800,00 Christians, 1,897,000 Moslems, had expanded relations with Israel.)

It is either completely or nearly impossible for foreign missionaries to operate in Guinea, Equatorial Guinea or Somalia, while pressure is strong for indigenization in Uganda. Zaire has dissolved the permanent bishops conference and placed restrictions on meetings. Conditions are far from normal as a result of civil strife in Burundi and to a lesser degree Rwanda.

The Sudan is a delicate country, as the southern rebels in the recent civil war were mostly Christians or animists fighting the Moslem north. But in many ways Roman Catholic relations with the civil authorities are remarkably good. (The authorities are helpful over facilities for schools in Khartoum and the north, while a Roman Catholic church and school have been built near the Eritrean frontier. Saint Paul major seminary has been reopened since the civil war in Juba in the south.) The authorities are deliberately slowing down on issuing permits for foreign missionaries to return to the south, while during 1973 the government has opened in the south about 15 Koranic schools.

Nigeria is also seen as potentially very delicate country, as many of the former defeated Ibos in the civil war were Roman Catholics and foreign missionaries were expelled from former Ibo territory. In the north missionary work goes on where possible.

ON THE PLUS SIDE, THE ROMAN CATHOLIC CHURCH IN EAST AFRICA REPORTS A BOOM IN RELIGIOUS VOCATIONS, AND A MEETING IN NAIROBI IN DECEMBER 1973 OF THE ASSOCIATION OF BISHOPS CONFERENCES OF KENYA, MALAWI, TANZANIA, UGANDA AND ZAMBIA DISCUSSED PROBLEMS OF PROVIDING ENOUGH SEMINARY FACILITIES.

In Rome, the Vatican Secretariat for Non-Christians, established in 1964, seeks to study the Moslem religion and promote practical collaboration. Christian and Moslem authorities in Dakar issued joint statements on issues such as housing and women's problems; Moslems joined in a pilgrimage in April to a Marian sanctuary in Kita, Mali; West African Roman Catholic bishops set up an informal commission in Lome Togo for contacts with Moslems, Bishop Enrico Dias Nogueira was invited to attend a service in a mosque in Vila Cabral, Mozambique.

IN THE LONG RUN, WHATEVER THE PREOCCUPATIONS OF TODAY, THERE IS A SURPRISING CONFIDENCE IN ROME THAT CHRISTIANITY WILL ADVANCE MORE QUICKLY IN AFRICA THAN ISLAM. ONE STUDY FORECASTS THAT BY THE YEAR 2000 THERE WILL BE 25 MILLION MORE CHRISTIANS IN THAT CONTINENT THAN MOSLEMS. IT IS BELIEVED THEY WILL RISE FROM A MERE FOUR MILLION AT THE START OF THIS CENTURY TO 351 MILLION, AGAINST A MOSLEM INCREASE OF 32 TO 326 MILLION. (SOME ARE DUBIOUS ABOUT THIS PROJECTION.)

In Africa today, there are 3,469 Priests and Bishops, more than half of whom are black. There are 12,000 missionary clergy. In 1973 200 African men were ordained as priests. The Roman Catholic Church is anything but passive in Africa. In Chad about 90 Jesuit priests are active among Moslems in the diocese of N'Djamena, promoting youth clubs, young farmers' activities, sports and cultural events, and a publication "Tchad et Culture." Combonian sisters have set up a community at Gioli and others toward the Central African Republic. French Capuchins have built a house among the Moslems of Dikhil Village. In Egypt, Combonian sisters have opened a community near Luxor. In Sierre Leone, Italian and Spanish missionaries with Irish and Mexican sisters are teaching

17,000 children despite strong Moslem infiltrations. In the Cameroons, a small group of Italian priests have moved to Yagua in the north to work among Moslems and animists.

A few words about Protestant missionaries (based on the Mission Handbook, a Brief History of North American Overseas Missions, by J. Herbert Kane, Prof. of Missions, School of World Missions, Trinity Evangelical Divinity School, Deerfield, Illinois):

NORTH AMERICA NOW ACCOUNTS FOR 70% OF ALL PROTESTANT MISSIONARIES IN THE WORLD, AND AN EVEN HIGHER PERCENTAGE OF THE TOTAL COST OF THE WORLDWIDE OPERATION (THE UJA OF PROTESTANTISM). Today practically every denomination in the U.S.A. and Canada has its own foreign mission board. BEFORE WORLD WAR II, 1 OUT OF 3 PROTESTANT MISSIONARIES IN THE WORLD WERE FROM NORTH AMERICAN. TODAY, THE RATIO IS 2 OUT OF 3.

The early missionaries (dating back to 1812 when American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions settled for India; and 1819 for Middle East) being themselves college bred, naturally had a flair for education. Not only in the Middle East where education had to substitute for evangelism, but in the Far East as well, they opened schools and colleges. In the face of stern opposition they pioneered in the field of education for women. Some of the most prestigious institutions were founded by American missionaries of the 19th century. (Robert College in Constantinople, American University in Beirut, Yenching University in Peking, American University in Cairo, Mackenzie Institute in Brazil, American Institute of Cochabombo, Bolivia.)

In the case of Britain, France and Germany, the cross often followed the flag, but not so in North America. American missionaries having no flag abroad to follow in the 19th century went to all the major regions of the world.

American boards of foreign missions today have more missionary candidates than they are able to accept. THOUSANDS OF COLLEGE STUDENTS ENGAGE EACH SUMMER IN MISSIONARY WORK OVERSEAS. The 1970 Urbana Missionary Conference attracted 12,000 young people. The Campus Crusade for Christ is greatly expanding its overseas work and hope to complete the evangelization of the world in the next decade. Expo 74 in Korea is expected to attract 300,000 persons. "There is no doubt that the North American churches have the technical, financial and spiritual resources to finish the job in this generation if only they will rise to the occasion," Professor Kane asserts.

Among the U.S. Catholics, the Society for the Propagation of the Faith collects one-half of the contributions made by Catholics throughout the world to the central mission fund for indigenous churches through local directors in 165 Catholic diocese.

The U.S. Catholic church, which was itself "a mission church" until 1908, has sent as of 1973, 7,600 missionaries who are active in 116 mission fields. Some 15% of those missionaries are active in Africa, 26% in Asia, 45% in Latin America; about 2500 in the Philippines (90% Catholic country), Peru, Brazil, Puerto Rico, and Japan; 340 missionaries in Alaska, Hawaii, and Canada, 9.5% in Oceania; a handful in North America and in Europe.

(add other data)

In Africa, U.S. Protestant missionaries have a huge stake in Liberia, Nigeria, Cameroon, Congo (Zaire), Ethiopia, Kenya, Angola, Mozambique. In the Middle East, U.S. shared this "barren field" with the Anglicans. (During World War I and again after World War II, American Lutherans went to the aid of "orphaned" German Lutheran missions in various parts of the world.) They had the continent of Latin America almost exclusively to themselves. Same was true of Indo-China and the Philippines. They were the dominant group in Burma, Thailand, Malaya, Korea. They were more than 50% in China, Japan, and Formosa, and a sizeable body in British India.

By 1945, the Student Volunteer Movement sent 20,500 volunteers overseas.

Evangelical groups have been forging ahead, while some ecumenical missions have been retrenching. (Evangelical groups regard Christian Europe a mission field. Today there are more than 1500 North American missionaries in Europe, divided almost equally between Roman Catholic and Protestant countries.)

The American Bible Society carries the largest share of the total budget of the United Bible societies. The Wycliffe Bible translators, with 3000 members, is now working in 540 tribes in 24 countries. Their aim is to make the Bible available to the 2% of the world's population that is still without the Scriptures. They anticipate the task will be completed by 1985.

SOME IMPLICATIONS

1) Christianity, like Islam, has a high prestige in Africa and many people who claim to be Christian rarely ever go to church.

2) Churches have put parts of the Bible into more than 500 African tongues, and this has been one of the most influential ways of naturalizing the religion, both in the older churches and the independents.

3) African Independent Churches are strongly Biblical. Bishop Sundkler, writing on Bantu Prophets in South Africa, said there are two main types of prophetic and healing churches, the Ethiopian and the Zionist: In Uganda, the Society of the One Almighty God, the Christian Apostolic Church in Zion; the Cherubim and the Seraphim in Ghana, Liberia, Sierre Leone, Ivory Coast, Togo, and Dahomey.

The "Zionist" churches claim to come from Mt. Zion in Jerusalem, emphasizing healing by faith, speaking in tongues in ecstasy, rites of purification and taboos on blood, pork and alcohol based on the Old Testament.

In 1911 Prophet Isaiah Shembe, seceded from Baptists over observance of the Sabbath. His Ama Nazaretha Church has set up a Holy Mountain of Nazarites. A great power among the Zulus, he is shown more respect than any Zulu chief.

H. W. Turner, reflecting an anti-Jewish theme, writes, "The Nazarites are too much under the influence of the Old Testament, speaking of Jehovah and the Spirit, but little of Jesus."

4) The missionaries have made a special contribution to the development of modern education. Christian schools are important educational institutions in every major city of Africa and Asia.

THESE SCHOOLS HELPED PREPARE THE FIRST GENERATION OF AFRICAN AND ASIAN MIDDLE CLASS LEADERS WHO WOULD BE ABLE TO CONTINUE THE ADMINISTRATION OF THE COUNTRIES AFTER COLONIAL RULE. They have trained African clergy, lay leaders, teachers, prophets, doctors, healers, and instructed church members.

5) They have witnessed to certain spiritual values, especially dedication to poor and needy. They have been influential in enhancing the dignity of the person and respect for the downtrodden.

They counteracted forces of fatalistic which tend to blame physical and other evils in one's past life. They brought an element of rationality in face of life's problems both personal and social.

6) Social service on a person-to-person nature has been a distinct contribution of Christians in all African and Asian countries.

7) They have helped to fight such social evils as caste and race among Africans and Asians.

8) They have helped achieve openness in modern Africa and Asia to science and technology.

9) They have introduced organization and the use of mass media.

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