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evaluation study, 1960.

THE NATIONAL CONFERENCE OF CHRISTIANS & JEWS

Evaluation Study

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I HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

The National Conference of Christians and Jews was established in 1927 to deal specifically with inter-religious tensions. It emerged as a response to the religious prejudices, especially the anti-Catholicism, rampant in the 1920's. It grew out of the Committee of Good Will between Jews and Christians which was established in 1924 by the Federal (now National) Council of Churches at the initiative of Dr. Alfred W. Anthony and Dr. S. Parkes Cadman, past President of the Federal Council, and with the financial support of B'nai B'rith.

America in the 1920's was seriously divided by religious dissension. This phenomenon was not altogether new to the American Continent. Until the advent of the Civil War, anti-Catholicism was a major political issue. It was not limited to a "lunatic fringe" of discredited bigots but it received vocal and powerful support from respected political and religious leaders. Convents, Catholic Churches and schools were burned, the Pope was burned in effigy at various places, in a riot in Louisville nearly 100 Irish Catholics lost their lives and in St. Louis 40 persons were killed or seriously wounded.

The extent of prejudice and bigotry was reflected in the volume of public support that political parties supporting bigotry received in the various parts of the United States. The "Nativists" (Native American Movement) was an aggressive political party organized in the 1840's to exclude all foreigners from public office and to so change the naturalization law as to impede the immigration and naturali-

zation of Irish immigrants Native Americans elected James Harper as Mayor of New York City and made impressive showings in other urban areas The "Nativists" were succeeded by the "Know-Nothing Party" which, in 1854, elected governors in 9 states, 8 of the 62 members of the Senate, and 104 of the 234 members of the House of Representatives The following oath of bigotry was required upon admission to the "Know-Nothing Party " "That you will not vote nor give your influence to any man for any office in the gift of the people unless he be an American born citizen, in favor of Americans ruling America, nor if he be a Roman Catholic "

The Civil War stilled these religious hatreds but in the wake of World War I America experienced one of its darkest decades with the revival of the Ku Klux Klan which is estimated to have had approximately nine million members in 1925 This dark decade reached its depths in the campaign of calumny and vilification accompanying the presidential campaign of Alfred E Smith

The Federal Council of Churches, at its convention in 1923 in Atlanta, Georgia, concerned itself with the question "What makes a person join the Ku Klux Klan?" The establishment of the Committee of Good Will under the direction of Rev John W Herring, was an effort to find an answer and solution Actually this pioneering venture germinated in John Herring's mind some years before James N Yard, an early director of the Chicago Round Table of the National Conference wrote in April 1946 to Dr Robert Ashmore, "John Herring, then Minister of the Congregational Church in Terre Haute, formed a committee of Protestants and Jews to combat the Klan in Indiana because it was especially fierce against the Catholics I think it was that experience of Herring's that prompted the formation of the Good Will Committee out of which grew the National Conference " In 1927, Rev Herring also undertook the direction of the National Conference of Christians and Jews which had been established as a result of a series of conferences which were held chiefly between Protestants and Jews on the subject of religious mis-

understandings The National Conference was an outgrowth of the consensus among the discussants that there was a real need for a program of a much larger scope than was possible under specifically Protestant auspices The misgivings of fundamentalist Protestant groups within the Federal Council of Churches, also necessitated the establishment of a separate inter-religious agency operating under non-sectarian auspices In 1928, John Herring resigned as executive secretary and recommended as his successor, Rev Everett R Clinchy, then minister of the College Church at Wesleyan University

II THE OBJECTIVES AND PROGRAM OF THE NATIONAL CONFERENCE OF CHRISTIANS AND JEWS DURING ITS FIRST DECADE

The National Conference of Christians and Jews pioneered a program comprising a rich variety of approaches almost completely devoted to the problems of inter-religious tensions and conflicts The Trios, Round Tables, Institutes, joint religious Thanksgiving Services, Brotherhood meetings and dinners represented completely new departures and the first historical break-through of the walls that separated and divided Catholic clergy from Protestant clergy and Christians from Jews

One of Dr Clinchy's first moves, upon becoming Director of the National Conference of Christians and Jews, was to invite C E Silcox, a Protestant who had done considerable research on Protestant fears concerning Catholics and Catholicism, to join him in organizing a two day seminar at Columbia University at which Catholics, Protestants and Jews would have an opportunity to discuss inter-religious tensions President Nicholas Murray Butler chaired the sponsoring committee Father Wilfred Parson, S J , exhibited a collection of anti-Catholic tracts and handbills distributed only a few months earlier during the campaign of Alfred E Smith In small groups and person-to-person confrontation, Protestants, Catholics and Jews talked to one another about inter-religious tensions and conflicts

It was during a panel on "Education and Miseducation in Religion" that the

seminar reached its most dramatic peak. There were no attempts to evade or compromise areas of religious conflict.

Protestants protested the Catholic's belief that his faith is "the one true faith." A Catholic priest rose to say that certainly Catholics believe, with regard to their unique revelation of God's truth, that it is the one true religion which the Catholic Church is charged to preach in every corner of the earth.

"We are not going to change," he said, "You non-Catholics have got to learn to get along with citizens who feel this way."

Rabbi Landman of Brooklyn, long devoted to the cause of inter-religious understanding, spoke up. He could understand such a statement, he said, because Jews felt the same way with regard to the Torah - the truth in Judaism. "Therefore, the problem is to agree to disagree agreeably." There was a releasing laugh. Then a Protestant bluntly asked "Must I, a Methodist, go to Hell?"

A Roman Catholic priest smiled broadly as he stood up to reply. "That's up to you," he said. "In Catholic theology God in His infinite wisdom allows freedom of conscience. I would hope that you would become a Catholic. But as long as your reason and conscience truly lead you to do otherwise, you have as good a chance to get to heaven as any Catholic."

Freedom of conscience, so respected and adhered to in NCCJ's formative days, was to become a basic principle in the organization's future work.

"I suppose that nothing will ever touch the excitement of the first institute at Columbia the beginning year," Dr. Clinchy observed recently. "I believe that those discussions set the tone which has rung through the history of the National Conference of Christians and Jews."

"We have discovered civic values in the proper use of the culture diversity in this land and in the world. There are uses mankind is only beginning to understand in the dynamism of cultural pluralism in group relations. Striving for brotherhood, we early learned, requires an affection for diversity."

This was a point emphatically restated later by Chief Justice Charles Evans Hughes when Dr Clinchy, Roger Straus and Basil O'Connor visited his home to make the first awards of the National Conference of Christians and Jews to him as a founder Said Justice Hughes "If we ever lose the right to be different, we shall lose the right to be free "

Seminars of the same general nature were held in the same year and soon thereafter at the following universities Smith, Brown, New York University, Syracuse, Cornell, Northwestern, University of Washington, University of California, University of Wisconsin, University of Nevada, University of Colorado, Connecticut State College, Rollins, Goucher, Johns Hopkins, Drake, Sarah Lawrence, Wesleyan, Bucknell, Dickerson, Ohio State, and Loyola University in New Orleans

In 1932 at the Washington Seminar, Professor Hayes stated succinctly the underlying philosophy of the National Conference of Christians and Jews

"What has saved us as a nation in the past from despotism and the denial of human liberties is primarily our religious, racial and cultural pluralism That pluralism we must retain, and the only way by which we can retain it is to accept the differences among Catholics, Protestants and Jews as facts and as desirable facts, to recognize that each group enriches rather than impoverishes the American scene and the national tradition and, while learning to respect one another's peculiarities, to learn also to cooperate in the responsible tasks of American citizenship

"We differ as groups, but we have like human interests and joint civil obligations We certainly can and should cooperate to achieve social and economic justice in this country, to educate for world peace, to deal intelligently with delinquency and crime, to cultivate standards of good taste, to safeguard human rights "

In 1933, the Reichstag Building was gutted by Fire and the godless Nazis rose to absolute power On the eve of Halloween of the same year, a Catholic

priest, Father John E Reiss of Charlottesville, Virginia, Rabbi Morris S Lazaron of Baltimore, Maryland, and Dr Everett R Clinchy began a historical good will pilgrimage that was to mark one of the many "firsts" that the National Conference pioneered in the area of inter-religious relations

The first "Trio" covered more than 9,000 miles in their pilgrimage and laid the groundwork for a large number of regional chapters This pioneering team was followed up by many "trio" pilgrimages In 1936, Father Ahearn visited 27 cities In 1939, he reported that he had addressed 70 meetings in 19 cities and towns before a total of 42,000 people This intrepid pioneer of religious brotherhood from Western College, Massachusetts, spoke, in a period of 15 years, more than 2,500 times and traveled over 50,000 miles for the National Conference of Christians and Jews

The Saturday Evening Post reported in 1940 that, "During 1939, Protestant, Catholic and Jewish speakers appeared together at 10,000 meetings in 2,000 communities in all of the 48 states In the last 12 years it is estimated that Protestants, Catholics and Jews sat down together 250,000 times to consider their relations as American citizens belonging to differing religious bodies That is a social change which has permanent effects The Trialogues are becoming an established American technique "

The first of the renowned Williamstown Institutes (National Institute of Human Relations) was held in August, 1935 on the campus of Williams College in Williamstown, Massachusetts Six hundred and eighty-five leaders of religion, education, business, and labor - 375 Protestants, 175 Jews and 135 Catholics - lived together in close personal contact, and participated in active discussions for a period of one week

The first seminar was organized "to give an opportunity for leaders among Catholics, Jews and Protestants to consider thoroughly and systematically some of their common interests and concerns as citizens in American communities,

and to plan community and educational programs which will result in better community relations " It was billed as "An American Adventure in Promoting Understanding and Community Cooperation "

It was at this conference that the purpose of the National Conference was defined by the late Newton D Baker and Professor Carleton J H Hayes With the addition of a single adjective, their definition continues to constitute the statement of purpose in an article in the Constitution of the National Conference of Christians and Jews which reads "Believing in a spiritual interpretation of the universe and deriving its inspiration therefrom, the National Conference exists to promote justice, amity, understanding and cooperation among Protestants, Catholics and Jews and to analyze, moderate and finally eliminate inter-group prejudices which disfigure and distort religious, business, social and political relations, with a view to the establishment of a social order in which the religious ideals of brotherhood and justice shall become the standards of human relations "

The second Williamstown Institute of Human Relations was held in the summer of 1937, and its theme was "Public Opinion in a Democracy " In 1939, the third Williamstown Institute, organized around the subject of "Citizenship and Religion", was attended by over 1,200 citizens Typical forums discussed the Church's relationship to economic reform, legislation, civil liberties, education, and social welfare

The fourth and final biennial Institute drew a record number of fourteen hundred Protestant, Catholic, and Jewish leaders from thirty-six states to Williamstown to discuss "The World We Want To Live In " A galaxy of national personalities guided the program, with the opening panel on "Inalienable Rights - Inescapable Duties " At this Institute, the delegates concluded that "Religion must assert its leadership as a living force in the moral values of the nation Our form of government was devised in principles flowing from deep religious conviction Every essential of any free society springs from the concepts of morality, moral

life and duties, and faith in the Fatherhood of God and the Brotherhood of Man. Each of these is denied by the purely materialistic philosophies of totalitarianism."

In 1938, the National Conference established Round Tables in 1,150 communities. These local Round Tables, comprising the leading citizens of Christian and Jewish faiths, "served as a clearing house for common understanding and furnished opportunities to mobilize spiritual forces."

The National Conference prepared detailed source books and syllabi for the Round Table Seminars. The following is a citation of several of the Round Table topics:

ROUND TABLE ONE

Jew and Christian

- 1 (a) What kinds of injustices, misunderstandings, or misrepresentations have occurred in our community?
- (b) What are the chief causes?
- 2 (a) In what ways have Jewish and Christian groups cooperated in our community?
- (b) What limitations are there to cooperation?
- 3 What may be said to be the results of attempts at improving Christian-Jewish relations?

ROUND TABLE TWO

Catholic and Protestant

- 1 What are the chief instances of social friction which have arisen between Catholic and Protestant groups in our community?
- 2 What are the origins and causes of the difficulties which have occurred?
- 3 In what situations have Protestants and Catholics cooperated with one another?
- 4 What types of cooperation are possible? Which are impossible? Why?
- 5 What evidences are there in the community of more cooperative relations between Catholics and Protestants?

ROUND TABLE THREE

The Problems of our Loyalties and Antipathies

- 1 What makes one a Protestant? A Jew? A Catholic?
- (a) Where and how do we get our beliefs and loyalties?
- (b) How do we acquire our customary attitudes toward other religious and other racial groups?

(c) What are the influences of

- 1 Social heritage
 - 2 Childhood experiences
 - 3 Environment and contacts (fortunate and unfortunate) with other groups
- 2 In what ways can we remove injustice from our relations with members of other religious faiths? How? How do we change our mind?
 - 3 What instances have we of leaders in our country who are loyal to their own group and also highly appreciative of the ideas of other groups? What instances of such persons elsewhere? What instances of national leaders?
 - 4 What are the goals to be striven for in our personal attitudes toward those from whom we differ?

This intensive program of activities in the field of inter-religious relations was further enriched by the innovation of joint religious Thanksgiving Services, The Religious Emphasis Week, The Religious News Service, and by the celebration in 1931 of America's first Brotherhood Week. The concept of a Brotherhood Week, initiated by Father Hugh L. McMennamin of the Catholic Cathedral in Denver, took deep root and soon became broadened and institutionalized as a Presidentially sponsored Brotherhood Month.

III THE CONTRIBUTIONS OF THE NCCJ TO THE FIELD OF INTER-RELIGIOUS RELATIONS

Very few organizations have equalled the rich variety and challenging quality of the NCCJ programming during its first decade. Inspired by a vision of religious unity and understanding and coupled with great courage and program ingenuity, the founders and leaders of the NCCJ made significant and pioneering contributions to the alleviation of inter-religious tensions. It is not particularly difficult to point out the weaknesses of the NCCJ program, the fallacies of its strategy and the limitations of its horizons. (We shall later discuss some of these.) But this should not cause us to gainsay any of the genuinely major and worthwhile contributions that the NCCJ did make to the promotion of inter-group harmony.

- 1 The very concept and techniques of the NCCJ were of a ground breaking nature. The pages of history record instances of religious dialogue imposed on a religious minority for the purpose of conversion. But there is no precedent in

the theological and intellectual history of man for the Trios, Institutes, and Round Tables, and many other such occasions which assembled Catholic, Protestant and Jewish clergy and laymen for cordial discussions of theological differences and of tension-creating situations

2 In spite of the many ties of common religious heritage and destiny which unite Christians and Jews, Protestants and Catholics, the tendency has always been in the past to accentuate the differences in "ethos and cultus" and to emphasize these historical pressures and experiences that have divided people and incited religious conflicts. The NCCJ achieved another "first" by pointing up the convergence of our spiritual insights, the confluence of the streams of our religious traditions - all of which unite us in our common Judaeo - Christian heritage

3 The NCCJ was the first non-sectarian agency to provide a common ground and flag for the rallying of men and women of good will for the fight against bigotry and religious hatred. The support for the Ku Kluxers, the Silver Shirts and Native Fascists was articulate and well organized. The NCCJ was a pioneering movement to organize and counterpoise the pro-democratic elements in the community

The existence of the NCCJ helped to re-affirm the convictions and strengthened the salience of the American democratic creed in the mind of the average American. The collapse of organized bigotry is in a large part attributable to the effectiveness of the NCCJ in evoking and stimulating pro-democratic leadership

4 The American culture does not have a completely consistent and integrated value-structure. Gunnar Myrdal demonstrated the hiatus between the values of the American Creed and the operative values of the society. He spoke of the "ever-raging conflict between, on the one hand, the valuations preserved on the general plane which we shall call the 'American Creed' where the American thinks, talks, and acts under the influence of high national and Christian precepts, and, on the other hand, the valuations on specific planes of individual and group living, where

personal and local interests, economic, social and sexual jealousies, considerations of community prestige and conformity, group prejudice against particular persons or types of people, and all sorts of miscellaneous wants, impulses, and habits dominate his outlook "

There can be no doubt that the American doctrine of democracy, its avowal of equality and the inalienable rights of man and its underlying Judaeo-Christian commitment to the "Brotherhood of Man" as a corollary of the "Fatherhood of God" is utterly inconsistent with religious prejudices and racism. Nevertheless, our culture has been hospitable to racism, discrimination and inter-group conflicts that affect a large proportion of our people.

It is difficult to grow up in America without being exposed to and moulded by stereotyped thinking and prejudiced behaviour that have no relation whatsoever to personal experience. Numerous studies suggest that prejudice is most rampant in precisely those areas where minority groups are least numerous and where there is little or no opportunity for personal experience. In fact, some of the greatest centers of anti-Semitism, anti-Catholicism and anti-Negro prejudice are in regions where members of these groups do not reside in large numbers. Americans become prejudiced by being exposed to powerful orientations and currents of thought reflecting norms of bigotry.

It becomes, therefore, so very important to evoke and enlist the vocal support of the moral forces and leadership of the community. As Professor R. M. MacIver, one of America's leading and senior social scientists recommended, "nor can there be any question concerning the desirability of mustering the moral forces that make and bind the community. Indeed, without the dynamics of these forces no social cause can triumph. We, therefore, agree with Gunnar Myrdal that it is an essential of strategy to evoke the powerful spiritual aid that inheres in the living conception of human brotherhood and in the democratic creed that the value of personality is not to be measured or bounded by distinctions of color or ethnic origin.

"There are, moreover, some types of discrimination for which the prestige factor has a special significance. Hence the counterattacks of prestige leaders are so salutary. It helped when Pope Pius XI, referring to the language of the Mass that calls Abraham 'our patriarch and ancestor,' declared that anti-Semitism is not compatible with the sublime reality of this text. We are spiritually Semites. It helped when General Eisenhower opened the drive of the United Jewish Appeal for the relief of European Jews and declared that mutual confidence between groups was a primary world need. It helped when Eric A. Johnston, then President of the American Chamber of Commerce, spoke forcefully of group superiority as 'the myth that threatens America.' It helps when anyone who has a considerable following puts his influence on the side of inter-group equality whether he be the President of the United States appealing against discrimination in the name of the 'American Creed' or Frank Sinatra telling his adolescent admirers that differences of race or color should never allow them to forget that all citizens of America have equal rights."

The NCCJ was doing precisely this when it enlisted what it called, "the power structure" of each community in official and public support of the "American Creed" of brotherhood and fair play. This represented an avowal that the American philosophy of man is not registered in an old or new version of the KKK, but is reflected in our Judaeo-Christian heritage as translated by the Bill of Rights and the American Constitution. Undoubtedly, many of those who lent their names to the public support of the NCCJ were tainted by the all-too-frequent dichotomy between public profession and private practice. Nevertheless, their public declarations helped invaluablely to strengthen the norms and values represented by the "American Creed." It may be of interest to note that the acceptance of this Creed is sufficiently pervasive and respected that when the New York State legislature recently held hearings on legislation against discrimination in employment, hundreds of leading New Yorkers spoke in favor of the legislation in contrast to the complete absence

of any negative voices. Undoubtedly, a large portion of our New York population discriminates in practice and is prejudiced in belief, but the appeal of the "American Creed" is sufficient to discourage a public display of its rejection. People will break it in private behavior but will not flout it publicly. In short, the NCCJ performed an important public service in articulating and dramatizing the "American Creed" during a period in our history when it was under severe and public attack.

5 The NCCJ also dealt effectively with many overt expressions of prejudice. The following incident is an illustration of this aspect of the conference's work.

"In the 1930's, some organizers for the Silver Shirts came to a small city in Michigan to start a hate movement. Immediately the local branch of the National Conference of Christians and Jews went to work. They called on the municipal authorities, the service clubs, the Chamber of Commerce, labor unions, youth leaders, women's clubs, fraternal orders, veterans' posts, school principals, the clergy, the radio owners, and the newspaper editors. They told about the hate hucksters. They proved that it would be bad for business, bad for politics, bad for the city's morale and reputation, and disastrous to religion. Each institution accepted its share of responsibility to go to work and immunize the population against the appeals of the hate organizers. In two weeks time the organizers left town, their movement died."

No empirical study has been conducted to evaluate objectively the extent of the NCCJ's contribution to the allaying of inter-group tensions. There is, however, a considerable body of impressionistic data which indicates significant effects.

In 1954, Archbishop Gerald Bergen testified that in the 1930's, NCCJ teams of teachers changed the cultural climate of Iowa from inter-group fear, mistrust and isolation, to understanding, good will and cooperation. Bishop Bergen, who served the state during the heyday of the KKK, witnessed the amazing transition that the Brotherhood program brought about in spite of Klan activities and the Nazi racial propaganda of the period.

Professor A M Lee, in a study of the effectiveness of the NCCJ conducted in 1924, reported that "the National Conference was created in 1928 as a means for treating prejudice as a mental disease, to quote a conclusion stated by Dr David Levy at the 1924 Institute of Human Relations, Williamstown In building the Conference into a national communication mechanism for the nurturing of the folkway of inter-faith conversation and cooperation, the conference has (1) brought into being and gained wide acceptance for a communication structure, (2) made strides in developing and disseminating diagnostic knowledge of how to recognize this mental disease when it appears The Conference Staff is training leaders of other organizations to carry the message of tolerance to their own associates The Conference program thus penetrates units of the service clubs, veterans' posts, women's clubs, P T A 's, the educational system, labor unions, and churches

"The most convincing elements in the foregoing are these the quantity of incidents available as evidence of the awakening in the minds of individuals of an appreciation for their fellowman's human qualities and rights, evidence of easing of community inter-faith tensions through Round Table procedures, the fact that none of 800 intolerant organizations in the United States in 1938 had succeeded up to the entrance of the United States into war, in amounting to anything very dangerous "

IV THE PRESENT STATUS OF THE INTER-RELIGIOUS FOCUS IN THE PROGRAM OF NCCJ

In the 1940's, the NCCJ moved away from the concern with inter-religious conflicts as the major focus of activity By the end of World War II, the larger part of the program that the NCCJ had so dramatically pioneered in its first decade had become largely obsolescent The Trios, The Joint Thanksgiving Services, have only a very limited survival in the Southwest, the famed Williamstown Institute ceased at the beginning of World War II and has not been revived, the pulsating and

searching discussions of the Round Tables became a record of past history, the brotherhood dinners lost much of their early symbolism and in many communities were transformed into fund-raising "gimmicks "

In the 1940's, the NCCJ set up a series of Commissions The concern with inter-religious tensions was placed as the responsibility of the Commission on Religious Organizations An indication of the marked NCCJ shift in interest may be garnered from the failure to find it necessary to appoint a director of this Commission for a two year period from 1947-49

A serious attempt was made in 1941 with the support of important segments of the staff and board membership to accelerate the pace of the changing NCCJ program and objectives A staff executive prepared a detailed report analyzing the characteristics of the National Conference program during its first 12 years "While the Conference always recognized that prejudice rises from racial, social, psychological and economic causes as well as those of a religious nature," the report said, "its concern was primarily with prejudice toward religious groups and its attack was largely through religious channels "

"This procedure established a favorable atmosphere for development of good will toward the Conference," the memo conceded "Emphasis upon education for a better order rather than criticism of the present one undoubtedly dispelled fears of the suspicious Emphasis upon the dialogue pattern has made that pattern an accepted phenomenon of American community life and identified the Conference with a definite symbol in the public mind Moreover, it is of course necessary in the early days of any unendowed movement to appeal first to sympathetic groups and through their interest build financial support for education of the less sympathetic

"In the years 1940-42 it was noted, there had been an increasing tendency in NCCJ to deal with prejudice rooted in racial as well as religious differences and to take more aggressive action, for example, in working with fair employment

agencies and fighting against the alleged discrimination by landlords against Negroes in Chicago. Also NCCJ was making more attempts to educate the intolerant as well as those in sympathy with its aims, beginning to emphasize learning-through-doing more than learning-through-listening, and popularizing its program materials.

"All these gradual shifts in emphasis were under way before the war," the report said, "but were not occurring rapidly enough to satisfy some cooperating agencies, contributors to the Conference and members of its Board and Executive committee. The war brings both new programs and financial challenges to the Conference and sharpens the impatience of its friends with its gradual evolution."

This report strongly recommended the extending of the NCCJ's program to an active campaign against discrimination on all fronts. It recommended that we lay more emphasis on direct action. "Because of the seriousness of today's situation, it is suggested that temporarily at least somewhat less emphasis be laid on publicizing the desirability of cooperation and more on studying community situations and rallying forces to do something about them. Field directors would need to act as community organizers. The time now spent in making speeches or in getting others to make them would be spent in an analysis of community forces at work, interpreting these to community leaders and getting facts and public opinion constructively marshalled for action. The ideal of inter-racial, inter-faith cooperation would not be lost sight of but would rather be all the more clear because it was worked out in action."

Dr. George N. Shuster took the position at a meeting of the NCCJ Board of Trustees, that this report and program presented an issue of principle. Dr. Shuster stated that "the Conference has survived other organizations pledged to promote inter-religious amity which have come and gone, because it has stuck to its task of developing the common idealism of members of the Catholic, the Protestant and the Jewish faiths."

"Of course, every educational organization is facing the issue of whether to concern itself with more specific practical tasks. But if we enter into the broad social field and deal with numerous problems, we run the risk of disappearing because of a lack of organizational unity. It would end up in a free-for-all which would accelerate intolerance. If we leave the ground of religious motivation, we shall create an organization which will be the undertaker which will put NCCJ in its final resting place."

Dr. Clinchy, in support of Dr. Shuster's position, stated that "if the recommendations of the report were accepted the Conference would become a kind of 'General League Against All Intolerance,' one more 'Pro-Democracy Committee,' of which the number already is legion."

A special committee, made up of George N. Shuster, President of Hunter College, and Henry N. McCracken, President of Vassar College, was appointed to further examine the report. They, too, concluded that "primarily the Conference must always remain an organization working in the areas that lie between the great religious organizations."

The decision of the Board was clear and decisive but of little avail. It may have slowed the process but it did not dam up the pressures pushing the NCCJ away from its historic mandate and program. In the larger part, the NCCJ did enter into the "broad social field" and in fact, it moved away from its specific mandate to "remain an organization working in the areas that lie between the great religious organizations."

The displacement of the religious focus from its centrality in the NCCJ program is apparent both on local and national levels.

1. Mrs. Ella Streater reported that, in the large majority of the regional offices which she visited, there is no substantive program in the field of inter-religious relations. (We shall later discuss the regions that represent notable exceptions.) Generally, on the local level the Committees on Religious Organiza-

tions are but paper commissions, without program content, and frequently without an active membership

New York City last year offered a vivid example. A conflict arose between Catholics and Jews concerning the legislative revision of the New York State Sabbath Law. Concerning this problem, there is no basic and necessary area of conflict between the Catholic and Jewish positions. Nevertheless, no substantive effort was made by the NCCJ either through its regional or national professional staff to bring together Catholic, Protestant and Jewish Clergy, or, if this were found to be impracticable, to bring together into direct communication responsible lay leadership of these religious groupings in order that they might discuss and resolve the tensions. In the absence of such an approach, what transpired was a desecration of religious values and purposes. Clergymen were transformed into high-pressure lobbyists, button-holing legislators and giving expression in the excitement of battle to all sorts of unfounded allegations. The newspapers became the forum of public debate in which there was a great deal of heat but little of the light which could have been derived from a rational analysis of issues. A comparatively minor instance of friction thus resulted unnecessarily in a public display of animosity and in tensions completely out of relation to the nature of the problem. This is a concrete example of a situation which cried out for the leadership of an agency like the NCCJ. Unfortunately, the NCCJ failed to meet the challenge.

2. There is insufficient contact in any organized and systematic fashion with our religious communities. For example, the Synagogue Council of America is the Jewish religious body which officially represents on rabbinic and lay planes its orthodox, conservative and reform components. In an adequate inter-religious program, active communication with such a group is a desideratum. To our knowledge, there is only a minimal contact.

There is some contact with individual clergymen who are members of the Commission on Religious Organization. However, this contact is generally of

a transient nature, and the Commission does not have adequate budget and staff to permit a thorough and complete examination and resolution of tensions and issues that divide the religious communities

3 Last year the Fund for the Republic sponsored an important two day conference on Church-State relations. The group convened by the Fund for the Republic comprised a significant cross section of American religious and intellectual leadership. The discussions were lively and at times stormy, but the consensus of the participants was favorable as to the worthwhileness of the conference. This project was in many ways a replication of the NCCJ's Williamstown Institute. Again, this is an area of work which belongs to the NCCJ orbit but which has not been pursued. The Williamstown Institutes made significant contributions to the development of harmony and understanding among our religious and social groupings. They should have been revived at the end of World War II. Instead, their pattern was exported abroad in the form of World Brotherhood Institutes, but little was done to fill the vacuum that their absence created in the American community. The Fund for the Republic is to be congratulated for its insight and foresight in convening the conference on Church-State relations. The NCCJ inadequacy in this field is another instance of the change in the NCCJ Program fulcrum.

4 The aforelisted statements are not to be construed as a general criticism of the professional leadership of the NCCJ. The NCCJ is especially fortunate in having recently brought forth to professional leadership men of the excellent caliber of Dr. Sterling Brown, Dr. Dumont Kenny, and Dr. Roy McCorkle. These men are actively and sympathetically concerned with the field of inter-religious relations. But, they do not have even the beginnings of an adequate budget and staff to do a creditable job in this field. Dr. Roy McCorkle is charged with the responsibility for the entire field without an assistant and with only a shared secretary. It is humanly impossible for a one-man department to provide guidance for regional offices, all over the nation, deal with Catholic, Protestant and Jewish

national organizations, prepare and supervise the preparation of materials, visit the field and participate in essential conferences. The National Commission on Religious Organizations has set up sub-committees in various fields, but by and large, they are still inactive because there is a lack of an adequate professional staff to follow up policy recommendations and to implement programs. The continued disinclination to provide an adequate program staff in the area of inter-religious relations is but another indication of a change of focus in the NCCJ concern. The NCCJ has moved away so far from its original purpose and objectives that the field of inter-religious relations is probably the most neglected area within its program spectrum.

V THE CAUSES FOR CHANGE IN THE NCCJ PROGRAM FOCUS

We may be challenged as having overstated the extent of the change in the NCCJ program focus. But very few will deny that a considerable and significant shift in emphasis has occurred. We believe that this change process did not take place as result of any concerted or purposeful effort by an individual or a group of persons to accomplish such an end. We see it rather as a consequence of a multi-causal constellation of factors. We shall attempt to describe some of these.

Clergy Attitudes

1 The sine-qua-non of an effective program in the inter-religious area is the participation of a sympathetic and actively cooperative Protestant, Catholic and Jewish clergy. Unfortunately, this is not available in a large number of the regions. Important segments of the clergy have become increasingly disaffected, disinterested and in some areas even hostile.

Almost from the very beginning of the NCCJ history, there were misgivings in Protestant, Catholic and Jewish religious circles. There was a pervasive fear that the Conference promoted religious syncretism, the tendency of some Thanksgiving Services to simulate common religious worship heightened these

suspensions, the alleged indiscreet statements of several Conference leaders supporting the development of an American Church as an expression of a religious melting-pot philosophy provoked consternation among Catholics, conservative Protestants and Jewish religious bodies, the liberal Protestant clergy background of a large proportion of the early regional directors added an additional dimension to these suspicions

In the Protestant groups there is considerable questioning of the NCCJ. The hostility of the fundamentalist Protestants was a primary reason for the organic separation of the NCCJ from its parent body, the Federal Council of Churches. Recently, liberal Protestant leaders of the National Council of Churches have also become less friendly. One of the leading professional heads of the National Council so stated his position to the Evaluation Committee: "I see no purpose for the National Conference to work in the inter-religious field. If we wish to speak to the leadership of Catholic and Protestant groups we do not need the intercession of the Conference. We can do so with greater profit by direct communication. Furthermore, we believe that the Conference has not yet clarified whether it is a civic organization dealing with inter-religious tensions, or a religious organization concerned with these problems."

The fears and suspicions of conservative Protestant groups are felt even more intensely by Catholic religious leadership. The Catholic Church does not have any national position on the NCCJ. The attitudes of Catholic clergymen vary widely. In Boston and Hartford, Catholic clergy participate actively in the Commissions with the blessing and encouragement of their superiors. In Texas, an archbishop supports and encourages clergy participation in the Trios. In many more areas participation by Catholic clergy in the Trios has been proscribed and regional directors have had great difficulty in securing active clergy participation in Conference programs. The following letters typify the real difficulties that our Professional Staff encounters in some regions

Dear Bernie

In line with our conversation the other day, I thought you would like to see a copy of the enclosed letter which came to Mr _____ who is one of the leading Catholic laymen in _____ and who is also a member of the Board of Directors of the _____ NCCJ. I will add that Archbishop _____ does not answer any of the letters that are sent to him by our regional men in _____ but he did answer a letter sent to him by one of his own Catholic laymen and this is broadly representative of what we are up against vis-a-vis Catholic clergy cooperation in the United States. I am sending you this in confidence and I know you will return it since it is my only copy.

It was good to talk to you the other day

Your friend,

Dear Mr _____

I am sorry to disappoint you, but in the Archdiocese of _____ (and in most other Dioceses throughout the Country), participation of Catholics in the National Conference of Christians and Jews is limited to lay people.

Years ago I explained to Dr. Clinchy, the Founder of the Conference, why this is so. In the Catholic Church the Sacrament of Holy Orders creates an essential difference between the priest and the layman. Outside the Catholic Church this Sacrament is almost universally repudiated, and no essential difference between Clergymen and laymen is recognized.

With all good wishes, I am

Sincerely yours,

Archbishop _____

The Jewish position on the NCCJ also varies widely among its religious and secular groupings. The rabbis who first carried aloft the torch of the Conference were generally of the most liberal wing of Reform Judaism. For many Orthodox and some Conservative rabbis, the NCCJ was stereotyped as a kind of religious ethical culture movement.

The secular Jewish community is even more diversified in its evaluation of the Conference. In 1948, the N C R A C (National Community Relations Advisory Council) conducted a study of the NCCJ. The N C R A C was then composed of the American Jewish Committee, American Jewish Congress, Anti-Defamation League, Jewish War Veterans, the Union of American Hebrew Congregations and representatives of a large number of regional Jewish Community Councils. We present excerpts registering the attitude spectrum of Jewish agencies.

- A) Summary of interview of January 27, 1949 with Mr. Richard C. Rothschild, Director, Department of Public Education and Information, American Jewish Committee.

Mr. Rothschild believes the basic premises of the NCCJ program to be that religious misunderstandings play an important role in disturbing inter-group relations, that familiarity breeds respect for members of other religious groups, and that the promotion of the concepts of brotherhood and of the basic principles common to Judaism and Christianity are effective in bringing about better inter-group understanding.

The American Jewish Committee believes that religious misunderstandings do play a part in the creation of prejudice, and that overcoming such misunderstanding is important with some people, although perhaps not so important as the NCCJ thinks it to be. While the American Jewish Committee does not have as much confidence in brotherhood as a slogan as the NCCJ does, an appeal on the basis of brotherhood as a religious principle may be effective with groups which are swayed by religious authority, it is difficult to establish the size of these groups.

The NCCJ has also placed considerable reliance upon the methods of inter-cultural education. The American Jewish Committee regards this as useful, but believes that the work of the NCCJ in this area may be less effective than that of the Bureau for Inter-cultural Education.

The American Jewish Committee believes that anti-Semitism should not be approached as a problem of bridging a gap between Christians and Jews, which emphasizes the separation of the groups. In the opinion of the American Jewish Committee, it is a much better approach to disseminate information on the basic common purposes of the Jewish and non-Jewish communities in upholding democratic ideals, and in other common endeavors.

The NCCJ often does valuable work in the smaller communities of the country where there is no N C R A C or similar group representative

On the negative side, the NCCJ does not seem to have a single staff member who could be called a real expert on Jewish matters -- cultural, religious, or public relations

- B) Summary of interview of January 26, 1949 with Dr. David Petegorsky, Executive Director, American Jewish Congress, and Mr. Leo Pfeffer, Assistant Director, Commission on Law and Social Action, American Jewish Congress.

Fundamental premises of the NCCJ

In Dr. Petegorsky's opinion, the fundamental premise on which NCCJ work is based is that inter-group relations can be improved only by fostering inter-action on the basis of the lowest common denominator of agreement. Its program is based on the assumption that the only conflicts between the Jewish community and the Christian religious communities take place on the basis of a mutual lack of understanding and that the way to counter such lack of understanding is to stress the areas of agreement. Dr. Petegorsky believes, however, that there are conflicts which stem from basic differences in social views, in evaluations of social situations, and in the concepts of democratic principles and practices. The conflict over released time, for example, is not due to any lack of mutual

understanding It emerges rather from fundamentally different conceptions as to the proper relationship of church and state in a democratic society The conflicts which arise out of such basic differences are likely to continue and to become intensified as the issues in this country are drawn more sharply on such problems of civil rights and related social issues Today, these conflicts are not merely related to differences of doctrine and belief, but are also directly related to political and social action, legislation, judicial intervention, etc The machinery of the state -- legislators, administrative agencies, the courts -- has become increasingly involved in many of the fundamental issues over which inter-group conflicts arise The occasions for cleavage will probably become more numerous and more significant While misunderstanding and prejudice may in the past have proved serious obstacles in the development of good inter-group relations, they are relatively much less important today

Since the NCCJ bases its program on the lowest common denominator of agreement and deliberately avoids any of the areas in which there is actual controversy between groups, it is unable to deal with the situations which are becoming increasingly real sources of conflict and friction The kind of program which NCCJ practices was once perhaps harmful It glosses over basic sources of inter-group conflict through a superficial agreement on slogans, it prevents democratic discussions and the resolution of genuine issues and it gives to many persons who might otherwise devote themselves to social activity in this field, a salve for their consciences by involving them in ineffective effort

As evidence of lack of effectiveness of the NCCJ program, Mr Pfeffer and Dr Petegorsky pointed out that the NCCJ spends a very large budget and absorbs the energy of many people in methods which have not been tested or evaluated objectively, and which may even be harmful

C) Summary of interview of January 26, 1949 with Dr Maurice N Eisendrath, President, Union of American Hebrew Congregations

Rabbi Eisendrath believes that while the NCCJ has many shortcomings, it

is doing an effective job. In his opinion, it is extremely difficult to evaluate the effectiveness of an organization whose work is in the area of culture and of the spirit by means of reliable, authentic, scientific criteria. Since, in his opinion, it would be difficult to measure the effectiveness of the work of N C R A C member agencies in this area, we must similarly judge the work of the NCCJ with some tolerance for its shortcomings. In his opinion, the NCCJ no longer confines its work to the superficial program of sponsoring inter-faith trios and other forms of exhortation. The present work of the NCCJ is largely in the field of education, and he believes it to be effective.

2 The Obsolescence of the Traditional Techniques

The Trios were historically a strikingly novel phenomenon which for a number of years attracted audiences numbering in the thousands. But in time the novelty wore off and as a technique it became shopworn. In a comparatively short time the Trios became a "gimmick", a theatrical contrivance for the attraction of audiences rather than a forum for the serious and forthright discussion of real issues and tensions. This is not meant to deny the real contributions of the Trialogues to an America that had never before seen Protestant, Catholic and Jewish clergy share a platform. The Trios represented a dramatic symbol of unity and an affirmation of the Judaeo - Christian heritage. But the Trios generally never got beyond the symbolism and frequently degenerated into empty "patting-on-the-back" sessions.

3 Lack of Grass Roots

The major part of the NCCJ program was of a national nature and did not take root in the local community. The Trios and the Williamstown Institutes did not involve the participation of local clergy in a local setting. The fact that Bishop X, Rabbi Y and Reverend Z, on a national level, broke the bread of friendship and brotherhood, did not necessarily translate itself into a resolution of the day-by-day tensions of the local community. It did not lead to closer

personal contact and communication between local clergymen. The Thanksgiving Services and the Brotherhood Dinners also generally were replete with platitudes but did not deal with matters of local contention.

4 Staff Problems

We indicated previously the difficulty presented by the preponderance of Liberal Protestant clergymen as the staff members in the early days of the NCCJ. Recently, the Conference has appointed social workers, educators, psychologists, and lawyers as regional directors. This has solved one problem but created another one in its stead. The men who came from a clergy background had the advantage of generally possessing a vital interest in the field of inter-religious relations. Our more recent professional staff members coming from a secular background frequently are much less interested in and attuned to problems of inter-religious concern.

The Conference staff is no longer preponderantly Protestant. Catholic professionals have been appointed to important positions within the national and regional offices. This has helped greatly in the presentation and interpretation of the Catholic viewpoint in the development of the National Conference program. There is, however, considerable questioning among Jewish groups about the very small number of Jewish staff members in the National Conference. In 1949, Mr. Richard C. Rothschild representing the American Jewish Committee stated that "The NCCJ does not seem to have a single staff member who could be called a real expert in Jewish matters - cultural or religious." In 1958, there is still considerable basis for this criticism.

More serious problems in this field present themselves in a review of the preparation of staff to fulfill their responsibilities as regional directors. Mrs. Streater reported that only a minority of the staff have had any special training in preparation for their work with NCCJ. Many staff members reported to us that the only orientation that they received upon their appointment was to

be given a copy of the NCCJ Program Manual with a request to read it carefully. The vice-presidents have the responsibility of guiding the regional directors but in many instances, under the pressure to produce financially, their guidance has been pre-eminently devoted to making better fund raisers of our regional directors. Under these circumstances, we cannot censure a regional director if he concerns himself with matters of a less complex and sensitive nature. It is easier to run a workshop program or an educator's conference than it is to bring together clergymen to discuss inter-religious problems.

5 Limitations of Exhortation

The traditional Conference programs were based on the principle of exhortation. The Trios, the Brotherhood Meetings, the Religious Emphasis Weeks appealed to men's better selves, to the moral forces that bind the community and to the "American Creed." In the 1940's, social scientists gathered an increasing body of empirical data which cast doubt on the effectiveness of exhortation in the strategy against prejudice. The empirical studies in the field suggest that the prejudiced individuals are relatively unaffected by the attacks on prejudice as un-American or un-Christian. The human mind has a great capacity for compartmentalizing belief from practice and devising rationalizations to justify behavior. Professor Robert M. MacIver represents the important segment of American social scientists in his presentation of the following criticism against exhortatory techniques:

"Without morale an army is worthless, but morale alone does not show the road to victory. Moral forces become effective when they are enlisted on the side of economic, political and social ends. We should remember, also, that inconsistency is a charge that does not bite deep, as the history of every religion makes clear. Most men seem to get along on some kind of compromise with their creeds, and they are adept enough at makeshift adjustments in the ordinary business of living. It is well to expose their rationalizations but nevertheless they have great capacity for finding new ones. They may have uneasiness on this score, but

often it is not potent enough to make them change their ways Furthermore, it by no means follows that this uneasiness will of itself make for greater tolerance and be a stage on the road to understanding Guilt feelings are uncomfortable, and they may be got rid of by a harder and blinder defensiveness, supported by justifications, so that the spirit of discriminations is not diminished but rather intensified

"We mention these commonplaces not to confute the position of Myrdal - we shall in due course bring out, from a somewhat different approach, the great importance of what we shall broadly call the educational front - but only to raise a caution against the assumption that a moral or spiritual assault alone will carry through the opposing line "

6 The Growing Interest in the Field of Race Relations

In the 1920's the rise of the KKK and anti-Catholicism was a major American problem In the 1930's the rise of Nazism and the growth of American fascist prototypes presented a threat of serious proportions At the end of World War II, anti-Catholicism and anti-Semitism had subsided The support of the Protestant South at the recent Democratic National Convention of the candidacy of Kennedy for vice-president is a dramatic illustration of the significant change in the south's religious climate of opinion

The American Jewish community, although still subject to discrimination and prejudice, is no longer comprised in the larger part of first generation Americans, it has become thoroughly integrated politically and culturally into the American society In a literal sense Catholics and Jews are no longer minority groups but in many parts of the U S , especially in the larger urban areas, outnumber the Protestants numerically and occupy important economic and political status positions It is therefore understandable that the concern of the National Conference began at the end of World War II to center around the most acute problem of this period - the field of race relations

VI THE MAJOR RESPONSIBILITY OF THE NCCJ

It is our thesis and firm conviction that the original and historic charge to the NCCJ to operate in the field of inter-religious relations is equally valid now and is clearly one of its primary mandates and responsibilities

An analysis of the criticisms levelled against the NCCJ indicates that these are in the main strictures of its traditional program rather than of its traditional objectives The Trios, Thanksgiving Services, the emphasis on pure symbolism have been questioned, rather than the goals which they were supposed to achieve

We shall briefly describe the rationale for our thesis

1 The uniqueness of the NCCJ

There are over 500 local, state, and national organizations operating in the field of inter-group relations, of these approximately 150 are national organizations Not a single non-sectarian agency - other than the NCCJ - is charged with a primary responsibility to the field of inter-religious relations This is uniquely an objective of the NCCJ

President George N Shuster cogently stated, at a conference of the evaluation staff, that "if the NCCJ did not exist we would need to create it " If the NCCJ fails to concentrate in the inter-religious field it is neglecting its historic mandate and is, thereby, leaving a vacuum that no other organization fills It becomes instead a "me-too" agency operating in areas which are preempted by many other organizations and in which it cannot and does not make a unique contribution

The NCCJ educational program is undoubtedly an important contribution to the field of inter-group harmony, but is not unique - more than 50 national agencies are also concerned with educational methodologies, neither is its spiritual orientation distinctive - almost all of the agencies claim this orientation, nor is the National Conference alone in its representation of Christians and Jews - every national group, except the exclusively sectarian agencies, is so comprised

The only valid claim for uniqueness that the NCCJ can stake out is the distinctiveness that accrues to it in the measure that it carries out its responsibility in the field of inter-religious relations

2 The Need

Many observers of the current American scene have commented upon what appears to be a substantial increase in inter-religious tensions Prof John Kane of the University of Notre Dame reported in 1950 that "there is some evidence of growing Protestant-Catholic tensions Second, these tensions find verbal expression in criticisms of Catholicism in foreign lands and the implication appears to be that were Catholics a majority in terms of power, American policy toward Protestantism would parallel Spanish policy Third, Catholics are attacked for using their power and influence in economic, social and political areas as a means toward achieving control of the country These criticisms specifically involve federal aid to education, censorship of the media of communication, and appeals to state legislatures to prevent passage of laws contrary to Catholic dogma

"Furthermore, recent tolerance toward other religions in the United States seems to have been predicated more upon indifference toward religion than upon understanding and good will Present indications are that such religious indifference may be disappearing and so religious bigotry may prove an unfortunate by-product unless both groups can emphasize that basic commandment of Christianity, charity "

Studies of the American scene suggest that we are witnessing a significant increase in religious commitments In 1800, less than 10% of the American people were Church members, in 1850, approximately 20% identified themselves with the Church

Around the turn of the century, Prof George Santayana stated in his volume on Character and Opinion in the United States that "Civilization is perhaps approaching one of those long winters that overtake it from time to time A flood of barbarism from below may soon level all the fair works of our Christian

ancestors, as another flood 2000 years ago levelled those of the ancients -- such a catastrophe would be no reason for despair -- under the deluge and watered by it, seeds of all sorts would survive against the time to come " Prof J H Leuba concluded from a study of the opinions of nearly 100 students in the leading American colleges that "Christianity as a system of belief has utterly broken down, and nothing definite, adequate and convincing has taken its place Their beliefs when they have any, are superficial and amateurish in the extreme "

In the last few decades the American climate of opinion, with respect to institutionalized religion, has undergone a radical transformation In contrast to the hostility and indifference of the dominant intellectual figures and germinal thinkers of the 19th century, our contemporary savants are, in the main, profoundly sympathetic to and actively identified with religious values and church organizations Sociologists, psychologists, and psychiatrists speak of religion as being essential for the integration of personality and the stability of society A Columbia University study found that in 1954, between 80 and 90 percent of the American people were actively identified with the church community In the same year a Gallup Poll reported that "the number of adults attending Church had increased upwards of 13 million in the last few years " Another study conducted for the Bureau of Applied Research of Columbia University by Havemann and West, and entitled "They Went to College," reported on the basis of a sample study of recent college graduates, that four out of every five Catholic males attended Church regularly, nine out of every 10 Catholic females attended Church regularly Among Protestants at least 70 percent of the males are regular Church goers and among Protestant females approximately four out of every five women attend Church regularly

The growing interest in and commitment to religious values and institutions has further cemented the cohesion of the American people and strengthened its democratic moorings but it also contains the seeds of conflict as theological differences become more important to the members of the respective faiths

Professor Herbert W. Schneider in "Religion in 20th Century America" astutely commented, "Whenever there is active theological construction there is a strengthening of the walls between religions, for however universal the themes of theology may be, each system has its peculiar idioms and is part of a particular faith."

A partial list of more important areas of divergence that have become involved in inter-religious strife included

- 1 Church and Dogma
- 2 Religious Liberty
- 3 Religion and Public Education
- 4 Church and State
- 5 Public Aid to Religious Education
- 6 Public Morals and Censorship
- 7 Family Relationships
- 8 Ambassador to the Vatican
- 9 Civil Liberties
- 10 Sabbath Laws

The NCCJ has an important responsibility to promote inter-religious communication on national and local levels in order to reduce tensions and to prevent the overt conflicts which ideological and theological differences may provoke. The history of man, surfeited with religious wars and ideological strife, provides striking evidence for the significance of this work.

The comparative quiescence of inter-religious relations at the present time should not cause us to neglect the explosive potentials for inter-religious conflicts that lie beneath the surface.

3 NEGRO-WHITE RELATIONS

We are not recommending a lessening of interest or any attenuation of our efforts to eliminate prejudice and discrimination against the Negro. We are rather urging a change in the approach to this problem. To wit, we are not concerned with prejudice against the Negro because we are an agency working in the field of race relations, our interest in this area flows organically from our mandate to deal with inter-religious tensions and prejudices. Negroes are

Protestant or Catholic and a small number are Jewish. The fact that a Protestant or Catholic is a Negro and is the object of prejudice does not therefore diminish our responsibility to him. Moreover, irrespective of color or national origin, we all are the children of God and have been created in His divine image. As the prophet Micah put it so eloquently,

"Have we not all one Father?

Hath not one God created us?"

Our religious heritage will not countenance the categorization of men into biologically ascribed superior and inferior races. The NCCJ cannot morally remain oblivious and indifferent to its religious objectives and moral responsibility.

We firmly believe that it is precisely as a clearly defined agency operating on the inter-religious plane that the NCCJ can also make its greatest contributions to the allaying of Negro-White tensions.

We shall briefly allude to the reasons for our conviction.

a) We have previously stressed the crucial importance of the "American Creed" in the strategy against bigotry. As Myrdal puts it "The American Negro problem is a problem in the heart of the American. It is there that the inter-racial tension has its focus. It is there that the decisive struggle goes on. This is the central viewpoint of this treatise. Though our study includes economic, social, and political race relations, at bottom our problem is the moral dilemma of the American. The American Dilemma, referred to in the title of this book, is the ever-raging conflict between, on the one hand, the valuations preserved on the general plane which we shall call the 'American Creed,' where the American thinks, talks, and acts under the influence of high national and Christian precepts, and, on the other hand, the valuations on specific planes of individual and group living, where personal local interests, considerations of community prestige and conformity group prejudice against particular persons or types of people, and all sorts of miscellaneous wants, impulses, and habits dominate his outlook."

Rabbi Maurice Eisendrath, a veteran and leading member of our Commission on Religious Organization eloquently stated a similar position at a meeting of the National Community Relations Advisory Council "To be sure, there can be appeals - and perhaps tentatively effective ones - to man's humanity to man - but the dynamic, abiding power of those appeals in this America of ours flows from that faith in man's brotherhood which is the corollary of God's Fatherhood Upon this foundation rests our strongest case against anti-Semitism, against all prejudice and bigotry, all persecution and inhumanity Men who do not share this faith cannot without hypocrisy or sham challenge their fellow Americans to live up to their high-born past which would give to bigotry no sanction, to persecution no assistance It is, therefore, through our fidelity to our own loftiest traditions of Judaism, through our own religion, in short, and through our appeal to the noblest in our neighbor's and in our nation's faith, that we have the most strategic counteraction to that which in America itself would belie the very basis upon which and for which it stands "

b) The religious leaders have a particularly great opportunity because they have the largest number of captive and regular hearers They are also much less exposed to threats of effective economic or political sanctions A teacher, businessman, lawyer, or physician taking a public position in the South against the segregation of the Negro will jeopardize his job or livelihood, the Priest, Minister and Rabbi is, comparatively speaking, much less fearful of such pressures or threats

c) The NCCJ as a race relations organization is a "dead duck" in the South or Southwest, the NCCJ as an inter-religious body working behind and through the local Commissions on Religious Organizations, Ministerial Association and/or religious lay leadership can make worthwhile contributions to the allaying of tensions

One may doubt the wisdom and even the legal warrant for the U S Supreme Court decision on integration, one may question the statements of social scientists

on the problem of race relations But one cannot debate the moral imperatives of our religious tradition If we accept the Bible as a word of God - and ninety percent of Americans do - we cannot hide as Adam or try to escape as Jonah from His call and teachings

Yet we cannot deny that many clergymen frequently act as Jonahs and Adams The individual clergyman as a child and youth was exposed to the same stereotypes that warped the minds of his neighbors Many members of the clergy have been affected by these prejudices We cannot deny the fact that Negroes are segregated in Southern Churches

Nevertheless, "when the chips are down" there is no organized group in the South that has been as decisively outspoken and effective as the clergy in their opposition to bigotry and segregation In November 1946, the North Carolina Baptist Convention at Ashville passed a resolution declaring that racial segregation in Churches was a denial of the tenets of Christianity About the same time, Georgia's Baptist Convention called on "all Christian people of Georgia, particularly Baptists, to oppose with every ounce of energy the groups that uphold race superiority," and proclaimed that "no man shall be discriminated against because of race, creed, or color "

Dr Gordon W Lovejoy, discussing the Northern Virginia Youth Program, summarized the results of these program activities on September 17, 1958 as follows

"The two Institutes in Arlington have shown very clearly that when we work through churches we not only secure young people with much less effort than if we approached the schools, but we assure ourselves of continuity of programming I am convinced that almost the only way we can hope to hold inter-racial meetings in extremely tense situations is for us to work through churches rather than schools This is especially true in a state like Virginia where inter-racial meetings are illegal unless held on private property "

In Little Rock it was again the clergy which was the only organized group to announce its opposition to the program of Governor Orval Faubus. And, it is significant that it was as President of the 9,000,000 member Southern Baptist Convention that Brooks Hays has spoken, so courageously and eloquently, throughout the South and to the various State Baptist Conventions, in behalf of moderation and good will. The Religious Forum of the Southern Baptist Convention provided almost the only public forum in the South that permitted Brooks Hays to carry on his fight in support of the "American Creed" directly to the grass-roots level. It is comforting to note that Brooks Hays reported that, "Among the many state conventions throughout the country passing resolutions of confidence in my leadership were six in the South. The greatest inspiration of all to me was the meeting of the Arkansas State Convention on November 20th. According to the Arkansas Gazette, 'Baptists attending this final session of the State Convention gave Hays two standing ovations -- unprecedented in the memory of convention veterans -- one when he was introduced to speak and one when he had finished.' My voice has certainly not been stilled in my own home city, and I find there a great longing to resolve the school problem in an honorable way.

"Evidence that the people of Little Rock are regaining their awareness of the need for a rational solution can be found in the recent election to fill five contested seats on the Little Rock School Board. Three were won by men branded with the moderate label.

"All of these recent events lead me to believe that there is hope for a solution. In the end it will be the South's institutional resources--churches and the schools themselves--that will bring race harmony and progress. Religious leaders are gradually asserting their right to apply moral judgment to the political scene and in the long run they will be upheld by the majority of our people. Those who have been disciplined through the spiritual resource of the churches, I am confident, will prevail over those whose fear of change has made them victims of the demagogues."

These are illustrations of our conviction that, even in the area of Negro-White relations, the NCCJ can make its most significant contribution primarily as an organization operating on the inter-religious plane It is essential that we emphasize our finding that the National Conference as a race relation organization can contribute little in the South and may not even be able to survive, the NCCJ operating through the clergy and clergy organizations as an inter-religious agency can make very significant contributions to the reduction of tensions even in the most tension-laden areas of the South

VII FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

1 The Reaffirmation of the NCCJ's Historic Mandate

We believe this to be a major task The NCCJ should reaffirm and return to its original focus as a civic agency operating in the field of inter-religious relations Such a reaffirmation should not be reflected not only in verbal declarations, it needs to be correlated with a directional change of program emphasis and concern, supported by an adequate budget

Dr Roy McCorkel, on June 12, 1958, sent the following memorandum to Dr Dumont Kenny for transmission to the Budget Committee

Dear Dumont

As you know, at the last meeting of our Program Committee on April 15th, Msgr Murray and Dr Bonnell reported on the work of the Commission on Religious Organizations Their description of the many relevant and substantive areas which now concern our Commission got a hearty indorsement from the Program Committee Likewise, in recent months there have been strongly expressed views from members of our professional staff and from a number of board members reaffirming that the central task of the NCCJ is in the field of inter-religious relationships All this was reiterated at the last meeting of my Commission

I know that you feel as I do, namely, that never in the 30 year history of the NCCJ have there been more important or more pressing issues in the field

of inter-religious relations facing us on a national and local basis. Moreover, it is clear from all the research studies available that the problems we face in inter-religious relations will not be easily or quickly resolved, but that methods of approach, opening lines of communication and the needed machinery to ameliorate difficulties are going to be of the greatest importance for some years to come.

Under these circumstances, it seems clear to me that the NCCJ must take immediate steps to strengthen its program in the specific area of the work of our Commission on Religious Organizations. I am aware of my own limitations, but I don't believe that any one man and a secretary can do justice even to the projects we now have underway.

It is generally acknowledged, without in any way criticizing our able staff of regional directors, that the greatest single weakness is with our regional programming and this should be the area of our central concern. There is a marked paucity of effective programming in this area.

I am not able to anticipate all the findings or recommendations of the Evaluation Committee, but I will be surprised and disappointed if they do not support my basic analysis and I hope they will support (in principle at least) some of the general recommendations I am going to make.

There are good reasons why we are weak in the field of our greatest potential strength, but there are not good and sufficient reasons, in my view, for our not concentrating more budget and staff in this area of concern. I believe it is part of the role of an executive to make recommendations and I would like to recommend the following:

a. Strengthen our National Staff by adding a Catholic and Jewish Executive, so that the main faith groups will be represented on our National Commission. We must do this if we are to work more effectively with National Organizations and do a more adequate job of developing National Programs and program resources for the use of regional offices.

b Increase research and administrative staff to serve more adequately our project committees

c Employ consultants to serve regional offices in the field of inter-religious relationships This is a job that requires sophistication and maturity Not all regional men feel confident in tackling it "They need help"

This report reflects our general agreement with Dr McCorkel's findings The Conference is paying "lip-service" to its concern with the inter-religious field It possesses neither the program centrality, the status, the budget nor the personnel that it needs and deserves and that it should have

We, therefore, support Dr McCorkel's request for the addition of a Catholic and a Jewish associate to the National Staff of the Commission on Religious Organizations We have suggested earlier that a one-man department cannot adequately cope with the responsibilities of the Commission on Religious Organization if this area is to be the major program fulcrum of the NCCJ The addition of two professional associates will enable this Commission to fulfill its responsibilities in a more adequate fashion Moreover, the presence on this commission of staff members of our three faiths will help greatly in the establishment and maintenance of a regular on-going and intimate relationship with their respective national religious bodies

These additional staff members need not necessarily be full time personnel although it is generally desirable that they should be They should possess the kind of broad-gauged backgrounds which will enable them to assume broader program responsibilities

2 The Revival of the Williamstown Institutes

The Williamstown Institutes have made a considerable impact on the ideologies and viewpoints of many of the opinion-moulders and makers of the American community Also, they have helped greatly in breaking down the sound-barriers that have inhibited personal and cordial communication among Protestants, Catholics and Jews on controversial and tension-laden problems

The Fund for the Republic made a worthwhile contribution by sponsoring last Spring a week-long Williamstown Institute-type seminar on Religion in a Free Society which was attended by a hundred Protestants, Catholics, Jews and secularists. Leaders of the National Conference played important roles at this conference. Dr. George N. Shuster, a Vice-President of the Fund for the Republic, chaired a key session and Dr. Dumont Kenny was "present to maintain the peace."

We believe that the Conference can continue to make important contributions in this area. It has unparalleled staff resources and could undoubtedly improve upon its earlier programs. We, therefore, recommend that the NCCJ consider plans to assure the revival and continuation of the Williamstown Institutes type seminars.

3 The Supreme Court Decision

The Evaluation Committee, at a recent board meeting, was requested to consider whether the NCCJ Program Manual should include a specific mandate to work for the acceptance of the Supreme Court decision on integration.

The Evaluation Committee warmly sympathizes and identifies itself with the spirit and the conviction that motivated the inclusion of the reference to the Supreme Court decision. But we do not believe that the NCCJ Manual should include this reference, for the following reasons:

(a) The uniqueness and distinctiveness of the NCCJ and the warrant for its activities flow from its focus and mandate as a civic agency operating on the inter-religious plane. We have suggested earlier that many Americans may question and doubt the wisdom of the Justices sitting on the Supreme Court but few will publicly debate the clearly enunciated principles of our religious traditions and faiths. We may disregard them but we will not deny them. The addition of a reference to a legal and political document cannot and does not strengthen the more fundamental and accepted moral imperatives that flow from our divine revelation.

(b) As American citizens, we are legally bound to accept the interpretation of our courts. A statement in our Manual does not reinforce this legal responsibility.

(c) There are hundreds of agencies actively working for the implementation of the integration decision. It has never been the aim of the Conference to be another "me-too" organization.

(d) The gains that may accrue by an addition of a phrase to the Manual will not compensate for the irreparable damages that will be brought to our programs in the frontier regions of the South and Southwest. A phrase does not make an organization, its program and activity do. The fact is that the NCCJ is making important contributions in the South toward the reduction of prejudice and the elevation of the status of the Negro. What is important is the intensification of these activities through the clergy and religious lay groupings, not the addition of a referent to a legal and political document. We see little profit in the addition of a phrase that, by itself, will yield few gains in the North but may seriously damage our great potential for productive work in the South.

5 Inter-Religious Programs in the Local Communities

The calibre of the NCCJ programming in the local community is the litmus test of NCCJ effectiveness. A purely national approach cannot cope with or anticipate the specific day-by-day tensions and abrasions that arise within the matrix of the local community. New York City is not America and it is a mistake to overemphasize its importance.

The work of the National Commission of Religious Organizations, therefore, should be supplemented by active and effective commissions on a regional basis. We have found that the regional Commissions on Religious Organizations are frequently inactive. Undoubtedly there are many real difficulties in securing the cooperation of religious leaders. But, we believe that the difficulties are not insurmountable and that with tact, understanding, and proper guidance much more can be accomplished.

We cite as examples, several successful regional programs

Hastings Harrison has performed eminently in this field We were greatly impressed with the intimate and understanding relationship that exists between Protestants, Catholics and Jews in Texas Dr Luther Holcombe, Director of the Dallas Council of Churches, gave the Conference credit for the fact that Dallas University, a new Catholic University, could set up a fund-raising committee in which Jews and Protestants are in the active leadership A large fund-raising drive for the Catholic sponsored St Paul Hospital was spear-headed by Protestants and Jews Jews in Dallas are not only integrated economically and politically but are, also, accepted also in "the upper social classes" There is very little tension between the religious faiths The Conference has every right to take real pride in these accomplishments

Dr J B Loud, a leading and nationally prominent Negro churchman in Dallas, told us that he was prejudiced in favor of the NCCJ He further stated

"Now in the Southwest as we are coming to human relations - particularly race relations - NCCJ is the most valuable organization we have NAACP is just beginning to overcome scars of court battle Protestant bodies are not taking as effective a stand as we think they should be in taking in the matter of segregation NCCJ - without fanfare and without publicity - is doing a terrific job - each year better and better Since we've had Institutes, there are ways of communicating Several young women leaders in the White Methodist church and the Director of Christian Education in my church got our youth together and let them plan and carry out a program Both races participated and pastors served communion It is the best way If the Conference did not have the respect of both sides it could not do so well NAACP has only one group You can't win with fists You cannot legislate good will As a member of a minority group I have the purpose of looking at things as they actually are I don't condone, I don't dress up, but I try to find the best way to help Without fanfare, the Conference is diligently at work It is marvelous "

In the New England Division, Dr James Egan has supported and encouraged programs of inter-religious communication and cooperation which may well serve as prototypes for other communities

The following quotation comes from an inspiring description of the Hartford-New Haven program

"The Inter-Clergy Conferences

"Connecticut last year was the scene of bitter inter-religious tensions. The bus bill was the occasion of the stirring up of much heated controversy, not only in regard to the bus bill itself but to every facet of inter-religious disagreements, supposed disagreements, and misunderstandings. The Hartford office of the NCCJ sought to do its part to alleviate the tensions in its region. It was felt that the best means to do so was by means of inter-clergy get-togethers.

"If Catholic, Orthodox, Protestant, and Jewish clergy were able to sit down together unofficially and thereby open up 'lines of communication' among the faith groups, it was felt that progress could be made. Areas of agreement and disagreement could be carefully delineated, expositions of the dynamics of each position in areas of disagreement could be made with a view to the dispelling of suspicions of the motives of each group and the building up of an understanding and a respect for the principles and the ideological basis for differing positions. The NCCJ was not seeking to mediate or compromise the differing positions, it was seeking to merely provide a means whereby the exact position and the motivating principles of the positions held by each group could be clearly known.

"Once the positions and motivations of each group were known, then the second step would be the working out of ways and means whereby a theologically pluralistic community could live together peacefully and learn to disagree agreeably albeit zealously according to the lights of each. On this second step, there was no plan. The NCCJ was honestly going to ask its religious

leadership in the community how this was to be done The informal clergy get togethers were to explore this problem together and to give advice to the National Conference on this unknown area

"Actually, it was felt, that getting to know the clergy of other faiths in a friendly, open way with no attempt at minimizing or compromising differences along with the knowledge exactly of the principles and motivations of each position already would in itself help to alleviate some of the tensions, the 'sting' would already be taken out of controversy There would be a healthy respect generated for the conscientious people who held opposite or even opposing views, this would be manifest in sermons and writings When difficulties or dangerous situations arose, there would be developed a tendency to 'make a phone call rather than make a blast' The religious differences would remain, but they would be religious or theological differences unmixed or uncontaminated with emotional bias, ignorance, or suspicions The religious differences would be fought out with religious weapons prayer, charitable explanations and discussions, good example, and the basic assumption of the good will and conscientious motivation of the adversary In such an atmosphere, theological differences could be debated and fought with no danger to charity, civic unity, or zeal for one's own religious convictions

"Such were the hopes, philosophies, and motivations of the NCCJ in Connecticut when it set about to start inter-clergy get togethers last June The history of what actually happened in various parts of Connecticut along these lines gives an optimistic basis for the most sanguine hopes for the future "

In June of 1957, the matter of inter-clergy get togethers was discussed with the Catholic, Protestant, and Jewish religious advisers to the Hartford Chapter of NCCJ The matter was also discussed with the Connecticut Director of the Council of Churches and the Catholic bishops All agreed the get-togethers were a good and necessary thing but some thought that tempers were still too hot from the bus bill for any real chance of success Bishop Flanagan of Norwich was

sympathetic to the idea, but such a get-together he did not want to participate in at the time if it crossed diocesan lines. Archbishop O'Brien of Hartford suggested we speak to Monsignor Murray of New Haven about the project, as far as his diocese was concerned.

In September, having visited the various chaplains at Yale, we found that there was wonderful cooperation and friendship among them. It was suggested to the chaplains that their cooperation might serve as a pattern for cooperation in the community. Dr. Lovett, Chaplain on the campus at Yale, agreed to call together the Catholic, Protestant, and Jewish chaplains at the university for an informal clergy get-together. It was further planned that each chaplain invite one or two colleagues working in the community to the get-together, and that subsequently the circle would be widened.

In October, the Hartford Chapter's religious advisers were again contacted for the possibility of an informal, unpublicized clergy get-together. Each of them was asked to secure a colleague for the get-together. Many Catholic and Jewish advisers were able to follow through, the Protestant adviser was not, consequently, we secured the aid of the Council of Churches Director for Protestant ministerial contacts. A luncheon meeting get-together then took place in November. Msgr. Murray of Boston attended as an adviser from the NCCJ National Religious Commission.

In November, Dr. Lovett was host in his home to the first clergy get-together in New Haven. As planned, Catholic, Protestant, and Jewish chaplains invited a colleague from the community to attend.

Both the Hartford and New Haven first clergy get-togethers agreed on the need of continuing inter-communication on a completely unofficial, informal, friendly basis with no publicity attached. Monthly get-togethers were planned, the circle of clergy would be gradually widened by the personal invitation to colleagues from the original members. After two get-togethers which were

completely unstructured, both groups decided to structure the meetings somewhat by having a topic for discussion. The Hartford group began on Religion and Education, and at present is discussing Church and State. The New Haven group is still discussing Religion and Education.

In the early part of the year 1958 when Paul Blanshard was scheduled to make a Hartford appearance, one of the Catholic members of the clergy group called the NCCJ office and one of the Protestant members of the clergy group to express his feelings about the meeting which was to be sponsored by POAU and to be held at a local Baptist church hall. Catholic, Protestant, and Jewish members decided to get-together to discuss the meeting, Mr. Blanshard, and POAU. The result of the inter-communication was the publishing of a letter by a distinguished Protestant member (President of the Hartford Theological Seminary) of the group who emphasized that Mr. Blanshard was not representative of Protestant thought and that from his Protestant point of view, Mr. Blanshard's position was most objectionable. Another statement (by the Executive Director of the Connecticut Council of Churches) was published which clearly explained that Mr. Blanshard and POAU were not an official Protestant group and that the local Council of Churches were not connected with the group. Thus was prevented a misunderstanding on the part of Catholic members of the community who may have been mistakenly led to believe that their Protestant neighbors were sponsoring a type of activity which usually is a bigoted attack upon Catholicism. Thus also was prevented a recurrence of emotional attacks and counter-attacks. Thus was built up a feeling of great appreciation on the part of the Catholic clergy in the area who felt that their Protestant and Jewish colleagues had more than demonstrated their good faith and good will. The local Catholic newspaper carried the story, more important, the Catholic members of the group carried the story orally to their colleagues in the three Connecticut dioceses.

The New Haven clergy group having heard of the Hartford story, the members sent letters of congratulations to the Director of the Connecticut Council of Churches, and the local director of the Council of Churches emphasized that were the same situation to occur in New Haven, he would act in the same manner as his colleague did in Hartford. Again, this demonstration of good faith and good will was circulated by the members of the New Haven group. Word was getting around, and the atmosphere, clergy wise, was becoming more favorable.

In New Haven similarly a problem of bus rides for released time pupils was raised by the head of the New Haven Council of Churches. Through his personal contact with Msgr. Donnelly, which were occasioned by the clergy get togethers, some exchange of information and subsequent resolution of the situation came about.

No "action" is taken by the NCCJ clergy groups. The actions of the clergymen cited in the POAU and New Haven bus instances were taken by them as individuals, however, much of their actions may have been stimulated or precipitated by discussions of the clergy group meetings.

Sparked by the danger of misunderstanding which would evolve from an aggressive POAU campaign in Bridgeport, clergy leadership was contacted in Bridgeport for the possibilities of an inter-clergy group in that area. With the help of contacts made by the Inter-group Council Director in Bridgeport, a clergy get together was held in April in Bridgeport. A second meeting is now scheduled, and it seems as though this group will follow the pattern of the two veteran clergy groups. Contacts have been made for the first inter-clergy get-together in Norwich, June will probably see the first meeting in that area.

It is our plan to continue forming these clergy groups in each area so that we may keep extending the lines of communication. Incidentally, we now publish a bulletin for the clergy group called "Open Line". In it we use the materials of Religious News Service and we suggest books which can be of service in this inter-communication. The two issues already published have been well received.

Success in this venture can now safely be assumed for the first step, our job now is to keep the lines open by keeping these groups going and by widening the circle of the participants. This latter we do through the personal invitations of the members. Rigid adherence to the rule of no publicity for these conferences, and firm understanding that these conferences are in no way official and that the members are in no way "representing" their denominations, have helped us to have successful meetings. From time to time, we have invited, through the members, guests from education and other fields who could give the group information and facts about a topic it had under discussion. These guests have been well received.

In Boston, the NCCJ sponsored an ambitious program in the field of inter-religious relations. Approximately 5 years ago, with the inspired leadership of the Rt. Rev. Msgr. Edward G. Murray and Very Rev. Msgr. F. J. Lally, the regional director of the Boston Region established a religious advisory committee comprised at its conception of individual representatives of the religious groupings. From this modest beginning developed a large clergy group which meets at regular intervals. Associated with these more formal meetings are informal study groups, one of which has recently prepared an important pamphlet on "Spiritual Resources."

The clergy meet every other month. In contrast to Hartford where the programs of the clergy meeting are unstructured, Boston has had a great deal of satisfactory experience with meetings at which prepared papers are presented and discussed. The advisory committee meets in advance of each formal meeting to choose a topic and to invite the speaker and the discussants. Some of the recent topics on which papers have been prepared for discussion include

- 1 A Catholic view of the parochial school
- 2 A look on Israel
- 3 The Protestant view of Church and State

The Boston Commission on Religious Organizations also sponsors a radio series on controversial subjects involving a Priest, a Minister and a Rabbi

The Commission has been successful in providing an informal forum which acts as a catalyst to reduce inter-religious tensions

A great deal of controversy arose recently in the Massachusetts State Legislature concerning a bill which would make funds available for the erection of chapels at State Hospitals. The Protestants opposed this bill. As a consequence of the personal contacts and communication established between Protestants and Catholics through the NCCJ, this issue was resolved informally by the religious group

A bill was introduced in the Massachusetts State Legislature against discrimination in housing. The NCCJ informally arranged for the spokesmen for the three faiths to take similar positions at the hearings

Myron W. Fowell in the January 21, 1959 issue of the Christian Century, writing on Catholic and Protestant cooperation, correctly states

"There are of course areas of social concern on which the faith groups differ sharply. An excellent contribution in respect to a joint facing of controversial issues has been made in the Boston area through the Clergy Round Tables, sponsored by the Religious Organizations Committee of the National Conference of Christians and Jews. About thirty Ministers, Priests, and Rabbis have shared in these discussions. The series most recently completed included the following topics: 'A Catholic's View on Parochial Schools,' 'A Look at Israel,' 'A Protestant Looks at Church - State Relationships in Greater Boston.' While these discussions have revealed ideological differences between the groups, they have also brought to light differences of opinion within each group. Moreover, they have permitted red-hot debate in an atmosphere of mutual respect and good fellowship

"One criticism often leveled against inter-faith meetings is that they are 'just so much talk about superficial irrelevancies.' Such criticism is not justified

when discussion helps the participants live and work together Our Boston meetings have resulted in action as well as talk They have brought face to face a number of Ministers and Priests, as well as a few Rabbis, who have come to feel that they know each other When they are troubled by issues on which they cannot agree, these men no longer find it difficult to discuss them amicably over the telephone or across a luncheon table Talk of this kind is conducive at least to understanding differences of viewpoint, even differences for which no bridge is in sight But many inter-faith bridges have been built in Massachusetts, making possible an increasing amount of joint action by Catholics and Protestants in respect to social issues "

Other examples of excellent work in the building of inter-religious respect and understanding can be cited In many regions, however, there is no such emphasis on this major area of NCCJ concern

Program Services

We are greatly impressed with the outstanding ability and dedication of Dr Sterling Brown and Dr Dumont Kenny and their associates who are concerned with program development and implementation We have had many discussions with the professional personnel working in the program areas and we believe that our recommendations reflect, in the main, their opinions as well

The program of the National Conference is its heart Although an effective fund-raising arm is vital for the adequate functioning of the NCCJ, it is the quality of the NCCJ national and local programs which must justify its existence The Evaluation Committee was, therefore, concerned with the structure and functions of the Program Department

The Program Department comprises the following national commissions

- Commission on Educational Organizations
- Commission on Religious Organizations
- Commission on Labor-Management
- Commission on Mass Media
- Commission on Community Organizations

Each Commission is guided by a lay advisory board. The Commissions generally meet annually and separately. This has had the effect of stimulating overcompartmentalization. We have had personal experiences with this tendency. At the last annual meeting of the Commission on Education, references to problems of religion and education were generally discouraged by the response, "this belongs to the Commission on Religious Organization." The Program Department has recently attempted to develop inter-commission approaches. But this is made more difficult by the implicit nature of the commission structure.

Our greatest gap is the absence of Divisional counterparts of the National Program Department. This is a serious lack.

The critical test of NCCJ effectiveness will not be in terms of its national program, but primarily in relation to what the NCCJ is doing program-wise in Middletown, Yankee City and in Cornerville. Mrs. Streater's reports suggest the need to develop programs of greater depth in many of our regions.

We believe, furthermore, that the establishment of Program Commissions on a Divisional level will help to assure a greater flexibility of program. It is not advisable to plan a monolithic national program. The mores vary, conditions differ, the strategy and the very program that the NCCJ sponsors should perforce be projected in the context of specific local situations.

Professor Robert MacIver is widely known as an exponent of legal and political approaches to the problem of discrimination. Professor MacIver belongs to the action-minded camp. Nevertheless, he stresses in "The More Perfect Union" the necessity of adapting programs to the prevailing mores.

"It does not mean that no action should be taken until the mores of the community are ready and ripe for it. There is always division and some conflict within the creeds and thought ways of a modern community. The mores are always imperceptibly changing. Good strategy will seek to discern and to take advantage of the trends of change. Good strategy will at the same time endeavor so to frame

its policies that they will not, then or later, arouse latent antagonisms or increase actual ones so as to endanger the objectives it seeks For this reason radical demands where the mores are strongly resistant to them are often dangerous, especially if they are put forward by the minority groups themselves They may serve sometimes to rouse the public to a consciousness of the problem, but if pushed too hard they may provoke a revulsion that will militate against progressive measures "

This indicates the necessity of assuring that the NCCJ shall be characterized by the greatest possible flexibility in terms of program and strategy Flexibility in program does not mean compromise of principle

The goal of the NAACP is to secure complete integration of the Negro into the American community, socially, educationally, politically and economically Nevertheless, their strategy varies from state to state and from one part of the country to another In New York State, they are now concerned with the battle against discrimination in housing Ten years ago, their strategy in New York State did not concern itself with this problem but their prime concern was with the enactment of legislation outlawing discrimination in employment In the South, the battle lines are drawn on the segregation issue

There is no moral compromise if the NCCJ varies its program and its educational strategy A rigid and monistic national program and strategy will fail to satisfy many of our supporters in the North and may outrage the mores of the South

We believe that the implementation of the following recommendations will help the NCCJ to secure a greater measure of program flexibility, and coordination between regional needs and national program resources and services, the intensification of program emphasis in the regional areas

We, therefore, recommend

- 1 the appointment of a program consultant in each Division,

2 the establishment in each Division of a Program Commission which shall consist of

- a) a representative or representatives from each regional office
- b) a number of outstanding lay resource persons,

the Divisional Program Commissions shall have the functions of

- a) the implementation of national policy
- b) the selection of representatives from the Division to the National Program Commission
- c) the development of program and policy to meet the special needs of the Division

3 that the National Program Commission shall include

- a) the chairman of the Program Commission of each of the five divisions
- b) five additional members - one from each division - who are members of the National Board to be selected by the National Co-Chairmen
- c) the lay chairmen of the five National Commissions

the National Program Commission shall have the functions of

- a) the development of program policy
- b) the coordination of the national program activities

4 that the five Commissions shall convene their annual or biannual conferences together The Conference program shall be so arranged to permit common and separate meetings We believe that this will assure greater coordination of program and purpose and yet will permit the specialization that Commission projects require

Submitted on January 1959 by

Dr Bernard Lander