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

Series C: Interreligious Activities. 1952-1992

Box 43, Folder 6, "Proposal for National Interreligious Conference", 1964.

*From N. W. Newman's
Office
To take with
for Chicago*

*F - Chicago
Conf. Cath-
Jewish*

**PROPOSAL FOR NATIONAL INTERRELIGIOUS
CONFERENCE IN CHICAGO**

I. OBJECTIVES

In the light of changes going on within the Catholic Church, as reflected in the Ecumenical Council, our purpose is to explore the interaction of the Catholic and Jewish communities in America on the many levels on which this interaction takes place: as specific religious communities, each with its traditional teachings and religious attitudes regarding the other group; as cultural-ethnic communities, with old world memories and suspicions about one another, and as socio-political groups concentrated in American urban communities, sharing the experience of immigrant groups in big-city life.

The ultimate objectives is to bring together for the first time in one place the significant research which has been done by both the Jewish and Catholic groups over the entire area of Catholic-Jewish relations so that we may have a foundation for constructive future programs for improving Catholic-Jewish relations in America.

One important consequence will be the inevitable effect which such a conference will have among Catholic leadership in Rome.

Although there has been an enormous increase in Catholic-Jewish interaction, understanding and cooperation in recent years and much significant sociological and related research has been done,

the fruits of Catholic-Jewish experience and research have not been drawn together and evaluated for their practical implications. (It is interesting to note that the only institute for Judeo-Christian studies in the United States today is under Catholic auspices and has a proselytizing purpose.) We are urgently in need of a vehicle to gather together all existing research in Catholic-Jewish relations, with a view to stimulating and coordinating future activities, and also for bringing together the key individuals in both communities responsible for teaching, programming, communications and social science research. The purpose of the conference is to achieve these ends.

II. METHOD

We envision a two or three day conference to investigate the entire range of Catholic-Jewish interaction and attitudes about one another. Significant research papers will be prepared in advance and presented at the conference covering such subjects as: (1) How Catholics and Jews perceive each other as groups (inventory of existing attitude studies, polls, existing sociological literature, etc.); (2) What Catholics and Jews teach about each other in their religious schools (textbook surveys, analysis of sensitive themes in religious education, such as the Crucifixion, the Crusades, etc.); (3) Specific political and social issues which cause tension and misunderstanding between Catholics and Jews (birth control, censorship, religion in public education, etc.); (4) Methods and channels which have been developed for resolving misunderstanding and increasing cooperation between Catholics and Jews.

III. OTHER FACTORS

Whether the Protestant group should also be included remains to be decided. On the basis of the Catholic and Jewish groups only, we plan a conference of approximately 50 people -- including Protestant, about 75 people. The conference would be held in such a place as the Kellogg Center of the University of Chicago in order to have an appropriate scholarly setting. It would be concluded with a public plenary session which would be attended by the conference participants as well as special guests who occupy positions of outstanding prominence (including for example, a Catholic Cardinal providing that he is not out of the country). One of the additional purposes of the conference would be to develop documents which can be the basis of teaching materials about Jews and Judaism to be utilized through the program to be initiated in Rome by the AJC.

February 19, 1964

FIRST DRAFT
4/10/64

AMERICAN JEWISH COMMITTEE
Chicago Area Chapter
28 E. Jackson Blvd.
Chicago, Illinois 60604

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION - KEY FACTOR
IN SHAPING HUMAN RELATIONS
SUGGESTED CONFERENCE OUTLINE

SPONSORSHIP

The Conference is a joint undertaking of the Religious Educators Association and the Chicago Chapter of the American Jewish Committee.

TIME and PLACE

It is proposed that the Conference begin at 3:00 P.M. on Sunday, November 22, 1964 and continue through dinner on Monday, November 23, 1964. The Conference should be held in an academic setting, e.g. McCormick Theological Seminary, University of Chicago, etc.

GOAL

The Conference will explore the moral responsibility of Religious education in improving human relations, inter-personal and inter-group, among children, youth and adults. It will identify methods and techniques for achieving this end.

METHOD

I. Substantive Papers and Panel

Three major substantive papers will be presented at plenary sessions outlined below. Papers will be followed by a panel which will react, first by a Round of questions on the presentation and then by a discussion of the general issue for a short while. Panelists will include experts in the following fields: Curriculum Development and Text Books; Teacher Training; Training of Seminarians; Adult Education.

II. Workshops

Four concurrent workshops will meet on Monday, from 9:00 A.M. to 12:00 noon and from 2.30 - 4:00 P.M. Each of these will focus on one of the four fields listed above with the panelist serving as resource person. In addition, each workshop shall have a chairman, recorder and reporter.

Each workshop will have three foci:

(Research, Experience, Et.)

1. What do we know?

2. What do we do? (Current

Programs, Curriculum and method.)

3. Where do we go from here?

(Next steps)

Chairmen will be responsible for the expeditious conduct of the Workshop and utilization of the expertness of the resource person.

Recorders shall make accurate notes of workshop discussions and conclusions, for a Proceedings to be published after the conclusion of the Conference.

Reporters shall take concise notes and report highlights of workshop discussions and conclusions at the final plenary session of the Conference.

III. Major Addresses

Three major addresses shall be given, one at dinner on Sunday, a second at lunch, Monday and the third at dinner on Monday.

Topics suggested are:

1. The Moral Responsibility of Religious Education to Improve Human Relations.

2. The Relative Influence of Religious Education Among the Other Social and Cultural Forces in Shaping Attitudes and Behavior.

3. A Program for Religious Education in Achieving Improved Human Relations.

IV. Conference Schedule

Sunday, November 22, 1964

A. 3.00 - 4.00 P.M. Registration

B. 4.00 - 6:30 P.M. -

Three substantive Papers and Panel of Reactors

1. The Yale Divinity School Study of Protestant Textbooks
2. The St. Louis University Study of Catholic Textbooks
3. The Dropsie College Study of Jewish Textbooks.

C. 7:00 - 9:00 P.M.

Dinner and First Address

Monday, November 23, 1964

A. 9:00 A.M. - 12:00 noon

Four Concurrent Workshops

1. Curriculum Development and Textbooks
2. Teacher Training
3. Seminarian Training
4. Adult Education

B. 12:15 - 2:15 P.M.

Lunch and Second Address

C. 2:30 - 4:00 P.M.

Four Concurrent Workshops (Continued)

D. 4.15 - 5:30 P.M.

Plenary Session - Workshop Reports

E. 6:00 - 9:00 P.M.

Dinner, and Final Major Address

V. Conference Kit and Exhibit

Each registrant shall receive a kit of materials for use during conference and thereafter. Materials such as the R.E.A. Symposium (Weinrib, Olson, etal)

Proceedings of the Loyola University Conference on Religious Textbooks, Inter-religious Newsletter, "Roots of Bias" by Pike, etc.

In addition, an exhibit of pertinent materials should be arranged.

VI. Conference Fee

The fee should be set at a low figure to encourage participation.

VII. Resource Persons

The following non-Chicagoans is the beginnings of a list of those who might be invited to present papers or serve as Panelists:

Father Gerard Sloyan - Catholic University of America

Father Bernard Cooke - Marquette University

Bernard Olson

Gerald Knopff - Dir. Division of Christian Education,
National Council of Churches

Kristar Stendahl - Harvard Divinity School

W. R. Davies - Union Theological Seminary

Rabbi Abraham Heschel - Jewish Theological Seminary

Rabbi Louis F. Silbermann - Divinity Chair Vanderbilt
University, Nashville, Tennessee

Prof. Emil Fackenheim - Philosophy Dept. University of
Toronto

Rabbi Marc Tannenbaum - A.J.C.

Marshall Sklare - Director of Research A.J.C.

Manheim Shapiro - Director of Jewish Communal Affairs, A.J.C.