



THE JACOB RADER MARCUS CENTER OF THE AMERICAN JEWISH ARCHIVES

Preserving American Jewish History

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

Series C: Interreligious Activities. 1952-1992

Box 44, Folder 2, Religion and the Modern World - Jewish and Christian Perspectives, 25-28 March 1968.

INTERRELIGIOUS INSTITUTE

RELIGION AND THE MODERN WORLD -
JEWISH AND CHRISTIAN PERSPECTIVES

A DIALOGUE featuring

Prof. Johannes B. Metz,
University of Munster, Germany

and

Rabbi Arthur Hertzberg,
Columbia University, New York

Sponsored By

The St. Meinrad School of Theology

and

The American Jewish Committee

March 25-28, 1968

Saint Meinrad, Indiana

"RELIGION AND THE MODERN WORLD:
JEWISH AND CHRISTIAN PERSPECTIVES"

Sponsored by St. Meinrad School of Theology and The American Jewish Committee

Monday, March 25

6:00 PM Dinner Greetings by Archabbot Gabriel Verkamp
and Rabbi Marc H. Tanenbaum

8:00 PM	Opening Lectures
---------	------------------

Chairman of Session: Rabbi Tanenbaum

Father Johannes B. Metz - "Christian Responsibility for the Planning of the Future in a Secularized World"

Discussant: ~~Prof. Tjaard G. Hommes~~

10:30 PM	Reception
----------	-----------

Tuesday, March 26

9:30 AM Chairman: Rev. Adrian Fuerst, O.S.B.

Rabbi Arthur Hertzberg - "Judaism, Christianity, and
Secularism: Allies or Enemies?"

Discussant: Rev. Donald Wolf, S. J.

12:00 PM Luncheon

2:30 PM -
5:00 PM

Seminar

Chairman: Rt. Rev. Msgr. Raymond Bosler

6:00 PM Dinner

8:00 PM -

10:00 PM Lecture by Father Metz - "Religion and Competing
Political and Ideological Values: The
Christian-Marxist Confrontation"

Discussant: Dr. Günther Lewy

Nero's mother - I'm afraid my son will never let the world on his
Charles V - cannot even make 2 children here before they check
Robespierre - not to talk to you until before they check

Wednesday, March 27

9:30 AM Lecture by Rabbi Hertzberg - "Religion and Contemporary Ideologies"

Discussant: Dr. Sidney E. Mead

12:30 PM Luncheon

2:30 PM Seminar

Chairman: Rt. Rev. Msgr. John M. Oesterreicher

6:30 PM Dinner

8:00 PM -
10:00 PM Lecture by Father Metz - "Religion and Society in
Light of a Political Theology"

Discussant: Dr. J. Lawrence Burckholder

Arthur
Dyck

Honorable
Cotman

Thursday, March 28

9:30 AM Lecture by Rabbi Hertzberg - "Religion and Community by
the Light of the Jewish Tradition"

Discussant: Dr. Josephine Ford

12:30 Luncheon

2:30 PM Seminar

Chairman: Rt. Rev. Msgr. Marvin Bordelon

6:30 PM Dinner

8:00 PM -
10:00 PM Closing Panel Discussion by Father Metz and Rabbi
Hertzberg responding to questions posed by seminar
chairmen

10:00 PM Adjournment

John Fetterman
Rix

CHRISTIAN-JEWISH DIALOGUE METZ-HERTZBERG

Professor Johannes B. Metz - University of Münster, Germany

Rabbi Arthur Hertzberg - Columbia University

Discuss

"Religion and the Modern World: Christian and Jewish Perspectives"

PROGRAM OPEN TO THE PUBLIC: ST. BEDE THEATER, ST. MEINRAD, INDIANA

MONDAY, MARCH 25, 8:00 P.M., C.S.T.

Metz: "Christian Responsibility for the Planning of the Future in a Secularized World"

TUESDAY, MARCH 26, 9:30 A.M.

Hertzberg: "Judaism, Christianity, and Secularism: Allies or Enemies?"

TUESDAY, MARCH 26, 8:00 P.M.

Metz: "Religion and Competing Political and Ideological Values: The Christian-Marxist Confrontation"

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 27, 9:30 A.M.

Hertzberg: "Religion and Contemporary Ideologies"

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 27, 8:00 P.M.

Metz: "Religion and Society in Light of a Political Theology"

THURSDAY, MARCH 28, 9:30 A.M.

Hertzberg: "Religion and Community by the Light of the Jewish Tradition"

THURSDAY, MARCH 28, 8:00 P.M.

Panel Discussion by Metz and Hertzberg

SPONSORED BY

The American Jewish Committee - Saint Meinrad School of Theology

**CHRISTIAN RESPONSIBILITY
FOR THE PLANNING OF THE FUTURE IN A SECULARIZED WORLD**

by

JOHANN BAPTIST METZ

AMERICAN JEWISH

**Paper delivered at Seminar on "Religion and the Modern
World - Jewish and Christian Perspectives"**

**Sponsored by The Saint Meinrad School of Theology and
The American Jewish Committee**

March 25-28, 1968

Held at Saint Meinrad, Indiana

"To believe" does not mean to make it easy to relate to the world and its history. The Christian faith can and may never live in an artificial side-world, which is, de facto, for the most part only the more comfortable religious situation of the world of yesterday. Christian faith is inexorably called to responsibility for its hope. There is no question of its being asked whether it wants to take part in the problems of the world in which it lives; it must take part. That distinguishes Christian faith from every religious ideology that presses towards universality by intolerance and arbitrary self-assertion. The universality of Christian faith to which we aspire cannot be gained surreptitiously; and it cannot be attained by way of a power that precedes the power of truth and love, but only by way of the responsibility for one's faith towards everyone who asks him about the basis for his hope. So the Christian faith presses towards self-interpretation in a way that corresponds to the historical situation of understanding - not in order to adapt itself to this situation, but to bring to bear the comforting and provocative, the liberating and critical power of the Gospel in and for this situation.

But how does Christian faith relate to our present world? Is there a critical and creative responsibility for this faith? I prefer not to ask this question in such a general way; I shall narrow it down to one particular problem: the form of Christian responsibility for planning the future in our secularized world. Concerning the possibility and form of this responsibility for faith in our technological planning society, I would like to offer two considerations: the first about the starting point for this responsibility (I), and the second about the indirect, that is, the socio-critical form of this responsibility (II.).

I. THE STARTING POINT FOR THE RESPONSIBILITY

Christian responsibility must unpretentiously avail itself of that situation in and for which it seeks to answer for faith as hope. In short, it must begin with a confirmation and report of the situation. This report of the situation should, at the same time, make it clear to what extent "future" and, to be more precise, "future that has been or can be planned" is today a central theme and problem about the responsibility for Christian faith, and not simply a random theme and problem. I would like to make this report of the situation in such a way that I begin by naming several characteristics of the world (1.) to which our responsibility for our faith must relate and from which it must begin today; and then I shall try to draw together these individual statements to that understanding of the world and reality, which guides the technological, systematic disposition of our future existence. (2.)

1. The starting point for the responsibility of the Christian community can be defined as the world in its permanent and growing secularity. I am aware of the fact that this definition, which I tried to develop several years ago, is not without its problems, and can be misunderstood. It has also

not gone uncontested. Nevertheless, I should like to keep this formula as a first, more orientating statement.

Secular world - this is no metaphysical description of the essence of the world, which would, in the end, dissolve into a pleonasm that says nothing. This is rather an historical definition of the present world. And if one tries to elucidate the matter by characterizing it as a world that remains and grows in its secularity, then this means that this secularity has not only a transitional character, but, to a certain extent, that of an epoch, a character that thoroughly co-determines the world situation for the future that we can foresee.

Secular world - this is the result of an historical process that began in the West and today, in the course of the growing unification of the world, is more and more becoming the situation of all nations and all cultures. Let's now briefly sketch it in its main forms, with reference to the determination of the starting situation of Christian responsibility for the future.

a) In the western historical area this process of the world's becoming worldly has the form of "secularization." Since the late Middle Ages man, his society, his science, his culture and his economy have slowly but all the more decisively and inexorably been withdrawing from the great, all-embracing edifice of medieval Christianity and its theo-political constitution, in which the Church and theology had a kind of key attitudes for the determination of all fields of existence. The political exodus begins early: the national states arise, press for autonomy and create independent social and cultural centers. Since the time of a Columbus, people don't set out any more to reconquer the Holy Land, but - to discover the world. Philosophy forsakes its tutelage by theology; as Kant later said, it no longer wants to walk behind ecclesiastical science like a maid carrying the train of a dress, but occasionally wants to walk ahead, carrying the torch of reason. The case of Galileo Galilei becomes the symptom of the consequential parting of the natural sciences from the prevailing Christian understanding of the world. The time of the Enlightenment, on the one hand, just like the political, social and technical scientific revolutions arising in it on the other hand, show that the world in a special measure and in a manner hitherto unknown is becoming man's business; they also show that man now orders his affairs for himself and takes them into the custody of his freedom and his political responsibility. To a certain extent, the world determines itself. It sets and autonomously develops its own goals. The social constitution of this world is no longer directly "from God's grace," rather its organization rests on human convention and setting of goals. For a long time - to some degree even up into the time of the last Council - the Church has followed this process only with resentment. She has looked on it exclusively as apostasy and false emancipation, and only slowly has she aroused the courage to let the world become secular in this sense and to understand this process not only as an event

opposed to the historical intentions of Christianity, but also as one that will co-determine precisely this Christianity and its message by its deepest historical impulses.

b) This process of the secularization of the world has moreover - and this is especially important in our context - the form of the technical hominisation and manipulation of the world. From the milieu surrounding man, the world is becoming, in the course of the rise and development of the natural sciences, the object and material of human change. "While man of the pre-technical era knew only goals that he himself could establish and realize, insofar as they were present directly because of the structure of his own physical being and the reality surrounding him in other words, while he in times past lived from the concrete, existential nature that supported him biologically and humanly, he can now set up goals for himself that he arbitrarily chooses (though of course not without limits). Moreover, in order to reach these goals, he can build up for himself a world that, up till now, has not yet existed. In his human existence he not only interprets the world and its influences that surround him, but he himself creates this world of his." Man turns from being the observer to the modifier of the reality of his world, renovated from the homo sapiens to the homo faber - "but this time to the overseer of a world, and thereby more than ever he is changed into the overseer. He is no longer an animal that has to work, but a creator": homo creator, or to put it more carefully, homo manipulator. And the world appears as one handed over to him and his manipulation, as an extremely hominised world. This hominisation of the world does not, however, limit itself merely to the world of nature and matter; it reaches out more and more into all areas of man's world and existence. It also appears to hand the future of the world and of man over to a thoroughly rationalized planning in increasing measure. "Modern medicine and social medicine, modern sociology and similar branches of an anthropology that works with the methods of natural sciences are witnesses for this. Modern biochemistry and genetics open up to man the beginnings of methods for manipulating the biological origin of his existence. He not only painfully experiences a social and political fate, but designs extensive social and political systems. He discovers and learns to use methods for manipulating man as an individual and in groups. These methods are no longer in their reflex consciousness the simple communication of knowledge to another and the appeal to his free decision, but in a kind of technology of the natural sciences and psychology, they are able to change the mentality of man as an individual and collectively. He manipulates man through all the newly created social complications that are being produced by mass communications media, the supply of consumer goods, the political education in authoritarian systems, and many similar phenomena. For all these new social complications, which not only arise but are planned and carried out with reflex calculation of their effects on man, mean that many self-manipulations of man.

c) The process of this secularization of the world has, moreover, the form of the radical pluralization of world spheres and world attitudes. This, too, is a situation universally known. This pluralization of our existence, with its continual changing of roles, leads in many cases to a psychic and "intellectual overloading", which awakes completely new release-tendencies in the man of this secular world: there is a growing tendency to flee into an artificial side-world and a readiness to commit oneself to an ideology that forcibly shortens these pluralistic spheres of experience and life, and promises existential security. In his novel The Man Without Qualities, Robert Musil describes this pluralistic situation and the consequences resulting from it: as an "inhabitant of Cacanica", the man of this pluralistic situation has at least nine characters, namely "a vocational, a national, a state, a class, a geographic, a racial, a conscious, an unconscious and perhaps also a private character. He unites them in himself, but they break him up, and he is really nothing more than a little hollow, washed out by these many little streams. And so everyone who dwells on earth has still a tenth character; and this is nothing other than the passive fantasy of areas that have not yet been filled out. This allows man everything, with one exception: to take seriously what his at least nine other characters are doing and what is happening with them; in other words, it forbids precisely that which should make him complete."

d) Finally, from a religious viewpoint, the process of the secularization of the world has the form of de-divinization, or as Max Weber put it, the "disenchantment" of the world. Even though it may have turned into a theologically fashionable jargon that is thoughtless and fatiguing today, to talk about a de-divinized, undeified, in fact godless world, still, behind this there hides an inexorable truth that doesn't become any more harmless just because theology is starting to get tired of it again and would rather play with other new balls of its theological fantasy. A world that has gone secular - that is the world that understands itself in its non-godliness; that is the world that is not experienced as a lower border zone or numinous vestibule of God; its borders don't disappear like dusk into the unendingness of God. That is the world that of itself is not directly transparent, as it were shining through to God; that is the world in which God does not "occur"; the world which doesn't present itself to man as a majestically untouchable viceroy, but as the building site and laboratory for man and his planning. That is the world that looks like it has thereby sunk down from its sovereign esteem as God's creation; the world which does not "exist" in a pre-determined order and in which an "eternal order of things" could be directly read off; rather, it "arises" to become the burden of human commerce in the process of conscious, scientific technical planning or socio-political revolutions. That is, finally, the world in whose nature and history man does not directly encounter the vestigia Dei, but the "tracks" of his own action. So it is the world in which man encounters himself everywhere and thereby is always in danger of gigantically projecting himself as creator of this

world and its history, or of despairing because of the stony facelessness, the lack of promise and the process of radical reification of this world he himself had taken on -- with the result that, in the final analysis, both extremes seem to fall back into one.

2. And now, in order to make present this "secular world" as the starting point of Christian responsibility for the future with its whole weight and its whole exactness, and especially in order to bring in the specific question about the responsibility for the future, let us in a further consideration ask about the unified understanding of the world around us, which this manifold process of the secularization of the world is guiding, and in which the pre-eminence of man and of human action in the determination and realization of this world is based. Theoretically, this second step in sizing up the desired situation can be summarized as follows: the process of the growing secularization of the world is guided by the understanding of the world as an arising historical world under the primacy of reason.

The so-called New Time, in which the process of the world's secularization unfolds, is stamped with the persistent inclination towards the "new". This inclination towards the new is effective on the basis of the modern social, political and technical revolutions. Mankind in this new time seems to know only one thing that fascinates him: the future, as that which has never yet existed. "The present situation changes into commitments interested in the future. The actually real element in what we call real are its possibilities." The direct power of tradition, on the other hand, is vanishing. What was old is rapidly looking obsolete. The "golden times" don't lie behind us, but - if at all - before us; they are not remembered as in a dream, but creatively expected. The relationship to the past is more and more taking on purely aesthetic-romantic or purely archaic characteristics; or it is guided by a purely historical interest that again proves and presumes the past in its very being as past. This new consciousness of the world therefore seems to have a more or less purely historical relation to the past, but a developmental relation to the future. It releases man from the curse of the mere development of his origin and organizes him for his final development.

The future is, then, in a basic sense a reality that is not yet existent, in fact, has never yet existed, but that which is, in the proper meaning of the word, "new". So the relation to such a future cannot be purely contemplative or purely imaginative, because pure contemplation and pure imagination refer to reality that has already happened or is already existent. The relation to this future has a definitely operative character, and the theory of this relation is, therefore, a theory geared to action. It is determined by a new relation between theory and practice.

In this orientation for the future man now experiences his world no longer as a fate imposed upon him, as a sovereignly

untouchable nature surrounding him, but as a "quarry", out of which he is at last building his own "new world". He changes the world and forms it into scenery of his own developmental gesticulation. It is because of man and his technical activity that the world seems to be arising and thereby becoming secular. The occurrence of the so-called "secularization", as we briefly tried to sketch it above, and the primacy of the future in the modern understanding of the world, have a close inner relationship.

The categorical pre-eminence of the future in this modern understanding of existence and of the world has brought about, in increasing measure, a crisis of trusted religious ideas about the Christian faith, in which the religious crisis of faith in the secular world is acutely expressed. The "transcendent" element and the heaven "above us" appear to be not only hidden, but vanished (what is hidden can, in fact, be powerful and near!). Slowly but steadily the world has grown together over our heads. It seems to have fallen completely into our hands and projections. The glamour of the super-worldly, the super-earthly, seems to have (fizzled) burned out. The thing that moves modern man most deeply is not the engagement with the super-worldly, but the engagement with the future. Though he is so disenchanted and is considered so non-religious, again and again he lets it demand too much of him and call him out into itself. And all effective ideologies and forms of humanism in the East and West today are primarily oriented towards the future in this way. Think only of Marxism and its theory of the classless society in a future of this world brought about by man himself. The salvation, the successful and perfect humanity don't lie "over us", but "before us". And the whole of modern religious criticism, beginning with the Marxist, can be formulated as follows: Christianity, like religion in general, is powerless against the already described primacy of the future in our understanding of the world. It is not seldom that this new consciousness of the world is interpreted as liquidation of religious consciousness in general, as the initiation of a new post-religious time, in which every transcendental orientation should be seen through as purely speculative, and succeeded by a purely operatively planning orientation for the future.

To make my point briefly, this may suffice as a characterization of the present starting point of Christian responsibility for the future. In any case it should have become clear that today the question about the responsibility for the future is not a random one, but a central question of the understanding of faith and world.

II. THE INDIRECT, SOCIO-CRITICAL FORM OF THE RESPONSIBILITY

What possibility and form does the responsibility of the Christian community have, in view of this situation? Is this responsibility still possible at all? And is it still sought after and questioned? How could it still be influential? How and where are there here still any points of

interception at all, and thereby starting points for a fruitful conflict between the world-process so described and the Christian message?

1. Here we could begin by speaking about the Christian responsibility for the world's future in a general theological consideration.

First of all, it could be demonstrated that an inner and causal connection exists between the understanding of the world as an operatively arising historical world, guided by the primacy of the future, and the biblical, Judaeo-Christian understanding of the world. This proof would not necessarily have to have anything to do with a subsequent adaptation of the biblical faith to the world situation we have described. The proof would not need to try to underhandedly gain or reclaim anything at all. It could, above all, serve to demand something from faith and the Christian community itself: namely the readiness to take part in the critical responsibility for this present world and to seek the image of one's own future not along with or beyond this present time, but in it, because it is precisely the faith itself that is co-responsible historically for this world situation.

The characteristic of the Christian consciousness of the future could also be explained, the specific form of Christian hope. In doing so, one can and must clearly express the fact that this hope itself sets free the element of operative formation of the world, and that therefore the ordinary alternative between transcendental orientation and orientation to the future, between promise and historical challenge, between expectation and struggle, between Christian end-time hope and operative formation of the world, is basically wrong. In this context, it must be made clear that the hope in which Christian faith is related to the future cannot be realized past the world and its future, that this hope must share in and be responsible for the one promised future and thereby also for the future of the world.

Both these general considerations which I tried to unfold elsewhere, and which I will talk about in my lecture on the Christian-Marxist dialogue, cannot be pursued here. Moreover, in view of our formulation of the question, they are always in danger of wanting to solve the proposed problem by a powerful abstraction. For example, the sentence that Christian hope is not a sedative, but a stimulant for operative formation of the world, is indeed correct, but it is still too general to suffice for the definition of the relationship between hope and planning, between eschatological faith in the promises and technological planning for the future. At first everything can still be tied together harmoniously in this generality. But how does Christian hope relate to planning for the future? And how does this technologically planned future relate to the expected future of the Kingdom of God? We have to take our stand on this question! We can't take the edge off it by hasty distinctions, for example, by speaking of a planned future for the world and a transcendental future for hope. That is precisely

our trouble, that this planned future of the world seems more and more to be taking all future away from hope. "We have to very radically separate ourselves from the peaceful, arbitrary distinctions we always have right on hand, when we as Christians speak of the future: the distinction, for example, when we say, 'Politics take care of the future of this world, the Church takes care of the transcendent future; reason produces the relative future at man's disposal, faith awaits the absolute future, not at man's disposal; technology and economy plan the material future, the future of things, while the faith looks out for one's personal future. In ordinary experience one knows what is coming, but not who is coming; faith, on the other hand, does not know what is coming, but who is coming.'" Such distinctions here won't help us any further; they loosen up but don't liberate, they only veil things. And the question still remains: what holds especially for the responsibility of Christians regarding the planning of the future, that is, the planning for the future in our technological society?

2. This responsibility has, if I see it correctly, an indirect form. By that I mean to stress negatively that the Christian comprehension of its faith cannot directly and abruptly start working into the technological planning process or start talking its way into this process. For this planning process has its own legalities and procedures; in fact, this self-lawfulness (being a law unto itself) belongs to its very definition. But then is any other responsibility towards this planning for the future possible, than that of immanent, expert management?

Now the tasks of planning, precisely where they are pursued comprehensively and with a broad view, are always tasks for the government. Planning for the future is not only a technico-scientific problem, but is always a political one, too. And the idea of a technocratic society, in which technology is the only replacement for politics, a society in which all political government problems are changed into purely technological planning problems, is precisely an ideology, even if it may be quite modern. "It is correct to say that pragmatic planning is dictated to by the force of the matter. But this dictation doesn't work directly, but rather through the subjectivity of individuals and groups, who in each case are the subjects of those interests and needs from whose perspective the force of the matter is evident. In fact, it is only from this perspective that the force is recognizable. It is seldom enough that what the matter requires is clear to everybody, and it is correspondingly easily possible to follow this requirement. The ordinary case is that of the conflict of interests, the divergence of needs. And the question of pre-eminence and of the greater urgency seldom takes care of itself by the irresistible, pure argument: a person has to have some influence. Planning does not make the social 'pluralism' of organized interests unpolitical; on the contrary, it makes it as political as possible. Every planning with a bit of dimension reaches in

manifold ways into manifold interests, challenges them wherever possible and promotes their organization. Whoever wants to carry through his planning must, therefore, in the classical sense, act 'politically' and promote his plan or himself in those places where the decisions fall. That is the reason which today, contrary to the expectations which the idea of technocracy nourishes, lets managers and planning experts be increasingly engaged in politics, instead of transferring them into the secure expectation of the euthanasia of politics." The irrevocable difference between planning and political government is also proved by modern scientific theories of decision, which work with mathematic-cybernetic, sociological and economic models, etc. For these theories can indeed rationalize the socio-political practice within a certain medium in the context of its goal, but with their methods they cannot come to a decision about the so-called "preferences" of the goals to be pursued. Here, by its scientific rationalization, the decision becomes a political problem in a new way.

Here, at this socio-political dimension of the planning for the future, the responsibility of the Christian community now - indirectly - fits in: not, of course, because the Christian community itself is again pushing for political power, but rather because it is, from its Christian conscience about the future, in a critical and liberating way talking its way into that socio-political reality in which these planning projects are being programmed. To be sure, that presumes that the Christian community mobilizes the socio-critical and, to a certain extent, "political" potency of its faith and hope and love in a completely new manner.

The Christian community finds the theological basis and orientation for this socio-critical task in the eschatological horizon of its self-understanding, which is, at the same time, a horizon of universal humanization. And these end-time promises of biblical tradition - freedom, peace, justice, atonement - cannot exist independently. Ever anew they press into social responsibility. Of course, these promises cannot be identified with any social condition already reached. In such identifications, which the history of Christianity knows sufficiently well, that "eschatological reserve" is abandoned, through which every historically reached status of society appears in its on-going (provisional) character. Note well, in its on-going (or provisional) character, not in its unlimitedness! For this "eschatological reserve" does not bring us into a negating relationship to present society, but into a dialectic-critical relationship. The promises to which it refers are not an empty horizon of vaguely rambling religious expectation, but a critically liberating imperative for our present day. That is the way the orientation to these promises is constantly changing our present historical existence in a new way. It brings and forces us again and again into a critically liberating position facing the existing social relationships that surround us.

This consideration about the socio-critical task of Christian faith and of the Christian community cannot be explained in detail here. It is the more expressed and direct object of my lecture about "Religion and Society in the Light of a Political Theology". But precisely in view of the responsibility for the planning process in our technological society, the Christian community must discover anew this "public" responsibility that belongs to it, as it were in a second reflection, not in order to develop a socio-political concept of its own, alongside the others, in a kind of "ideological self-authorization", but rather to bring to bear the influence of the socio-critical elements that lie in the eschatological message. Its "public" responsibility is, therefore, a critically liberating responsibility. As a special social institution, the Christian community can only then formulate its universal claim in a pluralistic society in a way free of ideology, if it represents this claim as criticism and brings its influence to bear. In conclusion I would like to name several of these critical elements with a view to our technological planning society:

a) The Christian community must mobilize its socio-critical power in the sense that it protests against every attempt to look on the individual man living at this moment merely as material and means for the construction of a technological, thoroughly rationalized future, and to see individuality only as the function of a technologically steered social process. Here it must, more than ever, become the advocate of the poor and oppressed, who are "poor" precisely insofar as they cannot be defined by an appreciation of their position in the so-called progress of humanity.

b) The Christian community will bring to bear the influence of the difference between hope and planning, again and again, in the public consciousness of our socio-political reality: the difference that exists between what is sought in every future revolution and what is redeemed when the goal is reached. "What is really discouraging is human existence itself, as it results from industrial society or will result from it, whether this existence is experienced or fore-shadowed...As long as socialism is under construction, it can maintain the charm of a genuine transcendence. In that measure in which it constructs itself, it is losing this charm...But can man live without any transcendence at all, after the transcendence of the future is eliminated according to God's transcendence?" The Christian community, for which history as a whole stands under the "eschatological reserve" of God, will therefore raise a critical protest against every attempt to make the future as a whole the content of technological planning projects, and therefore secretly - in a suspiciously ideological manner - to make science and technology the allegible subject of the whole of this world's history.

c) The technological planning process, as we have already said, has priorities and preferences in its programming, which themselves are not determined in a purely technological-rational way, but rather socio-politically. Here the Christian community, with its witness of love, will use pressure to see that, in this socio-political reality, a consciousness of solidarity arises that does not close its eyes to the needs of others, even those of coming generations; a consciousness that therefore concentrates the technological planning process more than up till now on those needs threatening in our present day, and especially in the foreseeable future: for example, starvation catastrophes because of over-population, extreme inequality in economic conditions and educational possibilities, plus new forms of nationalism and racism as "civilized" forms of contempt for man.

And so it is precisely the indirect form of the responsibility of the Christian community for the planning of the future that demands a promulgation, a socio-critical mobilization of its most original dowry: that of hope and of love. The "tradition" of this hope and love must be brought by the Christian community into our planning society that is becoming more and more forgetful (and thereby less and less conscious of historical tradition). Without it our much-cited progress lacks that creative-liberating resistance, through which it alone has the prospect of justly being called "progress".



SECOND LECTURE:

Religion and Competing Political and Ideological Values:
The Christian-Marxist-Confrontation

FOCAL POINTS OF THE DIALOGUE
BETWEEN CHRISTIANS AND MARXISTS

by
Johann Baptist Metz
AMERICAN JEWISH
ARCHIVES

Paper Delivered at Seminar on
"RELIGION AND THE MODERN WORLD -
JEWISH AND CHRISTIAN PERSPECTIVES "

Sponsored By
The St. Meinrad School of Theology
and

The American Jewish Committee

March 25-28, 1968

Held at St. Meinrad, Indiana

I N T R O D U C T I O N

I will offer you here no general theological theory of the inter-ideological discussion in our society. I am also forgoing general reflections about ideology and the criticism of ideology. I shall try to explain the general problem of "Religion and politico-ideological values in our society" in the present discussion between Christianity and Marxism.

From the Church's side, since the days of Pope John this discussion goes under the name "dialogue". The latest Council itself speaks of such a dialogue. It speaks of "dialogue with the world", which it explicitly tries to lead, or at least to begin, in its pastoral constitution - gropingly, not seldom betraying what is unfamiliar and untrained in this business. But the Council also speaks of "dialogue with the unbelieving", which should be carried on "in consciousness of the weight of the questions atheism asks" and "in readiness to bring help to atheism". Since then, this key-word "dialogue" has in many mouths turned into thoughtless, fatiguing jargon used as a fad that conceals and misrepresents the seriousness of the original desire. For that reason, I would like to begin here by saying something in general about this inter-ideological dialogue of the Church. This dialogue of the Church does not serve an adaptation that is lacking imagination; it serves rather a fruitful conflict. It may not become the cloak for a late liberalistic, half-senile attitude that puts up with everything and tries to get along with everything, because it no longer possesses any strength for change nor productive, creative imagination. Finally, the dialogue of the Church may not degenerate into a theology of pacification, in which the Christian message is levelled down to a symbolic paraphrase of human self-evidences. That would mean taking away from what is Christian all character of conflict, all character of opposition to any presently existing reality, and robbing it of its power to affect history. If at all, history is affected by what is not self-evident, by the "impossible", by the object of our hope. And Christian faith always understands itself as a victory - not as a result of atonement (reconciliation), but of struggle with our foregone conclusions. Its proclamation is always also information about what is existing and what has been accomplished. The dialogue of the Church may not veil the peculiarly revolutionary element in this faith; on the contrary, it should - finally - once again bring to bear the influence of this element in the eyes of our society. All this has to be kept in mind continually, when we speak of dialogue in what follows. Only then can we avoid from the start any confusion about what we mean to say about this word, that is, the newly awakened, determined readiness of the Church to share in the problems and questions of her social milieu.

With regard to the dialogue between Christians and Marxists, the Church and theology have meanwhile gathered several experiences: very many positive experiences, but also experiences about possible dangers of the dialogue which occasion critical reflection. Take, for example, the danger of a purely conceptual reconciliation of both positions, and the danger in our inter-ideological discussion

between Christianity and Marxism to underestimate the meaning of the "third power", that is, of the sciences and their technological rationalization of our social problems. In what follows I want to sketch for you several "focal points" of the dialogue between Christians and Marxists, as they have developed in recent years in the European dialogue. As such points of interception and focal points I shall name the discussion about the Humanum, the Futurum and the Politicum.

I. HUMANUM

A central theme of the inter-ideological discussion between Christianity and Marxism is the wrestling for threatened man. Since I am speaking about this theme as a Catholic theologian, may I explain this viewpoint of that self-evidence of the Church, as expressed in the declarations of the last Council. By that I mean that series of statements in which the Church's universal horizon of mission and responsibility is exposed. Corresponding to the universality of the consciousness of mission in the conciliar statements is the universality of a consciousness of service, of service to the hope of the world. This universal consciousness of service and mission takes up a primitive theme of New Testament preaching that can be characterized in the language of biblical tradition something like this: the barrier between Jews and gentiles falls, the curtain of the temple is torn to pieces, the synagogue becomes the Church among men, for men. Movement to the border, and over the border, becomes obligatory. The language of the Palestinian mother-soil, the language of Canaan, which would have built no bridge to the people on the other side of Palestine, but would rather have condemned Christianity to the spiritual isolation of a religious sect, is given up. What is sought is man; man in the place where he lives, with the language he speaks, with the historical experiences in which he has a share. Christian faith mobilizes from the very beginning the exodus to man, for "there is no longer Gentile nor Jew, circumcised nor uncircumcised, barbarian nor Scythian, slave nor free man" (Colossians 3:11). Here lies the root of a universal humanity in Christianity, as Pope Paul begged in his concluding address at the Council. Here is the basis of the unavoidable mandate for solidarity with those who are threatened - so much so, that the Church and all individuals are directed to answer for these threatened, anxious people, those farthest away and the lowliest among them. I am stressing this line of statements of the Council, because in it that common element sought between Christians and Marxists in the wrestling for threatened man can be recognized, of which I spoke in the beginning.

Now to what extent does that hold with reference to Marxism? Well, more recent Marxism, which is certainly no longer an unambiguous power, stresses very clearly that the Marxist alternative to religion is not actually a materialistic atheism, as Christian Scholasticism seeks to refute it, but rather a humanism decidedly in favor of totality and its radical consequence "for the honorable rescue of man". Marxism does not, therefore, appear primarily as a plan of the world and existence against God, but rather as an offer of a positive possibility of existence, of a total humanity without God. So the thematically-militant atheism is not the

object, but rather the presupposition of Marxism. Now by no means do I want to say that this scepticism of a generation that is, to a certain extent, post-atheistic, is less bewildering for the Christian than the explicitly atheistic scepticism. But, as I see it, right here is an opportunity for responsible dialogue and debate. Christianity must take this humanitarian claim at its word and let its own solidarity in the wrestling for the humanity of man be recognized, more firmly than ever before.

Here the Church, which described itself in the Council explicitly as the Church of the poor and oppressed, and with it the whole of Christianity, has to do justice to a great claim. It is, in fact, well known, that the complaint against Christianity as a form of self-alienation from man turns up again and again, especially in Marxism. And who would want to deny that, at times, a kind of self-alienation from man was favored in the name of Christianity and the Church; that some, for example, canonized certain social constellations in the name of Christianity and often had on hand, all too quickly, empty promises about the next world for the poor and oppressed?

Who would want to deny that the Church has spoken her criticism of the powerful of this earth often much too late, too softly, and with too little determination; that the Church has indeed clearly and firmly claimed to be the protectress of the natural law, but has not always just as clearly and firmly carried out the resulting duty to stand up for the humanity of all threatened people "without respect to person." Here history makes its accusation. And Christianity has to take this charge seriously, especially since it, as a historical reality, must always stand up for the concrete, historical developments of its own being, too.

If this is taken seriously, not only as a disposition, but as an attempt at a new experience, then it can be credibly shown that Christianity, from its roots, is in no way serving a radical self-alienation from man, that it is basically only trying to fix those forms of self-alienation that cannot be dissolved by any socio-technico-political progress. Lastly, there exist forms of this self-alienation, which cannot be removed by even an extreme amelioration of the socio-economic situation or by the removal of determinism, from both of which man will always derive the "pain of his finiteness." There are forms of self-alienation that cannot simply be dissolved into a socio-utopian effect of expectation. Let us assume that the great utopias in East and West could be realized and would lead to a vast, economic removal of man's determinism in the future great society. Would then man's questioning confrontation with himself be at an end? Or wouldn't it for the first time break forth in a radical manner, since many things that divert from this confrontation and constantly hush it up, such as work and economic anxiety, would now ex supposito fall by the way? For example, what about the problem of guilt and evil? Or what about suffering and death? What about the problem of boredom, or the experience that we theologians describe with the strange name of concupiscence, by which I mean the observation that idea and concrete existence are always splitting apart in our life, in other words, that there is not only an external but also an internal misery of man?

"Firm solidarity with threatened man in general" -- after what has been said, that offers itself as an important direction in the dialogue of Christianity with Marxism. But that has nothing to do with Christianity's giving itself up to philanthropy. It has nothing to do with a resignation and reduction of the Christian message to purely humanitarian interests. From the viewpoint of the history of religion, such a thing could be stigmatized as a typical tendency of senescence, as a specific danger of a religion that is growing old, one that uses the road of purely humanitarian thinking to try to reach or surreptitiously obtain that universality which it could never achieve on the road of historical discussion. But this humanism of Christianity has everything to do with the credibility and communicative power of a faith that represents a universal salvation in the face of a radically threatened humanity of man; a salvation of fraternal responsibility "for the least"; a salvation in reference to which anything is untrue that seems to be true only for the isolated individual.

II. FUTURUM

The dispute about the future is not the object of discussion only between Christians and Marxists. It has universal significance, and I tried to explain this significance for you in my first lecture about the "Christian Responsibility for the Planning of the Future." I must now ask you to remember what was said there, because I can't repeat it in detail here. The "future" has become a focal point for the dialogue between Christians and Marxists, because Marxism accuses Christianity of having developed no conscience for the future, or of having let it waste away a long time ago. As is well known, the accusation is defined exactly in the Marxist religious criticism: Christianity is said to be an ideology of tranquillization; it reifies the expectations of men into an unhistorical next world and thereby enervates man's historical struggle for his future. It creates in man "a false consciousness" about the social circumstances surrounding him, and thereby hinders a productive and critical alteration of his surroundings and generation.

Let me use as a starting point the charge that biblical religion reifies in its understanding of God the unfulfilled longings of man, and thus takes away from him the incentive for an historical struggle for a better future. I would like to choose this starting point, because it compels me to reach back into the great tradition of the idea of God that Jews and Christians have in common. How is God understood in this tradition? Of course, I can only call attention here to one series of biblical statements, namely, those which have direct reference to our question. In my opinion, this is very clearly expressed in the central Old Testament report of God's revelation in the Book of Exodus (3:14). To be sure, God is spoken of there as our future, but as our future, insofar as it belongs to itself, is based on itself and is not simply a correlate of our own wishes and endeavours. "I shall be who I shall be" - so runs the central thought in the text we cited. It defines the divinity of God as the free "power of our future" belonging to itself, and not primarily as a "being-over-us" in the sense of

an other-worldliness that can be experienced without conscious historical tradition. The God who is so understood appears here not as the product of the impatience with our own wishes, or the result of resignation to the fact that our historical endeavors cannot succeed; He appears not as the stifling of man's historical initiative, but rather precisely as the liberation for this initiative. For only a future that is more than the prolongation of our own open or latent possibilities can really call us out over ourselves, only it can free us for what is really "new", which will not plunge us again into the "melancholy of fulfillment". It can free us for what has never yet existed. Such an understanding of God refutes the suspicion that God is only an alienated idea of our own historical existence that is always alienating us. In fact, this makes historical existence possible for the very first time, because it lets our world appear as an historical world, arising to this "new" element, a world in whose process of development our freedom is taking part. Since this biblical faith in the promises refers to this new element, it awakens a kind of revolutionary attitude toward the world, whenever revolution is characterized by a living consciousness of an absolute novum, which cannot be understood simply as the evolutionary prolongation of our own possibilities. If one considers this admittedly seldom-noticed side of the biblical faith in the promises, then there can hardly be any talk about this faith's letting man grow fatigued in his historical wrestling, about its having a purely soothing, tranquillizing tendency. Isn't there rooted in this faith precisely our modern understanding of the world, with its persistent will for what is "new", with its primacy of the future?

With this in mind, the meaning of Christian hope can also be explained in this debate about the future. The alternative which the Marxist religious criticism has developed between promise and challenge, between expectation and struggle, and, to a certain extent, between Christian end-time hope and a revolutionary formation of the world, is basically not pertinent. For even Christian hope can never realize it in purely contemplative expectation, and especially not as hope based on the cross of Jesus, because pure contemplation refers, per definitionem, always to what has happened and to what is eternally existent. But the future of the world, sought and aimed at in Christian hope and based on the cross of Christ, is a reality that is still arising and has not yet been reached. So this hope has an essentially creative and critical character, and must realize itself in a creative-critical eschatology. It is always hope in the form of struggle, and waiting in expectation. The Christian concept of the end-time can therefore be determined neither by a purely present eschatology nor by an eschatology of purely passive expectation. I have already tried to give a detailed explanation of all this in other contexts, and don't want to repeat myself in particulars here. Moreover, what has been said here sounds quite "fundamental". Has Christianity, then, really fought for these promises? Or more exactly, has Christianity always made it credibly clear, for which promises it is fighting? Has it credibly realized that the promises it proclaims, that the hope it engenders, is not a hope in the Church, but rather in the Kingdom of God as the Kingdom of the world's future; the hope in a Kingdom of universal peace and justice, a Kingdom that knows no more tears, and in which "there will no

longer be mourning nor cry of anguish or pain" (Apocalypse 21:4)? And has Christianity given support in creative-critical expectation of this promise - that is, of the promise of the Sermon on the Mount, which turns the Christian Church into one of the poor and the enslaved?

Without doubt, the promises of Christian tradition are indeed an incentive in all our social, politico-cooperative endeavours for the future; but they are also a sting that doesn't merely drive these movements for the future into a militant optimism about the world, but also offers them critical resistance. In view of the scandal of the cross, Christian belief in the promises can never simply turn into the ideological paraphrase of the modern, militant consciousness of progress. It can never simply canonize the technico-economic-social progress we have organized. It is and will always remain the expression of a hope against all hope, and in that it is and will remain essentially untimely; untimely, however, not in the sense of something always belonging to yesterday, in the sense of fault-finders and people loaded with resentment, but untimely in a productive sense: it has a critically-liberating power and task, in view of our movements for the future.

That is the way Christian hope again and again calls attention to that real dialectic that is present in our movements for the future. It critically stresses the fact that the misery to be overcome not only lies in the circumstances surrounding us, but is also lingering in ourselves, so that with each victory over misery we bring forth some new misery, or else we create the conditions for it. Christians hope critically points out that, at any given moment, all historical action is still directed to forbearance and atonement (reconciliation). "Otherwise it does not recover from the paradox that it is impossible to anticipate the end of history's conditions; that it is impossible to overcome the alienation of man from man, under the conditions of alienation; and that it is impossible, biblically speaking, to overcome sin as a sinner, without simply producing new sins. How, then, is one supposed to bring about the Kingdom of brotherliness devoid of violence, under the conditions of the use of violence?" (J. Moltmann) Where this is seen, there also grows the consciousness that the "sound" future of man and mankind we are seeking does not come simply through and from ourselves; there grows the consciousness that we are ever anew waiting for a future that is more than the work of our hands, one full of forbearance, forgiveness and atonement (reconciliation), and one we will experience, when and if we ourselves take an active, creative part in this future. There are also Marxists who have at least surmised this. In this sense, let me, as I conclude this point, cite a sentence from the poem "To Those Born Later" by Bertolt Brecht:

"We, who wanted to lay the groundwork for friendliness,
could not be friendly ourselves.
But you, when things get so far
That one man helps another,
Think of us
With forbearance."

III. POLITICUM

What I mean here is the problem of social experience and, with that, the central theme of Marxism as a revolutionary theory of society. One can well say that Christian theology, particularly in the discussion with Marxism, again stresses more clearly the social dimension of its message of promise, and works out the socio-critical power of Christian hope. My article about "Religion and Society in the Light of a Political Theology" should explain that more in detail. As a start, let the following very general statement be stressed here: Christian hope refers to the end-time promise of the Kingdom of God as a Kingdom of universal peace, universal freedom, universal justice and atonement (reconciliation). These end-time promises cannot exist independently. They can and may never be understood merely as a correlate of the longing of the individual in his private inwardness. Ever anew they force one into a social responsibility. They are, in fact, not only an empty horizon for a vaguely rambling, religious expectation; they must rather be lived under the conditions of the "now" and have their influence brought to bear; and so they bring Christian hope into line with the present efforts for freedom, peace, justice and reconciliation. In the light of this tradition of the promises, Christian theology critically gets down to the problem with the Marxist conception of society. I would like to name several of these critical elements for you, so that I can end up by suggesting the basis of possible cooperation.

In view of the divine promises of a universal reconciliation, justice and freedom, Christian theology in general stresses that the whole of man's history of freedom is under the "end-time reserve" of God. So the freedom, justice and reconciliation being sought by all cannot be identified with a social condition we have fought for and achieved, nor with the understanding of freedom, justice and reconciliation prevalent in that condition. Christian theology therefore criticizes the absolutizing and sealing up of certain social conditions and their accompanying forms of understanding man. This protest has several starting points with regard to the discussion with Marxism. I should like to briefly sketch two of them here.

First of all, Christian theology, with its "eschatological reserve" toward every abstract idea of progress and humanity, critically stresses the dignity of the individual human being who is now living, and critically tries to protect him from being looked upon simply as material and means for the construction of a universal future for mankind. It criticizes the attempt to see the individuality only as the function of a politically steered social process. To be sure, there may also be a positive concept of the individual in Marxism, and it is public knowledge that precisely more recent Marxism is working on such a concept. But isn't the individual important here, not only insofar as he is the first one in the opening up of new social possibilities, insofar as he, to a certain extent, anticipates in himself the future social process in a revolutionary way? But what about the poor and the oppressed, who are poor precisely because they cannot be the first in such a process?

Secondly, in view of the political system of Marxism, Christian theology must ever anew critically stress that history as a whole is under the end-time reserve of God; that is, it must critically bring its influence to bear, so that history as a whole can never become a political concept in the more restricted meaning of the word. It must do this so that history as a whole can never become the content of a particular political action of individual political groups. For there is no subject of history as a whole that can be alleged of this world. But where a definite class, namely the proletariat, tries to see itself as this subject, as in classical Marxism, and wants to make the whole of history into the content of its political action, it must inevitably become ideologically totalitarian.

There still remains an abundance of viewpoints regarding the discussion between Christians and Marxists about the Politicum, that we could discuss. Nevertheless, I should like here, in closing, to ask the question about the basis of possible cooperation between Christians and Marxists from the standpoint of social experience. This basis cannot primarily be a positive determination of the social process, and it cannot be a definite, substantial notion of the future, free society of man. As far as this positive element is concerned, there will always be differences, and there will always be a pluralism; and in the positive design for society, this pluralism cannot be removed at all, under the conditions of our history, unless total manipulation should replace its free realization. Regarding cooperation, it is primarily a critically negative attitude and experience that offers itself: the experience of the threatened human being, the experience of the threat to freedom, justice and peace. We should not underestimate this negative experience. In it there lies an elementary, positive power of mediation. Even if we can't directly and suddenly agree among ourselves about what freedom, peace and justice positively are, still, we have a long, common experience of what discord, injustice and lack of freedom are. This negative experience offers the opportunity for unity - less in the positive plan for the freedom and justice we seek, than in the critical resistance to the horror and terror of injustice and the lack of freedom. The solidarity lying in this experience, the possibility of a common protest front, must be seen and mobilized. For the danger of new discord continues to be too close. The irrationalism of our social and political experience is too clear. The possibility of a "collective eclipse" is not yet banished. The danger of discord, injustice and lack of freedom is too great for indifference to this danger not to become a crime - for Christians and Marxists.

THIRD LECTURE:

Religion and Competing Political and Ideological Values:
The Christian-Marxist-Confrontation

CHURCH AND SOCIETY IN THE LIGHT OF A "POLITICAL THEOLOGY"

by

Johann Baptist Metz

AMERICAN JEWISH
ARCHIVES

Paper Delivered at Seminar on
"RELIGION AND THE MODERN WORLD -
JEWISH AND CHRISTIAN PERSPECTIVES"

Sponsored By

The St. Meinrad School of Theology

and

The American Jewish Committee

March 25-28, 1968

Held at St. Meinrad, Indiana

The object of this paper of itself demands to be unfolded in two considerations: one, reflecting on the meaning and the task of "political theology" (I), the other, investigating the relations between Church and society in the light of this "political theology" (II).

I

The notion of political theology is ambiguous, hence exposed to misunderstanding because it has been burdened with specific historical connotations. However, in view of the time at my disposal, I must refrain from historical clarifications here. May I then ask you to understand this talk on political theology in the way I shall use this notion in what follows; in using it, I shall attempt to elucidate its meaning. I understand political theology, first of all, to be a critical correction of present-day theology inasmuch as this theology shows an extreme privatizing tendency (a tendency, that is, to centre upon the private person rather than "public", "political" society). At the same time, I understand this political theology to be a positive attempt to formulate the eschatological message under the conditions of our present society.

1. Let me first explain the function of political theology as a critical corrective of modern theology. I shall begin with a few historical reflections.

The unity and co-ordination of religion and society, of religious and societal existence, in former times acknowledged as an unquestionable reality, shattered as early as the beginning of the Enlightenment in France. This was the first time that the Christian religion appeared to be a particular phenomenon within a pluralistic milieu. Thus its absolute claim to universality seemed to be historically conditioned. This problematic situation is also the immediate foundation of the critique expressed by the Enlightenment and, later, by Marxism. From the beginning this critique took on the shape in which it still appears today. It approaches religion as an ideology, seeking to unmask it as a function, as the ideological superstructure of definite societal usages and powerstructures. The religious subject is being denounced as a false consciousness, that is, it is deciphered as a status of society which has not yet come to itself. If a theology seeks to meet such a critique, it must uncover the socio-political implications of its ideas and notions. Now -- and here I am conscious of a daring simplification -- classic metaphysical theology failed to discharge its responsibilities in this quarrel. The reason is that its notions and categories were all founded upon the supposition that there is no problem between religion and society, between faith and societal practice. As long as this supposition was true, it was indeed possible for a purely metaphysical inter-

pretation of religion to be societally relevant: such was the case, for instance, in the Middle Ages and with its great theologians. However, when this unity was broken, this metaphysical theology got itself into a radical crisis as the theoretical attorney in the pending case between the Christian message of salvation and socio-political reality.

The prevailing theology of recent years, a theology of transcendental, existential personalist orientation is well aware of the problematic situation created by the Enlightenment. We might even say that, in a certain sense, it originated as a reaction against this situation. Still this reaction was not direct and sustained: the societal dimension of the Christian Message was not given its proper importance but, implicitly or explicitly, treated as a secondary matter. In short, the Message was "privatized" and the practice of faith reduced to the timeless decision of the person. This theology sought to solve its problem, a problem born of the Enlightenment, by eliminating it. It did not pass through the Enlightenment, but jumped over it and thought thus to be done with it. The religious consciousness formed by this theology attributes but a shadowy existence to the socio-political reality. The categories most prominent in this theology are mainly the categories of the intimate, the private, the political sphere. It is true, these theologians strongly emphasize charity and all that belongs to the field of interpersonal relations; yet, from the beginning, and as though there were no question, they regard charity only as a private virtue with no political relevance; it is a virtue of the I-Thou relation, extending to the field of interpersonal encounter, or at best to charity on the scale of the neighbourhood. The category of encounter is predominant; the proper religious way of speaking is the interpersonal address; the dimension of proper religious experience is the apex of the free subjectivity, of the individual or the indisposable, the silent centre of the I-Thou relation. It seems clear then that the forms of transcendental existential and personalist theology, currently predominant, have one thing in common, the trend to the private.

I should like to cast further light on this tendency which I have called a privatizing tendency. Let us look at the results of modern Formgeschichte and the way they are interpreted by modern theology. It is well known that the Gospels' intention is not to present a biography of Jesus in the current sense of the word; their account of Jesus does not belong to the genus of private biography, but to the genus of public proclamation -- of kerygma -- which is the form in which the Christian message of salvation couches its assertions. The exegetical studies in so-called Formgeschichte have shown that the Gospels are a multi-layered text, in which the message is proclaimed in the aforesaid way. Now it seems to me that it was, in a certain sense, a misfortune, when the discoveries and conclusions of Formgeschichte were at once interpreted in the

categories of theological existentialism and personalism. This meant that from the very beginning the understanding of the Christian proclamation was privatized and to a certain degree made existentially intimate. The word of proclamation was understood merely as a word of address, as a word of the personal self-communication of God, but not as a word having a hearing on society. The hermeneutic of the existential interpretation of the New Testament moves about in the circle of the private I - Thou relationship. At this point, therefore, there seems to be need of a critical deprivatizing in the understanding of the foundations of our present theology. This deprivatizing of theology is the primary critical task of a political theology.

It appears to me to be in a certain sense just as important as the program of demythologizing. At the very least this deprivatizing must accompany a legitimate demythologizing, since the latter is in danger of reducing God and salvation to a correlative factor of private existence and of leveling the eschatological message itself to the symbolic paraphrase of the metaphysical questionableness of the person and his private situation of decision. In this way, however, the character of conflict and contradiction to the present reality is taken from those promises and they are thereby robbed of all socio-critical power. The existentialist interpretation of the New Testament has a pronounced tendency toward privatizing. It carries on demythologizing at the price of the new myth of a worldless existence and private subjectivity.

Naturally there is also in the Message of the New Testament a legitimate individualisation of the particular person before God, which can be considered an essential point of this message, above all in its pauline tradition. And this should not be called into question by the demanded deprivatizing. Just the opposite! For by the above named tendency of privatizing, theology falls directly into the danger of not reaching the individual in his own existence whom she challenges. This existence today is involved to the highest degree in a mobile society. And every personal and existential theology which does not grasp existence itself as a political problem in the broadest sense of the word remains abstract in relation to the existential situation of the individual today. Furthermore, through such a tendency to privatize, theology is in danger of surrendering the faith immediately in an uncritical and uncontrolled way to the modern socio-political ideologies. And finally, an ecclesiastical religion which understands itself within the framework of such a privatizing theology takes on more and more the character of a non-binding standard and authority "which is a standard only in so far as no one takes offense on it, or many continue to let themselves be influenced by it, but which is without effect, because no impulses come from it except for its own reproduction".¹⁾

2. With this, the positive task of political theology comes to light. It is, to determine anew the relation between religion and society, between Church and societal "publicness", between eschatological faith and societal life; and, it should be added, 'determine' is not used here in a "pre-critical" sense -- that is, with the intention of a priori identifying these two realities -- but "post-critically" in the sense of a "second reflection". Theology, inasmuch as political theology, is obliged to establish this "second degree reflection", when it comes to formulate the eschatological message under the conditions of the present situation of society. Hence let me briefly describe the characteristics both of this situation, that is, how it should be understood, and of the biblical message, which is the determining factor of this theological political reflection.

a) I shall explain the situation from which today's theological reflection takes its starting point, by referring to a problem also raised by the Enlightenment which, at least since Marx, has become unavoidable. This problem may, in an abbreviated formula, be presented thus: according to Kant, a man is enlightened only when he has the freedom to make public use of his reason in all affairs. Hence the realization of this enlightenment is never a merely theoretical problem, but essentially a political one, a problem of societal conduct...In other words, it is linked with such socio-political suppositions as render enlightenment possible. Only he is enlightened who, at the same time, fights to realize those socio-political presuppositions that offer the possibility of publicly using reason. When therefore, reason aims at political freedom and, consequently, theoretical, transcendental reason appears within practical reason, rather than the reverse, a deprivatization of reason is absolutely necessary. Every "pure" theory, whether it be stressed or even over-stressed, is nothing but a relapse into a pre-critical consciousness. For it is clear that the subject's critical claims cannot be sustained as "mere" theory. A new relation between theory and practice, between knowledge and morality, between reflection and revolution, will have to be worked out, and it will have to determine theological thought, if theological thought is not to be left at a precritical stage. Henceforth practical and, in the widest sense of the word, political reason must take part in all critical reflections in theology. More and more, practical-political reason will be the centre of the classical discussion of the relation between fides and ratio, and the problem of the responsibility of faith will find the key to its solution, again, in practical-public reason. Properly speaking, the so-called fundamental hermeneutic problem of theology is not the problem of how systematic theology stands to historical theology, how dogma stands to history, but what is the relation between theory and practice, between understanding the faith and social practice. If the task of political reflection in theology, as emerging from the present situation, is to be characterized summarily, it might best be done in the way

we have just indicated. This also shows that our intention is not, once again, to mix faith and "politics" in a reactionary manner. Rather, it is to actualize the critical potential of faith in regard to society.

b) Biblical tradition, in its turn, obliges us to undertake this "second reflection" on the relation between eschatological faith and societal action. Why? Because salvation, the object of the Christian faith in hope, is not private salvation. Its proclamation forced Jesus into a mortal conflict with the public powers of his time. His cross, from which faith receives its orientation and promises does not stand ultimately in the privatissimum of the purely individual-personal realm; neither does it stand in the sanctissimum of the purely religious realm. It stands outside the threshold of protected privacy or of the screened-off religion sphere; it stands "out there", as the Epistle to the Hebrews says, in the profanum of the world. The scandal and the promise of this salvation are public. This publicness cannot be taken back or resolved or hushed up. It accompanies the message of salvation on its historical way and in service of this message a critical and liberating form of public responsibility is assigned to Christian religion. "All the authors of the New Testament are convinced that Christ is not a private person and the Church is not a club. They tell us of Christ's and his witnesses' encounter with the political world and its authorities. None of them has given more importance to this encounter than the apostle John. He already saw the history of Jesus in general as a lawsuit, which the world ...brings against Jesus and his witnesses. This suit was brought to its public judicial conclusion before Pontius Pilate, the representative of the Roman Empire and the holder of the political power." 2) Provided it is not read with the eyes of Bultmann, John's account of the passion is organized around this scene. This scene where Jesus stands before Pilate bears typical features.

The proposal of a political theology seeks to reclaim the consciousness of present theology to the continuing lawsuit, to the still pending case between the eschatological message of Jesus and socio-political reality. It emphasizes that Christian salvation is intrinsically concerned with the world, not in a natural-cosmological sense, but in a socio-political sense: that is, as a critically liberating force of this social world and its historical process. The eschatological promises of the biblical tradition - freedom, peace, justice, reconciliation - do not permit themselves to be privatized. They constantly compel us to social responsibility. Certainly these promises are not simply identifiable with any particular social situation as we of ourselves might always like to determine and to create it. The history of Christianity knows too well a number of such direct political identifications of the Christian promises which reveal, however, a betrayal of that "eschatologi-

cal reservation or proviso" by which every state of society reached in history appears as provisional. That every historical status of society is provisional does not mean that it is arbitrary, that it is not significant or important for us. For this "eschatological proviso" does not bring about a negative but a critical and dialectical attitude to the societal present. The promises to which this "eschatological proviso" refers are not an empty horizon of religious expectation; neither are they only a regulative idea. They are, rather, a critical liberating imperative for our present times. They are a stimulus and a mandate, because they are to be effective under the present historical conditions, and so they must "make" their truth; for their truth must be "done". The New Testament community knew from its very beginning that it was called to live out the coming promise already in the condition of the present - and so to "overcome" the world. The orientation toward the promises of peace and justice changes anew our present historical existence. It puts us and impels us again and again into a new critical, liberating position over against the present social milieu around us and its established conditions. For example, the parables of Jesus are parables of the kingdom of God, and yet at the same time are parables which set us into a new critical relationship toward our social and historical environment. Every eschatological theology, therefore, must become a political theology in the sense of a socio-critical theology.

II

We come now to the second part of this lecture where we shall consider the concrete relation between the Church and the world in the light of political theology. The scope of this theology does not allow "world" to be understood in the sense of cosmos, in opposition to existence and person, nor as a merely existential or personal reality. It requires it to be understood as a societal reality, viewed in its historical becoming. In this context, "Church" is not a reality beside or over this societal reality; rather, it is an institution within it, criticizing it, having a critical liberating task in regard to it. Let me explain in detail the implications of this statement.

Firstly: Formed by the eschatological promises, faith again and again takes on a critical task with regard to the society in which the faithful live. This was the conclusion of our considerations on political theology. The question now is: can this task be left to the individual believer? Will he be able to perform it authoritatively and effectively? Is it not, therefore, precisely this critical task of faith which, in a new way, raises the problem of institutionalizing faith? It is easy to admit ideas, even to propagate them,

when they agree with the needs of the time, or a certain order of culture and society. But what if they are critically contradicting these needs and, at the same time, left to the judgment of the individual?³⁾ It should be noted that the institution and the institutionalization emerge here not as the Uniat repression, but as the necessary condition of a critical awareness. Must not the faith be institutionalized in order to be the effective subject of a critical freedom in the face of today's impersonal society? If this is necessary, are we not obliged to work out a new understanding of the ecclesiastical institution? Would the Church not then be necessary as the institution of the critical liberty of faith?

Secondly: If the Church is tentatively so defined, then two objections come immediately to the fore:

a) There is, first, the question of principle: can an institution as such have the task of criticism? After all, would not "institutionalized criticism" be like the squaring of the circle? Is not institution by its nature something anti-critical? Hence is it not going to Utopian limits to postulate this "second order institution", which is not only the object but also the subject of critical liberty and which, therefore, has to make possible and to secure this criticism? In this context, I can only answer briefly by posing a question in reply. Is it not, on the contrary, the specific note of the religious institution of the Church to be, and even to have to be, the subject of this critical liberty? As institution the Church herself lives under the eschatological proviso. She is not for herself; she does not serve her own self-affirmation, but the historical affirmation of the salvation of all men. The hope she announces is not a hope for herself, but for the Kingdom of God. As institution, the Church truly lives on the proclamation of her own proviso. And she must realize this eschatological stipulation in that she establishes herself as the institution of critical liberty, in the face of society and its absolute and self-sufficient claims.

b) But, granted that in this way our first objection is answered, there is still one, additional, critical question addressed to the Church: what is the historical and social basis of her critical task? When was the Church truly an institution of critical liberty? When was she in fact critically-revolutionary? When was she not simply counter-revolutionary, resentful and nagging in her relation to the societal world? Did not the Church often neglect to speak her critical word, or come out with it too late? Did she not again and again appear to others as the ideological superstructure of societal relations and power constellation, and has she, indeed, always been able, with her own strength, to confound such accusation? Take recent centuries: is it not true that, more and more, religious institution and critical reflection have become incompatible things, so much so that, today, there is a theological reflection that ignores institution and an institution

that ignores reflection? Where then is the historical and social basis of the claim made when defining the Church as a critical institution in the face of society? This objection is valid. There is hardly one idea of critical, societal importance in our history -- take Revolution, Enlightenment, Reason, or again -- Love, Liberty -- which was not at least once disavowed by historical Christianity and its institutions. No theory, no retrospective reinterpretation is of any help. If anything is to help here, it will be new ways of acting in the Church. May we hope for this? I think we may. All that follows is supported by this confidence.

Thirdly: In what does the critical liberating function of the Church, in view of our society and its historical process, now consist? Which are the elements of that creative negation which makes the progress of society to be progress at all? I should like, without pretending either to systematic or complete presentation, to specify a few of these critical tasks of the Church.

a) In virtue of its eschatological proviso in the face of every abstract idea of progress and of humanity, the Church protects the individual man, living here and now, from being considered exclusively as matter and means for the building of a completely rationalized technological future. The Church contradicts the practice that would see individuality only as the function of society's progress technically directed. It is true that even our societal Utopias may contain a positive notion of the individual; still he is of value only inasmuch as he is the first to inaugurate new societal possibilities, in other words, inasmuch as he in himself anticipates the revolutionary social change that is to come, and inasmuch as he now is what everybody will have to be later. But then, what about the poor and the oppressed? Are they not poor because they are unable to be first in the sense just explained? In this case, it is the Church's task, in virtue of the eschatological proviso and with all her institutionalized, socio-critical power, to protect the individual against being taken as a number on a human-progress-computer-card.

b) It seems to me that a further point in this criticism is in the following: today more than ever, when the Church is faced with the modern political systems, she must emphasize her critical, liberating function again and again, to make it clear that man's history as a whole stands under God's eschatological proviso. She must stress the truth that history as a whole can never be a political notion in the strict sense of the word, that for this reason, it can never be made the object of a particular political action. There is no subject of universal history one can point to in this world, and whenever a party, a group, a nation or a class sought to see itself as such a subject, thereby making the whole of history to be the scope of its political action, it inevitably grew into a totalitarian ideology.

totalitarian ideology.

c) Lastly, it seems to me that, especially in this day, the Church must mobilize that critical potency that lies in her central tradition of Christian love. Indeed it is not permissible to restrict love to the interpersonal sphere of the I-Thou. Nor is it enough to understand charity as charitable work within a neighbourhood. We must interpret love, and make it effective, in its societal dimension. This means that charity should be the unconditional determination to bring justice, liberty and peace to the others. Thus understood, charity contains a socio-critical dynamism that can be viewed in two ways.

(First.) Charity postulates a determined criticism of pure power. It does not allow us to think in the categories of "friend-enemy", for it obliges us to love our enemies and even to include them within the universal orbit of hope. Of course, the Church, which calls herself the Church of love, will be able to express a credible and efficient criticism of pure power only if, and to the extent that, she herself does not appear in the accoutrements of power. The Church cannot and must not desire to press her point by means of political power. After all, she does not work for the affirmation of her herself, but for the historical affirmation of salvation for all. She has no power prior to the power of her promises; this is an eminently critical proposition! It urges the Church on, again and again, to a passionate criticism of pure power; it points an accusing finger at her when -- and how often has this been the case in history -- her criticism of the powerful of this world was too weak, or came too late, or when she was hesitant in protecting all those, without distinction of persons, who were persecuted or threatened and when she did not passionately stand up and fight whenever and wherever man was being treated contemptuously by man. This criticism of power would not oblige Christians to withdraw from the exercise of political power in every case. Such a withdrawal, if it were a matter of principle could be a sin against charity, for Christians possess in their very faith and its tradition, a principle of criticism of power.

(Second.) The socio-critical dynamism of charity points in yet another direction. If charity is actualized as the unconditional determination to justice and liberty for the others, there might be circumstances where charity itself could demand actions of a revolutionary character. If the status quo of a society contains as much injustice as would probably be caused by a revolutionary upheaval, a revolution in favour of justice and liberty for the sake of "the least of our brothers" would be permissible even in the name of charity. Therefore, we should not underestimate the seriousness of Merleau-Ponty's remark that no Church has ever been seen supporting a revolution for the sole reason that it appeared to be just. At this point it becomes clear once more, that the socio-critical task of the Church becomes the task of criticizing religion and Church as well. The two go together like the two faces of a coin.

Therefore, we should not underestimate the seriousness of Merleau-Ponty's remark that no Church has ever been seen supporting a revolution for the sole reason that it appeared to be just. At this point it becomes clear once more, that the socio-critical task of the Church becomes the task of criticizing religion and Church as well. The two go together like the two faces of a coin.

4. The socio-critical function brings about a change in the Church herself. Ultimately, indeed, its objective is a new self-understanding of the Church and a transformation of her institutional attitudes toward modern society. Let me say a few words about this point of political theology. We started by considering that, not only the individual, but the Church as institution is the subject of a critical attitude with regard to society. There are several reasons for this. One of these springs from the general philosophy and sociology of modern critical consciousness. It points to the aporiae in which the critical individual finds himself when faced with this society and its anonymous structures. Criticism, therefore, must be institutionalized and a "second order institution", which can be bearer and guardian of critical liberty, is necessary. But there is a question: Is the Church such a "second order institution"? In her present form she is not; but I dare to say, she is not yet. How, then, and under what conditions will she be such an institution? Are there signs that she will be such? I shall add a few remarks on this point.

a) What happens -- this is our first question -- when the Church today makes a concrete socio-critical assertion? She has attempted to do so, for instance, in some passages of the pastoral constitution of the last Council and, even more clearly and decidedly, in the encyclical Populorum Progressio. What exactly did happen when these assertions were made? At this point the Church was obliged to take into account and to elaborate data which did not simply result from inner-ecclesiastical theological reflection. Hence these socio-political pronouncements demand a new relationship to non-theological data. Only if the Church assimilates such data, can she become a catalyst of critical impulses, impulses that do not aim merely at her own reproduction.

All this will not fail to dissolve an uncritical, monolithic consciousness within the ecclesiastical institution. Moreover, the non-theological character of these data, which indeed are the foundation of new ecclesiastical pronouncements, requires a new mode of speaking in the Church. Assertions founded on such data cannot be expressed simply as a doctrine. The courage is needed to formulate hypotheses suitable to contingent situation. Directives have to be issued which are neither weak and vague suggestions nor doctrinal dogmatic teachings. This necessity of today's Church to speak out concretely and critically brings about, at the same time, a sort of demythologizing and deritualizing in her speech and conduct. For it is evident that the ecclesiastical institution is now undergoing a new experience: it must bear contradiction. Its decisions cannot avoid taking one side and therefore being provisional and risky. If this institution learns the new language, it will no longer encumber the societal initiative of individual Christians with doctrinal rigidity; although, on the other hand, it

will also remove arbitrariness from their initiative.

b) A further point comes to mind immediately. Ecclesiastical criticism of society can ultimately be credible and efficient only if it is supported more and more by a critical public opinion within the Church herself. Without this self-critical openness, who would see to it that the Church as institution does not embody in herself exactly what it criticizes in others? Certainly the description of such critical openness within the Church has had little substance up to now. Allow me, therefore, to enumerate at least some of the tasks of this critical reflection within the Church. One of them consists in critical opposition to every so-called ideological self-authorization or self-enthronment of ecclesiastical institutions.

Here I have in mind the case where the authorities attempt by institutional measures to carry through their own decisions in a matter of socio-political or economic relevance. Another of these tasks is the criticism of the inner ecclesiastical milieu. I am thinking of the fact that, within the Church, certain mentalities cryptomatically prevail - usually, middle class mentality - while others are thought to be and classified as irrelevant and, as it were, pushed to the background. A criticism of these uncontrolled yet powerful prejudices should be the object of public reflection within the Church. A further critical task is to show the historical conditioning and the change of the societal notions in the Church herself; since this change generally occurs chronologically out of step with social processes, it is indeed less discernible but, none the less real. It is also important - this is still another example of public criticism - to denounce the Church's struggle on false battle-fronts. The ingenuity sometimes expended in the preservation of certain social positions would, indeed, be sufficient for their radical and courageous change. Finally, why is it that the Church does not appear unmistakably and effectively as the one institution in which certain sociological prejudices are not admitted: for instance, racism, nationalism and whatever ways there are to express contempt for other men? These indications may suffice here. The courage to build up such a critical public opinion can, no doubt, be drawn only from the confident hope that there will be a certain change of the institutional customs of the Church. But this confidence is perhaps one of the most important concrete features of membership in the Church today.

c) One last remark: In the pluralistic society, it cannot be the socio-critical attitude of the Church to proclaim one positive societal order as an absolute norm. It can only consist in effecting within this society a critical, liberating freedom. The Church's task here is not the elaboration of a system of social doctrine, but of social criticism. The Church is a particular institution in society, yet presents a universal claim; if this claim is not to be an ideology, it can only be formulated and urged as criticism. Two important aspects may be pointed out on this basis. In the first place, it is clear now why the Church, being a socio-critical institution, will not, in the end, come out with a political ideology. No political party can establish itself

merely as such a criticism; no political party can take as its object of political action, that which is the scope of the ecclesiastical criticism of society, namely, the whole of history standing under God's eschatological proviso. And in the second place, one can see now, again on the basis of the Church's critical function with regard to society, how cooperation with other non-Christian institutions and groups is possible in principle. The basis of such a cooperation between Christians and non-Christians, between men and groups of even the widest ideological differences, cannot primarily be a positive determination of the societal progress or a definite objective opinion of what the future free society of men will be. In the realm of these positive ideas there will always be differences and pluralism. This pluralism in the positive design of society cannot be abolished within the conditions of our history, as long as complete manipulation is not to replace its free realization. In view, therefore, of the afore-mentioned cooperation, there is a negative, critical attitude and experience to which we should pay our chief attention: the experience, that is, of the threat to humanity, the experience of freedom, justice and peace being threatened. We should not underestimate this negative experience. There is to it an elementary positive power of mediation. Even if we cannot directly and immediately agree as to the positive content of freedom, peace and justice, yet we have a long and common experience with their contraries, the lack of freedom, peace and justice. This negative experience offers us a chance of consensus, less in regard to the positive aspect of the liberty and justice we are seeking, than in regard to our critical resistance against the dread and terror of no liberty and no justice. The solidarity which grows out of this experience offers the possibility of a common front of protest. This must be grasped; this must be exploited. The danger of new wars is too close. The irrationalities of our actions in the social and political field are too manifest. There is still with us the possibility that "collective darkness" will descend upon us. The danger of losing peace, liberty and justice is, indeed so great, that indifference in these matters would be a crime.

NOTES

1. A. Gehlen, quoted from H. Schelsky, Auf der Suche nach Wirklichkeit (Dusseldorf, 1965), p. 271.
2. H. Schlier, Besinnung auf das Neue Testament (Freiburg, 1964), p. 193, to be completed by H. Schlier, Die Zeit der Kirche (Freiburg, 1956), p. 310.
3. Cf. A. Gehlen, Anthropologische Forschung (Hamburg, 1961), 76
4. Cf. on this matter H. Lubbe, Herrschaft und Planung, in Die Frage nach dem Menschen (Freiburg-Munchen, 1966), pp. 188-211.

**Excerpts from Papers
by
Rabbi Arthur Hertzberg
Columbia University, New York**

**Delivered at Colloquium
on "Religion and the Modern World -
Jewish and Christian Perspectives"**

**Sponsored by The St. Meinrad
School of Theology and
The American Jewish Committee**

**AMERICAN JEWISH
ARCHIVES**
**Held at St. Meinrad, Indiana
March 25-28, 1968**



JUDAISM, CHRISTIANITY AND SECULARISM

The appearance of secularism in the eighteenth century and its triumphs in the next age were regarded by most Christians as a historic disaster. The major institutions of organized Christianity are only now beginning to come to terms with this new age and to find within it some positive religious value. For Jews the great political upheavals of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries had radically different meanings.

In the name of the "rights of man" they were admitted to civic equality. Among Jews almost no voices were raised against entering the new world of civic equality because this opportunity was offered by movements which were largely opposed to religion. One of the great modern crises between Christianity and Judaism, therefore, arose out of the fact that the Jews accepted the Revolution and gained from it, while Christianity lost and remained counter-revolutionary for at least a century.

Nonetheless, a fundamental reality of Judaism, both as faith and as self-image of the individual Jew, was no more at home in the new age than it had been in the older, medieval one. Classic Christianity had accepted as a fundamental axiom the notion that all religious communities should ultimately dissolve into the Christian one, in which there would be neither Jew nor Greek. The new ideologies of reason, social revolution and technocracy all envisaged a society made by man within which remade individuals would fit in some universal secular dispensation. From Jewish perspective it is

-more-

possible to say that the differences between medieval Christian theology and modern secular ideology sometimes blurs almost to the vanishing point, for in each age the dominant intellectual tradition of the West was saying to the one dissenting community that was present almost everywhere, that building for the future required the end of Jewish communitas.

In the modern age significant intellectual forces arose within Jewry which did, indeed, join in the attempt to create a new post-Christian world so that the ancient exclusions and antagonisms would be transcended in some new, man-made dispensation. It is not accidental that Jews have been so prominent among the makers of secular modernity, and yet the judgment of Jewish theology must be that secularism, especially in its most doctrinaire, ideological forms, is a Christian heresy. Karl Marx was, indeed, born a Jew, but he wanted to make an end of his own Jewish identity and the corporate existence of Jews, because he could only envisage the world as one and not plural. He rejected both his birth and his baptism, but the second event in his life was the more inescapable, since the whole of Western culture has been suffused with the vision of an over-arching world community which knows only individuals and which accepts variant cultures and religions grudgingly, at best.

John Courtney Murray once declared that pluralism was against the Will of God but that it had to be accepted as the inevitable condition of the City of Man. This formulation must be denied.

Pluralism is something more than the simple condition of man. It is the Will of God. The definition of Maimonides of the Messianic age is that it will be a world of justice and peace in which the varying communities of man will continue to exist. The confrontation with secular ideology at this moment in history has to be a confrontation with the whole of the religious and cultural tradition of the West. The underside of its astonishing creativity has been hubris, that is, its tendency to remake men to fit some paradigm that came from its own Western ethos. Man is one; mankind is one--but at the organic, intermediate level the faiths and cultures of men are many--and they are both precious and equal.



Religion and Contemporary Ideologies

In its quest for contemporary re-definition Judaism found two modern movements to be most congruent with its immediate needs and its religious traditions, social reform and nationalism. In the present, social reform represented the hope for the Jews of the Diaspora for justice and peace in the still largely unfriendly world in which they found themselves. Their notable passion, which continues to the present, for the just society is a reaffirmation of the ancient Jewish emphasis on this world as the stage of God's encounter with man. "To perfect the world in the Kingdom of the Almighty" is a summary, in one phrase of the Jewish liturgy, of both the Law and the Prophets. Religion does, indeed, deal ultimately with the salvation of man in the realm of the transcendent, but that realm itself is not apart from the labor of remaking society. Men are saved by God as they save other men from hunger and fear. The broadest meaning, therefore, of the term "biblical, political theology" is that Jews and Christians can affirm together their faith in the God who acts in history and their knowledge that to avoid history in the name of personalist salvation is a heresy and a sin.

We must, however, approach the task of making judgments about political and social issues with great humility. It is possible for the bearers of a religious tradition to be wrong, corporately as well as individually. The whole of the West was, for example, in error in the last century in the presumption that

-more-

Asia and Africa needed to be civilized by being Westernized. Whatever may have been false in the secular revolutions since the eighteenth century, they did add dimensions and possibilities to human freedom. They helped, to a large degree despite themselves, to bring the possibility of pluralism into view. None of these truths were apparent in the preceding medieval age. Modern Promethean man is a dangerous, overblown vision, but this notion was a needed corrective to the medieval idea that man was by nature irretrievably sinful.

No matter how much we may disagree with the premises which are at the base of other religions or ideologies, we must be willing to listen to their judgments on society and, which is harder still, to their judgments on ourselves. We must be open to truths which have not occurred to us. If pluralism is, indeed, the Will of God, then He has created these diverse traditions and outlooks as correctives of each other. If God is larger than the church or the synagogue, then something of what he wants is present in secular ideologies. All of us together are subject to one ultimate judgment, that we should labor for the minimum of constraint upon each other, the barest minimum that is necessary for social order. Man is not to be made into what we would want him to become, for that vision may not be the Will of God; it may represent our personal or corporate sinful arrogance. He must be allowed to become that which he uniquely desires for himself, so long as that is consonant with justice, men and peace, for other men.

The second modern movement with which Judaism became allied was nationalism. In contrast to cosmopolitanism of both medieval Christianity and the Enlightenment, nationalism did speak of the rights of varying communities and historic traditions to exist. In the post-religious age of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, men like Moses Hess and Theodor Herzl affirmed Zionism as the heir of the immemorial longing of Jews for a polity of their own, within which they could develop their own religious and historic identity. This venture, which culminated in the rise of the State of Israel, has created many new problems. All of the unresolved present tensions between religion and secularism are now being confronted by this new society. The boundary between the religious and the secular is particularly hard to define, because Judaism as such does not admit of this distinction, and yet a contemporary state cannot exist unless there is some line of demarcation. Jews have been alien to the contamination of possessing power for at least twenty centuries and there is, therefore, no continuing tradition of wrestling with the problem. Both the past and the present of Christian involvement in this dilemma will be of instructive use.

The reaffirmation of Jewish identities in a concrete, political way, has raised two other problems. The first, and most searing, is with the Arabs. There is certainly justice in the Arab outcry that a Jewish majority in Palestine has been created at the expense of the people who were dwelling in the land. A Jew must say that there is greater justice in the Jewish claim that the whole of Judaism is unthinkable without a living link to the Holy Land and that, in the

modern age, both Jews and Judaism would have been irreparably damaged and perhaps defeated without Zionism. To the survival of the Arabs and Islam the Holy Land is of minor importance; to the Jews their stake in it is central. Here, however, in this passion-laden and war-torn place, we need more than anywhere else, conciliation that can come only from the acceptance of the view that the survival of any community is an ultimate good for the world as a whole and that is ultimately of interest to all other communities. Our judgments can only be proximate but have Jews and Arabs really listened to each other as yet?

The other problem is with Christians. At the very core of classic Christian theology there is the notion that the Jews and Judaism should have accepted the new dispensation and that the continuing of the Jewish community was, at very least, a mistake. The strong reaffirmation of the desire of the Jewish community to live in its own terms has run into deep, often masked, and often even unconscious opposition from Christians who sincerely love Jews as individuals but do not regard the preservation of the Jewish community and its tradition as a prime and necessary good. There was more than a little of this in the confrontation between Jewish and Christian opinion over the whole question of the creation of the state of Israel. The end of this tension can come only from a new theology of pluralism.

Religion and Community in Light of the Jewish Tradition

Community is the dominant motif of the whole of the Jewish religion. At the great turning which came with the Revelation at Sinai the whole of the people stood at the foot of the mountain. As the ancient rabbis took pains to emphasize, the whole of the people heard at least the opening words of the Ten Commandments directly from God. The view that God, Israel and the Torah are one is an outlook that suffuses rabbinic theology. Into the contemporary age a re-echo of this affirmation has remained among even alienated or agnostic Jews. Those who maintain some tie to the Jewish community are regarded and regard themselves as affirming their Jewish identity. No matter what may be the rhetoric of such affirmation it is ultimately something more than ethnic; it continues to bear spiritual possibilities.

In the present century this community is, like all others, under very severe attack. Its ancient supports in family stability are weakening. The religious faith which was its sap of life is waning. Economic success in the West and ideological attack in the Marxist countries have combined to lessen its hold. In both these processes what is happening to Jews does not differ, except to some degree, from what is happening to Christians. And yet the great hunger of man is for true community of shared ideas and commitments. The sad and ineffectual attempts of the hippies in America today to live in communities of their own is not an answer to the ongoing crisis of depersonalisation. It is, however, an indication of the current need. The drop-outs of the last generation were fleeing from

community; those of today are seeking to create one.

The problem of defining a religious community which is viable and relevant in our own time is that the earlier models which come most readily to mind are now irrelevant. They arise out of Western experience which is unlikely to recur. Religious community is not going to be co-extensive with the whole of society, as it at least aspired to be at the height of the medieval era. The earlier model of a small band of faithful in the catacombs awaiting an apocalyptic moment near at hand means utterly to abdicate any hope of either living in society or influencing it.

The only other religious community that has lived in the west throughout its history has been a Diaspora, the Jewish one. In bad times it has at least defended its own continuity and preserved its values and the morale of the faithful. In better times it gave of itself to the rest of society and exerted some influence for the increase of knowledge and the growth of willingness for men to live at peace with other men who were not like them. The Diaspora in its own way was a working out of the prophetic tension between being in the world and not quite of it, in society and yet critical of it, in a community of one's own and yet bearing a responsibility to a larger community even when it was unfriendly or even hostile. For Jews the religious meaning of the Diaspora model is that this is the way in which a religious community lives out the reality of being God's suffering servant.

Christianity is today becoming a diaspora both in the secularized western world which it once dominated and in the international community of men. For that matter the eastern religions are beginn-

ing to spread into societies within which they were not present until very recently. That Marxism in all its forms has at least something of the nature of the diaspora about it, with its true devotees representing communities in tension with the masses even in the lands in which this doctrine is in power, is becoming even clearer.

Such diasporas are themselves in danger, always, of being formal structures of associations and powers which hold down the human individual and which attempt to destroy other diasporas. All these communities remain under the ultimate judgment of the moral law given to all the sons of Noah, which forbade such sins as bloodshed, robbery and injustice. Nonetheless all forms of community, including secular ones which are convoked for human betterment and are not inimical to freedom and justice, are to be accepted as a positive religious good.

The task of religious traditions in this day is twofold. On the one hand religion must labor to recreate living communities of its own, so that men may strengthen each other to be persons and not objects. On the other hand, while operating as one community among many others, the religious community must represent an ongoing criticism of all the other communities. It will do so best not by pronouncements in the name of its own presumption to possess superior truth but rather by the nature of its immediate life. It will justify itself by its works. When God first sent Abraham and his family out into the world He said: "Be a blessing." The great unanswered question confronting religion at this moment is whether it is indeed a visible blessing to the future of mankind. Its past in society gives it no clear credential--and yet true religious community is indispensable to the future of man.

THE LONG VIEW FROM ST. MEINRAD

(National Catholic Reporter - 9/20/67)

By Rabbi Arthur Hertzberg

A WEEK in a monastery at the end of August has represented a transforming experience in my life. I was invited to the Benedictine Archabbey at St. Meinrad in Indiana for an Institute on Judaism which was sponsored by its theological seminary. Perhaps 50 nuns and priests who are themselves engaged in teaching had gathered



from all over the country to have Professor Samuel Sandmel of the Hebrew Union College, Rabbi Arthur Gilbert of the Anti-Defamation League and myself

each various aspects of Judaism. I do not know how much I succeeded in teaching, but it is no cliché that I learned very much.

The readers of this column are aware that in the past several months, in the light of the confrontation between Jewish and Christian leaders over the Middle Eastern crisis and the Israeli war, I have been feeling deeply hurt and more than a little disenchanted. Until I got to St. Meinrad I do not know myself how dangerously close I was coming to identifying Christianity as a whole with the rather shabby performance of too many officials and bureaucrats of the churches. I was not greeted at the institute with agreement to everything that I said but the atmosphere of that encounter was totally different from that of the tense meetings in June with Christian officialdom. There was no showiness at St. Meinrad and not even any conscious effort on the part of my hosts and the assembled "student body" to be warm, open concerned and, yes, loving. They just were — all of them, even the one priest who could not help praying for my conversion. I encountered the meaning of Christian faith in the making of the character of sisters and priests who are giving their lives in high school classrooms and on college faculties to making something better of the next generation.

Above all, for the first time in my life I spent a few uninterrupted days with monks in their own world, and on the very last day of my week at St. Meinrad I was semi-seriously asking whether the Abbey would find it possible to keep a little kosher kitchen in some old corner so that I could at least revisit frequently.

In the classes and discussions of the Institute for which we had assembled, the Christians were trying very hard really to understand how certain basic issues of faith and history appear and feel to Jews. For me, and I am sure that this was true for my rabbinic colleagues who were the other two members of the faculty, we heard Christianity with greater resonance than perhaps ever before. Its own piety came through in its own terms.

I was speaking of this experience a week or so later with one of my friends from Israel who had spent five dangerous years in the French underground during World War II. He understood me exactly, for he told me that in his own experience in those tragic days the greatest single source of help in the hiding of Jewish children from the Nazis had come from convents and monasteries and from individual clergy in many humble places. Here there had been no political calculation or hairsplitting over policy, only an immediate sense of personal duty.

UPON REFLECTION I have come away from this week of many conversations, and especially from many hours with Father Adrian Fuerst, the dean of the theological seminary at St. Meinrad, with two basic convictions. The first is that the Jewish-Christian dialogue had been turning slightly rancid even before the shock of June, because it had been conducted for too long on the wrong level. The "brass hats" on both sides had been talking to each other interminably. As an inevitable result, either the subject matter had become either technically theological, or more usually, the discussion had turned into a thinly disguised diplomatic exercise in adjusting the interests of the various faith communities.

This institute at St. Meinrad is the beginning of a new attempt to move out to where Christians and Jews really live and work in terms of their faith, in the towns and schools and worshipping communities. Here we are closer to the lasting Church and the lasting Synagogues than

we ever get in the diplomatic encounters or the well-publicized dialogues—and here we did not even have to try to discover that, for all our deep differences, we could and were becoming one in love and in concern for each other and for the world. For the future, the Jewish-Christian encounter can be given its deepest meaning in more such sessions where the people of the Church and the Synagogue can find each other.

My second conviction will, no doubt, put me at some variance with what seems to be the major thrust of liberal Catholic opinion at this moment. I have been reading much, and especially in the N.C.R. about the need to bring the Church more into the world. Monasteries and convents are now seething with the desire to become more involved and less apart. Distinguished Catholic theological seminaries are now trying to find their way to university campuses so that the students for the priesthood might be closer to where the action supposedly is in American intellectual life. I am, myself, the product, in my own education, of precisely such a process as it operated within Judaism within the last generation. I received my theological education at the Jewish Theological Seminary in New York, which is located on Morningside Heights in the area of Columbia University and Union Theological Seminary, maintaining close relations to both institutions.

It is precisely from this perspective that I discovered that there was something to be said for theological education within a monastery, amidst a worshipping community. The men of religion will find the world soon enough, for it beats insistently upon everybody.

The question remains: what will they bring to the world out of the transforming power of their faith? I do not think that a theological student is a graduate student who happens to be in a department or faculty that is specializing in one discipline, theology. He is, or ought to be, someone whose very life is being changed, and perhaps the best way of changing it is to have such a young man associate closely with older men whose lives are an example of what such a change has wrought.

WE ARE TALKING very much today of bringing religion into the world, but after that glittering proposition is stated I hear little agreement on what the message to be brought ought to be. I sat at St. Meinrad and wondered whether it would not be better for at least some men to make it their vocation to keep examining this world of ours while remaining strongly rooted in a community of worship and contemplation. In short, I am even less ready to believe now than I was a month ago that one ought to disband all the monasteries and the convents and send all of those who are within them to become worker priests or social workers.

Religions and the world are, by their very nature, in tension. The urges to contemplation and action are the reflections of this tension in the lives of men. Precisely because we are all so busy in action, or in feeling guilty that we are not active enough, St. Meinrad reminded me that Moses was not always in the midst of affairs in the camp of the Jews. He was most useful to them and most transforming of them after he had ascended Mount Sinai and was alone with God for 40 days.

CABLES: "OIKOUMENE" GENEVA - TEL. 33 34 00 TELEX 23 423 OIK CH - 150 ROUTE DE FERNEY, 1211 GENEVA 20 SWITZERLAND

No. 30/36th Year

21st August, 1969

Contents

Stronger programme to combat racism asked	2
Rhodesia and great powers come under fire	2-3
Seven churches admitted to World Council membership	3-5
Central Committee sends message to Irish council of churches	5
Churches warned of dangers on way to unity	6
Church disagreement on mission surfaces at WCC meeting	6-7
New look for World Council assemblies suggested	7-8
Future of human society may be studied by World Council	8-9
Studies will probe "Christian human job"	9-10
Greek ecumenical pioneer dies	10
Miracles in food production don't solve development problem	10-11
Churches must face facts of life, Beirut lawyer says	12
Communication breakdown plagues the churches	13
WCC asked to lift Nigeria/Biafra appeal ceiling to \$5 million	13-14
Ceylon's Methodists ask two-stage scheme when union vote fails	14
In Brief	14

**STRONGER PROGRAMME TO COMBAT
RACISM ASKED**

Canterbury, England, (EPS) -- Members of the top policy-making body of the World Council of Churches called for sharpening up a proposed programme to eradicate racism.

In the first discussion of a proposal suggested by the Executive Committee, speakers from countries as far apart as Korea, Kenya, India, France and Cameroon said again and again that racism is "a universal phenomenon". Prof. Roger Mehl of Paris said: "Like the plague, it appears first here and then there without our being able to explain its cause."

All 17 speakers approved the intent of the resolution, but one after another expressed the hope that the programme might be strengthened.

Major emphases of the proposal were the appointment of a three-man staff to conduct a five-year programme of education in the churches, and a special fund to be raised among member churches of the World Council to assist organizations struggling for racial justice.

The proposal stemmed from a WCC-sponsored Consultation on Racism held in London's Notting Hill district last May. Called at the request of the Central Committee, it was asked to update WCC policy in the area of racism.

Dr. Eugene Carson Blake, World Council general secretary, first presented the report from Notting Hill but noted it did not require approval.

The Executive Committee resolution was referred, after a one-and-a-half hour debate, to a policy sub-committee and will come back to the Central Committee this week for final action.

EPS

**RHODESIA AND GREAT POWERS
COME UNDER FIRE**

Canterbury, England, (EPS) -- Rhodesia and the great powers came under fire at a meeting of the Central Committee of the World Council of Churches here.

A report from the Commission of the Churches on International Affairs (CCIA) said the new constitution of Rhodesia must be regarded as "merely continuing a course of human injustice which the Christian conscience must reject".

The commission also stressed the need for a deeper understanding of the psychological situation in the Arab nations, which feel that the great powers, by their support given to the establishment of the State of Israel, have done injustice to the inhabitants of Palestine.

Prof. Dr. Ulrich Scheuner, who teaches law at the University of Bonn and is chairman of the CCIA, told the Central Committee that his executive group meeting at Cambridge July 31 to August 3 had gone a step further on Rhodesia and urged governments and public to recognize that those who struggle against physical force, oppression and injustice, merit consideration and support.

(more)

The Cambridge meeting had also expressed the need for an alteration of the United States' policy towards Cuba, urging the end of the economic blockade and restoration of diplomatic relations between the two countries.

The National Council of Churches in the USA will be informed of this in the hope that both government and public opinion can be changed on the issue.

Professor Scheuner said any aid programme during the Nigerian civil war "will have political implications". But "this cannot make Christians abstain who feel bound in their conscience" to give aid, he added.

The report, which goes to the Central Committee's policy committee, returns for further debate on a new programme for the commission.

EPS

SEVEN CHURCHES ADMITTED TO WORLD COUNCIL MEMBERSHIP

Canterbury, England, (EPS) — The World Council of Churches moved into a new era here when its Central Committee on August 16 approved full membership for two colourful non-Western churches whose dynamic Christian life style could help change the whole tone and tempo of the 21-year-old ecumenical body.

The Church of Christ on Earth by the Prophet Simon Kimbangu, Congo-Kinshasa, is the first African church founded without missionaries to join the Council.

The Evangelical Pentecostal Church "Brazil for Christ" with 1,100,000 members is the second largest Pentecostal church in South America. Its membership in the World Council marks the entrance of Pentecostalism on a large scale. Two small Pentecostal churches already are members.

The Kimbanguist Church was founded by Simon Kimbangu, who started his prophetic ministry in 1921. Within several months he had created the greatest religious revival in the Congo. Tens of thousands made the pilgrimage to Nkamba, in the lower Congo, to hear the prophet and be healed.

Simon Kimbangu was imprisoned by the Belgians, who thought he was against colonial power. He died there in 1951, after a 30-year imprisonment. The Kimbanguist movement grew steadily under persecution.

His Eminence Joseph Diangienda, youngest son of Simon Kimbangu, is now the leader of the church, which was founded officially in 1956 and now claims three million adherents.

The Rev. W. Henry Crane, secretary for Africa in the World Council's Division of World Mission and Evangelism, said the Kimbanguist Church could bring into the ecumenical mainstream "the freshness of a church that still has about it the character of a movement consciously identified with salvation history because of the similarity of its own history with the Bible story". "For them the liturgy is still very much the work of the people, not something done for them by professionals", Mr. Crane said.

(more)

Mr. Crane described the Kimbanguist Church as "Black Power at its redemptive best". He stressed the importance Kimbanguists attach to the dimensions of mystery and to the psychic phenomena, including healing.

"The Kimbanguist Church can help us to recover the understanding of the gospel as an event to be celebrated in the broadest sense of that term", he predicted.

The Rev. Jean B. Bokeleale, general secretary of Disciples of Christ in Congo, the Rev. Albert Th. Nyemb, Yaoundé, Cameroon, and Mr. William Conton, in the Ministry of Education of Sierra Leone, also spoke in favour of the church's admission.

The Rev. Dr. Walter J. Hollenweger, secretary for Evangelism in the Division of World Mission and Evangelism, interpreted the membership of the Evangelical Pentecostal Church "Brazil for Christ" as a strong contribution to evangelism - "not just the bringing of people into the church, but communicating the gospel to the world". The Rev. Manoel de Melo is president of the church, which recently dedicated a sanctuary that will ultimately seat 24,000.

"The Pentecostals will bring to the World Council a different style of dealing with each other", he said. "Instead of giving a speech, they sing a song, instead of making a statement, they give a testimony. We will have to learn to tie into their oral network of communication, because their's is an oral culture", Dr. Hollenweger explained.

The Central Committee also approved the full membership of three other churches: one each in Poland, Indonesia and Jamaica.

The Polish Mariavite Church, which has 24,000 believers, is organized in three dioceses and 34 parishes. It has four bishops and 32 priests. The church was founded in 1906 after a group of priests and members broke away from the Roman Catholic Church on grounds of differences of interpretation of the Bible and in rejection of papal primacy and infallibility.

The Karo Batak Protestant Church of Kabandjahe, North Sumatra, Indonesia, has 65,000 members and is preparing another 10,000 for membership. It has 19 ordained and 38 unordained ministers.

The Moravian Church in Jamaica has 23,000 members in 51 congregations. The church began in Jamaica in 1732. The Rev. Edwin Taylor, of the Methodist Church in the Caribbean, in proposing approval said the church has a great influence on Jamaican society and was active in ecumenical relations.

A Latin American and an African church were both accepted into associate membership, each having under 10,000 members. The United Evangelical Lutheran Church in Argentina has 5,384 baptized members, of whom 2,193 are communicants, 23 congregations and two preaching centres, 16 national and six missionary ministers. The president is Pastor Juan Cobrda.

The Presbyterian Church of Liberia, organized in 1857, has been independent since 1868. It has 12 churches with a membership of nearly 1,000 communicants.

(more)

Central Committee action on membership is provisional and is transmitted to the World Council's present membership, not all of whom have representation on the Central Committee. Unless objections from more than one-third of all member churches are received within six months, the applicants are officially received into the ecumenical organization.

Applications approved August 16 will bring World Council membership to 229 full members and 13 associate, for a total of 242 member churches. Until the six-month period is over, membership will be 224 full members and 11 associate for a total of 235 churches. Associate members are churches with less than 10,000 members.

The Central Committee also voted to admit the Hong Kong Christian Council as an associated council of the World Council of Churches. Established in 1954, it now comprises 22 churches and Christian organizations, representing 75% of the total Protestant church membership in Hong Kong - estimated at 160,000 at the end of 1967. This brings to 25 the number of national councils of churches in association with the WCC.

EPS

CENTRAL COMMITTEE SENDS MESSAGE TO IRISH COUNCIL OF CHURCHES

Canterbury, England, (EPS) -- The Central Committee of the World Council of Churches sent assurance of its prayers to the churches in Northern Ireland during its meeting here last week.

As tensions rose in the British province and troops were called in to keep Roman Catholic and Protestant factions apart, Dr. George Otto Simms, the Anglican Primate of All Ireland, left the Central Committee meeting and returned to Armagh for urgent consultations with church leaders.

The message from the Central Committee said:

Rev. R.D.E. Gallagher, Chairman of the Irish Council of Churches

"The Central Committee of the World Council of Churches meeting in Canterbury sends to you and our other good friends in the leadership of all the churches in Northern Ireland the assurance of our prayers at this time. We share your deep distress that the tragic tensions of Northern Ireland have not found healing but on the contrary that the name of Jesus Christ is abused in support of the perpetuation of grave injustice or of the attempt by violence to destroy public order. The Anglican Primate of All Ireland as a member of our committee on his urgent return home will be able to assure you that the one ecumenical fellowship stands with you in your struggle for right and reconciliation and shares your grief for the sufferings of the victims of these events."

EPS

CHURCHES WARNED OF DANGERS ON WAY TO UNITY

Canterbury, England, (EPS) -- A Swiss theologian has warned the churches of the ecumenical movement about the danger of turning conversations into an "institutional structure" that would prevent them from being exposed to God's action.

Conversations are not substitutes for the fellowship of which the New Testament speaks, said Dr. Lukas Vischer, 42, in reporting to the Central Committee on the work of the World Council of Churches' Secretariat on Faith and Order, which he directs.

Dr. Vischer said the move towards unity still needs a goal. He suggested the "one universal council" mentioned in a document on the "Catholicity of the Church" at the WCC's Fourth Assembly in Sweden last year.

He pleaded with the churchmen to "aim resolutely" at the establishment of fellowship if their conversations are to be a "credible and meaningful" enterprise. But the fellowship can only arise, Dr. Vischer said, "when the divisions and condemnations of the past are replaced by mutual, responsible commitment".

A truly ecumenical council presupposes reconciliation, a fellowship in the Eucharist and "a definite sense of universal solidarity", according to Dr. Vischer. Churches must "break through the barriers that divide men from each other" and show the oneness of mankind.

Dr. Vischer was using the term "council" in the sense of a representative assembly of all Christians. And he urged the churches to achieve the kind of fellowship with one another that would make it possible for them to hold such a council together if circumstances required it.

The report was sent to the sub-committee on policy reference and will come back to the full committee for further debate and action.

EPS

CHURCH DISAGREEMENT ON MISSION SURFACES AT WCC MEETING

Canterbury, England, (EPS) -- "Socratic evangelism" or a willingness to listen to people of other faiths may be the pattern the churches must follow in a secular age, Prof. Jan Lochman of Prague suggested to the 120-member Central Committee of the World Council of Churches.

"In Czechoslovakia our willingness to enter into dialogue with secularists bore fruit", Professor Lochman reported. "Today the world Church has lost the authority it had in the past. And it doesn't work to approach the world as though we have all the answers. Paternalism today is impossible", he said.

The Czech theologian, who lectures at the University of Basle (Switzerland), was speaking to the report of the WCC's Division of World Mission and

(more)

Evangelism (DWME). It had been presented by the chairman of the Division, Dr. Tracey Jones, who is general secretary of the United Methodist Church's Board of Missions (USA).

"There is a violent dialectical struggle going on in the World Council on what the Christian mission is", said Father John Meyendorff of Crestwood, New York. He urged the committee to make a choice among the various alternatives offered at the WCC's Uppsala assembly of last year.

An Asian Methodist, Dr. D.T. Niles, said everyone accepted the need to proclaim the gospel of Jesus Christ so that men might be saved. But, said Dr. Niles, there is disagreement as to who is Jesus Christ, where is he found, how can he be identified?

The director of the Division of World Mission and Evangelism, the Rev. Philip Potter, pointed out that this disagreement is present in all the churches, not just in the World Council.

"We believe the issue must be fought out in mutual trust within the fellowship of the World Council", he said. "And we are determined not to lose our nerve." The Division acts as a catalyst, stimulating studies on mission in many countries and then publicizing the results around the world, according to Potter.

The Central Committee has been asked to approve new programmes in theological education, Christian literature production, the ecumenical sharing of mission personnel, and urban and industrial mission. The vote comes this week.

EPS

NEW LOOK FOR WORLD COUNCIL ASSEMBLIES SUGGESTED

Canterbury, England, (EPS) -- Five different "models" for the next assembly of the World Council of Churches were laid before the Central Committee August 16 in a report from its Structure Committee.

The committee, appointed after last year's assembly in Uppsala, was charged to consider, among other things, the character of the assemblies held every six or seven years, and their place in the life of the World Council.

It says it has arrived at a common mind on certain preliminary considerations, one of which is that the assembly is "a festival of the people of God". It cited the need for a re-examination of the use of non-voting members of an assembly, and of further participation of women, laity, and youth.

Among the five "models" described in the report, the first would eliminate the review of work accomplished between assemblies and would give the responsibility for this to the Central and Divisional Committees or their equivalents. Another would reduce the number of competitors for the floor to 240 instead of 800 and enable the voice of the smaller member churches to be more easily heard.

(more)

A third model suggests a limit of 700 delegates, grouped in three different categories, and would divide the meeting into a Business Assembly, Reference Committees and Committee of Finance, and Sections dealing with central themes that look towards future programmes.

The fourth model is concerned only with the method by which delegates to the assembly are chosen, and the fifth would divide the assembly into a Governing Body and a Congress. It suggests that the name "assembly" should be abandoned as a sign of the intention to break with established "evil" ways.

The Central Committee will come back at a later session to the report on structure.

EPS

FUTURE OF HUMAN SOCIETY MAY
BE STUDIED BY WORLD COUNCIL

Canterbury, England, (EPS) -- We live in a world of three-and-a-half billion people, and our environment - whether we realize it or not - is seriously endangered by the real and potential misuse of our own technological developments.

Dr. Margaret Mead, the eminent American anthropologist, sounded a serious note in speaking to the Central Committee of the World Council of Churches here August 14. In presenting a report from the Council's Department on Church and Society, Dr. Mead warned of an urgent need for international understanding and agreement on the control of destructive elements inherent in scientific innovation and change.

"Curbing technology where it can harm us, and encouraging research and development where it can improve the life of man is part of our stewardship of the earth under God", she added.

The report from this department urged a broad study programme on the future of human society in a world increasingly shaped and moulded by science and technology, yet plagued by unrest, intolerance, inequality, and racism.

Failure to understand the real problems connected with today's rapid technological progress could lead to pollution of man's ideas and actions as well as his environment, Dr. Mead said.

The study programme, suggested by a working group which met in Zurich, Switzerland, during July, is a response to the Uppsala assembly's call for study on the issues of technology, changing social structures, the function of law, and the elimination of racism.

The 30-member working group, headed by Prof. S.L. Parmar of India, included participants from 13 countries in Asia, Europe, and North America, and two observer-participants from the Roman Catholic Church. Consultants came from the fields of scientific research, government study, philosophy, ethics, and science information services.

The working group noted that 80 per cent of the scientists who have ever lived, are alive today and that, with the amount of scientific information doubling

(more)

every ten years, man has unprecedented power to change and develop his environment.

But the effect of rapid development in some fields and in some parts of the world is virtually to increase the poverty and lack of development in others. The inequalities and tensions thus created are problems for all Christians, Dr. Mead said in urging acceptance of the study proposal.

The study would have three parts - the prospect of a science-based technological age, the political-economic issues affecting social justice, and the theological-ethical imperatives of the situation. Implications would obviously include world population and food supply, racial justice, the influence of military power as affected by increasing technological development, and the challenge of space exploration.

If approved by the Central Committee, the study programme would probably cost U.S. \$270,000 over the first three years, 1970-1973, when the activities would include making contacts with experts and groups throughout the world concerned with science-based industrial technology, government and religious leaders and planners, and social and natural scientists.

EPS

STUDIES WILL PROBE "CHRISTIAN HUMAN JOB"

Canterbury, England, (EPS) -- Some men are on the way to the moon, but other men feel society has lost its way. One Anglican theologian even admitted to 120 fellow churchmen from around the world meeting here at the University of Kent that the churches have lost their way.

Said Canon David E. Jenkins, 44, (England) who works for the World Council of Churches: "We have become unsure about our actions. Or if some are sure what to do, others strongly disagree. And when we do act, we're not sure our actions are good enough."

That's why, Canon Jenkins said, he had been commissioned to co-ordinate a number of studies on Man now going on in many parts of the world under the umbrella of the World Council of Churches.

Canon Jenkins was chaplain and lecturer in theology of Queen's College, Oxford before he began work in Geneva on July 15.

Christians are sure man is meant to be on his way to greater freedom and greater fulfilment, Canon Jenkins said. The question is how the Church can help all men, Christian or otherwise, to a life that is really worth living. This he termed "our Christian human job".

Everything seems to be changing, he noted, yet "poverty is the same, hunger is the same, oppression is the same".

To help the churches "get in touch and stay in touch", Canon Jenkins proposed studies to put theologians in touch with the data of the natural and social sciences.

(more)

"Most theology and much religion is almost entirely out of touch with the data of human living", he said, "and is only so much talk. We who are believers and theologians must not talk at scientific and social data, we must confront them, respond to them." He also advocated being in touch with human beings in particular local situations.

Three areas, Canon Jenkins said, that should receive immediate investigation were medicine, biochemistry and genetics; the possibilities of prediction; human motivation and development.

The goal of his work, according to the co-ordinator of the WCC's humanum studies, is "enabling the Church to find its way in helping man to find his way".

EPS

GREEK ECUMENICAL PIONEER DIES

Canterbury, England, (EPS) -- Prof. Hamilcar Alivisatos, 82, a former professor of theology at the University of Athens and a member of the WCC's Central Committee since 1948, died in Athens on August 14.

A short memorial service was held at the close of the Central Committee session the same day.

Professor Alivisatos was the distinguished president of the Athens Academy and gave more than half a century to the cause of theology, ecumenism and church life.

A leading layman of the Church of Greece, he took part in the Stockholm World Conference on Life and Work in 1925 and the Lausanne World Conference on Faith and Order in 1927. As a representative of his church, he attended all major ecumenical meetings including all WCC assemblies.

The Central Committee, through Chairman M.M. Thomas of India, sent cables of condolence to his wife, the Church of Greece, the Academy of Athens and the Faculty of Theology at the University.

EPS

MIRACLES IN FOOD PRODUCTION DON'T SOLVE DEVELOPMENT PROBLEM

Canterbury, England, (EPS) -- Important technological advances in rice and wheat production in the under-developed areas of the world have not solved the problem of under-development, but they have bought a little desperately needed time.

This assessment of the present state of development was made to 120 representatives of Protestant, Anglican and Orthodox churches meeting here to assess and plan programmes for the World Council of Churches during the next 12 months.

Mr. C.I. Itty, an Indian layman who heads development efforts for the World Council, told the churchmen: "Considering the enormous challenge of develop-

(more)

ment, the response of the churches and the World Council is inadequate to say the least. The problem remains in all its staggering proportions."

Yet Mr. Itty voiced hope, because "people's consciences are being aroused and people's energies are being mobilized for self-reliance".

In the discussion which followed Mr. Itty's presentation of ongoing development programmes within the World Council and jointly between the WCC and the Roman Catholic Church, Dr. W.A. Visser 't Hooft, ecumenical veteran who is WCC honorary president, proposed using secular organizations to channel some of the development funds collected through the churches.

Dr. José Miguez-Bonino of Buenos Aires, Argentina, agreed in principle but said that in some cases, turning over church funds to secular agencies would only reinforce structures that are at present hindering development.

Replying to the contention that the World Council must work out a clear definition of development that all can subscribe to, Dr. Miguez-Bonino said even the experts don't all agree because there are different ideological and sociological contexts.

"The World Council of Churches may have to live with more than one concept of development", he said. It may even accept projects with conflicting ideological presuppositions.

A Korean churchman, Dr. Won Yong Kang, said people in the developing countries must decide what projects should be supported. He proposed a development agency administered at the national level rather than regionally or internationally.

A consultation will be held early in 1970 to determine what kind of ecumenical agency is needed to set criteria for projects and "mobilize increasing church funds for development". It is suggested that the chairmen of the various WCC divisions form a committee to plan this consultation. The Central Committee will vote on this proposal this week.

Two other steps are being taken within the Division of Inter-church Aid, Refugee and World Service (DICARWS), Mr. Itty said. An Advisory Committee on Technical Services is being set up to give technical assistance on projects to WCC units and other Christian agencies. It will be administratively separate from DICARWS although financed by it and by fees for services. The existing Ecumenical Church Loan Fund will assist with loans for aid projects and examine the possibility of moving into the field of investments for development.

Mr. Itty also mentioned briefly the work of the Committee on Society, Development and Peace (SODEPAX), a joint effort of the World Council and the Pontifical Commission Justice and Peace in Rome. This group is working on four issues: theology, development, peace and education. It is at present establishing regional groups which will advise on projects in their regions but will not attempt to become operational.

EPS

CHURCHES MUST FACE FACTS
OF LIFE, BEIRUT LAWYER SAYS

Canterbury, England, (EPS) -- Basic conflicts in contemporary social and church life have to be met squarely by the World Council of Churches and its member churches, involving positive action in support of movements for freedom and against repression and racism.

A Beirut lawyer, Albert Laham, chairman of the Division of Ecumenical Action (DEA), told the Central Committee here that without concerted and effective action by the world-wide Christian council and its 235 member churches, they would fail both in renewing their own life and in serving a fast-changing world.

Mr. Laham, 45, who brought the report of the DEA working group to the policy-making Central Committee, warned that the deepening conflicts between young people and the "establishment", both within the Christian Church and outside it, as well as tensions between rich and poor nations, and between racial groups, cannot be veiled or ignored.

He called for effective Christian action that would contribute to much-needed renewal in deteriorating racial conflicts, unimproved relationships between the "have" and "have not" nations, and outmoded educational systems.

The Division, responsible for suggesting programme emphases to the WCC, said that racism must be combatted in every sphere of life. Improved general educational opportunity throughout the world and the elimination of racist content in school curricula where it exists would help, Laham said. Action groups in local churches and at regional and national levels should also be stimulated to fight racial injustice and discrimination at every level.

Mr. Laham reported on the Division's favourable reaction to the proposed merger with the World Council of Christian Education, and the creation of a new educational office within the Division. He also recommended the creation of an Education Renewal Fund to help the member churches mobilize and channel ecumenical efforts in improving and reforming educational systems and opportunities.

Two officially appointed observer-consultants from the Council on the Laity of the Roman Catholic Church had been welcomed by the Division, and as a result of co-operation between the two groups, joint meetings had been held in Kenya and Australia. A further joint session is scheduled for Rome in October, when future co-operation especially at regional levels will be discussed.

The Division's own membership was unique, Mr. Laham said, as out of the 28 members who participated in last week's meeting when the report for the Central Committee was prepared, 13 were from the "third world" and ten were under 30 years of age.

EPS

COMMUNICATION BREAKDOWN
PLAGUES THE CHURCHES

Canterbury, England, (EPS) -- There is increasing danger of a serious breakdown in communication within the Christian Church because of the "escalation of ecumenical organizations" around the world, a British bishop and ecumenical leader told the World Council of Churches' Central Committee August 16.

The Rt. Rev. Kenneth Sansbury, general secretary of the British Council of Churches, spoke following a report pointing to the need for effective liaison with regional and national Christian councils throughout the world.

Bishop Sansbury, 64, formerly Bishop of Singapore and Malaya and now leader of one of 76 national councils in working relationship with the WCC, warned that with increasing numbers of regional and national inter-church groups, "plans and developments at one level are often not known elsewhere".

The World Council's associate general secretary in charge of liaison with national and regional Christian councils, the Rev. V.E.W. Hayward, said in presenting the report that the WCC should do everything possible to encourage inter-church co-operation at every level, and to serve the ecumenical groups as it serves its 235 member churches.

Mr. Hayward is working to extend and enlarge WCC links with regional and national Christian councils, and to consult with them in an effort to help the local inter-church groups know each other and serve their own constituencies as effectively as possible.

"Christian councils must bring our individual churches out of isolation and introversion" and into a new era of common action, Mr. Hayward said. "The job of councils of churches is to help the ecumenical movement keep moving."

EPS

WCC ASKED TO LIFT NIGERIA/BIAFRA
APPEAL CEILING TO \$5 MILLION

Canterbury, England, (EPS) -- The World Council of Churches has been asked to increase its appeal on behalf of victims of the Nigeria/Biafra conflict to \$5 million. Dr. Hans Thimme of Germany, chairman of the Division of Inter-church Aid, Refugee and World Service, made this request when he reported to the Central Committee on August 17.

The request was referred to the Policy Reference Committee and will come back later to the full Central Committee for a vote.

The Fourth WCC Assembly last year in Uppsala had fixed a ceiling of \$3,800,000 for the WCC's fund-raising efforts. Monies collected as a result have gone to the International Committee of the Red Cross, the Christian Council of Nigeria, and the independent airbridge known as Joint Church Aid operated on behalf of 35 Protestant and Roman Catholic relief organizations in 21 countries.

Dr. Thimme told the Central Committee that much thought was being given to the kinds of help the churches could give in Vietnam when the fighting there

(more)

ceases. The Consultation on Reconstruction in Vietnam, announced earlier, will be held next February. To prepare for this, a delegation of about 30 representatives, including 10 from Asia, will go to Paris in October to have talks with groups from both South and North Vietnam.

In his report, Dr. Thimme said that around \$13,000,000 a year passed through the Division for the support of ecumenical service projects, refugee programmes and emergency relief. But despite staff efforts, it seemed impossible to hold down the Division's operational and service budget, estimated at \$1,900,000 in 1970 with income likely to fall short by \$200,000. Unless the churches increased their contributions or new sources of revenue were found, it would be necessary to cut back on programme.

"It would be a bad policy", Dr. Thimme said, "if we were obliged to take up new responsibilities for development aid and to give up former major concerns merely for financial reasons."

EPS

CEYLON'S METHODISTS ASK TWO-STAGE SCHEME WHEN UNION VOTE FAILS

Colombo, (EPS) -- The vote of the Methodist Conference of Ceylon on the proposed scheme for church union fell 1% short of the required 75% when the conference met here two weeks ago.

However, in resolutions passed immediately following the vote, the Methodists affirmed their intention to achieve union but suggested a two-stage scheme.

A union of ministries at the presbytery level was proposed. With the mutual recognition and interchangeability of the ordained ministry, intercommunion would become automatic, Dr. D.T. Niles, a leading Ceylonese Methodist and a World Council of Churches president, has stated.

The conference also suggested that a legislative assembly be set up immediately by all the uniting churches. This would enable the churches to begin functioning as one united church, even though the execution of decisions would remain with the separate churches until legal technicalities could be ironed out.

The Committee on Legal Questions has said those churches constituted by an act of Parliament (Anglican and Presbyterian) would require revision of that act before they could enter fully into the united church. The Methodists recommend this step be taken last.

Churches participating in the union negotiations are the Anglican, Presbyterian, Church of South India, Baptists and Methodists.

EPS

IN BRIEF

A group of 47 Mexican theological students attending the Mexican College in Rome visited the Ecumenical Centre, Geneva, August 15 to learn about the work of the World Council of Churches/Roman Catholic Church Joint Committee on Society, Development and Peace. They are also visiting Belgium and Germany and other Swiss cities on a two-month tour sponsored by the International Humanum Foundation, a Lugano-based organization which encourages dialogue on the Church and economic and social questions.

EPS