



challenge

ARABS AND ISRAELIS

THE ISRAELI MILITARY victory in the Middle East War may well prove to be a political and diplomatic liability, for the world as much as for Israel. A liability to Israel because of growing hostility to the retention of any of her territorial gains (the warning sounded by Mr. George Brown, the British Foreign Secretary at the U.N. exemplifies this trend): a liability for Israel because the increased bitterness among Arabs may frustrate Israel's attempts to negotiate from its new position of apparent strength. A set-back for the world because of the harm which must be done to the fragile, but crucial, cause of international peace and justice if other nations, small or large, act upon examples of successful and rewarding aggressiveness. South Africa has already drawn conclusions from this war which may have to be unlearned at the cost of much suffering and certainly at the cost of great waste of scarce human resources.

For Israel itself, the danger exists that effective military preparedness and strength will come to dominate completely its strategy for winning political acceptance from the Arab world, an eventuality that could poison the social and political life of Israel itself and that could precipitate, eventually, a confrontation of nuclear powers (perhaps Israel and Egypt themselves) in a situation where neither the interests of the peoples of the Middle East nor the interests of the rest of mankind will prevail. If Israel (or South Africa, for that matter) comes to rely upon the superiority of western technology and its own military powers, buttressed as this is by sophisticated military weapons supplied by the west, the polarisation of opposing ideologies will make inevitable the abandonment of any pretence to morality.

Any solution of the Middle East problem must not only be acceptable to Israel and the Arab states but it must also contribute to the development of the power and prestige of the U.N. The force of this presently unpalatable truth will emerge from the crises of the next decade if it does not develop out of the Middle

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Ut omnes unum sint

East and Vietnam wars. It is a cliché to observe that the U.N. is hamstrung by the qualified and erratic adherence of the great powers to its aims and to its development into an alternative source of power in the world. Mr. Eban, Israel's Foreign Minister, has earned himself a footnote in history where his unwarranted attack upon the U.N. Secretary-General for withdrawing U.N. troops from Egyptian territory will illustrate the responsibility of smaller nations for the ineffectiveness of the U.N. at this time. We find ourselves clearly aligned with those countries who believe that both the facts of the matter (Israel had itself refused to allow U.N. troops on its territory) and the long-term interests of mankind require more, not less, U.N. presences and action in the modern world.

That there are grievances on both sides in the Middle East is clear to any impartial observer. We are not sure how much is to be achieved by drawing up a detailed balance sheet, but it does seem necessary to make the basic point that the Arabs have a case, a case which is more complex historically, politically, and psychologically than is generally admitted. Paradoxically, this is perhaps better understood in Israel (though those who have this insight may not now be in political ascendancy) than in the rest of the world. This is certainly fair comment upon public reaction in South Africa.

The war itself, by no means the clinical, almost

chivalrous encounter some South African observers make of it, has aggravated the underlying problem of refugees in the Middle East, so that their number now approaches half the total population of Israel. Is it too much to demand that the Israelis, Arabs and the outside world (in the proportion that each has resources to commit) approach this problem directly, not merely in humanitarian terms of emergency relief but also in terms of political concessions which hold out some prospect of lasting solutions? No country's conscience is clear in this matter. Or must we conclude that national pride has infected newer nations as deeply as the old?

The Americans deliberately took advantage of the Middle East war to escalate the war in Vietnam still further by bombing targets hitherto untouched: the Russians were able to repress the more savagely the uprising in Hungary in 1956 because of the Anglo-French attack upon Nasser in which Israel participated and from which it benefitted. These immediate distortions of the morality of international life may serve to illustrate the point that the responsibility for international peace and justice rests as much with the smaller nations of the world, like Israel and South Africa, as with the great powers whose freedom for manoeuvre and initiative is increasingly distorted by their possession of nuclear weapons. ●

343.23(68)

David Welsh

Should We Hang?

IT HAS SLOWLY DAWNED on a number of South Africans that our soaring execution rate is not only a matter to be deplored but also a symptom of something seriously wrong with our society. South Africa hangs on an average upwards of 100 persons per annum. It is not a time of civil war nor has any criminologist of note been able to demonstrate that the death penalty is a vitally necessary institution to the security of life and property.

The following table shows the dramatic rise in the number of hangings.

Year	Murder	Rape	Robbery	Housebreaking	Total
1947	25	2	—	—	27
1948	32	5	—	—	37

1949	20	3	—	—	23
1950	37	3	—	—	40
1951	29	8	—	—	37
1952	40	2	—	—	42
1953	39	4	—	—	43
1954†	54	3	—	—	57
1955	44	6	—	—	50
1956	n.a.	n.a.	—	—	n.a.
1957*	98	6	—	—	104
1958	63	7	—	—	70
1959†	63	7	—	—	70
1960	63	3	4	—	70
1961	55	6	5	—	66
1962	106	12	7	4	129
1963*	104	9	2	—	115
1964	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.
1965	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	85
1966	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	124

Note: *The figures for 1957 to 1963 are for the year ending 30th June.

†Figures for 1954 and 1959 are approximate, based on calculations made from statistics released in Parliament.

Source: Annual reports of the Commission of Prisons. Replies to Parliamentary Questions, House of Assembly debates.

Hansard 1957, Cols. 8765-6; 1959 Col. 346. *The Star* 24th January, 1967.

Not only has the number of death sentences imposed increased but the number of reprieves has declined. Between 1947 and 1956 63% of the whites and 69% of the non-whites sentenced to death were actually executed, while in the period between 1 July 1959 and 30 June 1964 89% of the whites and 72.4% of the non-whites sentenced to death were executed. It is this dual process which has led to the striking increase in the number of executions.

Comparisons between South Africa and other countries lead to some striking conclusions. It would appear from calculations based on comparative figures contained in an international survey of capital punishment published by the United Nations in 1962 that South Africa has a higher execution rate than any other country in the world for which figures are available.

In contrast to the trend in most Western countries where the number of capital offences has steadily been reduced, South Africa has steadily increased the number of capital offences. At present the death penalty is mandatory in cases of murder where no extenuating circumstances are found. It may be imposed, at the discretion of the judge, for the crime of murder with extenuating circumstances, treason, rape, armed robbery with aggravating circumstances, housebreaking with aggravating circumstances, sabotage, child-stealing and kidnapping. More than 90% of death sentences are imposed for the crime of murder. 90% of those executed are non-whites.

CURRENT LINEUP

Abolition has never been a popular cause in South Africa. In 1947 the Lansdown Commission on Penal and Prison Reform concluded that public opinion was not ripe for abolition. I have no doubt that this opinion would be found true today, despite a mountain of evidence that has discredited the death penalty elsewhere. The ruling Nationalist Party is staunchly in favour of retention. The United Party, in the event of capital punishment being debated in Parliament, would allow its Members a free vote. Most would undoubtedly vote for retention in the case of certain crimes. The Progressive Party has no declared policy on capital punishment. Many of its members, including Mrs. Helen Suzman M.P., are abolitionists. The Liberal Party adopted a resolution in favour of abolition some

years ago.

Of the Churches, only the Methodists and the Church of the Province have come down squarely on the side of abolition. The Roman Catholics, while granting the right to the state to take life, can be included among abolitionists. (The Vatican City retains the death penalty on its statute book but in practice never employs it.) The Dutch Reformed Churches have never debated the death penalty in any of their Synods but it can safely be assumed that they are mostly retentionists. A senior official of the N.G.K., Dr. D. F. B. de Beer was quoted in 1961 as saying that it was 'desirable that punishments for some crimes should be extreme if certain groups were to be protected from the lawless and violent behaviour of other groups.'

South Africa has never had a large abolitionist movement. Opponents of the death penalty have been isolated individuals, sometimes clergy (like the Reverend Henri Junod, for many years doyen of South African abolitionists and also a Prison chaplain whose duties included ministering to condemned persons) and sometimes judges, notably Justices Hiemstra (of the Transvaal bench) and Cloete (of the Eastern Cape bench).

THE ABOLITIONIST'S TASK

It is quite obvious that the abolitionist has a hard task of public education in front of him. Since the Lansdown Commission declined to recommend abolition on the grounds that a large part of the population (i.e. the Africans) was 'just emerging from barbarism,' there has been hardly any public debate on the issue. Most whites feel themselves to be part of an isolated minority group, jealous of its privileges and separated widely in culture and values from non-whites, particularly Africans. The gallows are regarded as a vitally necessary source of protection for life and property. With our exceptionally high crime rates (nine murders *per day* are committed in South Africa) a widespread feeling of insecurity prevails among many members of the population which predisposes them to the view that the death penalty must be retained and used extensively.

What is one to make of the Lansdown Commission's argument against abolition which is so widely believed? If the argument about 'barbarism' implies that Africans in traditional tribal societies were noted for a propensity for committing violent crimes on a large scale, it can be rejected summarily as false. There is ample evidence from early observers of tribal societies that crimes like rape and murder are rare. For instance,

Col. J. Maclean in his *Compendium of Kafir Laws and Customs* (1858) wrote of the Xhosa on the Eastern Frontier of the Cape that 'the shedding of blood, except in time of war, is a rare occurrence among them'.

If Africans today commit crimes of violence on a large scale it cannot be attributed to a background of barbarism or some inherently violent streak in their natures (as is sometimes believed). High crime rates among Africans are symptoms of social dislocation. Poverty, poor housing, split families, lack of stability and sheer frustration — all these drive men, whatever their colour, to crime.

In 1942 the Elliot Committee stated bluntly that the 'consequences of many years of indifference, half-measures or measures whose intellectual content never aspired to rise above the conception of more and larger prisons, more and more frequent floggings and more (or less) spare diet have been to produce a native population of industrial serfs, called upon to perform the unskilled labour of civilisation under exacting conditions and at wages which keeps it chronically on the verge of destitution and produces, inter alia, the native criminal.' (Para 13).

The Commission's words underline a great truth: that savage punishments are never an effective method of combatting crime. Crime will be reduced only when the social maladjustments that produce it are remedied.

THE ARGUMENTS FOR RETENTION

Let me turn now to an examination of the arguments commonly held to justify the death penalty. The most cogent and plausible argument holds that the death penalty has a deterrent effect greater than that of any alternative form of punishment. This view has never been demonstrated with any degree of scientific precision. It is held as an article of faith. Unfortunately for the retentionist it is virtually impossible to prove, for, as the British Royal Commission on Capital Punishment (1949-53) remarked, one can see how many persons have *not* been deterred from committing a capital offence but never how many have been deterred.

The abolitionist can point to the findings of many criminologists and official commissions to support his own case. The most famous Commission of recent times, that referred to in the preceding paragraph, examined statistics culled from some 50 judicial systems and concluded that there was no evidence to suggest that abolition of the death penalty had in any case led to a significant increase in the rate of former capital offences, or that reintroduction of the death penalty had led to a decrease in the number of these

offences.

It was also shown that murder rates were similar in the adjoining states of federations even if murder carried the death penalty in the one state and not in the other. It must be added, that these adjoining states were carefully selected so as to ensure that social and economic conditions were similar in each.

All evidence points to what criminologists have believed for a long time: that the rate at which certain crimes are committed varies independently of whether they are capital offences or not. It is certain that the deterrent mechanism of the death penalty does not operate in the way retentionists often believe it does. It is simply not true that most would-be criminals weigh up the benefits and satisfactions to be derived from committing the crime against the prospect of apprehension, conviction and subsequent execution.

If the death penalty did operate in this manner (as it might do in a small number of cases) it is highly likely that an alternative non-capital form of punishment would have equal deterrent power.

For some crimes such as rape, armed robbery and housebreaking which can be punished by death, the retentionist's argument can be self-defeating. The man who contemplates rape may consider that if he is to hang for rape he might as well hang for murder; and by murdering his victim he eliminates the person who is most likely to identify him and cause him to be convicted.

NOT A SUPER-DETERRENT

Examination of crime rates and execution rates in South Africa does not lend support to the view that the death penalty is a super-deterrent. Both rates have soared. More than 5,000 murders are committed annually despite the fact that nearly 100 persons are annually executed for this crime.

The onus is heavily on the retentionist to demonstrate his most plausible argument. To date he has conspicuously failed to do this. The abolitionist is often taunted for being, allegedly, more sympathetic to the criminal than to his victim. This is sheer nonsense. Of course the abolitionist sympathises with the victim and his family. But why add a second killing to the first (if the crime was murder)? Why cause additional misery to the criminal's family who, after all, are innocent?

In any event if society wished to show sympathy to the victim in some tangible form it ought to institute a system of compensation for the victims (and dependants of victims) of violent crime. It is invariably people who are abolitionists who fight also for this particular reform.

Another argument against the death penalty is its finality. A mistake might be made despite the great care which is taken by the courts and the Government Law Advisors (who look into every aspect of the case before recommending that a death warrant be signed). The recent case of Timothy Evans illustrates the point. Evans, a young mental defective, was recently found by a British Commission of Inquiry to have been hanged for a murder which he did not commit.

It has never been definitely established that innocent men have gone to the gallows in South Africa, although competent observers such as the Rev. Junod have given it as their considered opinion that such cases have occurred. There are, moreover, several instances on record where condemned persons have been reprieved from the gallows in the nick of time.

CRUELTY

The cruelty involved in capital punishment must also be considered. The condemned man sits in the bleakness of Death Row in Pretoria's Central Prison. He may wait for three, six, nine months or even longer. Death is imminent and virtually inescapable.

Most of us do not know when we are going to die. We assume hopefully that it will be a long time hence. For the condemned man no such shock absorber operates. Even tranquillisers and a blindfold can do little to mitigate the hideous prospect of so violent an end. Any number of assurances about hanging being the most 'merciful' form of execution cannot persuade me that capital punishment is anything but a most gross form of torture, invariably more cruel than the crime for which the condemned man was originally sentenced. Equally gross is the mental torture inflicted on the wife, children and parents of the condemned man.

Even if it could be shown that capital punishment is a uniquely effective deterrent this does not *ipso facto* justify its retention. The humane conscience has come to reject burning at the stake as too cruel a form of execution. But let us assume that this particular form of punishment was adopted for the crime of murder and the murder rate dropped dramatically. Would this justify the punishment? Clearly not: we do not uphold the doctrine that any means will justify an end, however desirable attainment of that end may be. We would (I hope) reject burning at the stake as being too cruel.

But where, and how, do we draw the line between punishment which is too cruel and that which complies with the requirements of humaneness? It is my considered opinion that capital punishment *in any form* is a gross cruelty which no civilised state ought to inflict on any citizen however depraved and degraded a

monster he may be.

The death penalty has upsetting effects on those who have anything to do with it. Judges, prosecutors, warders and welfare workers who visit condemned people are all subject to a terrible strain which is inescapable. A former Governor of Pentonville Prison made the following statement to a Select Committee which inquired into capital punishment in Britain in 1929-30: 'I never can help asking myself why, when one is called upon to superintend an execution, one should have been affected with such an acute sense of personal shame . . . There must be something fundamentally wrong with a law which has the effect of lessening the self-respect of those whose duty it is to carry it out.'

There is evidence also that a particular type of warped criminal mind is stimulated to commit an offence by the very fact that it carries the death penalty. Such a mentality sees in the gladiatorial contest of the trial and the climax on the gallows a sort of Valhalla for criminals.

VIOLENCE

In a society such as ours, already horribly scarred by violence, capital punishment only adds to violence. It diminishes respect for human life; it contributes to the brutalisation of human relations; and it reinforces the barbaric vengeful desires of many. The great John Bright once remarked that 'a deep reverence for human life is worth more than a thousand executions in the prevention of murder; and it is, in fact, the great security of human life. The law of capital punishment whilst pretending to support this reverence, does in fact tend to destroy it.' The annual toll of the gallows in South Africa is a needless slaughter. It does nothing to eliminate the underlying causes of crime. It can only contribute to the growth of callousness and a decline of the virtues of charity and forgiveness.

In a country such as ours the execution of those who commit violent crimes in the furtherance of political ends will only lead to even more bitterness and exacerbation of inter-group cleavages. No one could fail to be moved when Dr. D. F. Malan pleaded in Parliament in 1943 for the life of Robey Leibbrandt to be spared. 'If blood is split, then we make the future difficult. Blood is a means of binding us together, this we know . . . But blood that is spilt does not bind together, but it creates a gulf, a deep gulf which in the history of a people like ours might be unbridgeable.' ●

Mark Collier

Celibacy

IN YOUR FEBRUARY - MARCH issue of *Challenge*, Edward Higgins wrote an article on clerical celibacy. I am glad he did this. However, the article gave me the impression that this topic was being discussed only by a group of angry young reactionary clerics. No weight seemed to be given to the profound psychological and pastoral arguments being raised by responsible Catholic thinkers, both clerical and lay, for some revision of the existing discipline in the Latin Church.

However, I would like here merely to reflect 'on reflections.' I will refer in passing to two enquiries which were restricted to priests, both of which were controlled and responsible. One was made in Holland and its findings were submitted to the secretariate of the Pastoral Council of the Dutch ecclesiastical province and to the Bishops of the Netherlands, and the other by the recently-formed National Association for Pastoral Renewal in the United States of America.

Mr. Higgins says that celibacy 'seems most desirable for the Latin Church' and that 'clearly, the reasons in favour of the retention of celibacy are weighty and long-standing.' But what are these reasons? Surely they are not only the eschatological sign-value or witness-to-heaven of celibacy.

In parenthesis, I agree that celibacy can be and often is a sign both to the People of God and to the world. One therefore emanates from a country known to be theologically progressive and the other from a country regarded as theologically conservative.

But it will be a more profound and pregnant sign when freely chosen 'for the sake of the Kingdom,' i.e. for its own sake. All too often it is the purchase price of service of God and man as a priest. It is all too often accepted, not chosen. Nevertheless we should not forget that Christian life, be it single or married, should be a sign to the world of the same reality of which celibacy is also a sign. The Vatican Council states clearly that the Church is the sacrament of the presence of God in the world. This means that all Christians should be signs of the reality and presence of God.

'The Latin Church decrees that marriage and priesthood are two mutually exclusive vocations and states

of life.' The Church may so decree, but scripturally, theologically and historically they are not necessarily mutually exclusive.

The New Testament envisions no conflict between priesthood and marriage. (1 Timothy 3:1-7 Titus 1:5-9.) The Vatican Council sees no intrinsic connection between priesthood and celibacy. (Decree on Priests Ch. 3 Para. 16.) And from an historical examination of celibacy and the priesthood in the Latin Church it is clear that it had both a late birth and a very checkered career.

Furthermore celibacy is only a discipline of the Church. Canon law, like the sabbath, is made for man and not man for it. What the Church has decreed in the past, it can repeal in the present.

ROLE CONFLICT

Doubtless there will be role-conflict for a married clergy more than in the case of a celibate clergy. But would this be necessarily more than for a married doctor, psychiatrist or psychologist? Does this conflict arise out of the priest's multiple role-expectation — 'a priest is supposed to be a teacher, preacher, dispenser of the sacraments, administrator.' But should he? There is a continuing debate at present in ecumenical circles on the essential role of the ministry in the Church. The only role that the priest has essentially by ordination is his sacramental role. The variety of ministries that should exist in the Church (e.g. 1 Cor. 12:4 ff Rom. 12:6) have become united often in the priest. But the deacon can also preach, the catechist can also teach, and the accountant can also administer. Hasn't the time come in the Church for not only a re-examination of existing structures but also of role-expectations?

We all have different talents, but as Paul told the Ephesians (Eph. 4:12 ff) these gifts are given that 'the saints (Christians) together make a unity in the work of service, building up the body of Christ. In this way we are all to come to the unity in one faith and in our knowledge of the Son of God, until we become the Perfect Man, fully mature with the fulness

of Christ himself.'

'Even a decree making clerical celibacy optional could have chaotic consequences.' Why? because too many priests would want to marry? Surely this would then be an argument in favour of optional celibacy, not against it. However, I don't think that such a decree would cause an appreciable rise in de Beer's Consolidated shares. Most priests look with unaffected eyes at the Marriage Register in their sacristies.

But those who do feel that their vocation is to marriage and not celibacy, need cause no chaos. The National Association for Pastoral Renewal, for example, has prepared a specific proposal for the consideration of the National Conference of North American Bishops. This proposal attempts to minimise the structural and organisational changes involved in the introduction of an optional celibacy for the diocesan clergy. At the same time, it makes use of approved canonical procedures and structures recently proposed by the Holy See i.e. according to the provisions of paragraph 4 of the Pope's Apostolic Letter *Ecclesiae Sanctae* of 6th August, 1966. In terms of these provisions they ask for the erection of a special ordinariate to initiate a married clergy with its special apostolate. This request they hope the American Bishops will present at the Episcopal Synod at Rome in September, even though celibacy is reported not to be on its agenda.

EMOTIONAL AND SEXUAL PROBLEMS

Clearly Mr. Higgins is right that marriage is no 'magic wand to cure all (their) emotional and sexual problems.' There is an interesting parallel in the published text of the majority report of the Papal Birth Control Commission (*THE TABLET* 22nd April, 1967). In Part 11, Chapter 1, the report reads that though they advocate responsible parenthood, 'couples who may think they find in the doctrine as it has just been proposed an open door to laxism or easy solutions make a grave mistake, of which they will be the first victims.' The operative word is responsible. All freedom rests on responsibility and there is no choice without responsibility. The report offers no panacea to all marriage problems, but recognises an evolution in doctrine flowing out of a deeper understanding of man, his nature, marriage and sex.

At present the priest is presented with an either/or situation. Why should his present Hobson's choice not become a responsible choice as a result of our better understanding of man, his nature, marriage, sex and celibacy. The argument is not in favour of marriage as an escape from the demands of celibacy, rather

in favour of marriage as the fulfilment of the vocation to this state of life.

Interestingly enough the quoted report continues in Chapter 11 of Part 11 as follows: 'It seems very necessary to establish some pontifical institute or secretariate for the study of the sciences connected with married life . . . It would be in a special way for this institute to . . . contribute to the formation of priests and married couples dedicated to the family apostolate.' (See also in this regard Ch. 1 Para. 52 of the Constitution on the Church in the Modern World.) Surely these priests would be more valuable to the family apostolate if married and it would be an apostolate in line with the recommendations of the Association for Pastoral Renewal. Expenses will naturally increase with married clergy but economics never makes a convincing argument against marriage.

NOT THE POLICY OF DISCONTENTS

No, the debate is not being waged by a group of discontented celibates. The Dutch survey showed that one-third of all the diocesan clergy in the Netherlands were in favour of a revision of the present dispensation. This does not imply that they would marry. Rather it only implies that they do not agree with the obligation of celibacy. And among these priests are university professors and lecturers, university chaplains, seminary lecturers, retired priests and naturally mainly parish priests and assistant priests.

After all celibacy is a gift from God and it seems difficult to legislate about charismata. And we need not fear: the charisma will continue to be given and it will continue to be responded to and in these chosen ones the gift will shine. No, there is room in the Church—much more than we think. We haven't yet discovered the full dimensions of the Body of Christ—there is room for marriage, the single state, religious life, new forms of religious life, the celibate clergy, the married clergy, worker-priests, auxiliary priests and a whole lot more.

I have already used up too much of your space. So far I have not proposed any of the reasons, philosophical, psychological, pastoral or ecumenical that suggest a controlled revision of the existing ruling, but perhaps these few considerations will justify the following statement of the Association for Pastoral Renewal: 'The growing debate within the Catholic community reveals that the rationale of clerical celibacy has lost its compelling force. This is not to say that the teaching on the value of celibacy is less convincing, but only that requiring it for all priests appears less defensible.' ●

The Secular City

THIS IS AN UNUSUALLY frank book which faces most candidly the manifold implications and consequences of contemporary secularisation for the religious believer. Professor Cox's theme is '... if we are to understand and communicate with our present age we must learn to love it in its unremitting secularity.' The author argues quite cogently that for centuries religion has been too tribal and where there is tribalism there is no room for a transcendent point of view or any critical detachment.

According to the writer, secularisation must be clearly distinguished from secularism. Secularisation refers to an historical process which liberates man from his tribal past and which stems from biblical faith. Secularism, on the other hand, is a pejorative concept, viz., an ideology, a new closed world-view. Hence Christians should support and nourish secularisation while shunning secularism.

The entire book sees secularisation as something good, especially as it stems from the Bible. Briefly, the creation story involves the disenchantment with nature; this means that nature is freed from religious overtones and thus the development of science becomes possible. Creation means that man is now distinguished from nature and God is separated from man as well as from nature; This is regarded as a great advance.

In addition, *The Secular City* argues that secularisation is rooted in the Sinai Covenant. This Covenant represents the deconsecration of values—they become relative, limited and partial. Consequently, change is possible. Author Cox reasons that only God is supreme, absolute and unconditioned and, therefore, change is healthy because it allows for cultural pluralism. Moreover, every individual's perspective is limited and conditioned. The relativity of values and the biblical prohibition of idolatry are regarded as having a good deal in common. The writer views this biblically-caused relativism as working against man's tendency to deify himself, his culture, his society, or this or that particular form of political organisation. Man is finite and should have a sense of proportion. But great maturity is required in this context as well as in

the wider task of Christians, viz. to prevent secularisation from hardening into a rigid world-view.

One cannot talk about secularisation without some advertence to urbanisation, a phenomenon which continues to distress some thinkers. However, Harvey Cox tends to look on the positive side of things. The modern city has been criticised for its anonymity as well as the mobility which it produces. Nevertheless, Cox refuses to regard anonymity and mobility as epithets. As far as he is concerned, anonymity preserves privacy which is something essential to life; he sees it as allied to the struggle between law (blind adherence to the past) and the gospel (freedom to decide for oneself). Law, in this sense, Cox equates with conformism; this makes people irresponsible because it blocks choice and freedom. It is the gospel which promotes choice and responsibility. According to him: 'The gospel is the activity of God creating new possibilities in history.' Urbanisation can speed the spread of the gospel particularly by freeing us from much of our bondage to the past. Furthermore, mobility underlines the pilgrim idea both for the believer and the church—'no lasting city.'

Inter alia, the secular city is characterised by pragmatism and profanity. Pragmatism is characterised by the question: Will it work? Will it get results? Profanity implies that secular man's horizon is wholly terrestrial; he is unreligious and this-worldly. As a result, the style of the secular city is highly provisional.

PERFORMANCE THE YARDSTICK

Like Comte and other thinkers, Harvey Cox feels that Mankind has moved through three stages, three different ways of grasping reality, i.e. the mythical, the ontological and, finally, the functional. He argues that a functional view of truth fits in much better with the biblical message than any other view of truth. According to the Bible and to God 'Performance is the yardstick of truth.' This is the sort of slickness and over-simplification with which *The Secular City* abounds. Certain of the writer's arguments are specious

because he fails to make rigorous distinctions in addition to stating half-truths. His contention that there is no contradiction between the biblical view of truth and the functional view of contemporary society is a case in point.

Professor Cox has a lot of hard things to say to present-day Christians. For instance, he accuses them of worshipping a Platonic or Aristotlean God rather than a Biblical God. He fears that Christians have over-conceptualised the divinity. Here again, one longs in vain for precision and careful distinctions. Moreover, the writer's treatment of God highlights the fallacy in fact, the anti-intellectualism of making all man's knowledge of God dependent upon the Bible and the Bible alone. The weakness and inadequacy of this approach remains in spite of the considerable sophistication which the writer is able to muster.

It does not seem to have penetrated the author's mind that God as 'Actus Purus' or 'Ensa Se' can, by definition and in the very nature of things, never be totally grasped by a finite mind. It distresses him that some schools of theologians have concentrated on certain aspects of the divinity and ignored others. This is hardly surprising. However, what is intellectually immature and arrogant is the unwritten but implicit contention that all theologians before Harvey Cox were wandering off the beaten track and quite confused about the God of Genesis. Besides, it is naïve to suggest that because Albert Camus was an atheist, I must immediately discard all the tenets of classical theism.

INSIGHTS

The chapter dealing with the church in *The Secular City* contains some sharp and unusual insights. The author laments the absence of a theology of revolution and contrasts our world of rapid social change with our static theology. Perhaps he is overly sanguine when he finds the Kingdom of God and the Secular City to be quite compatible. However, when he pleads for a theology of social change he is extremely convincing.

Because the author regards the Church as God's avant garde, he maintains that it must not be tribal. Here one must agree with him.

The writer also views the Church as a type of cultural exorcist. It is refreshing to hear a theologian make the following sociologically trite but often overlooked observation: 'Culture has a powerful effect on persons, far more than we were willing to admit during the 18th and 19th centuries, when rationalistic individualism laughed at such things.'

In this chapter about the Church's exorcist role,

Professor Cox pleads for freedom and responsibility for all men. He wants liberation from 'the archaic heritage which distorted their vision of reality and from the anxious legalism which constricted their behaviour.'

The writer of *THE SECULAR CITY* certainly would not restrict the Church to the sanctuary or limit witness to pietist behaviour: 'The Church should be ready to expose the fallaciousness of the social myths by which the injustices of a society are perpetrated and to suggest ways of action which demonstrate the wrongness of such phantasies.' In short, the Church must confront society with what really is: there is no warrant for cultural smokescreens.

According to *THE SECULAR CITY*, secularisation is a good thing because it opens up new possibilities for religion. Vis-a-vis the past, it nevertheless constitutes 'a dangerous liberation.' In the past, tradition played a determining role in man's affairs, but Cox feels that today tradition is more and more being assigned a secondary role. This, he feels, will make a more creative and relevant type of religious life possible.

SEX AND SECULARISATION

One of the best chapters in this appealing and yet puzzling book is devoted to the question of sex and secularisation. The writer brings a sharp scalpel to bear on the question of the dehumanisation and commercialisation of sex. All around our culture he finds spurious sexual models and detects an increase in sexual immaturity. Professor Cox vigorously attacks the beauty queen phenomenon symbolising and sanctifying consumer society and delighting the advertiser. Furthermore, he attacks departmentalised sex and he criticises whatever fosters an heretical view of sex—sex, for him, is essentially a totality. The writer is clear-sighted enough to realise that much of what he finds offensive in 'today's sexually rapacious society' cannot be attributed exclusively to individual moral deterioration. Rather aptly, he declares: 'It is strange how even people who see most clearly that crime, illegitimacy, narcotics addition, and poverty are largely structural problems still interpret the increase in pre-marital sexual experience as a breakdown in personal morals.'

Another worthwhile chapter discusses the Church and the secular university. In this chapter he deplores the fact that most churches have become organisational bureaucracies. In addition, the Church is allied to too many vested interests and this causes it to frown on radical social change. Cox contends that the prevailing economic structure suits the Church, hence it is not free to exercise radical criticism because it depends on

the economy for its institutional life. It seems to this reviewer that the author is unduly critical of the organisational Church. The 'Church of faith' is all very well but it does need a concretisation, permanence and continuity and how is this possible without some form of organisation? Professor Cox seems to forget that abuses never invalidate proper uses. Throughout this book a strange concept of ecclesiology is evident, one that is unrealistic, over-simplified, unsociological, un-historical and scarcely in accord with Christ's mandate as expressed in the gospel.

The last section of *THE SECULAR CITY* treats of the need to speak in a secular fashion of God. According to Professor Cox, the word 'God' is meaningless in our age because of its 'bewildering equivocality.' He is concerned only with the God of the Bible. The God of the metaphysicians and theologians is out. He urges us to find a better word for the divinity and to speak of him only in a political fashion, by which he means in a civil, concrete and contemporary manner. Furthermore, the writer can be faulted for a general approach which is of the all-the-eggs-in-one-basket type. This, of course, is always risky and in *THE SECULAR CITY* it is sometimes unwieldy and unconvincing. Religious doctrine springs primarily from two sources, viz. scripture and tradition. Professor Cox appears to admit only a scriptural basis for Christian doctrine; tradition seems anathema to him; tradition, that is, as he conceives it, represents something static and retrogressive. Such a view of tradition is partial and inaccurate. The writer's exclusive concentration

on Scripture and his lack of a clear definition of the Church constitute the major weakness in this interesting and decidedly stimulating book.

Scattered throughout *THE SECULAR CITY* are the seeds of anti-intellectualism and consequently one is not surprised at the resultant subjectivism. At times, the reader feels that the writer is straining just that bit too much. This is particularly evident when he indulges in analogical reasoning.

One could also fault the writer for his liking for neologisms and for his persistent sweeping style which lends itself to over-simplification. Professor Cox writes with great assurance that sometimes borders on arrogance. In fact, this reviewer felt sometimes that the author of *THE SECULAR CITY* was peddling some sort of with-it Gnosticism. Some critics might allege that *The Secular City* comes close to robbing religion of its supernatural content. This would be a superficial view because the writer does manage to make the supernatural extremely relevant to the market place of contemporary life. Throughout *THE SECULAR CITY* the approach is positive. Professor Cox is most assuredly an alert critic but he does give the impression of being unduly and excessively optimistic. There seems to be no place in his scheme of things for duality, for original sin, for the reality of evil. In spite of his restricted denominational background (vide his one-sided bibliography), Harvey Cox nevertheless signifies an exceptionally challenging voice in American Protestantism and one that all serious minded Christians should heed and ponder. ●

Wilfred Vogt

The Council and Ecumenism

IT WAS INEVITABLE that in the course of the Second Vatican Council the agonizing question of 'divided Christians' should be brought up. The very presence of the observers symbolized, as it were, the division; and it was only natural that after considering the mystery of God's Church (God's people called together in Christ, and called to *be* together) the Council would turn its attention to this grave problem and try to give at least some guiding principles which, in God's own good time and under the inspiration of his Spirit, would help to lead all Christians towards a

solution.

The ecumenical movement—the movement towards Christian unity—had been under way for some time before the Council began; and individual Roman Catholics had not been strangers to it. However, by and large, the Roman Catholic Church as a body had scarcely entered wholeheartedly into the movement. In part this was due to a conception of the nature of God's Church which was current in Roman Catholic circles, and which led us to think of the ecumenical movement as ultimately a movement of *return* to the

Roman Catholic Church, the one true fold of Christ—however much one might charitably camouflage it in its initial stages. In part the Roman Catholic lack of co-operation was also due to another attitude of mind; the post-Reformation 'defense mentality' about which I shall say something further on.

The Roman Catholic conception of the Church 'pre-Vatican II' could be expressed after this fashion: Christ founded one visible Church, and one only. Into this Church all must enter to be saved. Outside the one true Church of Christ there is no salvation. This one true Church is found today exclusively in the Roman Catholic Church—all other Church bodies, which have separated themselves at different stages in the course of history from the Roman Catholic Church, can make no claim whatever to be the one true Church of Christ. And their members, then? Are they all absolutely outside the pale of salvation? Certainly not; but through the working of God's Spirit they are 'related' in some way 'by unconscious yearning and desire' to the one true Church, Christ's Mystical Body, in which alone, and through which alone, all the benefits of salvation are to be found. The Holy Spirit is thus conceived as being at work in individuals in the non-Catholic Christian bodies, but not at all in these bodies as such.

STATIC CONCEPT OF CHURCH

As will be readily understood, this is a 'static' conception of the Church—the Church is 'all there' in the Roman Catholic Church, in full and exclusive possession of all truth, of all the means of salvation, of all Christ's authority. Moreover, the Church is a 'something' over and above the members, an ideal entity which remains holy in the supreme degree, whatever the condition of the members may be. All that is required of the members is that they submit themselves to 'the Church' (here, the teaching and ruling authority) and avail themselves through it of the means of salvation, and all is well for them.

For some time, however, this idea of the Church has been appearing unsatisfactory to Roman Catholic theologians themselves—and it finally appeared unsatisfactory to the Council too. It is altogether too juridical, too 'institutional'; it presents the Church as an 'institution for salvation', with precise rules and regulations governing membership of the institution much as there are precise rules and regulations governing membership of an exclusive club. And indeed it does consider the Church as an *exclusive 'club'*, as an exclusive institution for salvation. Further, it supposes the Church as a fully achieved reality here

and now, perfect in all respects; it transports the Church of the future age, of the Parousia, to this present earthly condition: *triumphalism*. It lays too much emphasis on authority, on the institution with its rules and regulations: *juridicism*. It neglects the mass of the laity, with the gifts of the Spirit working in them as he wills, in favour of the clergy: *clericalism*.

This conception of the Church is quite opposed to that of the New Testament—and it is opposed to the view of the Church given in the Council's Constitution on the Church, which returns to the true biblical view, telling us of the nature of the Church along these lines: The Church is first and foremost a *people*, God's people called together in Christ, incorporated into Christ as his members through Baptism, all being one body in Christ through Baptism, all basically equal in Christ because all share the same gifts of Christ in the Spirit. Wherever there are believers in Christ, *there Christ's Church is to be found*, in differing degrees according to the degree in which Christ's teaching, his authority and the means of salvation are to be found. Therefore the Roman Catholic Church will no longer refuse the title of *Church* to those Christian bodies which gather together believers in Christ.

To continue the New Testament vision of the Church as the Council presents it: the Church is a holy people, a kingly priesthood, a people called from darkness into the light of God's kingdom, the Bride, the Temple, the Body of Christ; but it is a people on the way, a pilgrim people on the march in this world towards the final consummation of God's kingdom when he will be all in all. In the Church as she goes on her pilgrimage there can be imperfection, darkness, sin even; the *holy* Church is at one and the same time the *sinful* Church, the 'ecclesia semper reformanda', not yet consummated in the fulness of truth to which the Holy Spirit is leading us. Thus all the churches are in some measure Christ's Church; in all the Churches, *as Churches*, the Spirit is at work. All are already in some measure one; and we should never forget our oneness when we come together to talk over our divisions.

BASIC QUESTIONS

The Council's decree on Ecumenism dwells with satisfaction on the good things of salvation to be found in the other Christian Churches in paragraphs 20-23 (as regards Western Christian bodies). Among other things are cited: belief in Christ and acknowledgement of him as God, Lord and Mediator; love and reverence for the Scriptures; Baptism, and in some way the

Eucharist and worship generally; Christian living. This brings us to realise that if we would have said in the past: 'So-and-so will be saved *in spite of* his being (for instance) a Lutheran', now we will have to say that he is saved *because* through being a Lutheran he is a member of Christ.

All of which leads naturally to two questions:

1. Are we then to say that the division of Christians is no more than a minor inconvenience? Far from it; it is a scandal—and the decree on Ecumenism states this unhesitatingly at its very beginning:

'Without doubt, this discord openly contradicts the will of Christ, provides a stumbling-block to the world, and inflicts damage on the most holy cause of proclaiming the good news to every creature.' (par. 1).

And the Spirit is instilling into Christian hearts everywhere the anguish of this separation. We have not to enter here into the whys and wherefores of our division; sinful humanity has played its part on all sides, and for our part the Roman Catholic Church admits her fault, asks forgiveness for whatever she may have done to be a cause of separation, and pardons the faults of others:

'St. John has testified: 'If we say that we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us' (1 Jn. 1:10). This holds good for sins against unity. Thus, in humble prayer, we beg pardon of God and of our separated brethren, just as we forgive those who trespass against us.' (par. 7).

2. Does the Roman Catholic Church no longer think of reunion as a return to herself as the one true Church? It would be simple to answer this question with a categorical affirmative: the Roman Catholic Church no longer thinks of reunion in terms of such a return. But this would be an oversimplification, though a true statement. A little closer consideration is necessary. Two things, in fact, need to be considered: the attitude of the past, and the position at present after the decree on Ecumenism.

ATTITUDES OF THE PAST

To explain the past attitude, I refer to the Reformation. The Roman Catholic Church regarded the sixteenth-century Reformation as a defection en masse from the mother Church; hence her reaction was essentially defensive, a closing of the ranks. And though she reformed herself at Trent, this reform was in the main conservative, a 'restoration' like that of an old building, a preservation of the 'good old days'. There was no attempt to look for new forms, far less to get to grips with Protestantism and to try to understand

'from inside' what the Reformers were really about. So the shutters went down, the defenses went up, minds were closed in an implacable hostility towards Protestantism. And on the Protestant side, the same happened. Then, as the years and the centuries rolled by, this attitude of mutual hostility only became hardened. It was normal for a Roman Catholic to detest anything Protestant, and equally normal for a Protestant to be averse to anything Roman Catholic. On our side, this attitude was typified by our views on Luther, which are happily changing among Roman Catholic scholars, and on Calvin, which are also changing, but not yet enough.

To outline the present attitude, I must be content here with a mere statement, as space will not permit the tracing of the slow evolution of this attitude from the time of Leo XIII to the Council and the activity of the Secretariate for Promoting Christian Unity set up in 1960. Now, as regards the Reformation in particular, there is much more of a receptive spirit towards it, towards what it stood for originally and what it stands for today. Not that this receptive spirit has not gone hand in hand with a certain excessive caution; not that the old ideas are completely dead. Still, we can definitely say that as a result of the Council and the Secretariate's activity we have a renewed understanding of what the Church is, with a consequent renewed understanding of what the Churches are. No longer can we talk of the Church, of its unity, catholicity and so on, as a ready-made, cut-and-dried thing handed us by God as a gift. Rather we are to think of the Church as a *task* to be laboriously perfected. No longer can we hold a static view of the Church; we must hold a dynamic, evolving one. We are *in the process of becoming Church* as we evolve towards the fulness of all things in Christ. No longer can we think of the Roman Catholic Church as possessing all things in their fullness; we are on the way towards this fullness.

ROMAN CATHOLIC CLAIMS

But of course—and it would be falsehood to pretend otherwise—the Roman Catholic Church remains convinced that in her Christ's Church is realized fully, in this sense that the Holy Spirit preserves in her fully the authentic heritage of the teaching, sanctifying and ruling mission of Christ. In the dynamic possession or assimilation of these gifts, however, the Catholic Church is, according to the Council's Constitution on the Church, in constant need of reform and purification till the end of time, for on her pilgrimage the Catholic Church is not, and never will be, simply

speaking, the perfect realization of Christ's Church. Thus speaks Father Gregory Baum in an article in *CONCILIUM* of April 1965. And another great ecumenist, Maurice Villain, in the April 1966 issue of the same review, adds: "If the Catholic Church remains conscious of possessing—*de jure*—the fulness of the gifts of Christ, it admits that it is far from reflecting this plenitude in the eyes of the world, and that therefore the mystery of unity is not limited to what this Church is in actual reality. This Church itself needs to enter into a fuller communion of the mystery of Christ. By the same token, the road of 'return' or 'integration' has shifted to a way of 'communion'".

This leads us Roman Catholics to see that we have to undergo a conversion, a change of heart and mind and ways of living and acting; a conversion insisted upon by the decree on Ecumenism, a conversion *from* a power exercising sway over immature minds and hearts and consciences *to* a "servant Church"; *from* superfluous ecclesiastical trimmings which do not belong to the essence of Christianity *to* the purity of the Gospel; *from* the accidental forms of the office of Peter in the Church *to* the pure simplicity of that office; *from* the sins and guilt that stand in the way of unity and hinder it *to* true love and understanding of our 'separated brethren'.

The union of Christians 'stands or falls not by a return of the Protestants to the Roman Catholic Church, but by a return of that Church to a thorough, all-round expediting of her original commission and task' (Adolfs: 'The Church is different', p. 115). No doubt this reform, this conversion, is needed by *all* Christians; but I am speaking here from the point of view of my own Church.

At the same time, the Roman Catholic Church, in loving dialogue with the separated brethren, will invite them to consider certain things. After all, we have *more*. Now *more* does not necessarily mean *better* (anyone undertaking a slimming-course will bear me out on this point!), but we can at least respectfully ask our separated brethren whether this *more* is not perhaps part of the essence of Christianity. And here it is of supreme importance not to regard the non-essentials, the unnecessary and perhaps offensive 'trimmings', the outmoded forms and other such things which are part of the object of that necessary conversion I mentioned earlier. It is, I repeat, of

supreme importance not to let these accidentals obscure our vision so that we cannot see the wood for the trees, but to regard only the things themselves.

Here then are some of the things which go to make up the 'more' which the Roman Catholic Church possesses and claims to be essential to the fulness of the Gospel:

- (1) Seven Sacraments—Even admitting that two of these sacraments are obviously of greater importance and receive greater scriptural emphasis, is there no mention of the other five in Scripture and no place for them in the Christian economy?
- (2) Bishops—We are not thinking of fussy old gentlemen in mitres who are called 'My Lord', but of the evangelical office of responsibility for the tending of Christ's flock, vested in a body of men which, in this function, succeeds the Apostles.
- (3) Mary—Here again we must discount certain external features of the expression people give to their devotion to Mary; lighting candles at statues and so on. But what about the place of the Woman in the plan of God for our Redemption, as evidenced especially in the writings of John? And what about the traditional honour paid to Mary by the early Church, as witnessed by the Council of Ephesus in 431? Can all this be simply thrown overboard?
- (4) Peter and his function in the Church—Once more, it is necessary to abstract from the ceremonial trappings of the Vatican and its extreme authoritarianism; but is there not, in the Church of Christ, a permanent office of Peter, head of the apostolic college?

This last point also brings up the question of the Church as a *communio*, a 'koinonia', a fellowship; which surely supposes a centre, a visible head, a touchstone of orthodoxy around which all gravitate, towards which all converge.

I am of course perfectly aware that there are certain emphases which we Roman Catholics have neglected, and which we can learn again from our Protestant brethren. In all humility and sincerity and honesty, we must learn these from them; and the decree on Ecumenism reminds us of this.

CONVERTS

What about 'converts' to the Roman Catholic Church? Well, those who are moved by the Spirit towards the 'more' will always be welcomed. But 'the work of preparing and reconciling those individuals who wish for full Catholic communion is of its nature distinct from ecumenical action. But there is no oppo-

sition between the two, since both proceed from the wondrous providence of God' (par. 2). Thus the decree on Ecumenism, which incidentally does not make use of the word 'convert' or 'conversion'. Proselytizing, sheer 'touting for converts', is not only distinct from ecumenical action, it is totally opposed to the whole spirit of our striving for Christian unity and to any true understanding of what the Church of Christ is.

Meanwhile we should realise that this true understanding of the Church makes us believe that it exists and is fulfilled and 'comes alive' above all in *each local congregation*. The Church is not a mighty something apart from the members. And while we do hold that, institutionally speaking, the Roman Catholic Church embodies all the heritage of teaching, ruling and sanctifying left to his Church by Christ and maintained by the Spirit, nevertheless, speaking in terms of God's merciful and sovereign action, a Christian community is more truly Church when it is more transformed into God's people, into his family, into a spiritual brotherhood of faith and charity through the power of Word and Sacrament. So, for instance, on this level, a Protestant community or congregation could be more *Church* than a Roman Catholic community or parish—a chastening thought for complacent Roman Catholics.

PRACTICAL ECUMENISM

These are the main principles on which the attitude of the Roman Catholic Church to the separated brethren is based, and which are outlined in the decree on Ecumenism. What of the *practice* of ecumenism? What are we to *do*? Here I can do no more than indicate briefly what the decree itself states, leaving to readers to exercise their own minds on the points raised, and to try to do something about them each in his own sphere.

1. Among the first and most important things mentioned in the decree, dialogue stands out. There must be meetings, and frequent meetings, so that a sincere dialogue can really take place. And this dialogue must be genuine; it must never be allowed to turn into a monologue on either side; each side must be prepared to learn from the other. (cf. par. 4).

2. The attainment of unity is the concern of the whole Church, clergy and laity alike. No one in the Church has the right to alienate himself from the ecumenical movement. This universal concern for unity, says the decree, 'already reveals to some extent the bond of brotherhood existing among all Christians, and it leads towards that full and perfect unity which

God lovingly desires' (par. 5).

3. Reformation, renewal, change of heart is everywhere necessary.

'There can be no ecumenism worthy of the name without a change in heart. For it is from newness of attitudes, from self-denial and unstinted love, that yearnings for unity take their rise and grow towards maturity. We should therefore pray to the divine Spirit for the grace to be genuinely self-denying, humble, gentle in the service of others, and to have an attitude of brotherly generosity towards them' (par. 7).

This will mean a sincere acknowledgement of our sins and failings as regards Christian unity—a matter I have already referred to above, and which the decree explicitly refers to in the context of the quotation just made.

4. Common prayer is an extremely vital ecumenical function.

'In certain special circumstances, such as in prayer services for unity and during ecumenical gatherings, it is allowable, indeed desirable, that Catholics should join in prayer with their separated brethren. Such prayers in common are certainly a very effective means of petitioning for the grace of unity, and they are a genuine expression of the ties which even now bind Catholics to their separated brethren' (par. 8).

PRAYER AND WORSHIP

5. Common prayer can even blossom out, in certain cases, into common worship. But, as the decree points out, 'such worship depends chiefly on two principles: it should signify the unity of the Church; it should provide a sharing in the means of grace. The fact that it should signify unity generally rules out common worship. Yet the gaining of a needed grace sometimes commends it' (par. 8). In this matter of common worship, the final decision is left to the local Bishop, unless the Bishops' Conference or the Holy See has determined otherwise. In this connection we are still waiting, and with some impatience, for directives of our Bishops' Conference. While local Bishops here and there have shown willingness to allow a certain participation in common worship, the Bishops' Conference has not yet seen fit to give a policy for the whole country. We are told they are awaiting directives from Rome. This merely goes to show that our Bishops have still a long way to go in carrying out the full implications of episcopal collegiality, and that their mentality is still the old one of not doing anything without Rome—a mentality which is harmful

to a great deal of things in the Church, ecumenism included. Our Bishops need a bit of hard pushing from the laity. Where are the laymen who are going to do this pushing, perseveringly and without fear of any possible unpleasant consequences? The recent timid 'reform' of the mixed marriage rite is an example of the sort of thing one can expect from Rome. Have our Bishops protested?

6. The practice of ecumenism also demands understanding, true understanding, of the doctrine of the other Churches. Hence theology should be taught in our seminaries along ecumenical lines. There was a time when theology gave the Protestant doctrines in a few lines under 'Errors'. It is to be hoped that this time is definitely at an end, everywhere. I know at least of one house of studies in this country where the study of the Church includes a considerable section on the doctrines of the non-Roman Churches—a study based on what the non-Roman theologians themselves say, not on what we say they say.

7. A further great contribution to the practice of ecumenism is the presentation of our own teaching in a way in which it can be understood and accepted by others. There must be no 'hammering' of specifically Roman Catholic doctrines. At the same time, there must be no soft-peddling either; this would get nobody anywhere.

8. Finally, there is common witness and common work, which shows forth our already existing unity, and does a great deal to pave the way towards full unity. In this matter all Christians in this country are not doing nearly enough. Where, for instance, is our common Christian witness on race relations? And where is our common work for the poor and the sick? Why cannot all church societies, of all denominations, band together into one organization for common work in Christian love? Is the showing of love an Anglican, Lutheran or Roman Catholic monopoly? 'See how they love one another' was said of the ancient Church. When will it be fully said of twentieth-century Christians? To take a specific example: in visiting hospitals, why do we visit only those of our own faith? This is neither ecumenism nor true Christian love. And let me say in passing: I hope it is clear by now that nurses in Catholic hospitals *must* (not merely *may*) call a non-Catholic minister to a non-Catholic patient who requests it—or even if he doesn't request it, if she sees that he needs this visit and that it will do him good.

Such then is the attitude of the Second Vatican Council towards the agonizing problem of Christian

unity. Such, therefore, it is to be hoped, will soon become the attitude of the Roman Catholic Church as a whole, and of each and every true Roman Catholic. Not that this is yet the case. Attitudes centuries old do not change in a few months. But the impetus has been given by the Council; and, as the great Lutheran theologian Oscar Cullman says: 'What has to be stressed (about the decree on Ecumenism) is that the will to achieve a renewal which inspires it from beginning to end is still more important than the actual text . . . it is not just a text, it is a *deed*.'

We can only conclude these reflections on the decree on Ecumenism by quoting the conclusion of the decree itself:

'This most sacred Synod urgently desires that the initiatives of the sons of the Catholic Church, joined with those of the separated brethren, go forward without obstructing the ways of divine Providence and without prejudging the future inspiration of the Holy Spirit. Further, this Synod declares its realization that the holy task of reconciling all Christians in the unity of the one and only Church of Christ transcends human energies and abilities. It therefore places its hope entirely in the prayer of Christ for the Church, in the love of the Father for us, and in the power of the Holy Spirit. 'And hope does not disappoint, because the charity of God is poured forth in our hearts by the Holy Spirit who has been given to us'" (Rom. 5:5). (par. 24). ●

The Black Sash

326, 323, 4 (68)
a. 301, 423 (68)

African Family Life

WE BELIEVE THAT the Churches are as distressed as we are about the way in which influx control laws are affecting the family life of Africans.

In the Advice Offices run by the Black Sash we continually meet heart-breaking cases that make a mockery of the value we place on the stability of marriage whether performed by Christian rites or tribal law and custom. Influx control legislation means that in many cases married couples are denied the basic right to live together. It has reached the stage where a young man should examine a girl's reference book before allowing

himself to fall in love with her. If she comes from a country area they will not be able to set up home in an urban area.

As will be seen from the cases described below a Minister of Religion can be placed in the dilemma, when celebrating the sacrament of marriage, of knowing that the vows taken, in many cases, cannot be fulfilled because the laws make it impossible for the couple to live together. In these cases the marriage ceremony becomes a meaningless ritual.

White South Africans are solely responsible for these laws. White South Africans are responsible for the evils which stem from this legislation. White South Africans alone have the power to change the law.

We ask the Christian Church in South Africa to take action to ensure that the laws of the Church are not violated by the laws of the country.

SECTION 10

The following is the crucial section, section 10, of the Natives (Urban Areas) Act of 1945, as amended:

- (1) No native shall remain for more than seventy-two hours in an urban area, or in a proclaimed area in respect of which an urban local authority exercises any of the power referred to in sub-section (1) of section twenty-three or in any area forming part of a proclaimed area and in respect of which an urban local authority exercises any of these powers, unless —
- (a) he has since birth, resided continuously in such area, or
 - (b) he has worked continuously in such area for one employer for a period of not less than ten years or has lawfully resided continuously in such area for a period of not less than fifteen years, and has thereafter continued to reside in such area and is not employed outside area and has not during either period or thereafter been sentenced to a fine exceeding fifty pounds or to imprisonment for a period exceeding six months, or
 - (c) such native is the wife, unmarried daughter or son under the age at which he would become liable for payment of general tax under the Native Taxation and Development Act, 1925 (Act No. 41 of 1925), of any native mentioned in paragraph (a) or (b) of this sub-section and ordinarily resides with that native; or

- (d) in the case of a native who is not a work-seeker as defined in section one of the Native Labour Regulation Act, 1911 (Act No. 15 of 1911), and is not required to be dealt with by a labour bureau as provided for in any regulations framed under paragraph (o) of sub-section (1) of section twenty-three of that Act, permission so to remain has been granted to him by an officer designated for the purpose by the urban local authority concerned or in the case of a native who is such a workseeker, permission has been granted to him by such labour bureau to take up employment in such area:

No country-born woman is now allowed to be in large urban areas for more than 72 hours — she cannot enter an urban area lawfully. Since the word 'lawfully' was included in Section 10(1)(c) an African who qualifies to have his wife living with him can only do so if his wife is an urban African and qualifies in her own right to be in the area.

All contract labourers, those in an urban area in terms of Section 10(1)(d) — can only live with their wives if the wives qualify to be in the area and can only obtain lodgers permits to live with another family.

Contract labourers may not rent a house themselves — most of them have to live in 'bachelor' hostels, compounds or on the private premises of their employers.

Here are two examples of the many cases which come to the Advice Office for help:

MRS. M was born in Lady Selborne — Pretoria and remained there until 1956. She then went to Hammanskraal where she lived until 1957. She returned to Pretoria for a year and came to Johannesburg — She took out her reference book there in 1962. She was married in April 1963 and they have two children born in Johannesburg. Her husband has been working here for eleven years. Mrs. M. has been endorsed out. She has been to Hammanskraal and has been refused entry there. She is going to Pretoria to see if she can stay there although she has no one in that area she can go to.

MRS. D was born in Natal. — She was married in 1965 in a Church and according to native law and custom, and the couple have one child. Her husband was born in Johannesburg, and has always lived here. He is the tenant of a house and his mother lives with him. His wife has been endorsed out. ●

Edward Higgins

On Reflection

FATHER DAVIS

A SIGN OF THE WIND of change now blowing through the Church is the widespread publicity and full coverage given by the Catholic press to the decision of the gifted English theologian, Father Charles Davis, to leave the priesthood and the Church. Some press comments have been emotional and quite silly while others have been sensible and restrained. Basically, the matter is one for Charles Davis and his conscience. On the other hand, there is the loss of a sensitive thinker as well as the very real scandal of his departure.

I must confess I found Father Davis' theological justification for his step patently unconvincing. However, his more 'sociological' reasons deserve the thoughtful attention of the whole Church. He stated: 'the Church in recent history has again and again compromised its mission to save its institutional existence or privilege. The glaring instance is the Church in Nazi Germany, but this does not stand alone. When in fact has the Church ever entered into conflict with established authority to bear witness, even at the cost of its institutional position? The Church [is] . . . more concerned with its own authority and prestige than with the Gospel message.'

In spite of the qualifications one is legitimately entitled to insist upon, whichever way one looks at these words, they certainly add up to a savage indictment. One can counter with the fundamental principle of choosing the lesser of two evils, of the necessity for prudence and all the rest but Davis' charges do make one uncomfortable especially in a South African context precisely because he has a point. I do not think his leaving the Church and discarding his priesthood will rectify matters and the manner of his going still seems to have been unfortunate. Nevertheless, in this dialogue-conscious age, all Catholics should ponder his accusations rather than dismiss them in pique.

In some quarters Father Davis' announcement caused panic but this is an immature reaction. Charles Davis is one man while Catholicism is a way of life which does not depend for its validity on any one man, no matter how talented. Whether Charles Davis comes

or goes, the Church remains. And whatever faults and shortcomings, he has encountered in the Church and so ably underlined, this Church, this community of believers is one that was divinely willed and that is what really counts. ●

PSYCHOLOGICAL CONCEPT

AS A RESULT OF A GOOD deal of research, psychologists have come up with some useful concepts which have gradually become absorbed into our more technical vocabulary. One such concept is the 'Self-fulfilling prophecy mechanism.' In spite of its sound, it is not mere jargon. In a South African context, this means that the whites, as the dominant group, give the non-whites, who are the dominated group, their identity images: the whites define what the non-whites should be; the whites specify the appropriate roles for the non-whites. The whites alone determine the identity images for the non-whites; in due course, the non-whites, as the subordinate group, tend to act out these identity images, to fulfil the decreed expectations of the whites. This, in turn, reinforces the original prejudice of the superordinate group which gave rise to the identity images in the first place. This phenomenon has little to do with colour and not much to do with culture; it is fundamentally a question of power.

Similar phenomena have occurred throughout the course of human history. Both the English and the Irish are white and western and yet during the long British hegemony in Ireland one sees this 'self-fulfilling prophecy mechanism' at work as a means of political control and social and economic subjugation. In order to survive, the Irish subjects usually did on the surface of course what their English masters expected of them. In our own country, the non-whites manifest a similar pattern; it is the normal response on the part of the dominated group.

An omnipresent ingredient of the English stereotype of the Irish was blarney, i.e. 'the art of soft deception.' The English expected it and they got it often with interest. On the whole, the Irish do not take kindly to silence and so they fell back on the arts of wit and

speech frequently at the expense of their English masters in the face of the rigorous system which oppressed them. And so the whole world came to expect a supple, if not devious, eloquence from the Irish and, mostly, the latter tried to oblige. In their own inimitable way, the Irish were doing what all minority groups, black or white, Jewish or Christian, have to do, viz. learning to accommodate, learning to go along with, possibly get along with, the 'self-fulfilling prophecy' if they are to survive.

The last point is quite vital if we are to understand any subordinate group. Their technique of accommodation and the 'self-fulfilling prophecy mechanism' affect both the subordinate and the dominant group. Because the dominated group are quiet and seemingly docile does not mean that they are happy, contented and unresentful. But perhaps it is too much to expect the South African electorate to view things this way. After all, what can history or psychology or sociology teach people who are trying to cope with their problems by means of inflexible social myths and rigid cultural reflexes? ●

SINCERITY

LAST YEAR A LETTER TO THE SOUTHERN CROSS urged Catholics of different political persuasions to respect each other's sincerity. However, in another letter, a correspondent wisely observed that sincerity could never serve as the criterion of truth. Politicians, of course, delight in blowing the trumpet about sincerity; it always sounds good, noble and charitable. Sincerity frequently acts as a protective device so that many people believe that where there is sincerity, there is no room for argument. Unlike charity which is said to cover a multitude of sins, in the eyes of some people, sincerity seems to excuse—if not justify,—a multitude of sins. Consequently, I, for one, would be pleased to see another invocation added to the litany of the saints, viz. 'From too much sincerity deliver us, O Lord.'

Sincerity is simply the quality of being honest, truthful and genuine within oneself, i.e. from the subjective point of view. The sincere person is one who means well but, of course, to mean well and to do well are two different things. So, you could be a sincere fool or an insincere genius.

In much controversy, what is so frequently overlooked is that a person can be quite sincere within himself and still be quite mistaken about his facts; he may be sincere and quite ignorant about the relevant facts; he may be sincere and disastrously wrong in his actual judgments. The reveller may sincerely believe that he can drive his car with complete competence in

spite of an advanced state of intoxication. His sincerity makes no difference to the objective untruth of his belief. In spite of his undoubted sincerity, he is a potential menace to other road-users.

On the whole, we white South Africans show a slavish respect for sincerity while we lack, or prefer not to cultivate, the ability to question and penetrate the convenient facade of sincerity. For instance, one reads that Mr. Gary Player is a most sincere man, sincere about his golf, sincere about his political convictions and sincere about his religious beliefs. But does this sincerity make South Africa's No. 1 golfer an eminent theologian or a brilliant political scientist? I hardly think so.

The sincerity which inspires so much of our apartheid legislation cannot unmake the folly and meanness of much of that legislation. For example, the race classification laws are masterpieces of sincerity even though they more or less crucify some unfortunate people and often ruin their lives and careers. We whites are victims of a terrible, almost frightening, sincerity. Originally, we were sincere about baasskap; later on we were sincere about apartheid; now we are sincere about separate development. Undeniably, our sincerity is quite progressive. ●

Letters

BELL, BOOK AND CANDLE?

Sir,—In his article in your Feb/Mar. issue Mr. Woods puts a question to the clergy which deserves an answer. I think his question is fairly paraphrased as 'How can the clergy be justified in not condemning racial discrimination, and support of the two parties which publicly advocate it, even under pain of ecclesiastical censure?'

I have great sympathy for the general feeling of Mr. Woods' letter; I think it contains criticisms of the (white) Catholic body, and the clergy, in this country that are unanswerable. But I also feel that his question rather suffers from the sin of 'indiscrimination'; that it contains a number of questions which need to be sorted out and given priority, before we can begin to formulate an effective line of Christian action.

Mr. Woods seriously considers ecclesiastical censures against supporters of the two main parties,

presumably on the model of censures levelled hitherto against the Communist party and its supporters. Even granting his premises about the sinfulness of racial discrimination (which I do with a number of qualifications), I am sure a policy of ecclesiastical rigour would be wrong and disastrous and itself sinful. I would like to quote St. Augustine in evidence for my case. He is writing about, and against, the Donatists, a puritan sect of North Africa who had broken away from the Catholic Church because of grave sin (so they alleged) in high ecclesiastical places. Augustine is making the point that nothing whatsoever can justify 'the sacrilege of schism, which far outdistances all other crimes'; and he says that even the proper authority in the Church has to refrain from excommunicating evildoers where this might involve schism: 'If one of the brethren, a Christian within the Church, is convicted of such wrongdoing as deserves excommunication, let this be done where there is no danger of schism, provided it is done with charity, for the man's correction, not his destruction. This can be done without ruining peace and unity, when the congregation of the Church as a whole has no part in the sin that is being punished by excommunication. But when the disease has caught hold of very many, nothing remains for the good to do except to grieve and groan. In fact if an epidemic of sin has invaded the multitude of the faithful, what is needed, all that can help, is the severe mercy of God's discipline (his implication is that ecclesiastical discipline is now powerless); for counsels of separation are vain, pernicious, sacrilegious' (*Contra Epistolam Parmeniani*, III, 13, 14).

Isn't that a very accurate statement of the situation in this country? I have only been in the country nine months, and so perhaps it is a little impertinent of me to be arguing with Mr. Woods, but from my limited observations, it is not government policy or the political parties that are the basic evil of South African society; they are only symptoms. As I see it, the basic evils are two: ingrained racial prejudice which is 'an epidemic of sin that has invaded the multitude of the (white) faithful'; and a social conscience in the privileged (white) section of the community which is outstanding for its effective repression, which indeed, if anything, lags behind the social conscience of the government.

Seen in the light, ecclesiastical engagement in the obvious political sphere of government and party policies, even if it is not disastrous by provoking disunity and near schism in the Church (as it well might be), would leave the roots of the evil largely untouched. How could these best be met by pastoral exhortation in the pulpit and the confessional, and other pastoral

activity? As for the almost universal racial prejudice, in virtue of its irrational nature, it cannot be argued with directly; perhaps all the clergy could do, besides liberating themselves from this prejudice, is warn the white faithful of 'the severe mercy of God's discipline' that is likely to overtake their blindness of heart or rather our blindness of heart.

The most promising object for attack, it seems to me is social injustice and economic exploitation. Here a sustained campaign, not of generalised invective against apartheid, but of pointing out and protesting against particular wrongs known to the clergy, and on the very doorsteps, perhaps in the very houses of the faithful, could, one hopes, be effective. And in this sphere I would ask Mr. Woods if the press could not do more than it does. If the English language press could ease off for a little on just wringing its hands over government policy, and give us far more feature articles, well documented, on cases of black and coloured men working, as he himself says, for pathetic wages; of the indifference of local authorities to the interests of non-white inhabitants; and so on and so forth; then things might begin to stir in the residual Christian consciences of white South Africans. I am not familiar with Mr. Woods' own paper, but here in the Cape, it is only occasional letters to the papers, not feature articles, that carry the informed social protest that is so necessary. ●

EDMUND HILL, O.P., *Stellenbosch*.

THOMAS MORE

Sir,—'Do you consider yourself wiser and more conscientious than all the bishops and nobles in the kingdom?'

This is the question that every 'rebel' must ultimately answer, at least to himself. This is the question as it was put to Thomas More, at his trial, by his successor, the Lord Chancellor Audley.

The answer of 'the man for all seasons' is, I think, illuminating for our times. He said: 'My lord, I have for every bishop of yours, above one hundred; and for one Council or Parliament of yours (God knoweth what manner of one) I have all the Councils made these thousand years. And for this one kingdom, I have all other Christian realms.'

Here the Duke of Norfolk intervened: 'We now plainly perceive that you are maliciously bent'. 'No', replied More, 'very and pure necessity for the discharge of my conscience, enforceth me to speak so much'. Earlier he had said: 'This indictment is grounded upon an Act of Parliament directly repugnant to the laws

of God and His holy Church . . . It is therefore in law amongst Christian men insufficient to charge any Christian man”.

It is (or ought to be) a commonplace, not only of history but also of theology, that an individual bishop or a whole national hierarchy can be wrong, while a layman is right. Unfortunately, it is only in the light of history that we can be certain who was right and who wrong; at the time, the situation is usually confused.

There can be no doubt that no. 35 of the Constitution ‘De Ecclesia’ (the Prophetic Office of the Laity) implies the duty of the laity to oppose, on occasion, the actions of the clergy, as Thomas More did. More, in fact, was not even prepared to depend upon his fellow martyr John Fisher, the Bishop of Rochester. He said: ‘It does not make much difference to him, even if he saw the Bishop of Rochester himself swear the oath. Although he reckons that no one in this realm is meet to be compared with the bishop in wisdom, learning, and long approved virtue, he (More) was clearly not led by him, for he refused the oath before it was offered to the bishop. And also the bishop was content to have sworn in a different manner to what More was minded to do. He never means to pin his soul at another man’s back, for he knows not where he may hap to carry it. There is no man living of whom he can be sure while he is alive’.

Nevertheless, we do not see the whole picture unless we remember:

1. that both men, and particularly More, did everything possible to avoid a confrontation with the King, and to evade refusing to take the Oath of Supremacy;
2. that both were particularly careful to avoid condemning those who took the oath. St. John Fisher wrote to Cromwell: ‘Not that I condemn any other men’s conscience. Their conscience may save them, and mine must save me’.

However hard I try, I find it difficult to imagine Bishop Fisher as a ‘petulant prelate’ snatching away posters. But I find it equally difficult to picture Thomas More, ‘the noblest of all the English’ and one of the glories of the Christian laity, parading with a poster in defiance of his bishop.

I feel that both men would have considered the Christmas Eve incident at Johannesburg Cathedral as unnecessary, undignified and unworthy of Christians and of the occasion. They had different ideas about the methods of protests and counter-protests. Is it

possible that all of us, clergy and laity, may learn from them? ●

MGR. FRANCIS WARD, *Pretoria.*

PROSPERITY AND JUSTICE

Sir,—I am deeply depressed to read in your so-called progressive paper the kind of mumbo-jumbo dished out by Mr. W. G. Davies.

It is obvious to the most unsophisticated observer that the Western nations are the most justly governed and the most prosperous nations, and it is therefore likely that there is a connection between the two. If other nations wish to become equally prosperous and just, they had better follow their example, be they Asian, South American or African. (Japan is one example of successful adaptation). I am of course not talking of the many nations, South Africa amongst them, where a minority group prospers at the expense of the masses.

This will require a psychological change in the peoples concerned before they will be able to aspire to the Westminster constitution and the London stock exchange and no country in Africa is in a more favourable position to do this than South Africa. There was no sane reason why compulsory education when it was introduced in South Africa, was not introduced for all its peoples, but it is not yet too late to undo a basic mistake, assuming we aim for peaceful coexistence in this country of its various races.

In other words the psychological change necessary in the southern tip of Africa is to westernise and civilise its white settlers who have cut themselves off from the ideals of their forefathers. ●

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challenge



POEMS

I

Show these trappings to the rabble
It will stand and duly stare,
Give you honour and create your fame
And build the grand hypocrisy
That is your life and name.

Show these trappings to the rabble,
Not to me, I see you bare.
Yet I love you and will play the game
And live the grand hypocrisy
That is our life and shame.

II

O Woman
Of the mouths of peace,
When will the double ripeness
Of your blood stand firm
When will the double ripeness
Of your blood stand firm
Full as the swollen moon,
Round, as the bursting sun,
And give to heedless, heady men,
Drinking at the earth's red mouth
The daring deed, the laughing ease
To crush the sullen mountain
And to drown the sullen seas?

III

Are you a hypocrite too?
I feared 'twas only I
And vowed to hide my face
And wished that I would die.
Are you a hypocrite too—
So we can talk together,
A brace of honest liars—
Two birds of a feather?
Do all the rest wear masks?
Have all their lives this savour?
Dissimulate their thoughts;
Double-cross their neighbour?

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Ut omnes unum sint

Shalom

IN RECENT ISSUES of the SOUTHERN CROSS (11th January and 7th June) reference has been made to liturgical experiments being conducted in Northern Europe, especially Belgium and the Netherlands. These experiments have caused both official anxiety and theological speculation. They can, however, only be understood in the light of the prevailing atmosphere of present-day Christianity in Europe, and more especially within the goals set out by the Christians involved. Without discussing the problems of sacramental theology being raised, it may be well to look at one of the groups of committed Christians in Europe, examine its aims and so view the place the agape meals (or so-called 'Last Supper masses') play in its life.

'Sjaloom' is the Dutch equivalent of the Hebrew word for peace. 'Shalom' is its English equivalent. The Sjaloom (Shalom) group is an experimental, ecumenical group attempting to be a living and working anticipation of the unity of all Christians and of the establishment of Shalom upon the earth. This group came into existence in the autumn of 1963 in the Netherlands and Belgium. The Christians who came together to form the Sjaloom group had first encountered each other in a variety of mutual experiences; in international volunteer workcamps, in the peace movement, in liturgical experiments, in social and political action, in ecumenical and theological study, and in community work. They came from different backgrounds, from diverse Christian churches and communities. Over the boundaries of their individual churches they recognized in each other a common faith and purpose.

Ecumenical is understood as not only the unity of Christians but also as the unity of all men in the world, as the breaking down of the barriers which separate man from his fellow man. Shalom is understood in the most profound sense of the Hebrew word—peace, well-being, healing, wholeness, the reconciliation of God with man, of man with his fellow man, of man with himself. In Jesus Christ, God has given man the promise that his Shalom shall be established on earth. The Holy Spirit is at work in the world, among people everywhere establishing God's Shalom. The purpose of

the group is to participate in this work, to live in faithful anticipation of the fulfilment of Shalom on earth.

The Group itself is loosely organized. There is the working or core group, a wider circle of about 500 participants, and an even wider circle of contacts. The core group consists of about 30 people (and includes both clergy and laity) who belong to different churches: Roman Catholic and various Protestant denominations. The members participate in the life of their local churches and pursue their various callings: housewife, doctor, physicist, social worker etc. In their free time they participate in the life and work of the group. There are two full time workers and all the members contribute in their free time to the planning and carrying out of the work including both business and administration. A number of the core group live in houses close by each other and in this centre much of the planning, business and administration takes place, as well as meetings, discussions, study and agape feasts.

An important aspect of the group's work is its publications. These include a monthly paper with a circulation of 5000. This journal is a media for discussion about the church and ecumenical relations, about the church for the world, about race relations, and about war and peace, the actions of the United Nations, cybernation, the East-West dialogue, etc. Other publications are occasional position papers which result from study and discussion groups on theological and social issues; a political action work study book; and an Ecumenical Study Series published in co-operation with a board of theologians and clergy. There are about 3000 participants in this study course, either individually or in study groups, and contact is maintained with these people not only through the study series but personally through day conferences or meetings during the year.

The members of the Sjaloom group are engaged in a great deal of work with study and discussion groups, in political and social action, in conferences and work groups. Some of this work is initiated by the group itself, some of it is done in co-operation with other

movements. The group has contacts and relationships with many other groups and movements and cooperates and participates with them in study and action: peace movements, The Fellowship of Reconciliation, lay training centres, local churches, student groups, workcamps, study and discussion groups, the World Council of Churches, Roman Catholic Church Council, social action groups etc. Personal contact and small group work is basic to the purpose of Sjaloom.

AGAPE FEASTS

The organisational structure of the Sjaloom group is thus loose and flexible—ad hoc in its nature. The core group comes together monthly at the Sjaloom centre for theological study and reflection, for planning and business, and to distribute the work among the members. Each individual shares in the work according to his gifts and time, doing together the necessary administration, publication of the journal, study, leading programmes and discussion groups etc.

Throughout all of this there is the attempt to be the 'church inside-out' emphasizing the servant nature of the church rather than cult and ritual, emphasizing 'being the church in the world' rather than the institution, working faithfully in the world in the hopeful anticipation of the fulfilment of Shalom on earth. There is the belief that the mission of the church is to participate in the establishment of the Shalom with as great as possible pluriformity in accordance with the gifts of each individual.

Essential to the life and work of the group are the ecumenical agape feasts. (The agape or love feast in the early Church was a common meal called the Lord's supper in 1 Corinthians 11; 20, eaten as a token of love and brotherhood. It had in the early churches partly social but no sacramental character. In apostolic times it preceded the Eucharist but soon afterwards became separated from it). These agape celebrations of the Lord's supper cannot be seen in isolation. They can only be understood in the context of the work of establishing Shalom, as a token of and equipment for this task.

Each Friday evening about 20 to 30 people gather at the Sjaloom centre. They come from many places. They are from the core group, from study and action groups, Sjaloom participants and contacts, including the churchless and those from mixed religious marriages.

The order of the evening is flexible and responsive to the particular group. There is first informal conversation over coffee, an exchange of ideas and concerns. Meanwhile some are busy with cooking and arranging the table. When all is ready the guests gather around

the table, one of the group presides over the table and sets the theme for the meal. The theme must be relevant to the concerns of the individuals who have come together or taken from the events of the world which are of current concern. Hereby reminding the group of its relationship to these events. Thus the theme may be concerned with the current happenings in the world—in Vietnam, in Rhodesia, or in the freedom movement in America or it may be concerned with conscientious objection to military service about which one of the group is trying to make a decision.

REGULAR MEAL

The leading of the agape meal is shared by the whole group. The order is not fixed but usually contains the following elements: there is singing led by someone at the table, often from a new ecumenical songbook. Others read from the Bible and from the newspaper or an article about the theme of the evening. These two, Bible and newspaper, are always read in connection with each other. And there is, of course, eating and drinking and table conversation with each other. It is a regular meal. There is a sort of dialogue sermon: someone speaks briefly about the evening's subject e.g. a conscientious objector or a civil rights worker about the freedom movement, or a doctor who is especially concerned about the problems of the aged, or another with a special concern and contribution to make. There is time for questions and discussion. The concerns of the group are gathered and someone prays or several people offer prayers.

In between there is more singing. There is a confession of faith, perhaps through reading together the Christological hymn in Paul's letter to the Phillipians, Chapter 2. During the course of the meal the bread is broken and given to each other; the wine is poured. Someone at the table reads or paraphrases from the Bible: the feeding of the five thousand, the story of the risen Christ and the disciples on the way to Emmaus, how Jesus 'was known to them in the breaking of the bread' or from I Corinthians 10: 'The bread which we break, is it not a participation in the body of Christ? Because there is one bread, we who are many are one body, for we all partake of the one bread'. All present at the table partake in the ministry of service to each other, in the breaking and giving of the bread. The wine is poured and drunk to the fulfilment of Shalom on all the earth. There is an offering given in connection with the theme for the civil rights workers in Mississippi, for the underdeveloped countries, for community work. After the meal conversation and discussion continues often resulting in concrete plans or actions for the Shalom work. There

is, of course, mutual strengthening and encouragement for the Shalom task. The bread gives strength along the way.

In the meal the presence of Christ is experienced. The content of this real presence (not the traditional sense of the objective presence of Christ in the eucharist) was explained recently by a priest connected to the group when he said: 'The real presence for us is not a question that one can take in isolation. The real presence for us is in the meal itself, in its whole context, with all the friends who have united themselves to the bread, the world, at the commemoration of the Lord. It is a real presence, but not in the physical sense'.

Sjaloom has arrived at a great truth which we all need to relearn. Wanting to live for-the-world, wanting to serve mankind as the servant Christ thereby giving

meaning to the whole concept of service, they have discovered that this action must be rooted in and flow out of a source. This source is the eucharist, the single source that will give unity to their action.

In conclusion then, much of the vision of the group is summed up by the same priest I have just quoted when he said: 'our goal is to have an anticipated ecumenism. We want to show that, in the ecumenical area, in the sphere of the approaches between the Church for unity, and above all in the approaches between the Church in the world, it is necessary to do something in the form of direct action. We want to show that, when one engages oneself as a group in this activity, then one opens out new possibilities. The union will come by doing today what has to be tomorrow. This is a question of witness, hope and trust'. ●

Ian Thompson reviews

An Existential Approach to Theology

'AN EXISTENTIAL APPROACH TO THEOLOGY' by G. M. A. Jansen, O.P., is in many ways a challenging invitation to all Christians to rethink their relationship to Christ and the Church. I am sure that most Catholics will find this exposition of the Christian Faith intellectually disconcerting; but, as such, it is something everyone should try to read for himself, for it will undoubtedly provoke in all who do so a deeper concern to grapple with the Christ of God in the reality of their own situation. In this sense, even though the book may not be wholly successful or adequate, it is pertinent. The voice of Fr. Jansen ought to be heard everywhere in the Catholic Church in South Africa today, even if only that the issues he discusses so suggestively may be taken up and thrashed out to a satisfactory conclusion in a continuing dialogue and critical discussion.

In outward form Fr. Jansen's exposition follows the standard pattern of theological treatises, dealing in turn with the doctrine of God, the doctrine of man, the mystery of the Incarnation, Christian love, sin and the three stages of Mystical Union with God. A final chapter deals with some matters relating to contemporary life in the Church.

However, instead of dealing with our knowledge of

God, Fr. Jansen discusses 'Our Encounter with God', in terms of the following categories; 'subject', 'inter-subjective encounter', 'co-existence', 'self-transcendence through the indwelling of others', 'human existence as a being in the world'. Faith is defined as that kind of trust which grows out of our standing in inter-subjective dependence with others; and as such, it is defined as more basic than knowledge, the pre-condition of all knowledge. Supernatural faith is brought about by the initiative of God in creating an analogous inter-subjective encounter with man.

In terms of the same apparatus of categories, Fr. Jansen seeks to distinguish between the Natural and the Supernatural as including and pre-supposing one another. He attempts to characterise the differences between Scholastic and Existential Theology, in a manner not altogether successful.

'Our existence is in reality a co-existence, we always exist with and through our fellowmen'* is the keynote of the doctrine of man. With this in mind Fr. Jansen attacks the dualism between soul and body which infects so much of our thinking about man and society, preventing us from a full understanding of what it means to be human.

The test of Fr. Jansen's 'existential' theology is the

exposition of Christology. I am not convinced that he has succeeded here. His treatment of the Hypostatic Union seems to involve the use of mixed modes, and the doctrine of the Trinity seems to be too subjectivistic. His sections on Christ as Man, and Jesus the Saviour are very fine and illuminating. However, the suggestive section on Christ in His Church seems to be too superficial to be really helpful.

* Page 1.

What Fr. Jansen has to say about the doctrine of Christian Charity seems very helpful, but one-sided. The full social dimensions of charity are ignored and on the whole his treatment seems to be 'ethical' rather than 'ontological'. The treatment of Sin and Judgement is tame and lacks a full appreciation of the profound implications of the doctrine of Original Sin for the whole Doctrine of Man. On the whole Fr. Jansen doesn't seem to take evil very seriously, especially in its social and political ramifications.

The Epilogue appears to be tacked on at the end, and I would like to have seen certain other sections of the book re-written in the light of what Fr. Jansen says about Ecumenism and our corporate guilt for the sins of division.

There is an engaging honesty about Fr. Jansen's introduction to his book:

'I still feel that I am standing with a foot in each of two different countries. You cannot cast off the old theological training on which you have built in the past all at once, while at the same time you are not fully acquainted with the new theology . . . since I was writing for students who so desperately wanted to hear more about it (the new theology); I felt that I was closer to them than to the experts. By the very fact that I am jumping about from one foot to the other, I am still on their side and not with the experts. I still belong to the listeners, not to the teachers'.⁽¹⁾

This is all very well, but this is where the difficulties start, for it is by no means clear that this book was written for the students of the theology course, but seems rather to be directed to a wider reading public. If it is directed at the former then the treatment of traditional philosophy and theology must seem oversimplified and misleading, and the treatment of existential phenomenology eclectic. If it is directed at the Catholic public in general then the novel interpretations of dogma seem to call for more cautious exposition and the anomaly of consecrating Merleau-Ponty and Heidegger to this use requires explanation (since they are widely used by atheists as well). If it is directed at the general public (including Jews and Protestants and Atheists) then the specifically Catholic

conclusions which are deduced from so-called existential phenomenology require more rigorous justification.

There is a rhetorical tone to this whole work which obscures much which is of value in it. Is this really an 'Existential Approach to Theology'? I rather doubt it. It is one thing to talk the language of existentialism, it is another to talk about talking the language of existentialism. Fr. Jansen seems to me to be doing the latter.

I think his purpose would have been better served by calling his book: 'An introduction to the existential approach to theology'. He is attempting to explain the jargon of the new theology rather than writing as an existentialist himself. This perhaps explains his rather stilted style and too self-conscious use of words like 'inter-subjective', 'encounter', 'existential', 'dialogue' etc.

There are difficulties in trying to write a popular theology which Fr. Jansen overlooks. He reminds me sometimes of G. E. Moore talking about the Philosophy of Common Sense, as if it were self-evident that there is such a thing. Everything which suits his book is 'phenomenological' or 'existentialist':—

'it is the perennial philosophy of everyman: Jesus taught us the inter-subjective relationship'⁽²⁾

'Jewish thinking is a typical phenomenological way of thinking'⁽³⁾

'In these words of Saint Thomas we may almost hear Merleau-Ponty speaking'⁽⁴⁾

'the great mystics are really the first existentialists of the Church'⁽⁵⁾

and so on. This vague use of technical terms can be misleading and, in any case, used like this they say so much that they effectively say nothing.

SCHOLASTICISM

Fr. Jansen refers repeatedly to the 'traditional philosophers' or 'the Scholastics' and blandly defines their position as 'always looking for what is universal, seemingly unchanging, in the phenomena'⁽⁶⁾ or 'abstract' and 'objective'⁽⁷⁾. Which scholastics is he talking about? He never specifies any particular scholastic, and it is by no means evident that there is unanimity amongst the diverse group of theologians from Anselm to Ockham covered by that term. These generalisations are even more suspicious when one considers that 'traditional philosophers' include besides Augustine or Plato an even more mixed bunch. There are times when St. Thomas is included amongst those who 'objectify' and 'abstract', other times when he is classed as a mystic and 'existentialist'⁽⁸⁾. (These remarks are made quite apart from a consideration of the justice of the charac-

terisation of 'scholasticism' and 'traditional philosophy' which he gives).

Throughout the book there is a queer admixture of terminology from both 'traditional theology' and 'modern theology'. The terms used pre-suppose a totally different conceptual frame of reference in each case and beg for more precise definition. For example: 'This consciousness of the inter-subjective relationship we have with God is faith' ⁽⁹⁾, but later, 'My religious experience is that the faith is given to me; it is an inner light by which I am able to establish a relationship with Christ' ⁽¹⁰⁾. Anything more incongruous with Merleau-Ponty's conception of consciousness than an 'inner light' it would be hard to find. Further when talking about Christ as man ⁽¹¹⁾ Fr. Jansen speaks with moving eloquence in a style which could be called existential, but when talking about the three stages of mystical union with God ⁽¹²⁾ he not only adopts the traditional apparatus of categories but lapses into the language of 'dogmatic theology' itself. When discussing 'Our Sacramental Life' Fr. Jansen gives a 'phenomenological' analysis of the nature and functioning of the sacraments, and then proceeds to certain deductions about the nature of the visible Church and its authority ⁽¹³⁾. These inferences are plausible enough to a committed Catholic, but are by no means demonstrative arguments to a non-Catholic. The same remarks apply mutatis mutandis to the argument for the existence of God ⁽¹⁴⁾ and the argument from experience to prove the existence of a 'forgotten dimension' to human life ⁽¹⁵⁾. Fr. Jansen's book would be vastly improved if he was more aware of the demands of an apologetic theology, namely, to provide a reasonable justification of the conclusions we draw from revelatory events.

The omission of any reference to Our Lady in connection with the Church at this point is very curious in view of the prominence given in de Lubac, Hugo Rahner and others to the traditional typological analyses of her relation to her Son and the relationship between the Church and her sons. In fact I found only one oblique reference to Our Lady in the whole book. Surely Mariology is relevant to any consideration of Christology or Ecclesiology? Then why is there this curious omission?

TENDENTIOUS BUT PROVOCATIVE

Considering the use Fr. Jansen makes of Merleau-Ponty, and his strictures against 'traditional theology' one cannot but say that this account is highly tendentious. It is also provocative for this reason. However, we should remember Nietzsche's warning, 'Beware of the dreadful simplifiers'. It is highly debatable whether

Existentialism can simply be equated with Phenomenology. They are independent traditions which meet in some cases. Further, quotations from Heidegger require careful qualification in the light of his later work where he explicitly repudiates existentialism as 'subjectivistic'.

Fr. Jansen characterises 'traditional philosophy' as 'essentialistic'. Now this seems to me a false characterisation of the ontology of Aristotle/Thomas or Plato/Augustine. Where 'essence' and 'existence' are distinguished as correlative and dependent modes of 'being' we can hardly apply to such ontologies the strictures Kierkegaard applied to Hegel's 'essentialist philosophy' which provoked Sartre to say that 'existence is prior to essence'. Fr. Jansen seems to be dealing with a false antithesis between 'existentialism' and 'traditional philosophy' whereas we have in reality at least three traditions: Traditional Ontology, European rationalist essentialism and Existentialism. One could hardly bracket St. Thomas with Descartes and Hegel, as Fr. Jansen implicitly seems to do. Furthermore, existentialism operates with its own apparatus of conceptual abstractions: 'existential', 'essential', 'subject', 'phenomenon', 'co-existence', 'encounter' etc.* Again it is simply tendentious to argue that these are concrete and dynamic and that the abstractions of Aristotle are 'static' and 'essentialist'.

It would only be plausible to argue that existentialism is the really real philosophy of human existence if Fr. Jansen had satisfactorily disposed of the criticisms of logical positivists that existentialism is a language of emotionally charged words used for the sake of a particular kind of rhetorical effect and of Marxists, that it represents a degenerate form of bourgeois idealism.

From a Christian standpoint the philosophies of Merleau-Ponty and Heidegger with their explicit criticism of theism, demand a much more thoroughgoing criticism before they can be adopted on the basis of a new theology.

Crucial to phenomenology is a distinction between intention (meaning purpose) and intentionality (that projective relationship in which man stands to things as a being-in-the-world). Fr. Jansen seems to confuse these things, and apart from giving an inadequate explanation of them, seems to use them interchangeably. Related to this is his misleadingly simple account of 'dialectic causality' as distinguished from 'cosmological causality' ⁽¹⁶⁾.

There seems to me a grave danger in the 'new theo-

*Fr. Jansen uses the term 'inter-subjective' ad nauseam throughout the book and it is by no means obvious that its meaning is as transparent as he implies.

logy' of falling into the kind of eclecticism which has brought Catholic theology into disrepute on many occasions in the past. It is all very well to ride 'piggy-back' in the modern philosophical steeplechase, but the Christian needs to be very sure of his mount before he ventures to stake the Faith on it.

ACCEPTANCE NECESSARY?

Fr. Jansen claims that the teaching of Jesus and the Bible reflects an existential phenomenology such as he discusses⁽¹⁷⁾. There is grave danger that the plausibility of the Faith is made to turn on the acceptability of this philosophy. He has not demonstrated to my satisfaction that acceptance of it is the *conditio sine qua non* for the understanding of the Christian Faith that he suggests it is. I'm not even convinced that Fr. Jansen needs this philosophy to make the points which he does so admirably in this book.

I wonder if existential philosophy succeeds in escaping from the Cartesian magic circle obsessive pre-occupation with the self-conscious ego or subject and his mental contents?

There is an artificiality about the terms 'subjective' and 'inter-subjective' suggestive of 'the disease of Philosophers' as Nietzsche called it, namely 'the artificial generation of antitheses' like subject/object, essence/existence, static/dynamic, concrete/abstract etc. The subject is suggestive of the self-conscious, ratiocinating, willing, meaning-projecting individual, and Fr. Jansen draws an interesting conclusion from this: 'The inter-subjective relationship between husband and wife, as a comparison to the relationship between God and the Christian is specially well chosen because it is a relationship that starts later in life . . . and depends more on the free will of man⁽¹⁸⁾. How do we relate this to the incident where Christ's disciples, with adult impatience rebuked the children that clustered around Him clamouring for attention, and Christ retorted: 'Of such is the Kingdom of God'⁽¹⁹⁾.

My contention is that Fr. Jansen and others have taken over from Heidegger etc. an ontology in which the primacy is given to will. (Fr. Jansen constantly speaks of 'wilful self-projection' into the world and human life as essentially a 'meaning-giving' activity'. How this is to be squared with St. Thomas's insistence on the priority of intellect over will in the essence of man's being, and human knowledge as the adequation of intellect with thing (specifically as creature with an inherent intelligibility of its own), is not at all clear.

The traditional term in Christian theology is 'person' not 'subject' and there is a world of difference between the two. Paul Tillich discusses very illuminatingly the concept of 'person' and shows it implies an additional

dimension which the rationalistic two-dimensional 'subject' of consciousness excludes, namely the dimension of the demonic or the holy, the 'sacral centre of personality'⁽²⁰⁾.

Further, there is an interesting suggestion implicit in the term 'inter-subjective' which Fr. Jansen illustrates in his treatment of the Trinity and of Christian charity. The relationship between Father and Son is strictly vis-a-vis and there is a loss in awareness of the Third Person of the Trinity as a person. Likewise. Donne's lovers with entwined eyes,

'Our eye-beames twisted, and did thred
Our eyes, upon a double string'⁽²¹⁾

seem to illustrate Fr. Jansen's conception of the 'inter-subjective' relationship between man and God, and man and fellow-man. Each is represented by a dyadic relation of the two subjects vis-a-vis. The traditional Star of David illustrates the relationship of Father-Son-Holy Spirit—God, man, fellowman—as a triadic relationship. It is not surprising that there is a rather comfy parlour atmosphere to Fr. Jansen's account of charity and his book has little to say about Christian social ethics.

PHILOSOPHICAL ANTHROPOLOGY?

At this stage the question arises whether *An Existential Approach to Theology* is not a philosophical anthropology rather than theology strictly speaking. So much stress is laid on the 'meaning-giving activities' of man and his 'being-in-the-world' as a 'continual self-projection' that it becomes difficult to avoid a sort of humanist deism and adoptionist Christology. Behind the experiments of Heidegger lie Bultmann's probing investigations into the problems of 'de-mythologising Scripture'. Implicitly Fr. Jansen seems to be recommending a similar programme, without acknowledging the difficulties involved.

In his attempt to rationalise everything in terms of existentialist categories of thought Fr. Jansen, perhaps against his will, has seemingly succeeded in domesticating God. I wonder whether the paradoxes of Christianity do not explode these categories and demand a recognition on our part of the relativity and finitude, the rents and gaps, in the fabric of our theologies?

Much of this may seem very harsh, but it does not vitiate what I said at the beginning. There is much in this book to be moved by and much that is extraordinarily helpful. For example, I found Fr. Jansen's discussion of the humanity of Christ very illuminating. His explanation of how, in our co-existence with one another, by 'indwelling' with one another, we are enhanced in our individual power and so enabled to

transcend our natural powers, is very helpful. It also helps to clarify the relationship between the natural and the supernatural, and is, perhaps, most illuminating as an analogy for the working of grace.

In conclusion, let me say, the Epilogue is very fine. Fr. Jansen's discussion of the nature of the Church, the impact of Vatican II, the guilt of all Christians for the scandal of division and his discussions of ecumenism has a power all of its own. We witness here Fr. Jansen writing more freely, with a style and bravura of his own, shorn of the clichés of his so-called existential theology. I have no doubt that we have here to deal with a theologian who does not necessarily need the

apparatus of categories and artificial abstractions of existential phenomenology. ●

- (1) Introduction, page ix.
- (2) Page 9
- (3) Page 47
- (4) Page 94
- (5) Page 91
- (6) Page 17
- (7) Page 91
- (8) Page 91
- (9) Page 12
- (10) Page 36
- (11) Page 45 ff.
- (12) Page 99 ff.
- (13) Page 81
- (14) Page 5 ff.
- (15) Page 29 ff.
- (16) Page 21 ff.
- (17) See pages 9 and 47
- (18) Page 90
- (19) St. Matthew 19, 13-15
- (20) Tillich: *The Protestant Era*, Chapter 8.
- (21) Donne: *The Extasie*, Stanza 2.

Edward Higgins

On Reflection

EVEN THE MOST ARDENT liberal must admit that political trends in many of the new black African states are anything but reassuring. On the other hand, conservatives find all their fears justified. Most white South Africans probably ascribe the northern political turmoil to one fact power has been given to black men who are incapable of using it properly. This, of course, is a mighty over-simplification but it does make the white supremacist feel good.

Many of the new African governments are extremely authoritarian and dictatorial and they aren't even subtle about it. Their countries have only recently emerged from colonial rule and colonialism was, *inter alia*, a form of paternalism. Colonialism in Africa does not seem by and large to have constituted an efficient preparation for political freedom and self-rule. In addition, historical trends and socio-economic patterns have combined to complicate the situation.

Perhaps a brief historical excursion might serve to temper the hypercriticism which so many critics manifest towards the new African states. A few years after the French Revolution, France experienced the dictatorial rule of Napoleon. However, this was hardly surprising, i.e. the swift return to autocracy; after all, the attempts to impose a full-blooded democracy on an unprepared people had been far too drastic and arbitrary. Similarly, the African tribal background and the conditioning which colonialism induced did not create a fertile ground for the seed of Western democracy.

Obviously, the social structures and value systems of these new nations cannot absorb a stiff dose of independence overnight without showing a tendency to veer off into some form of despotism or one-party rule. Psychologically, the people were not prepared for a democratic form of government.

A somewhat analogous situation arose in Germany after World War I. The Germans never really took to the democratic Weimar Republic it just didn't work but they took fairly readily to the one-man rule of Hitler. A long history of submission to Junker aristocracy and the military caste formed a poor preparation for democracy. Foreign politicians tried to foist political freedom and social equality on to a social structure which still exuded class privilege, class consciousness, militant nationalism and a deeply entrenched, almost pathological, spirit of submissiveness to all forms of authority. Coupled with these factors were the chaotic post-war social and economic conditions. The stage was set for Hitler despite all the democratic trappings and decor of the Weimar Republic.

Apropos the folly of the Treaty of Versailles, especially its doctrinaire aspects, Winston Churchill sagely noted: 'Emperors having been driven out, nonentities were elected . . . Wise policy would have crowned and fortified the Weimar Republic with a constitutional sovereign . . . Instead, a gaping void was opened in the national life of the German people. All

the strong elements, military and feudal, which might have sustained the new democratic and parliamentary processes were for the time being unhinged.'

Drastic social change and revolutions of their very nature cause upheavals and chaos. Those who successfully wage revolutions, whether black or white, are rarely adept at governing wisely when they find complete political power in their hands. As Thomas Jefferson observed in 1823: 'The generation which commences a revolution rarely completes it.'

No one can deny that a cultural lag plagues the new African states at this moment of history. In these countries the personal and group security that the masses had known had traditionally been rooted in an ethnocentric and authoritarian frame of reference. Unfortunately, most demagogues choose to ignore this reality with great cost to their peoples.

The black governments need help and understanding. Their task is unenviable. Among the many problems they face are tribal affiliations, economic backwardness and population pressures. Allied to these is a sense of inferiority and sometimes servility, an inescapable concomitant of colonialism. Indeed the reasons for the plight of these new states are sociological and historical rather than merely racial. ●

RELIGIOUS SOCIOLOGY

A RELIGIOUS GROUP can never be fully understood if one analyses it solely in theological terms. For instance, in the study of religious divisions, the knowledge of the relevant sociological factors can contribute to a fuller understanding of what is a rather complex phenomenon. The sociology of religion neither ignores theology nor does it attempt to secularize religion; it merely aims at a more comprehensive picture.

Religious history teems with theological disputes but as far as the ordinary believer in the past was concerned, how many people joined religious breakaway movements for purely doctrinal reasons? So often, on the Catholic side, we have tended to overlook social and political, as well as economic, factors which played a highly significant role in religious upheavals. Sometimes we have accused people of theological bad faith when it was, so to speak, political good faith which motivated their rupture with Catholicism.

It would be exceedingly naïve to divide 16th century Europe up into the 'good guys' who remained Catholics and the 'bad guys' who broke with the Church. Let us look at one Catholic people in this regard. The Irish are a predominantly Catholic people who have, on the whole, remained faithful to Catholicism wherever they have gone. Some might wish to romanticise this

loyalty by ascribing it to the influence of St. Patrick who evangelised the Irish. However, such pious thoughts are scarcely germane.

At the time of the Reformation, Henry VIII's England controlled Ireland politically yet the mass of the populace stuck to Catholicism. The Irish had everything to gain by making a religious about-face but this they did not do. One might well speculate on what would have happened had Ireland been a free country then, with Catholicism as the country's established religion. This is an interesting speculation but so hypothetical as to preclude any answer.

From the time of the Reformation onwards, the Irish were alienated from their society but not from their Church. Their socio-political discontent was directed chiefly at the alien political authorities, not at the Church something of the opposite nature happened in other countries during this period. During the post-Reformation era in Ireland, the Catholic Church was not the established church. Thus, no mantle of religion could be cast over the sores and festering injustices of Irish society. The Catholic Church was not allied with the oppressive status quo. Even during times of severe persecution, the Church represented a transcendent centre of reference to the Irish Catholics; it alone came between them and their oppressors.

Theology, by itself, can never explain the unswerving adherence of most Irish Catholics to their religion during centuries of persecution and hardship. The institutional Church might have been hard on them at times but it never espoused the cause of their foreign overlords. Their Church remained poor but powerful and so it retained their loyalty.

On the other hand, where Church and State are one — or presumed to be such — quite a different pattern emerges. For example, for some centuries England has had an established church. In the 18th century, John Wesley, originally a member of the established church, was forced to break away from this Anglican church and so Methodism began. The first Methodists were the poor, the dispossessed, the discontented, the oppressed — those alienated from English society. Deep down, it was not the Methodist doctrines which aroused so much hostility but rather their dissenting political views and their lack of respectability. Critics of early Methodism ignored such matters as their anti-formalism and their habit of methodical prayer and concentrated on the socio-political overtones and the class structure of this new religious movement. In fact, one English magistrate dismissed the Methodist preachers as 'disorderly persons who go about raising riots.' The patent sincerity of the Methodist pioneers

counted for very little in the eyes of their opponents for Methodism was seen not only as a challenge to the established church but also as an attack on the socio-political order to which the established church was tied and committed. When Countess Selina Huntingdon joined the Methodists, her circle of aristocratic friends was outraged. One of them, the Duchess of Buckingham, wrote to her: 'I cannot but wonder that your ladyship should relish sentiments so much at variance with high rank and good breeding.' Clearly, comment would be superfluous.

In the case of the Irish Catholics and the English Methodists — and there are many others — there are vital lessons for churchmen. In any age, in any society, a church or religious group moves close to the State at its peril. Too close an alliance or liaison with the political authorities means that the church or religious body in question tends to tarnish its image, lose its identity and forfeit its dependence. A church hand-in-glove with the State or merely appearing to be so must share the hatred and revenge of the masses when the political tide turns. Tsarist Russia and the Russian Orthodox Church are cases in point, to say nothing of

the Throne and Altar tie-up in pre-revolutionary France. Russian history from 1667 to 1917 was punctuated by a whole series of religious revolts. This is not a matter for surprise when one notes how the Russian Orthodox Church became so absorbed into the Russian State that it seemed to be more like a political institution than a religious body. Naturally, then, the revolutionaries wished to destroy it along with all the other oppressive machinery of the State.

Churches, whether established or not, tend to be conservative forces in human society. Up to a point, this is praiseworthy but not when this conservatism supports injustice or blocks necessary social and political change. On the whole, the status quo has had a powerful fascination for Catholic churchmen throughout history; their tendency to regard a given political order as sacrosanct has been noted by many historians. Even in our own day, some churchmen have forgotten that the smile of the politician has something of the Mona Lisa quality about it. After all, of its nature, political flavour is relative and fickle and any church that dances to political tunes must, of necessity, eventually compromise the Gospel and betray its mission. ●

Oswin Magrath

Letter

Sir,—I should like to comment on two letters in your issue of June-July from Fr. Edmund Hill O.P. and Mgr. Francis Ward.

Fr. Hill speaks rightly, with St. Augustine, of 'an epidemic of sin that has invaded the multitude of the faithful' in Southern Africa, and I agree that excommunication as a remedial measure is not indicated at the present day and in the present situation.

We have here a general state of sinfulness which is only a particular example of what is today often called in theology 'the Sin of the World'. This is that inheritance of sinful attitudes, that sinful situation, into which we are born and from which it is impossible for any individual to escape totally. Some identify it with, or make it the principal part of, Original Sin. It comes from our forefathers, dominates our upbringing, and leads us into innumerable sinful acts of which the individual is often hardly aware, but which nevertheless reap the reward of 'the severe mercy of God's discipline' in this life, in the next, and in our descendants.

The 'ingrained racial prejudice' and 'a social conscience in the privileged section of the community which is outstanding for its repression', of which Fr. Hill speaks, form the special aspect of the sin of the world in South Africa, into which we are born, or in which we become immersed. No member of the church here is exempt from its influence in one way or another, and all are led by it into acts which are objectively sinful, even if not perceived as such by those who do them. Every age and every country has its particular blind spot and inheritance of special sinfulness, and history shows the inevitable judgement that comes upon it.

We must recognise, with Fr. Hill, that it is *our* blindness of heart: of the whole church: bishops, priests, religious and all the people of God of all races and origins. No one is unaffected. All are led into sins, all are more or less dominated by the sinful situation, all fail to a greater or lesser extent to react to it in a christian way.

But the particular seriousness of the sinful situation

here is that it is aiming more and more directly at the central element of christianity and of catholicism: love of our neighbour as ourselves in God, and the union of all in the one family and people of God. The central things we are dealing with are not 'wrongs' against justice, but a lack of christian charity. To attack the wrongs may indeed be working towards charity, but does not go to the heart of the matter. Nor can the 'political' side be entirely evaded. It is the expression in law and usage of this epidemic of sin. The most central things here, again, are those laws and social pressures which effectively prevent those contacts which are necessary for the exercise of christian love and for the catholic unity of the church.

This affects specially the vast mass of the white laity, and of priests and religious working among whites. To an ever increasing extent the full exercise of christian charity is also prevented or impeded for those christians, bishops, priests, religious or laity, who wish to cross the social and legal colour bar in order to manifest true christian love and catholic unity. And among the underprivileged an opposing lack of charity tends to build up, openly, or simmering beneath the surface. These laws, regulations, policies or social conventions and pressures are direct attacks on the very centre of the christian life. To acquiesce in them is to acquiesce in lack of full charity in the church, and in innumerable sins against love by default and by commission.

The bishops have indicated these things in pastoral letters, which by now are largely unread, and are unknown to many of the younger people, even those in seminaries and religious life. The teaching of the universal church on these matters is to a large extent silenced and obscured by this epidemic of sin. The appeal to the whole church and its teaching, as cited by Mgr. Ward in his letter in the case of Fisher and More, is, as in their case, regarded as 'maliciously bent', as politics, as subversion, or at least as imprudence. The bishops, like St. Augustine, feel helpless in the face of such a situation. Less than ever to-day can they impose solutions on their people. They can only try to promote christian thinking. And they too are immersed like their flocks in the sinful situation.

Hence there seems to be a strong case for action by individual members of the church, laity, clergy or religious, to draw attention to this epidemic of sinfulness and its consequences. And that in no spirit of self-righteousness or display, but, like More and Fisher, humbly, repentantly, as members of the pilgrim church, under a 'very and pure necessity for the discharge of conscience'.

Hence I cannot agree with Mgr. Ward that the 'poster' incident last Christmas was alien to the spirit

of the martyrs. More was faced with a limited challenge, that of papal supremacy against royal supremacy. It did not impinge on the whole of the daily life and christian love of neighbour as does ours. He could wait until the challenge was inescapably put: it faces those here daily in a thousand forms. It reveals the 'traditional' values of a family Christmas and jolly good-will-to-all-men as false in our situation. The truth needs to be uncovered in the name of the two-edged sword of God's word, and in the name of Him who came not to bring peace but the sword and to uncover the thoughts of many hearts, before his reign of peace could be established. Just as More and Fisher uncovered the real nature of the Oath of Royal Supremacy, so do we need witnesses who are ready to suffer prosecution, exile, or rejection by their friends and even by most of their fellow catholics to uncover the evil in our midst.

The enormous deficiency in catholic charity which the present widespread acquiescence implies is a mortal wound dealt to the Church in S. Africa. It is limiting, reducing, tending to the destruction of the fulness of charity in all its members.

There is a growing awareness of this weakness, too, among the underprivileged catholic majority.

Four-fifths of the laity, one fifth of the religious, one tenth of the priests, are non-whites. But the power of the church, and, especially in the cities, its wealth, buildings, educational and community facilities, and, most notable of all, its personnel, are concentrated heavily among the white minority. While the mass of non-white catholics are still, outwardly at least, grateful for what the church is able to do, there is a growing awareness of the basic lack of full christian charity and catholicity in the church. Especially in the towns, in the spearhead of African advance, there is growing dissatisfaction with the acquiescence in a diminished christianity that seems to prevail. Those bishops, priests and religious, those laity who wish to be active in christian love across the colour bar, are above all in a difficult position, for their silence is the condition of their being able to continue to do so.

There are the roots here of a future disunity and schism more perilous than anything that could be caused by present opposition to the current outlook. The catholic majority needs the witness of those ready to risk much or all for conscience sake, to be reassured that the universal church, the catholic church, is still with them and still the bond of charity. They should have the approbation and support of those who are unable for various reasons to take the same stand. In them and through them the whole church can confess its sinfulness and need of redemption. ●

Comparison of Parishes

WHAT FOLLOWS is a comparison of two parishes within the Johannesburg diocese, one Rosebank, the other Orlando West, one of the better developed African parishes.

Johannesburg	Soweto
4800 Whites	4500 Africans
Predominantly English speaking.	Approximately equal numbers speaking Zulu and S. Sotho.
Church of Immaculate Conception, Rosebank	St. Martin de Porres
Seats 420 (Before Alterations)	Seats 500
5 Sunday Masses	2 Sunday Masses
12 Weekday Masses	6 Weekday Masses
6 hrs/week confessions	3 hrs/week confessions
St. John the Apostle, Parktown North	
Seats 450	
2 Sunday Masses	
No weekday Masses	
1½ hrs/week confessions	
Total Sunday Attendance	Attendance
to mass 1800	1000
communions 1200	Communions 200
Three parish priests residing in the presbytery at Rosebank, all speaking English	One parish priest, who resides in Coronationville—he is not allowed to reside within his parish, it is a prescribed area. The parish priest speaks one of the local languages. His sermons are translated into the other language by a layman interpreter.

Naturally enough, many duties are common i.e. Mass, Confessions, Baptisms, Marriages, Funerals, Church Society Meetings, Marriage Instructions, Teaching Catechism at school, Instruction to convents etc.

In addition to these the parish priest in Orlando West, assisted by the Sisters of Notre Dame manages the school, a mammoth task as will be seen from the following comparison of schools. A task made more difficult by the drastic shortage of teachers. When a teacher leaves, the priest has to find a replacement, this requires the qualities of a detective in seeking out a suitable person plus the qualities of a salesman in persuading them to accept the job at the salary he can afford to pay them. Besides this, he is involved in the raising of funds for the continued existence of the school and for building campaign.

Another duty, the visiting of parishioners is common to both parishes but extremely difficult to fulfil in Orlando West as:

1. It is considered dangerous to visit at night,
2. The priest does not reside within the parish and
3. With the exception of the very old and the very young most parishioners are away at work during the day.

Thus in Orlando West, Sunday is an extremely busy day for the priest, besides mass, nearly all Baptisms, Funerals, Marriage Instruction Classes and Church Society meetings are held on Sunday. Hence the priest has little time much less the opportunity to visit the people of his parish or for missionary work.

In addition to the above Rosebank is responsible for the Chaplaincy of Tara.

SCHOOLS

	St. David's Marist Brothers, Inanda Junior Grade 1 to Std. 5 High Std. 6 to Stad. 10	St. Theresa's Convent Rosebank as St. David's	St. Martin De Porres
STD. OF EDUCATION			Primary Lower Grade 1 to Std. 2 Primary Higher Std. 3 to Std. 6
PUPILS	700 boys	660 (330 Jnr) girls (330 Snr)	1060 Boys and Girls (500 a year turned away)
STARTING AGE	Must turn 6 in first year of school	as St. David's	Minimum of 84 months old. Average age finishing Std. 6=16, when most boys must go to work.
LANGUAGE TEACHERS	English 10 Brothers 32 Lay	English 13 Irish Sisters of Mercy 8 lay full-time 5 lay part-time	Zulu or Sotho 2 Sisters of Notre Dame 18 Lay The nuns travel from Venterspost every day. Their salary is paid by the Bishop, however, they donate this to help pay the lay staff.
TEACHERS STARTING SALARY	Jnr. R110 p.m. Snr. R160 p.m.	as St. David's	Maximum Females R24 per month Males R30 per month dependant upon qualifications Equivalent to 75% of Govt. Teacher's salary
CLASS-ROOMS	24 Classrooms Art Room Library Science Laboratory	22 Classrooms 12 Junior and 10 Senior Art Room Science Laboratory Hall	9 Classrooms 1 Hall, flimsily partitioned off so that simultaneously there are: 5 classes in Hall, 2 classes on the stage, 2 classes under the stage.
NO. OF PUPILS PER CLASS	Max. 38 Min. 17 Average 32	Max. 45 Average 30-35	Max. 70 Average 50-60 Standard 6—40
ORGANISED SPORT ETC.	Rugby Cricket Swimming Soccer (Jnr) Athletics Hockey Tennis Volley Ball Table Tennis Golf (at Bryanston)	Hockey Netball Tennis Swimming	Soccer Netball Girl Guides Boy Scouts
SPORTS GROUNDS	4 Rugby fields 3 Soccer fields 2 Hockev fields	Swimming bath 2 Tennis courts, one of which can be used for	Netball pitch Soccer played on Township playing fields

- | | |
|----------------------|-------------------------------------------------------|
| 4 Cricket pitches | Netball. |
| 8 Cricket nets | 1 Hockey practice field not large enough for matches. |
| 4 Tennis courts | |
| 4 Volley Ball courts | |
| 1 Swimming bath | |

FINANCE

Marist Bros. manage school. School is self sufficient from fees paid by pupils. No monies drawn from parish to maintain school.	Rosebank Convent of Irish Sisters of Mercy manage school. School is self sufficient from fees paid by pupils and fund raising. No monies drawn from parish to maintain school.	Parish priest manages school. Private schools for Africans cannot charge fees. 39% of money comes from the Bishop. 61% organised by priest from parents' voluntary contributions and fund raising such as cake sales, fetes, concerts, jumble sales etc.
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BOOKS

In all schools, pupils must provide their own books.

At Orlando West School there is a school feeding scheme organised by St. Vincent de Paul Society providing soup, oranges, milk etc. to which European parishes contribute generously.

In addition to the above schools in Rosebank there are two other schools, St. Vincent's School for the Deaf and San Salvador, school for mentally retarded girls both conducted by the King William's Town Dominican Sisters.

In the whole of Soweto there is no Catholic High School and new Catholic Schools for Africans will not be permitted, there are however 5 government high schools in Soweto.

ASSOCIATIONS

St. Vincent de Paul
Legion of Mary
Catholic Women's League

Parish Council
Knights of da Gama
Discussion group
Altar boys (30)
Choir (8-9)

Alterations, additions and renovations to Church and Presbytery at present in progress. Cost R87,000.00 will be met by parishioners planned giving campaign and fund raising.

Hall at St. David's. Cost R60,000 to be raised by Marist Brothers through fund raising, parents contributions etc.

St. Vincent de Paul
Legion of Mary
(St. Anne's
(Sacred Heart, Women
Catholic African Organisation
Sacred Heart, Men
Young Christian Workers
Girl Guides
Altar boys (30)
Choir (50)

Extensions to vestry of the Church. Cost R1700 which the Bishop will provide.

Six additional classrooms for school. Cost R7000. The Bishop has promised R2000. The balance of R5000 to be raised by priest through fund raising etc.

A private company has offered to bear cost of building one new classroom in return for the use of an old room as workshop for welding school.

Whilst some of the figures quoted above are obviously approximations they are all honest estimations of reality obtained from reliable sources of information during April and May 1967.

This article is meant to be a presentation of facts that we might learn something of other parishes and it is not intended to comment on the comparisons.

Palal Commission Majority Report

Rebuttal to Conservatives

The following report is published for the first time in South Africa. This position paper is the first of two (the second will be published in the next issue of Challenge) submitted by the majority of the papal birth control commission to Pope Paul in 1966.

A) *THE PAST TEACHING OF THE CHURCH IS NOT DECISIVE*

1) *THE IMPORTANCE OF CASTI CONNUBII*

THE ENCYCLICAL *Casti Conubii* has special importance in solving the question of the reasonable regulation of births precisely because of its solemn condemnation of every contraceptive intervention in the conjugal act. But the encyclical did nothing other than re-affirm the common teaching at that time. The solemnity of the condemnation of every contraceptive intervention is especially understandable as a reaction to the declaration of the Lambeth Conference. But to this must be added the fear prevalent at that time among many peoples that contraceptive practice could lead to an undesired reduction of (the world) population.

Today no one holds that the solemn declaration of the Encyclical *Casti Conubii* constitutes a true doctrinal definition. Nor does the reference to the encyclical to Genesis, Chapter 38, (concerning the sin of Onan) prove that the teaching of the encyclical is divinely revealed. For the reference is made only incidentally and only because of the well-known exegesis of St. Augustine. Augustine, with only one or two other Fathers, saw in the scriptural text a condemnation of onanism, whereas contemporary exegetes, Protestant and Catholic, are rather inclined to another interpretation, or, at least, are uncertain. The encyclical offers no other text from the Old or New Testament which condemns contraceptive intervention, nor can

Arguments defending contraception as a permissible means of birth control and rebuttals of the case for the traditional position are presented in this 'position paper' approved by a majority of the commission theologians. It may also be seen as a first step in the development of the final majority document.

The position paper, entitled 'on the morality of birth control', was drawn up by Father Joseph Fuchs, S. J.; Canon Philippe Delhaye and Father Raymond Sigmond. It is dated May 27, 1966.

one be found. Finally, the reference of the encyclical to an interrupted tradition does not make its teaching infallible, since the assertion of the encyclical of such an existent tradition is not infallible.

The reference of the encyclical to the argument from reason or the natural law is vague and imprecise, especially since this argument does not consider sufficiently man, God's creature, as the prudent administrator and steward of the gifts of nature.

2) *THE TRADITION TO WHICH CASTI CONNUBII REFERS*

Casti Conubii is of greater importance if it is considered as a *particular* and even solemn part of the total tradition, including the explicit teaching of the past two centuries. For in this tradition contraceptive intervention is never approved, but when the question arises it is condemned. This has occurred many times in the last few centuries. However, this is by no means an apostolic tradition or an attestation of faith but merely the tradition of a teaching formulated in diverse ways at diverse times.

In this tradition there is a constant concern for protecting the goodness of procreation especially in opposition to the Gnostics, Manichees and, later, the Cathari. But the necessity of multiplying the human race and therefore of increasing the number of children in families was denied through the centuries on theological grounds. The protection of the goodness of procreation as such through the prohibition of contraceptive intervention is more rarely proved from Scripture (Gen. 38), than from reason or natural law

and not without the influence of philosophies and medical science of the three prior centuries. But the reasons alleged are generally quite vague and lack precision, nor do they always refer to the avoidance of children in marriage specifically, but from adulterous unions and fornication. Likewise today many of the best theologians who defend the illicitness of every contraceptive intervention because of the past teaching of the Church, concede that they do not have a convincing argument based on reason or natural law.

For the rest, the concept of the natural law, as it is found in traditional discussion of this question, is insufficient; for the gifts of nature are considered to be immediately the expression of the will of God, preventing man, also a creature of God, from being understood as called to receive material nature and to perfect its potentiality. Churchmen have been slower than the rest of the world in clearly seeing this as man's vocation.

3) THE OFFICIAL TEACHING IS IN EVOLUTION

Little by little, however, the Church has freed herself from this inadequate concept of nature and the natural law. A first intimation of this is already found in the notion of conjugal love expressed in reference to the physical act of marriage. Thus stated it is found both in the writings of Pius XI (*Casti Connubii*) and more frequently in the writings of Pius XII. The teaching of Pius XII on the regulation of birth through rhythm follows this direction even more. (1951). Finally the teaching of the Second Vatican Council affirmed the great importance of the expression of conjugal love through intercourse and especially the virtuous exercise of responsibility in determining the number of children. And this teaching was felt at that time by certain Fathers of the Council to be "pregnant" in terms of the licitness of diverse contraceptive interventions. They showed this by pointing out the difficulty in arriving at a conciliar consensus on the former position. Hence the council proceeded very cautiously in simply reaffirming the traditional teaching on this matter. It is easily understood, then, why a widely felt doubt on the truth of the teaching of the encyclical *Casti Connubii* in the matter of contraceptive intervention could have arisen, notwithstanding the teaching of the ordinary magisterium.

This issue is a matter of real concern not only among husbands and wives but also among priests and the hierarchy itself. With all this in mind it becomes evident that the official teaching with regard to the manner of protecting the good of procreation has been evolving in recent decades, and that the position stated

in the text of the encyclical *Casti Connubii* has not yet been found to be definitive.

4) THE REASONS FOR THIS EVOLUTION

The reason or, if you will, the forceful occasion for seriously rethinking the traditional teaching on the illicit contraceptive intervention as regards each and every conjugal act is based on various things: the social change in marriage, in the family, in the position of woman: the diminution of infant mortality; advances in physiological, biological, psychological and sexological knowledge; a changed estimation of the meaning of sexuality and of conjugal relations; but especially a better perception of the responsibility of man for humanizing the gifts of nature and using them to bring the life of man to greater perfection. Finally, one must consider the consensus of the faithful, according to which a condemnation of spouses to a prolonged and heroic abstinence from the helpful and appropriate expressions of conjugal life must be erroneous.

A later development of such a position (which seems to be prevalent) is based less on these changes than on a better, more profound and more correct perspective on married life and intercourse which the changes have brought about.

5) THE IMPORTANCE OF THE DEVELOPING OFFICIAL TEACHING

Not a few theologians and faithful fear that a change in the official teaching could damage the confidence of Catholics in the teaching authority of the Church. For they ask how the assistance of the Holy Spirit could permit such an error for so many centuries, and one that has had so many consequences, especially in recent centuries. But the criteria for discerning what the Spirit could or could not permit in the Church can scarcely be determined *a priori*. In point of fact, we know that there have been errors in the teaching of the magisterium and of tradition. With regard to intercourse one should note that for so many centuries in the Church, with the active concurrence of the Popes, it was all but unanimously taught that marital intercourse was illicit unless accompanied by the intention to procreate—or, at least (because of the words of I Cor. 7.), to offer an outlet for the other partner; and yet no theologians hold to this teaching today, nor is it the official position. In recent decades there has been an increasing tendency to consider the authentic non-infallible magisterium infallible in practice, whereas in reality it must be expected that the non-infallible magisterium is sometimes mistaken. There is, then, no sound basis for fearing that a change in this particular point would cause a

loss of trust in the Church's teaching authority or would make it possible to raise doubts on every other doctrine. Such a change is to be seen rather as a step toward a more mature comprehension of the whole doctrine of the Church. For doubt and reconsideration are quite reasonable when proper reasons for doubt and reconsideration occur with regard to some specific question. This is part and parcel of the accepted teaching of fundamental theology.

B) A SYSTEMATIC EXAMINATION OF THE ARGUMENTS FROM THE LAW OF NATURE

1) The arguments based on the law of nature are not persuasive. The principal argument is founded on the inviolability of the sources of life; like human life itself, it is said, they do not fall under the dominion of man but pertain to the dominion of God.

But an unconditional respect for nature as it is in itself (as if nature in its physical existence were the expression of the will of God) pertains to a vision of man which sees something mysterious and sacred in nature and because of this fears that any human intervention tends to destroy rather than perfect this very nature. In past centuries, because of this mentality, many interventions of the art of medicine were prohibited, and only little by little, with the progress of medicine and science, have the possibilities of intervention for the good of the person and sometimes even for the good of the community been acknowledged.

The sources of life, just as existent life itself, are not more of God than is the totality of created nature, of which he is the Creator. The very dignity of man created to the image of God consists in this: that God wished man to share in his dominion. God has left man in the hands of his own counsel. To take his own or another's life is a sin not because life is under the exclusive dominion of God but because it is contrary to right reason unless there is question of a good of a higher order. It is licit to sacrifice a life for the good of the community. It is licit to take a life in capital punishment for the sake of the community, and therefore from a motive of charity for others. Suicide is a sin because it is contrary to right reason and opposed to man's destiny.

In the course of his life man must attain his perfection in difficult and adverse conditions, he must accept the consequences of his responsibility, etc. Therefore the dominion of God is exercised through man, who can use nature for his own perfection according to the dictates of right reason.

In the matter at hand, then, there is a certain change in the mind of contemporary man. He feels

that he is more conformed to his rational nature, created by God with liberty and responsibility, when he uses his skill to intervene in the biological processes of nature so that he can achieve the ends of the institution of matrimony in the conditions of actual life, than if he would abandon himself to chance.

2) *The principle or moral criterion* for his action remains the same: it is conformity to his own rational nature created by God and redeemed by Christ, even in those matters which pertain to Christian matrimony. The order impressed on things by the Creator is preserved; Christian matrimony is fashioned according to the teaching of the New Testament. However (since at this point we are speaking of matrimony as a natural institution), man too belongs to created nature, just as subhuman nature and man's relationship to it. The order of creation does not require that all things be left untouched just as they are, but that they reach the ends to which they have been ordered. Nature is understood by St. Thomas from the finalities which make up the dynamic element of nature. The decision about the manner of intervention therefore must be formulated according to the finalities which can be discovered from human nature.

3) *The sources of life are persons* in and through their voluntary and responsible conjugal acts. The pastoral constitution *Gaudium et Spes* recognizes that the decision about the number of children rests ultimately with the parents and is their exclusive right. The parents must be guided in this decision by objective criteria or, to say it in another way, by the objective finality of the institution of matrimony. But it is up to them to determine, in view of their personal and social situation, how to achieve this purpose of marriage, as one essential element among diverse goods, and how to bring about a perfect balance between conjugal love and harmonious fecundity. In virtue of this decision they use the sexual organs to gain the predetermined goal, but the organs themselves are not *per se* the sources of life. The biological process in man is not some separated part (animality) but is integrated into the total personality of man.

4) *It is more and more evident today* that in man sexual relations in marriage are raised to the expression of a mutual personal giving (herein lies the change of object). Intercourse materially considered carries with it some orientation toward fecundation, but this finality must be rationally directed by man according to the measure and conditions of human love, size of the family, educational need, etc. The mutual giving of self perdures throughout the entire life, biological fecundity is not continuous and is subject to many irregularities and therefore ought to be

assumed into the human sphere and be regulated within it. Finalization toward fecundity can formally come only from man though this finality is found materially in the organs. Fecundation must be a personal human act (deliberate, responsible for its effects, etc.). With the progress of knowledge, man can exercise this dominion and ought to exercise it with responsibility.

5) *From this point of view there is no difference between acts* which happen in a fertile or infertile period. For either it is permissible for man to use his sexual organs both to foster love and to achieve fertilization (with the result that the conjugal community is filled with the goods of matrimony and then it makes no difference whether the intervention of man happens in a fertile or infertile period); or it is permissible to use his organs for fostering love in infertile periods, but in fertile periods he is given no alternative other than fertilization or abstinence. This however seems to have no foundation in the law of nature.

C) INTERVENTION IS WELL EXPLAINED WITHIN THE LIMITS OF THE CLASSIC DOCTRINE

What are the limits of the dominion of man with regard to the rational determination of his fecundity?

The general principle can be formulated in this manner. It is the duty of man to perfect nature (or to order it to the human good expressed in matrimony) but not to destroy it. Even if the absolute untouchability of the fertile period cannot be maintained, neither can complete dominion be affirmed. Besides, when man intervenes in the procreative process, he does this with the intention of regulating and not excluding fertility. Then he unites the material finality toward fecundity which exists in intercourse with the formal finality of the person and renders the entire process 'human'. Conjugal acts which by intention are infertile (or which are rendered infertile) are ordered to the expression of the union of love; that love, however, reaches its culmination in fertility responsibly accepted. For that reason other acts of union in a certain sense are incomplete and they receive their full moral quality with ordination toward the fertile act. If this act is deliberately and without sufficient reason excluded, then these 'incomplete' acts receive their proper moral specification from some other end (which is outside the order of the goods of matrimony) and then it is a question of an intervention which is illicitly 'anti-conceptual'. Infertile conjugal acts constitute a totality with fertile acts and have a single moral specification.

Explanatory Note: Not every act which proceeds from man is a complete human act. The subject of morality for St. Thomas is always the human act whose master is man (determined from a knowledge of the object or end). But this human act which has one moral specification can be composed of several particular acts if these partial acts do not have some object in itself already morally specified. And this is the cause for matrimonial acts which are composed of several fertile and infertile acts; they constitute one totality because they are referred to one deliberate choice.

D) MORAL CRITERIA WITH REGARD TO HUMAN INTERVENTION IN CONCEPTION

1) GENERAL REMARKS

Up to this time the simple biological conformity of the acts has been adhered to as the determining criterion or morality in this matter. A renunciation of this (*Gaudium et Spes*, No. 51) does not abandon Christians to subjectivism or laxism. There are other criteria, more strict from one point of view, concerned no longer with the materiality of the acts but pertaining to the meaning of the action. Christian ethics confirms this in many other areas—for example, in the use of arms which are good when used in defense but evil when used to take away life unjustly or to steal.

What are these objective criteria?

Gaudium et Spes, No. 51, treats of these: 'Therefore when there is question of harmonizing conjugal love with the responsible transmission of life, the moral aspect of any procedure does not depend solely on sincere intentions or on an evaluation of motives. It must be determined by objective standards. These, based on the nature of the human person and his acts, preserve the full sense of mutual self-giving and human procreation in the context of true love. Such a goal cannot be achieved unless the virtue of conjugal chastity is sincerely practiced. Relying on these principles, sons of the Church may not undertake methods of regulating procreation which are found blameworthy by the teaching authority of the Church in its unfolding of the divine law'.

2) EXPLANATION AND SYNTHESIS OF THOSE OBJECTIVE CRITERIA

a) *The meaning of sexuality in marriage.* 'The responsible procreative community' is always ordered toward procreation; this is the objective and authentic meaning of sexuality and of those things which refer

to sexuality (affectivity, unity, the ability to educate). So we can speak of the 'procreative end' as the essential end of sexuality and of conjugal life.

But this procreative end does not have to be realized by a fertile act when, for instance, parents already have children to educate or they are not prepared to have a child. *This obligation of conscience* for not generating springs from the rights of the already existing child or the rights of a future child. *A child has a right to a 'community of life and unity'* so that it can be formed and educated. Therefore the procreative end is substantially and really preserved even when here and now a fertile act is excluded; for infecundity is ordered to a new life well and humanly possessed. Man is the administrator of life and consequently of his own fecundity.

b) *The meaning of mutual giving.* On the other hand, sexuality is not ordered only to procreation. Sacred Scripture says not only 'increase and multiply', but 'they shall be two in one flesh' and it shows the partner as another helpful self. In some cases intercourse can be required as a manifestation of self-giving love, directed to the good of the other person or of the community, while at the same time a new life cannot be received. This is neither egocentricity nor hedonism but a legitimate communication of persons through gestures proper to beings composed of body and soul with sexual powers. Here intervention is a material privation since love in this case cannot be fertile; but it receives its moral specification from the other finality, which is good in itself, and from the fertility of the whole conjugal life.

3) OBJECTIVE CRITERIA PERTAINING TO THE MORAL DECISION CONCERNING METHODS

Now if we come more precisely to a decision as to methods, it helps to recall these principles which must simultaneously be considered.

—Infecundity of the act, when this is required by right reason, should be accomplished by an intervention with lesser inconveniences to the subject. Man can use his body in such a way as to render it more apt to attain its proper ends but he cannot manipulate his body and organs in an arbitrary fashion.

—If nature ought to be perfected, then it should be perfected in the manner more fitting and connatural.

—On the other hand, this intervention ought to be done in a way more conformed to the expression of love and to respect for the dignity of the partner.

—Finally, efficacy should also be considered. If there is a privation of conception for the sake of procuring other goods, these must be sought in a more

secure and apt manner.

In this matter the rhythm method is very deficient. Besides, only 60 per cent of women have a regular cycle.

Some argue that to legitimize contraception will prepare the way for indulgence with regard to certain sins such as abortion, fellation, anal intercourse, fornication, adultery and masturbation. How far this is from the truth is clearly evident from the following remarks.

a) Abortion is entirely different from contraception because it concerns human life already in existence. Thousand upon thousands of male sperm become useless and are lost in every act of intercourse; from approximately 200 ova present in a woman, perhaps 15 can be raised to the dignity of human life while the others are eliminated during menstrual periods. The right of an offspring already conceived and living is absolute and must be regarded with the same respect as every human life. From a sociological point of view it is interesting to note that abortions are more numerous in areas where contraception is neglected.

b) The so-called new theory is extremely strict, as is that of the casuists, with regards to oral and anal copulation, since it does not permit them. For in these acts there is preserved neither the dignity of love nor the dignity of the spouses as human persons created according to the image of God.

c) Human intervention in the process of conception is not permitted, as we have said, unless it favours the stability of the family. Therefore there is no parity with the question of extra-marital relations. These relations lack the sense of complete and irrevocable giving and the possibility of normally accepting and educating children. These extra-marital relations contradict the norms already given concerning the habitual ordination of the institution of marriage toward offspring and love.

d) The affirmation of the permissibility of intervention does not lead to an indulgent attitude toward masturbation since intervention preserves the intersubjectivity of sexuality ('they shall be two in one flesh'). Masturbation rather negates that intersubjectivity. Masturbation, in as much as it turns the individual on himself and seeks mere egocentric satisfaction, totally perverts the essential intentionality of sexuality whereby man is directed out of himself toward another. For intercourse even with intervention is self-offering and heterosexual. If a question is to be raised about masturbation, this should be done independently of the question of the regulation of birth, even should the classic teaching on this matter remain in force. ●

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