

# The **+ WITNESS**

AUGUST 4, 1966

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## Story of the Week

# Problems of Technology Split Church and Society Meeting

★ Are the modern scientific and technological revolutions a blessing or curse for man? This question dominated the first half of the conference on Church and Society, July 12-26.

It confronted the potentialities and terrors of nuclear energy, automation, and biological experimentation. Participants, half laymen in science, education, industry, research, and half theologians and church leaders, grappled with the role of the Church in a rapidly changing world.

W. A. Visser 't Hooft, general secretary of the WCC, in the opening address raised some troubling questions about the new scientific discoveries.

Asking "who will work out the programs for the computers?", he questioned whether decisions would be made in "the esoteric atmosphere of scientific laboratories or in wide open debate between all men willing to participate in responsible choices?" (7/21).

### Poverty Gap

The gap between the rich and poor nations was the principal theme cutting through the deliberations of the first half of the conference.

A Nigerian lawyer active in political affairs, Bola Ige, an Anglican, served notice that there could be no peace as long

as two-thirds of mankind are patronizingly referred to as "the poor", "the underdeveloped", "the third world" and now "the newly awakened peoples."

He said the US and USSR were endangering the peace of the world by arrogating the monopoly of directing the future of the world and other nations.

He said there would be no peace "as long as there is a colony in the world and as long as neo-colonialism remains more vicious than its parent colonialism."

### Role of Church

The primary role of the Church today is to offer a stable point of reference midst man's ever-changing circumstances, said Prof. Jacques Ellul of France.

Ellul, of the University of Bordeaux law school, said that this point of reference was not reactionary, but represented real values for mankind which was being devalued by constant change.

"The potentialities of technology today are unlimited," he said. "We might say that anything we can imagine can be done. This is evolution, not revolution, for it cannot be stopped; within itself the present technology contains all the seeds of the future.

"We can forecast what, in the short-term, our technology will produce, but we cannot forecast the political, economic, and social effects it will have, for this requires value judgments."

Ellul said Christians must accept technological development as ambivalent: "It is neither good nor evil; neither can you control it, nor stop it."

Christians could also formulate the desirable long-term goals of society in the light of the short-term possibilities indicated by present technology. "We can calculate with some accuracy the short-term possibility, and, through a critical evaluation of our ultimate goals, calculate how to move from our present position to those goals."

Economist and author Robert Theobald, New York, told the conference that "technological power can be controlled for man's benefit only if he consciously makes major efforts to alter national and world social structures."

Theobald said that war "cannot be abolished until new social means are discovered for settling otherwise insoluble conflicts," that the end result of man's dramatic increase in life expectancy will be famine unless the will, and therefore the funds, are found to limit births; and that automation "offers the possibility of setting man free to do as he wishes" only if "it offers him his income as a right."

Theobald challenged the conference to take seriously "what



might be the final opportunity we have for a real meeting of the rich and the poor nations." He said it was too easy for those of the developed countries to meet the poor believing that they had all the answers and for those from the poor countries to come feeling that they had heard it all before and that "the immutable order of the west could not be changed to accommodate them."

"Much that today passes for dialogue is merely a meeting of people to achieve a consensus which has already been determined by a priest, pastor or expert," he said.

"True dialogue is a profoundly wrenching experience as one tests each one of one's beliefs against the beliefs of others, and it is only tolerable if one shares a profound sense of purpose with the other members of the group."

"Should technology always be exported to the developing countries or should they be required to develop their own?", asked Prof. S. A. Aluko, head of the department of economics, University of Nigeria. "Those of us who live there are becoming restive because imported techniques create dualistic communities and economies."

He said that man's confidence in himself did not necessarily enhance the Christian faith. "I am inclined to say that man's confidence has been used more as a lever against God than as an acknowledgement of his authority . . . The tendency to worship technology and the human power of achievement is very real. Though we may not be able to stop technology, we have to realize the problem that it poses."

Aluko equated the race to the moon and space flight to the building of the biblical tower of Babel. "There must have been plenty of people without rooms to live in on earth when the

Babel tower builders wished to reach heaven. There are many hungry people on earth today while immeasurable wealth is being put into the colonization of the moon and the planets beyond. I hope that what befell the builders of Babel will not befall the modern technocrats and the world that produces them."

### Exploitation Charged

A Latin American spoke about the ways in which a small ruling class can use technology to keep itself in power. A participant from a West African country said simply that his people didn't know what technology was, and wondered aloud what relevance the discussion held for them.

## U.S. Bombing of North Vietnam Hit by Church Conference

★ Delegates to the conference on Church and Society declared that growing American military presence in Vietnam and the bombing of villages and targets near North Vietnam cities "cannot be justified."

While overwhelmingly defeating an amendment to a document which would have "condemned" American actions, the delegates stated that the military build-up and bombing practices "involve the danger of escalation of the war into a world conflict and do not bring South Vietnam closer to political stability or solve the problems which have produced a revolutionary situation in that country."

In view of the international dangers created by the situation, it was urged that "all hostilities and military activity be stopped and that the conditions be created for the peaceful settlement of the Vietnam problem through the United Nations, or the participants to the

Then a speaker from Ceylon warned against that drift in the discussion. "It is morally wrong" he said, "to feel that moral issues lie only in the underdeveloped nations. What we need is a solidarity in thinking about moral issues."

### Praises Communist China

Bola Ilge, a Nigerian lawyer, told the conference at one point that Communist China symbolized all that was best in the developing nations.

It was "nationalist, militant, economically free and . . . unyielding in its commitment for the freedom and full emancipation of the nations of Africa, Asia and Latin America," he declared.

Geneva conference, or other international agencies."

Because nuclear war is "against God's will and the greatest of evils," the conference statement said, it is "the first duty of governments and their officials to prevent nuclear war."

In a parallel action, 73 of the United States' participants at the conference cabled President Johnson a statement stressing that the "current episode involving American prisoners should not be made the occasion for any acts of reprisal."

The cable also called on the U.S. and North Vietnam to treat captured personnel "according to standards set up by the International Red Cross."

"We deplore any suggestion that we lay waste the cities of North Vietnam," the cable said. "Acts of vengeance are abhorrent to Christian conscience and inimical to national and world interest."

Among those signing the



cable were Presiding Bishop John E. Hines; John C. Bennett, president of Union Theological Seminary; Christian Methodist Episcopal Bishop B. Julian Smith; Methodist Bishop Prince A. Taylor of Princeton, N. J., and Episcopal Bishop J. Brooke Mosley of Delaware.

(On the same day the cable was sent, a message received in New York by the Columbia Broadcasting System from President Ho Chi Minh said there was "no trial in view" for American prisoners in North Vietnam. CBS had asked for the North Vietnam leader's comment in view of repeated unofficial reports that captured Americans would be subjected to war-crimes trials.)

The cable from the U.S. Church and Society conference participants was formulated at a meeting convened by John Regier, associate general secretary for Christian life and mission of the National Council of Churches in the U.S.

It was stated that after their discussions with leaders from Asian, African, European and Latin American countries at the sessions, the U.S. participants "are more keenly aware than ever before of Church and world criticism and anguish over United States involvement and escalation of conflict in Vietnam."

The Vietnam war and U.S. participation in the conflict was the focus of attention at a press conference earlier, where Archbishop Nicodim, head of the foreign affairs department of the Russian Orthodox Church, condemned U.S. actions as "cruel" and "lawless."

In answer, Eugene Carson Blake, incoming general secretary of the WCC, declared that the Russian churchman had not made a "balanced presentation."

The Russian Orthodox leader commented that his "personal

views coincide completely with those of the Soviet government."

Among other comments, Archbishop Nicodim dismissed as a "myth" the claims that

Jews in the Soviet Union are being persecuted. He cited the "high percentage" of Russian Jews in important offices as evidence in support of his statement.

## Justice Between Nations Debated By East and West Leaders

★ Eugene Carson Blake, general secretary-elect of the WCC, declared at the Church and Society conference that the Church "must act, take a stand, and march with those in the society who cannot alone win in the battle for justice, freedom, and equality."

Noting the increasing participation of Christian churchmen and laymen in civil rights demonstrations in the U.S., Blake said that "this is a risk for the Church for it always results in controversy."

However, he added, "I am convinced that the putting of one's body in the right place at the right time is often the only way that a Christian can help his Church to be a part of the transformation of society."

Blake observed that "comfortable American Churches have been pained and surprised and troubled and inspired by the fact that we have authentic martyrs in our time."

"No normal man sets out to become a martyr, but sometimes integrity and love—more important even than courage—puts Christian bodies where the action is," he said.

He participated in a panel discussion with churchmen from Czechoslovakia and Uruguay in which the three speakers agreed that the Church only could be effective in transforming society by identifying with the poor and pioneering social change.

Joining Blake in the discussion were Emilio Castro of

Montevideo, general secretary of the commission for Latin American Evangelical Churches, and J. M. Lochmann of Prague, professor of theology in the Evangelical Church of the Czech Brethren.

"Political power for the poor themselves — in many of our cities this is black power — is one important ingredient in the transformation of our society as more and more the great city is the location of the struggle," Blake stated.

"In some situations it may be that the Church feels obligated to use direct action, such as mobilizing the masses, even direct political pressures, so that certain necessary changes become a reality," Castro said.

"The Church cannot defend the status quo because it must always be ready to recover its role as a pilgrim people and to become part of new social forms that can better represent the necessary justice in a particular historical situation."

The east European churchman, Lochmann, put it this way: "We must press on to a greater justice on a worldwide scale. By creating an atmosphere in which sound politicians can venture on new forms of constructive, responsible policies, the Church can contribute to society's transformation."

Disagreement developed on the role of order in society. Blake, put this question to Prof. Lochmann: "In light of the gospel, can we get to the place



we want to get by complete overturn of established structures, carrying with it terrible suffering in most cases?"

Lochmann replied: "Man is a creature who cannot do without certain order and law. But order is for the sake of man and has value only as far as man is helped by it. Revolution is not an abstract program, but in some situations it might be a way of humanization."

One of the Church's responsibilities, according to Castro, concerns the "desacralization" of terms and concepts. "When the Church organizes round tables and discussions of such concepts as revolution, land reform, nationalization, it is eliminating from those terms all possibility of ideological misunderstanding. This raises them to the category of vital problems and opportunities for the community."

Three other ways in which the Church contributes to the transforming process were defined by Blake: through its regular preaching and teaching from the Bible; by the formulation of concrete goals for society and concrete means to reach them; and by pastoral care of its members in positions of influence and leadership in government, private institutions and voluntary organizations.

Commenting on the role of the Church in "socialist societies" where it is definitely in a minority position, the Czech theologian expressed his belief that "the positive and growing democratization of our society would not have been conceivable without the quiet, steadfast presence of our Churches."

He mentioned specifically the "new depth of our dialogue with Marxists" as "one of the most encouraging experiences in our existence as Churches."

"We find we have a great deal to say to each other, in spite of all our radical ideologi-

cal differences," he said. "This is a sign of a true opening up of a society which has often been called 'closed'."

Lochmann noted that even the still powerful and influential Churches in the west become "minority churches" in the face of growing secularism. He urged that Christians "no longer act as those who know everything better or who know all the truth, but as those who help to find truth as 'midwives'."

He posed the two great prophetic issues of our time as: peace and the equal distribution of the world's wealth. Castro immediately called for a reversal of the order. "Let us have justice between nations, then we will have peace," he said.

## ROLE OF CHURCHES IN REVOLUTIONS

★ An Indonesian participant in the conference on Church and Society called upon the churches to work toward ending the "untenable division of mankind into an affluent minority and a starving, backward majority."

"They must at the same time serve as agents for conciliation between the new and older states, working to overcome resentment and the sense of superiority, and beginning within the household of God," declared General Tahi B. Simatupang.

General Simatupang, who was deputy chief of staff of the Indonesian army during his country's struggle for independence, said that to harness the "revolutionary steam" of developing nations so "the train of revolution can move toward concrete aims" should be the concern of the conference.

"The new confidence, hope, vision and dynamic of developing nations must not be romanticized," he said, but directed toward specific goals.

"Christians," he went on,

"must be in the revolution as people who, while having an open eye for its pretensions, at the same time take its promises and hope more seriously than anyone else, infusing a great sense of realism and responsibility into the thinking of revolution."

Citing the developing nations "double leap . . . from dependence to independence and from a post-colonial situation toward a developed, modern society," Gen. Simatupang said that the Indonesian struggle for independence "brought people to a realistic understanding, sometimes bordering on cynicism, of the tenacity of vested interests."

Such interests, political, economic, racial and otherwise, he said, were "only prepared with great reluctance to accept fundamental changes in the face of an over-whelming pressure."

The Indonesian leader acknowledged that the future progress of the developing nations "will certainly depend upon the social motivation, the social discipline and social sacrifice of the people concerned."

But he stressed that it is also related to "the policies of the developed nations during the next ten to twenty years," and he concluded by asking if their relationships with the developing nations in this period will be "in terms of growing co-operation or in terms of growing antagonism."

## NONE PRESENT FROM CHINA

★ Representatives from the People's Republic of China were noticeable by their absence at conference on Church and Society.

M. M. Thomas of India, conference chairman, observed that the absence of Chinese Christians "leaves a serious gap" in the delegations present from eighty nations.



# EDITORIAL

## Poor Man, Rich Man At Geneva

WHEN the World Conference on Church and Society convened in Geneva, Switzerland, it was the first time in nearly thirty years that such a large-scale attempt to examine the Christian's responsibility in the world has been made. It was in Oxford, England, in 1937 that the last such world conference was held.

Immense changes have taken place since then. There has been world war two, the splitting of the atom, the formation of the United Nations, the cold war, the formation of many new nations, and many other changes in the world.

In the Churches vast changes have occurred. The World Council of Churches itself has been formed and its membership has become truly worldwide rather than largely European and American. The Russian Orthodox Church has joined. The Vatican Council has revolutionized the ecumenical scene. All of these developments would seem to indicate that a worldwide look at the Church's role in society was overdue.

This is reinforced by the climate of activism now current in Church involvement in such areas as civil rights, the war on poverty, and anti-war protests in this country and also to be found in Churches in the newer nations.

Combined with the current theological emphasis on the secular and the need for "religionless Christianity," the Geneva conference comes at a moment to crystalize and carry forward a Christian thrust in social action.

The wide gap between the thinking of Church leaders in poor and rich countries characterized the conference at the half-way point.

The Rev. Paul Abrecht, executive secretary of the WCC's department on Church and Society and the chief architect of the meeting, said many western participants were "shocked" at the challenge to western ideologies and structures voiced by speakers from developing countries.

"Churches of the west have been ignorant, even complacent about the gap." Abrecht said

in a press conference progress report on the meeting. "Now illusions have been swept away. There has been plain speaking and we are moving to a more constructive stage."

More than half of the 410 churchmen and lay professionals from social, economic and political fields at the conference have never previously attended such a world session. Most of these were from developing countries in Asia, Africa and Latin America.

Conference Chairman M. M. Thomas, director of the Christian Institute for the study of religion and society at Bangalore, India, said the conference was facing the question: "What is love in terms of structures?"

"We are not here to say we should love one another," he added. "I would hope the meeting need not say that. We are here to find what structures are needed to express love for our neighbor in the world today — what sort of economic and political structures are needed nationally and internationally."

In the first days of the conference, Abrecht commented, participants from developing countries justified their nationalism and strongly criticized the west but the western participants were not "hitting back." He added that he did not expect that situation to continue.

The official called the confrontation between points of view one of the conference's early achievements and said it could "help bring about a friendlier atmosphere and real dialogue" between developing and industrialized worlds.

What this dialogue produced in the way of a Message to Christians throughout the world is presented in a summary in this issue. It was released on July 25, a few hours before the two-week gathering came to an end.

Many trees have stood forth during these two weeks — sturdy oaks, stately pines, peaceful maples and, we suspect, a few birches. At the moment it is difficult to see the forest for the trees. Articles by the Rev. Joseph Fletcher and the Rev. Arthur Walmsley in our next number will, we are sure, bring the decisions and activities of this important conference into focus.



# CHRISTIANS AT GENEVA ASK RADICAL ACTION

## A BRIEF SUMMARY OF THE MESSAGE TO CHRISTIANS THROUGHOUT THE WORLD FROM THE CONFERENCE ON CHURCH AND SOCIETY

THE WORLD-WIDE CONFERENCE, after two weeks of deliberations, called for the acceptance of "radical" action for promoting rapid social change.

The call was sounded in a "message" in which the conference summarized its discussion of ways to meet social and economic stresses.

The conference predicted that considerable tension was to be expected for some time within the Christian community between those who believe in "quiet efforts" and those who take a "more radical or revolutionary position" in promoting social transformations.

"At the present moment," the message said, "it is important for us to recognize that this radical position has a solid foundation in Christian tradition."

The radical position has "its rightful place in the life of the Church and the ongoing discussion of social responsibility," the message said.

In its final message the conference said that its discussions had given rise to a "new sense of urgency" about the need for "serious study and dynamic action" by all Christians on the major issues of the day.

Four reports were prepared for consideration.

- In one report the conference, which had earlier criticized as unjustified the United States military build-up and bombings in Vietnam, said that the escalation of the war "aggravates ill feeling between races" because Americans and other non-Asians are fighting Asians in an Asian country.

- In the same report the continued existence of anti-semitism as "an issue among Christians" was deplored. Churches were urged "to insist that no discrimination should be made among men for religious, racial or ethnic reasons."

- The conference denounced the present white regime in Rhodesia, which declared its inde-

pendence of Britain in November of last year, as "illegal," and identified itself "with the African nationals of Rhodesia in their quest for majority rule."

- The delegates said that the "Churches see in biblical teaching the sanctity of monogamous marriage."

"But," they continued, "we have to face the fact that pre-marital and extramarital intercourse is not uncommon in any country."

- A conference report urged Church support of research to "help powerless groups achieve social and political change" because the Church's "continuing bias should be for those who are powerless and deprived."

- The conference urged the establishment of new Church structures "to keep in touch with science and technology."

Further theological and ethical reflection is required, the conference said, to assist Christians to decide issues such as those facing scientists who wonder whether to release a new drug before all the effects are known, families who ponder how to cope with new birth control devices and contraceptive pills, and political leaders who must decide the priorities among research programs.

### Unofficial Demonstration

At the close of the conference about 150 delegates marched the relatively short distance from the headquarters of the World Council of Churches to the square in front of the Palais des Nations, former headquarters of the League of Nations. It now houses offices of the United Nations. The march was not sponsored by the conference, though a resolution was introduced asking the delegates to do so.

At the square, in a statement read in six languages, the demonstrators called for an immediate halt to the war in Vietnam.



# TWENTIETH-CENTURY IDOLATRY

By John M. Krumm

*Rector of Church of the Ascension, New York*

## ONLY AS MEN ARE POSSESSED OF GOD'S SPIRIT DO THEY FIND REAL SECURITY

A RECENT HISTORY of fifteenth-century England quotes one of the kings of the period as saying, "God of his grace hath sent me with the help of my kin and of my friends to recover the throne"; and the historian adds, "All through history men will say 'God' when they mean themselves or their own interests." That is as good a way as any to describe what the Bible means by idolatry. The Bible talks a great deal about idolatry and — curiously for many modern people — almost not at all about atheism. In the Ten Commandments there is no commandment which says man must believe in God. The people of the Bible take it for granted that everyone believes in something which serves the function of a god for him. Everyone has some cause or purpose or person to which he devotes himself and his energies in the belief that he is sacrificing himself for something supremely important and worth-while. So the Ten Commandments take that for granted.

But the Ten Commandments are apparently greatly concerned about how men understand the nature of God, the way they speak to him and about him, the way they understand his relationship to their own lives. So the first three commandments remind us that we are to worship only the one, true, genuine, authentic God of reality, to avoid setting up anything less than him as the center of our devotion, and to speak of him only with reverence and awe and a sense that we are speaking of what we can never fully understand or describe or represent. These are the dangers the first three commandments warn us about, and they add up to the danger of idolatry. Even today, men will say "God" when they mean themselves and their own interests. So when we celebrate all that we have come to know about God as he makes himself known to us as Father and as Son and as Holy Spirit,

let us draw the line more clearly than we sometimes do between this true and real God and the idols that falsely claim our ultimate loyalty and total devotion.

### Sins of the Flesh

PERHAPS the first thing to notice is that an idol — a false god — is usually able to be successful in his imposture and impersonation because he resembles the real God in some ways. For example, a successful idol usually represents some important and worth-while undertaking or purpose or cause. It is true that men and women can make even fairly trivial and unworthy things into idols. St. Paul says that some people in his day made a God out of their belly — which means, I take it, that they idolized the pursuit of comfort and pleasure and sensual satisfaction. The New English Bible translates this verse: "Appetite is their god." But most thoughtful or serious people are aware that although they often act as if appetite were their god, it cannot really be an adequate center of meaning and purpose for human existence. So the clergyman who warns against the dangers of sensuality and self-indulgence will probably get an attentive hearing, but he may be missing some of the subtler dangers.

It is interesting that Jesus did not often warn men against the sins of the flesh, although he does not obviously condone them. He seems to realize that most people see through that idol fairly easily. What he warns his hearers against are some of the more plausible idols — idols that represent some really high and worthy and noble purpose which, nevertheless, is not quite high or worthy or noble enough to take the place of God. The more godlike a cause is, the more likely that it will be a candidate for man's idolatry, set up in the place where only the true and real and living God deserves to stand.



## Idolizing Good Causes

THERE IS more danger that we will idolize some of our current campaigns to make the world better, for example, than that we will idolize our appetites — simply because human betterment is a higher purpose than satisfying appetites. This is in no way a criticism of these movements. Quite rightly, many Christians have given endorsement and sacrificial leadership to the cause of civil rights and world peace and the abolition of poverty. But the Christian will also know that these are campaigns led and directed and sponsored by fallible and sinful men, men who sometimes make mistakes, men who sometimes see things in only one perspective and who consequently become too easily dogmatic and oversimplify complicated situations. The worshippers of an idol often see only one issue, one cause, one concern as worth-while and do not see as clearly the legitimate claims of other concerns and interests. There is an obvious obsession, for example, of many passionate crusaders for peace and civil rights to publicize and dramatize their points of view without giving due attention to the rights of others who disagree with them. When I read of a peace group which deliberately sits down in front of a military parade in order to disrupt it, I think I see a worth-while group which is in real danger of idolatry.

Christians who know that God alone is deserving of absolute and unqualified and total devotion and who know that he judges and sifts the motives and purposes of even the best men and women and of even the most worth-while and humanitarian causes will serve the good causes of the world with a readiness to correct their one-sidedness and to acknowledge the honesty and sincerity of those who oppose them.

## Demand for Sacrifices

THE SECOND WAY an idol impersonates the true God is by demanding sacrifices. Since God represents the supremely worth-while, he can make absolute and total demands. It is one of the signs of how incurably religious men really are that even the most inadequate idols can command glorious sacrifices. I have been reading the story of the battle for Berlin in 1945 and I am both fascinated and appalled at the way a raving lunatic of a leader could command the total destruction of the German nation by its own military forces and be fanatically obeyed.

The true God demands sacrifices, too, but there is a significant difference. The idol consumes and annihilates what is sacrificed to him; the real God gives back what is offered and gives it back glorified and enhanced and transfigured. St. Paul had found that to be true, as we know from what he wrote to the Galatians: "I am crucified with Christ; nevertheless, I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me." He had lost everything for Christ's sake — his reputation and status, his friends and associates, his favorite ideas about religion. But he was not destroyed. He received life back again — his identity and significance, his freedom, his power to be himself. He was more alive than ever, though now Christ was living in him and through him.

Professor William May of Smith College has used a bold and very disturbing symbol to illustrate the difference between the real God and some of the causes and purposes that we substitute for the real God. He calls attention to the symbolism of the use of the flag to cover the coffins of the men who have died serving their country. This is done, of course, out of respect to the men who have sacrificed so much for their country. But there is a disturbing part of that ceremony of respect. The flag is always carefully removed and folded neatly and taken away as the coffin is lowered into the ground. So Professor May concludes:

"The symbolism is inescapable . . . A man may die for his country, but the country does not die for the man. The man is dead; long live the country . . . A man may die for a cause, but the cause does not die for the man. That is at once the source of its nobility and the limit on its power as a cause."

## Revealed in Jesus Christ

HOW DIFFERENT — as Good Friday and Easter remind us — is the real and the true God who is revealed in Jesus Christ. He does not first demand sacrifice from us but offers himself on our behalf and in our place. "He was crucified under Pontius Pilate, he suffered and was buried." And so the real God can accept our sacrifices and assure us that they are miraculously the means of a fuller and a wider and deeper life than ever before because they are taken up into Christ's own self-offering, which was his glory. So in the liturgy of the



Holy Communion, as we present our offerings at the altar, perhaps we can imagine that we are offering up the things in which we have trusted too much to give meaning to our lives: the loyalties and commitments, the causes and the purposes, even the persons whom we have sought to idolize by our love and devotion. None of them has the power to be God, but all of them can be opportunities of responding to God and ways of serving God. And when we see our sacrifices in that light, we can believe that none of our sacrifice is in vain.

We have already begun to talk about a third way in which the idol resembles the real God and yet is profoundly different from him — and that is his reliability. God has to be dependable. Men obviously are born and die, and their memory is soon lost. So their religious quest is always partly a quest for something that will outlast them. So the idol must have the illusion of permanence. He must insist that he can survive the vicissitudes of earthly existence. But, of course, the idol turns out to have feet of clay and topples over in its turn. Part of the evidence that it is an idol is its inability to change its form and to survive the revolutions of history. Some of the desperation of idolatry is evident in the fanatical resistance of some groups of Americans to the changes which are overtaking our familiar patterns of national life. Soren Kierkegaard in his *Journal* imagines a man who goes mad because he can think of nothing else but the fact that the earth is rotating on its axis. Living with instability is too unsettling for many people, and they must find security in something that simply cannot be permitted to change.

### New Ways Will Be Found

THE REAL GOD guarantees only the security and stability of himself and his purposes of responsibility and freedom and love. Everything else passes away. Only as men are possessed of his spirit do they find a security beyond the ordinary securities which idolatry promises. The spirit of God is like the wind, blowing where it will, unpredictable, free, far-reaching. Think of the cultures and societies which Christianity has survived. It broke out of the Jewish environment of ideas and institutions and made itself at home in the Greek-Roman world. When that world began to come apart, it did not die with it but took root in the mediaeval world. When that world was

assailed by forces of modernity, by new learning, new explorations and discoveries, new movements of classes and nations, Christianity once again was able to find a home in the new kind of world that came to birth.

Today that world, too, is falling apart, but men can believe that God's spirit will find new ways to live and to move and to prevail. The worshipper of idols has the frantic task of always propping up his god, protecting and rescuing him from destruction. Such anxiety is a blasphemy with respect to the real and the true God. He is the holy God who was and is and is to come.

We shall have to let our ways of thinking of him die — to change our picturing him, our describing him without supposing that God himself has died. The anxious and frightened churchmen who resist such changes prove that they are worshipping an idol of traditional words or familiar formulae. The real God is always a God whom we can never fully describe, who dwells in light inapproachable, whom no man has seen nor can see. The faith of the Christian man, unlike the faith of an idolater, is a faith which, as someone has said, is strong enough to doubt, deep enough to question, sure enough to see old pictures and ideas disappear and to know nevertheless that God himself abideth forever.

A wise man once said something which showed that he understood what it means to speak about God. He said, "When I say I believe in God, I mean that nothing is certain." The true God is not another name for my interests and my understanding of what life means. The true God is the unshakable foundation of reality itself — always beyond our grasp — the God who will not allow us to give him some human name as if he were some identifiable, historical being. We rejoice today that he has made himself known to us in Jesus of Nazareth — but chiefly in his death and resurrection and by the indwelling of his spirit, which means that we do not cling to the human Jesus as to a dead cultic hero but worship a God who, although present and shining through his countenance, belongs to the ages and comes to us again as a free and untrammelled spirit. This is the meaning of the doctrine of the Trinity, and we worship this God in the assurance that only he and those who find their life in him abide forever.



# THE TOLERATION OF DISSENT

By Ralph W. Jeffs

*Episcopal Chaplain at University of Southern California*

## THE PRESSURE TOWARD CONFORMITY IN AMERICAN LIFE IS A DANGEROUS TREND

AS I LOOK BACK over the last 25 to 30 years — from my own grammar school and high school days to the present — one of the things I notice in American society is a change in our ability to tolerate dissent and permit diversity. As I see it, it is not a change for the good. There seems to be at present, and it has been growing since world war two, a growing pressure for conformity in dress, behavior, opinion, and the expression of opinion.

One can see this growing pressure for conformity in the present struggle going on in some schools over the length boys are allowed to wear their hair. Of course, some of us can remember when the issue was how short one should wear it. When crew-cuts first became popular among school boys, in the late '30's and early '40s, there were many parents and teachers who were very unhappy. And when "mohawk" haircuts were the rage, they were horrified. Some of you will remember the "mohawk," — the head shaved except for a strip about two inches wide and about an inch or two long down the center of the skull. It was not a very attractive style, but I do not remember anyone being expelled from school for wearing it.

Recently you may have read in the paper of one boy who was suspended from high school until he got his hair cut. He went to the barbershop and had it all shaved off, a la Yul Brynner, only to be suspended because it was too short. This would be funny, of course, except that it indicates that the issue was not the length of his hair, but his unwillingness to conform to an imposed standard of conformity — and this insistence on conformity, I would submit, is not a funny thing.

The strange thing is that these demands for conformity in dress and appearance are being exerted by administrators and parents who themselves — at least those over forty — grew up in an era of considerably more freedom than

they are willing to allow their children. I can remember the occasion, for instance, when the entire football team of Fremont High School, in this city, bleached their hair — and beards, for about half of them had grown beards — a bright platinum blonde. Some of them came out green and some sort of orange. A lot of us thought it was pretty stupid, but I don't think any of the authorities got very excited about it.

### Intolerant of Dissent

OF COURSE, hair styles and clothing styles are not crucial questions, except to the young who are struggling to find their own identity, who are struggling to become authentically themselves and not rubber stamps of their parents. Those of you who have experienced military service will remember that two things happened to you very soon after induction: (1) your hair was cut as short as possible, and (2) everybody was dressed alike. Of course, these two things were done deliberately to destroy as much individuality as possible. This is necessary, I suppose, in the army, but it is hardly what most of us want for a permanent way of life.

It seems to me that this furor over boys' haircuts is just one example of a broader kind of pressure toward conformity in American life, one symptom of what I consider a dangerous trend — the inability to tolerate dissent and diversity. One can see this in politics. In the '30's in this country there was a range of political opinion being openly expressed ranging from the pro-Nazi, anti-Semitic, racist Father Coughlin on the one hand to the Communist party on the other.

Today, anybody left of President Johnson or right of Barry Goldwater is suspect. That doesn't leave much room in the middle, in view of the fact, as some columnists have noted, that President Johnson — at least in his foreign policy — has fulfilled virtually all of Mr. Goldwater's campaign promises. There is merit in



the criticism of many persons — I think particularly of students — who feel that there is virtually no difference between the Democratic and Republican parties. And the disturbing thing is that any departure from that narrow middle ground — whether left or right of it — is often spoken of, even by high-ranking government officials, as though it verged on treason.

### Christianity and Democracy

I CAN IMAGINE at this point that many of you are saying, "Why doesn't he get off hair styles and politics and preach religion?" Well, there is a direct connection between the concerns I have been trying to raise and biblical religion. The Christian gospel is a gospel of freedom. It is no accident that historically the only free, democratic nations in the world emerged where there was a strong New Testament Christianity.

It is customary to trace the roots of western democracy to the Athenians. That is a fallacy. In the first place, Athenian democracy never included more than a small minority of the population, based on a slave economy. Secondly, it flowered only briefly and failed, being succeeded by a series of tyrants and by the empire of Alexander the Great, who allowed himself to be worshipped as a god, and then by the empire of the Caesars.

The fact is that political democracy as we know it developed out of the Protestant Reformation, when the Church threw off the final ecclesiastical holdovers of Roman imperialism and began to discover again the source of its life in the scriptures — in the prophetic tradition of the Old Testament and in the gospels.

So there is a very direct connection between political and personal freedom and Christian faith. True, the Church has not always understood that; there is always a tendency for the Church to fall back into legalism and puritanism. But the Church when it is true to the gospel is always on the side of a maximum of political and personal freedom, even to the extent of tolerating some rather odd personal behavior.

### The Old Testament

THERE IS certainly plenty of this in the Old Testament prophets: Nathan, confronting King David, the highest political authority in the

land, telling him he is under the judgment of God.

Isaiah, statesman and counselor to the king, challenging the foreign policy of the rulers of his country, their reliance on military might and foreign alliances based on expediency rather than on commitment to justice and integrity at home and abroad, crying out "Do not call conspiracy all that this people call conspiracy, and do not fear, nor be in dread. But the Lord of hosts, him you shall regard as holy, let him be your fear, and let him be your dread."

### The New Testament

ONE WONDERS what reception John the Baptist would receive in our society. He was a truly wild man, even in his own day. He drank no wine, in a society where it was a staple of the diet. He wore the skins of animals and lived in the desert. He ate grasshoppers and wild honey and called the king an adulterer. And he never cut his hair.

Or our Lord himself. Tender as he was with the lost and the lonely, the outcasts of society, he was certainly outspoken in his controversies with the self-righteous Pharisees and the cynical, double-dealing Sadducees who ran the country. Whatever else he was, Jesus was never one to conform to the prejudices of the aristocracy or of the solid middle class who had the power and prestige in his day, as in ours.

If any further connection need be established between the gospel and freedom of opinion and expression, I would refer you to the great essay entitled *Areopagitica*, written by John Milton in the 17th century. It is one of the great defenses, on Christian grounds, of freedom of speech and of the press. Truth, says Milton, may have more than one shape. Today's unpopular opinions are tomorrow's taken-for-granted knowledge. "Let Truth and Falsehood grapple," he cries, "who ever knew Truth put to the worse, in a free and open encounter?" The problem always, my friends, is to keep the encounter free and open.

### Draw the Line Carefully

ARE THERE, then, no limits to personal and political freedom? There are, but the limits are far broader than most of us usually like to think. Words that directly incite to riot; behavior that hurts another person; actions that undermine justice — not simply law, since some



law is unjust — these are beyond the limits of freedom and become license.

But we need to be very careful in drawing the line. A democracy can stand a great deal of dissent and controversy, and still be healthy and strong. If it seeks to stifle dissent and eliminate controversy, it has already destroyed itself; it is no longer a democracy.

And certainly those matters of personal style — the kind of clothes one wears, the length of

one's hair, the purely personal expressions of human diversity — freedom in these things ought not only to be tolerated but encouraged. The great pressures of today, some of them in the name of freedom, to limit freedom, to produce a bland, homogenized society in which people look alike, think alike, act alike, in which no one dares express a new or unpopular opinion, must be resisted, in the name of the gospel, at all costs.

## THE STILL OF THE NIGHT

By Wm. B. Spofford Jr.

*Dean, St. Michael's Cathedral, Boise, Idaho*

MOST CITIZENS of Idaho are devotees of nature. The native-born always have been such and the in-migrants have generally come here because they hear the call of the wild. Without sounding too chauvinistic in a state sense, it has to be admitted that God's creation around us is grandiose. Boise, for instance, is a city where, in March, one gets into serious conflicts on a day off as to whether to play golf or go skiing in sixteen inches of new powder on an eighty-seven inch base. The logical decision, often arrived at, is to play golf in the morning and ski all afternoon and evening!

Because of the lure of the wilderness and primitive areas; the clear, shining lakes and the many trout streams and well-stocked reservoirs backed up behind the many high dams, there is inordinate attrition in church attendance on most Sundays. During the summer, on Friday evenings, the exodus from town easily equals the flight from Egypt. Instead of the pastoral goods and chattels which were toted by the liberated Israelites, however, each pick-up truck bears a brand-new camper, generally with small motorcycle tied onto the front bumper and a trailer bearing a power-boat wagging behind. The Israelites, you see, didn't know much about affluence!

One of the Christian's bounden duties, according to the catechism, is to worship God each Sunday in his church. But, out our way, God's creative power has put a lot of extraordinary temptations in the way.

Two summers ago, we put in a 9 p.m. service in the cathedral schedule. Six years ago, we tried an evening service at 7 p.m. but it proved

to be an exercise in isolation. But, by nine p.m., in the summer, the mountains are funneling our populace back into town. And they have begun to stop into the cathedral in their shorts and levis in order to give thanks for a well-spent and re-creative weekend.

In the service, we do all sorts of things. One emphasis is to use those services in the Book of Common Prayer which most communicants once heard about in lecture 7 of the confirmation series and have never heard of or participated in since. And those who have attended seem to have discovered that there are meaningful phrases and values in those full pages which come after the propers for holy communion.

Also, the clergy have a chance to do some things and talk about some subjects which they believe to be both relevant and fun. A few of the typical emphases which have been used in the two-year period are:

The Martin Buber memorial service in which we remembered the great Jewish scholar and philosopher after his death.

The Albert Schweitzer memorial service.

The Folk-Mass, which the ecumenical youth group sang — since the lead guitar was played by one of our Jewish brethren the combination quickly became known as "The Wandering Jew and the Episco-cats".

James Thurber night, in which the writings of this profound humorist were shared; — with recorded music from Charlie Chaplin's *Modern Times*.

An ordination to the diaconate which truly came alive at that darkening hour.



A series of biographies of the Oxford Reformers — John Colet, Desiderius Erasmus and St. Thomas More — stimulated by the local Little Theater's production of "A Man for All Seasons".

A reading of Stephen Benet's "The Devil and Daniel Webster" on the night before Independence Day.

And "For the Birds" featuring the nature of bird-songs and a strong gospel on natural resource conversation by one of the canons who is an expert ornithologist.

As you can read, the gamut is wide and varied. And we have discovered that the gospel speaks through just as well in the still of the

night as it does in the glaring sun of the morning hours.

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## THE EMPTY PULPIT AT THE CATHEDRAL

Below is a news report of one of the most dramatic moments at the conference on Church and Society, with a picture of the empty pulpit on the next page.

Television viewers in eight countries were linked with the 1,000 worshippers in the cathedral for the service. Eurovision carried the pre-filmed sermon in addition to shots of the empty pulpit, but only the audio portion was heard in the cathedral.

## HOW CHICAGO RIOTS REACHED GENEVA

★ The man who could not come has become a dramatic symbol of the world's search for new freedom and a truly human society as it has been the focus of the conference on Church and Society.

The man is Martin Luther King, Jr. who was forced to make a last-minute cancellation of his visit here because of the race riots in Chicago.

"If the Church does not participate actively in the struggle for peace and economic and racial justice, it will forfeit the loyalty of millions and cause men everywhere to say that it has atrophied its will," he declared in a sermon filmed in Chicago and seen by millions in Europe over television.

The possibility before the delegates was shown by King when he said, "If the Church will free itself from the shackles of a deadening status quo, and, recovering its great historic mission, will speak and act fearlessly and insistently in terms of justice and peace, it will enkindle the imagination of mankind and fire the souls of men, imbuing them with a flowing and ardent love of truth, justice and peace."

It was in the midst of a

varied and profoundly disturbing debate about a revolutionary Church and the Church in revolutions that gun-fire and racial violence 5,000 miles away in Chicago brought "the struggles of the disinherited" into the heart of the conference. The visit of King, eagerly awaited, could not now take place. "I am sure the Council will understand the pre-eminence of my responsibility to society in these revolutionary times," he said in a telegram.

But perhaps the empty pulpit in St. Pierre Cathedral on July 17 where 1000 worshippers listened to King's voice recorded in Chicago the previous day, spoke more tellingly of the urgency of the struggle and of the potential of the Church's involvement than any other event could do.

Describing the current world state as midnight, "darkness is so deep we can hardly see which way to turn," King said, "The most inspiring word that the Church may speak is that no midnight long remains.

"Our eternal message of hope is that dawn will come . . . Faith in the dawn arises from the faith that God is good and just. When one believes this, he knows that the contradictions of life are neither final nor ultimate . . . Even the most

starless midnight may herald the dawn of some great fulfillment."

The picture on the next page is of the empty pulpit of the Cathedral of St. Pierre, and some of the more than 1,000 worshippers. From the pulpit came the familiar voice of the civil rights leader.

The day before the service in Geneva, Dr. King had gone to a church in Chicago and delivered his sermon before cameras. The film was flown to Switzerland and shown to some 80 million tv viewers throughout Europe, as it was simultaneously presented to the cathedral congregation.

## URGES DIALOGUE WITH OTHERS

★ Eight Roman Catholic observers are attending the conference. One of them, the Rt. Rev. Charles Moeller, under-secretary of the commission for the doctrine of the faith of the holy see, told a session that dialogue among Christians should be both theological and experimental. He stressed the importance of Christians seeking together, each in accordance with and in faithfulness to his own tradition, the responses they must make to the problems modern man sets before them.







## CHRISTIAN-MARXIST DIALOGUE PROPOSED

★ Initiation of an informal dialogue between Christians and Marxists on an international scale was recommended by a Church and Society conference study group as a step toward peace "and the progress of all mankind."

The study group, on theology and social ethics, also called for conversations with "right-wing ideologies," declaring that all such talks will increase the possibility of cooperation between Christians and non-Christians for the betterment of the world.

In its general comments, the report pointed out that "the Christian knows by faith that no structure of society, no system of human power and security is perfectly just, and falls under the judgment of God insofar as it is unable to reform itself in response to the call for justice by those who are under its power."

It declared that the Christian therefore is "called to speak a radical 'No', and to act accordingly, to structures which perpetuate and strengthen the status quo at the cost of injustice to those who are its victims."

## ETHIC FOR REVOLUTION URGED IN GENEVA

★ Christians and their Churches should promote radical and even revolutionary social change, the conference on Church and Society was told.

"Christian existence is revolutionary existence," declared Prof. Richard Shaull of the Princeton Theological Seminary. It is the responsibility of the Churches, he argued, to provide a "context" for revolutionary commitment by offering "a theological perspective on and ethic for revolution."

The young American theologian, the most emphatic of a

number of speakers who sounded the theme, dissented forcefully from the view that Christians should "urge exclusive reliance on nonviolent action." The important thing, he said, was to make sure that violence was being used to gain limited, otherwise unattainable objectives.

None of those who spoke about the relation of the Churches to social change maintained that they should adopt a conservative or passive stand.

## THE DEMONSTRATION FOR PEACE

★ The unofficial demonstration for peace, reported on page eight in this issue, had 225 marchers instead of 150 as stated there. (The Witness is printed in three sections thus making this correction possible).

It was organized by youth

participants in the conference who first tried to get official sanction through a resolution. It was opposed by Visser 't Hooft, WCC general secretary, who said it would be pointless without knowing what UN officials would receive the peace proposals.

Eugene Blake, the WCC secretary-elect, also disapproved, declaring that a problem was where "to start and stop the march."

When the 225 demonstrators reached the UN plaza, an address was given by Harvey Cox of Harvard who stated that the location "was chosen because of its significance in the history of man's aspirations for a just world order."

Cox stressed that the march was not a protest but a demonstration of concern and humility. Short statements on war,



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the Vietnam conflict, economic and social justice and racial discrimination were read in English, French, German, Russian, Indonesian and Spanish.

The demonstration ended with a prayer by the Rev. Henry Daniel, a minister of the Church of South India in Bangalore.

In their procession, the marchers carried placards with such slogans as "Negotiate, Don't Escalate," "Apartheid Against God" and "The Church Must Be Where the Action Is."

## THEOLOGIANS DEAL WITH REVOLUTION

★ Institutional Christianity's identification with the status quo must be recast in theological language and thought in order to recapture the original Christian revolutionary emphasis, theologians from Russia, America and West Germany declared at the conference on Church and Society.

Agreeing that a prime task for the church in the current era of social and political revolution is to undergird the basic revolutionary nature of Christianity were Archpriest Vitaly Borovoy, Russian Orthodox representative to the World Council of Churches; Prof. Richard Shaull of Princeton Theological Seminary — reported on page 17 — and Prof. H. D. Wendland of Westphalian Wilhelms University at Muenster, Germany.

Through many of its clergy and hierarchy, Archpriest Borovoy pointed out, the Russian Orthodox Church "went through all stages of rejection, opposition and even direct action against the revolution and the changes it brought to the life of the Church."

"This was no mere theoretical rejection or passive non-participation—it was bitter and open struggle," he said, adding that as a result, the Church lost millions of believers despite the fact that "the victorious revolu-

tion went its difficult way of consolidation and development without the Church."

The Russian churchman said that the overwhelming majority of believers who remained true to Christianity and the Church "became a constructive element in the building of a new society on new revolutionary bases and thus became an example to the clergy and hierarchy who had not welcomed the revolution.

"This helped the entire clergy and hierarchy to untie their life and fate with the life of the people and come to terms with what had happened," Borovoy said. He suggested that while there are legitimate Christian questions about revolutions which make men "the measure of all things," western Christians should find a lesson in the experience of the Russian Church.

Prof. Wendland emphasized the Christian obligation to "reform and improve institutions of society," to be both positive and critical toward their environment.

"The kingdom of God does not become identical with society as a result of Christian action," he said. "Secular freedom must be preserved, and the state and society must retain their own independent form.

"Christians are therefore not carrying out a 'Christian revolution,' they are working with secular, human methods of justice and politics to reform society for the sake of man.

"Christians therefore remain within the limits imposed on them in this world. They do not set up any 'Christian' orders, systems, states and societies, for their task is to humanize the secular orders."

## THE WITNESS

Will feature further reports on the Church and Society conference, and also articles about the meeting.



# Will she learn about God, too?

On her first day at school she is looking forward to learning. She will learn how to read and write, later learn history and arithmetic. But will her school teach her about God?

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## - NEW BOOKS -

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E. John Mohr  
Book Editor

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**LUX IN LUMINE:** Essays to Honor W. Norman Pittenger, edited by R. A. Norris, Jr. Seabury. \$4.50

For thirty years Norman Pittenger, sometime chairman of the Witness editorial board, taught at General Theological Seminary. Now he is joining the faculty of King's College, Cambridge University. This *Festschrift* by former students, colleagues, and friends is published in his honor as a token of appreciation felt by so many.

The problem is how to do justice to ten tightly written essays on diverse topics which have in common a high degree of excellence. Harvey H. Guthrie, Jr., shows that although the amphictyony of the Israelites was destroyed by the Philistines, what is centrally characteristic and unique was preserved after David, but now in the setting of the temple and cult to which was added messianism and eschatology. Basic to biblical faith is the theologically affirmative attitude toward ongoing history.

John Knox, who is moving to the Episcopal Theological Seminary of the Southwest after distinguished service at Union Theological Seminary, New York, writes of the "prophet" in New Testament Christology and clarifies the relationship between the followers of Jesus and those of John the Baptist.

E. V. N. Goetchius examines the meaning of "faith (pistis) in Jesus Christ" through syntactic and semantic analysis procedure, suggesting the guides and controls that should be used in theological discussion.

Rowan A. Greer 3rd is concerned with the image of God and the prosopopoeia in Nestorius. As the reviewer became convinced that he is more a Nestorian than an Alexandrian, although a complete identification with either the "heretical" or "orthodox" position is difficult, he was shown by R. A. Norris Jr., that if he uses contemporary terms, i.e., a "linguistic" interpretation, that he can rescue some of the Chalcedonian nature-substance terminology from the limbo of metaphysics. It is not too difficult after that to follow James E. Griffis as he gives a kind word to Hegel's *Logos* Christology. The reader may well be impressed by Hegel's conviction that the natural order is grounded in the eternal and that history is the working out of God's purpose.

Time is of crucial importance in

the interpretation of history and the meaning of life. However, the English word is a cover for several Greek, Hebrew, and Latin words and concepts. L. G. Patterson finds in St. Augustine a fruitful synthesis and the point of departure for our intellectual history.

Kenneth J. Woolcombe surveys recent theological developments and shows how important it is to rehabilitate the doctrine of God since the direct and descriptive method of the Scholastics is inadequate. Man wants to know not that God is but God as he is. Woolcombe is not too clear as to how the rehabilitation should occur, but his essay is at least suggestive.

Joseph Fletcher, pointing out that the relation between love and justice has been a central focus of Christian ethics and moral theology, proclaims that love and justice are the same. Although Fletcher did not convince this reviewer, nevertheless his analysis and treatment is excellent.

The concluding essay is by William H. Ralston who contrasts the views of a theologian, Barth, on a musician, Mozart, with those of a musician, Stravinsky, on sacred music, and in the process raises many questions pertaining to the relationship between music and religion.

It is customary for a reviewer of a collection of essays to say that they are of uneven quality, but in this case each contributor offered something of which he can be proud. The essays cover a broad spectrum, but so too do the writings of Pittenger. Pittenger's former students should be greatly rewarded by a serious study of his *Festschrift*. Furthermore, there is a bibliography of Pittenger's writings which is impressive indeed.

— LEE A. BELFORD

*Dr. Belford is Chairman of the Department of Religious Education of New York University.*

**THE MEANING OF PASTORAL CARE** by Carroll A. Wise. Harper & Row. \$3.50

Dr. Wise of Garrett Theological Seminary has been one of the leaders in the clinical pastoral training movement from the very beginning. During that time, he has consistently sought to bring the pastoral ministry of the ordained clergyman into focus, using psychology and sociology as the lens.

This is not one of his most creative books, since he spends a good bit of space working with the categories of Dr. Erik Ericson developed for the White House conference on children and youth in 1950, and, while the ideas are sound, it is more profitable to read Ericson's *Childhood and Society*. One gets the impression that this is a collection of papers read by

Dr. Wise on various occasions and rather artificially forced into the format of an integrated book.

Withal, there are keen thoughts and vital gems to be found in it.

— WM. B. SPOFFORD JR.

*Dean, St. Michael's Cathedral, Boise, Idaho*

**THE SOCIAL GOSPEL IN AMERICA**, by Robert T. Handy. Oxford. \$7

The secular city which today we either celebrate or deplore did not creep upon us suddenly, even if it did in many ways catch us unaware. The alarm was sounded back in the second half of the 19th century when social and economic problems were becoming critical in a changing society of swiftly growing cities and rapidly expanding industry. There were three men most notably who saw the need to enlist the Church in a crusade for social justice and thereby to make America more nearly Christian. They addressed themselves especially to Protestant Christians, shaped by a highly individualized understanding of the gospel, that they might be prepared and helped to make the transition from a rural, small town America to an urban society with unheard of and unanticipated demands imposed on man by living closely together.

The men who led this social gospel revolution were Washington Gladden (1836-1918), Richard T. Ely (1854-1943), and Walter Rauschenbusch (1861-1918). Their teaching may be learned from the excerpts from their best known and most representative writings which are prepared and edited for this volume by Prof. Robert T. Handy of the Union Theological Seminary. While their reforming thought seems almost mild compared with the radical thought of today, their writings reveal clearly the current of the mainstream of Christian social thought which shows how we got from there to here.

Modern Protestantism in this country cannot be well understood without a surer knowledge of the development of the social gospel in America. Toward this end this source book makes a valuable and much needed contribution.

— ROSCOE T. FOUST

*Dr. Foust is Director of Special Services, Seamen's Church Institute, New York City.*

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