

The **+** WITNESS

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Story of the Week

WCC Takes Stands on Rights, Peace in Vietnam, Middle East

By Betty Thompson

R. N. S. Special Correspondent

★ The World Council of Churches spoke out through its policy-making central committee on a wide variety of international issues, ranging from human rights to peace in Vietnam and the Middle East.

The committee backed its retiring general secretary, Eugene Carson Blake, in his stand against the U. S. bombing of dikes in North Vietnam and affirmed its conviction that the "violence and killing on all sides must stop."

There was no debate on the committee's Vietnam statement which like other resolutions had already been discussed in the meeting of the commission of the churches on international affairs and in a reference committee to which it had gone before plenary discussion.

Central committee members expressed their conviction that continued U. S. military presence "whether through Vietnamization, the air war, or in any form is detrimental to peace in Indochina" and called upon the President of the U. S. to order an immediate and total halt to all bombing.

The international group of Protestant and Orthodox leaders all asked for total and immediate withdrawal "as soon as possible

and in no case later than December 31, 1972." It expressed the conviction that this withdrawal would create the opportunity for different Vietnamese parties to reach "a peaceful negotiated peace without reprisals."

The WCC statement also called upon the Provisional Revolutionary Government (Vietcong) and the Government of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam (North Vietnam) to hold to their pledge to release U. S. prisoners of war in response to the cessation of bombing and the withdrawal of all U. S. military forces. It called on the government of South Vietnam to release all political prisoners and asked all foreign powers to "cease military support of Indochina pending a peaceful settlement" in response to a U. S. withdrawal.

In another statement, the central committee said the World Council of Churches "continues to express deep concern for the unsettled situation in the Middle East." It renewed an expression of anxiety about the explosive situation which "continues to threaten the peace of the world."

"We reaffirm our basic attitude as expressed in Canterbury 1969 (at a meeting of the central committee)," it added, "and urge the churches to exert all possible influence for the imple-

mentation of the principles of that statement. We once more pray and express our eager concern for a just, speedy, and peaceful solution to this crucial conflict."

A statement on human rights called for a WCC consultation on how to relate standards of human rights to the cultural, socio-economic, and political settings of different parts of the world. The consultation is to be held before the end of 1974 in order that its findings can be utilized at the council's next assembly in Djakarta, Indonesia in 1975.

The committee said the participants should include men and women from various parts of the world with knowledge and practical experience of the application of human rights.

A Norwegian Lutheran bishop asked conference planners and the World Council generally to give attention to the abridgement of human rights in countries of Eastern Europe. The Rt. Rev. Bishop Kaare Stoylen of Norway said, "For the World Council of Churches, the problem until now has been how do we communicate to a broader public our concern for people suffering because of their political and religious convictions."

Referring to the attention given by the world press to the Lenten letter of Russian novelist Alexander Solzhenitsyn which was addressed to the Moscow Patriarch, Bishop Stoylen said he felt the letter would have been better addressed to Soviet

authorities. The letter was an impassioned plea for religious liberty.

"We shall have to raise the question of how the different member churches and the World Council of Churches itself support the oppressed ones. Too lightly do we forget that on this very day four years ago we saw what happened in Czechoslovakia. But the world keeps silent about the consequences and the trials going on now," said the bishop who with other Norwegian bishops last fall signed an open letter unable to practice religious liberty.

He expressed the hope that the WCC consultation on human rights would take up such questions.

The Council also endorsed a resolution previously transmitted to member churches by its executive committee asking them to urge their respective governments to take the occa-

sion of the 25th anniversary of the adoption of the universal declaration of human rights on Dec. 10, 1973 as their goal for ratification of the international covenant on economic, social and cultural rights, and the international covenant on civil and political rights.

In another action endorsing work by its commission of the churches on international affairs, the central committee adopted a statement supporting the United Nations and attributing its political weaknesses not so much to its structures as to national self-interest and unilateral and bi-lateral diplomacy. It urged member churches to give "steadfast and realistic" support to the international body. "By expressing the claims of justice, the churches can help the U. N. to become a more effective instrument for the protection of human rights," the WCC said.

"We hope to meet with the newly elected general secretary, Dr. Philip Potter," Cardinal Willebrands said. "We know him and we commit ourselves to him in the spirit of Jesus Christ." Potter was chosen as Blake's successor at the Utrecht meeting.

Cardinal Willebrands acknowledged difficulties and problems arising from growth in "number and intensity" of Catholic-WCC contacts. He said due attention will be given, hopefully in common with the World Council, to finding the best possible solutions.

"The hand of God has not been short," he stated. "He shall take us and carry us where we hope to stay together and to glorify him with one mouth and one voice."

Both cardinals spoke in English. Cardinal Willebrands cited the work of Roman Catholics in the WCC faith and order commission and the creation of SODEPAX — a joint committee on Society, Justice and Peace — as two forms of cooperation.

"We have many reasons to be grateful for the growth of our relations over the last seven years, even if we are not fully satisfied," he said, also noting growing cooperation in mission and evangelism.

"But more important than all of this is the fact that dialogue and cooperation between us have been sought and established not for practical reasons or for mere efficiency, but for Christian and ecclesiastical motives," the Vatican official said.

Cardinal Alfrink said that the "divine message will be incredible" if the church itself is divided as it seeks to preach "that God through his son wishes to bring together all humanity into one undivided fold.

"The church of Christ is disfigured because the robe of Christ is torn, the message of

World Council Meeting Hears Two Dutch Cardinals

★ Two Dutch cardinals visited the central committee and stressed that Christian unity is the will of God.

Cardinal Bernard Alfrink of Utrecht and Cardinal Jan Willebrands, president of the Vatican secretariat for Christian unity, were introduced by Eugene Carson Blake.

Blake stressed that he had invited the cardinals in their private capacities. He spoke warmly of both, but took care to point out that Cardinal Willebrands had interrupted a holiday to come, but not as head of the Vatican secretariat.

The central committee is the policy-making unit of the ecumenical organization which has 255 Protestant and Orthodox Churches.

"The unity of Christians is

not just a voluntary matter," Cardinal Alfrink said. "It cannot just be a hobby of a few idealists or of some unreal optimists. The unity of Christians is the command of the Lord himself, and is meant for all churches and for each and every Christian."

Cardinal Willebrands expressed his appreciation for the past, present and future general secretaries of the World Council. He mentioned the "understanding, patience and friendliness" of Blake, who will retire in October, in "all cooperation" with Roman Catholics.

He recalled the first period of WCC-Catholic contacts initiated by his fellow Dutchman, W. A. Visser 't Hooft, the first general secretary succeeded by Blake in 1966.

unity which she has to proclaim to the world in the name of Christ is deformed, for we show to the world a divided Christianity."

The unity of Christians will be a hopeful sign, "a sign of peace and a sign of a happy future," Cardinal Alfrink concluded.

Faith and Order Leader Stresses Quality of Fellowship

★ Lukas Vischer, director of the faith and order secretariat of the World Council of Churches, suggested that in the future the council "not be so exclusively obsessed with the structural question" of Roman Catholic membership.

Instead, he said, attention should be directed to "the quality of fellowship between Christians of the Roman Catholic Church and of our constituency."

He made the remarks in a press conference. Later, Vischer told the central committee, the policy-making unit of the organization that "only rash prophets" could expect early membership of the Roman Catholic Church in the council.

"Fat years? Lean years? How am I to answer the question?" the Swiss Protestant theologian asked. "Slowing down perhaps. But why should this necessarily mean that the time for harvesting is over. Perhaps this is, in fact, a time of ripening. Whatever the case, our task of sowing the seed cannot be made to depend upon the chances of success."

Vischer described the work of a WCC-Vatican joint working group, a women's ecumenical liaison group and SODEPAX, a jointly staffed and funded agency on development and peace.

Both the SODEPAX commission and its secretariat in Geneva have been reduced while the staffs of two parent organizations — the pontifical commission on justice and peace in

Rome and the WCC's commission on the churches' participation in development in Geneva — have been strengthened. This will make "direct collaboration really possible," Vischer said.

As to membership of the Roman Catholic Church in the world conciliar body, he said, "When all is said and done, the question of membership must be decided by the Roman Catholic Church; it is therefore natural that they should weigh the pros and cons in the light of their own conditions and not solely in joint consultations."

"The first talks in the plenary of the Secretariat for promoting Christian unity have already brought to light a series of questions requiring further clarification on the Roman Catholic side. Conversely, the World Council will have to ask itself how it can contribute to making the fellowship of the churches, which it claims to be, more complete and effective."

Dutch Roman Catholics were asked to keep the central committee in their deliberations and prayers in a pastoral letter from the Dutch bishops released on the eve of the meeting in Utrecht. Two Catholic delegated observers, both staff members of the secretariat for Christian Unity, attended the WCC sessions here. They were Fr. Basil Meeking of New Zealand and Fr. John Long of Brooklyn. Neither spoke during the discussion following Vischer's representation.

Cardinal Jan Willebrands, president of the Vatican's unity secretariat, and Cardinal Ber-

nard Alfrink of Utrecht later made brief addresses to the central committee in private capacities.

Nine Catholic theologians participate in the faith and order commission. Catholics take part in many World Council-initiated consultations and are expected to help in planning the WCC's fifth assembly, set for 1975.

It seemed clear from an address by Eugene Carson Blake, the council's outgoing general secretary, Vischer's report and the recent study paper from the joint working group, published in the July issue of *Ecumenical Review*, that for the time being the emphasis is off the question of formal Catholic membership. It is on collaboration and fellowship in a variety of activities.

In central committee discussions, Bishop J. W. Armstrong Cashel of the Anglican Church of Ireland said that the question of mixed marriages still remains a major obstacle to unity. He urged more WCC attention to this issue.

Prof. Basil Istravidis, representing the ecumenical patriarchate of Constantinople (Istanbul), pled for hope and patience in WCC-Catholic relations. He compared the present stage with that between the council and the Russian Orthodox Church before 1961, when the Russian Church became a WCC member.

ANGEL OF ANGELA DAVIS SEEKS NEW ENVIRONMENT

★ Rodger McAfee, the farmer who put up his land as bail bond for Angela Davis, has advertised for a job in another area, because he says he must find a sane environment for his family.

The man who identifies himself as a "humanitarian communist," placed ads in two northern California newspapers. He seeks employment as a milker or herdsman.

Peruvian Bishop is Ousted For Backing Indian Work

★ Catholic Bishop Julio Gonzales Ruiz of Puno, Peru, has charged that he was forced by the Vatican to resign his see earlier this year because of his "liberal policies."

He also charged that he was "condemned without trial and without previous notification."

The 49-year-old prelate, considered by his supporters to be the most progressive bishop in Peru, leveled his charges in an interview with the Catholic review, "Com." The social action journal, labeled by its critics as "radical," is published in Rome by Benedictine Abbot Giovanni Franzoni of St. Paul's Outside-the-Walls.

Bishop Gonzales was received in private audience by Pope Paul VI early last July. Later in the month the Vatican announced that the Pope had accepted the bishop's resignation.

The Peruvian prelate reportedly was under investigation during six of his seven years as bishop. A member of the Salesians of St. John Bosco (Society of St. Francis de Sales), he was consecrated bishop in 1959 at the age of 36, thus becoming one of the youngest Catholic bishops ever appointed in recent history.

A communique issued last April from the office of Archbishop Luigi Poggi, apostolic nuncio to Peru, and published in Lima, indicated that Bishop Gonzales had been interviewed as early as 1966 by the former nuncio about "confidential matters."

The archbishop's report did not specify any charges against Bishop Gonzales, but a Lima newspaper claimed the prelate was charged with activity that might be considered heretical, criticism of the Pope, and interference with religious congregations.

It was also reported in Lima that Bishop Gonzales' liberal ideas had caused problems for the Peruvian Catholic hierarchy.

Strong support for the ousted bishop was mustered by the clergy and laity of Puno. The city's mayor and the director of Puno's Catholic charities program asked Cardinal Juan Landazuri Ricketts of Lima to intervene "in the name of the people of Puno."

A Puno diocesan assembly has asked that instigators of charges against Bishop Gonzales be named and a listing of the charges be made public. Several priests of the diocese have alleged that five Peruvian archbishops unjustly instigated the prelate's removal.

In his interview with "Com" (short for "Community"), Bishop Gonzales said, "They — church authorities — condemned me without trial and without previous notification."

Speaking of his work in Puno, the bishop said he tried to bear witness to the Christian life through sacraments and prayer "and also by organizing co-operatives, literacy campaigns, elementary education programs, irrigation projects, and agricultural development."

He said the conservative clergy of Peru were guilty of racial discrimination against Peruvian Indians, and that Peruvian bishops had never visited his Puno diocese to see for themselves the work we were doing.

The bishops, he added, "have condemned my pastoral and social work . . . without ever having seen it, without ever having spoken to the people of Puno, without ever having asked the people if they were happy with their bishop or not."

Bishop Gonzales said he had even been accused, along with three priests in his diocese, of "organizing a rebellion."

"When I began studying sociology at Lima University in 1962-63," he said, "other bishops and all the conservatives laughed at me."

The prelate charged that his fellow bishops prevented him from getting a \$50,000-grant from Rome to help build a seminary for native Indian aspirants to the priesthood.

The bishops told him, he said, that they did not think "a mad bishop" could produce priests from Indians, "who live with the bottle and die with it." This was a reference to the problem of alcoholism said to afflict many Peruvian Indians.

Bishop Gonzales also accused the Catholic Church in Latin America of ignoring the people and choosing bishops without any consultation with the people.

As a result of such policies, he said, many men are leaving the priesthood. In Peru, for example, "there are only about 2,000 priests for a population of 14 million."

CHURCH AGENCY URGES RELATIONS WITH CUBA

★ The Council for Christian social action of the United Church of Christ has called on the U. S. government to restore full diplomatic relations with Cuba.

The council also said the government should "move as rapidly as possible" to encourage trade and communications between Cuba and the "democratic nations" and to remove restrictions on travel to Cuba.

Members of the United Church of Christ were urged as private citizens to "undertake travel to Cuba to visit church groups and to seek knowledge, understanding and friendship with our neighbors to the south."

EDITORIAL

Ecology and Ecumenism

ECOLOGY in the physical world is the equivalent of ecumenism in the moral and spiritual world, the secretary general of the United Nations' conference on the human environment said.

Sir Maurice F. Strong, a Canadian, addressed a special session of the central committee of the World Council of Churches.

He said that the challenges of contemporary environmental issues demand a new set of values and that since values involve religion — environment is the proper concern of churches.

Ecology shows "the inter-dependence of the moral and spiritual dimension of man's life with the material and physical," said Sir Maurice. "The new ecology must lead to new and larger concepts of ecumenism."

A native of Manitoba, the diplomat was head of the U. N. environmental conference held in Stockholm last June. He is the likely choice to head a proposed U. N. secretariat on environment.

Sir Maurice has been active in the World Council since a 1968 conference on world cooperation and development. He is a member of several WCC units.

He told the central committee that the current environmental crisis "has demolished the illusion that man can pursue his economic goals without cost to the natural environment on which his own life and well-being ultimately depend and without limiting his opportunities and impairing the quality of his life in social and spiritual terms."

While this illusion has been shattered, he added, the attitudes and habits that accompanied environmental exploitation, especially in industrialized nations, continue to shape lives.

He urged churches to help societies face up to the need for changes.

"A large, if not dominant, proportion of the instruments of power in today's world are in the hands of the white Christian world," he said. "We must believe that peaceful change is possible, though certainly it will be accompanied by political and social turbulence, conflict and difficulties."

Margaret Mead, anthropologist, cautioned against people blaming big business and government for the environmental crisis when their own consumer demands are the cause.

It is "easier to see the power company smoke stacks belching into the sky" than to be aware of one's own two air-conditioners and the vacuum cleaner, she said.

Dr. Mead appeared at a press conference during a meeting of the central committee. She is co-chairman of the North American section of a WCC study on the future of man and society in a technical world.

She said that new institutions on a global level are needed if environmental challenges are to be met. Dr. Mead called the "nation-state" inadequate in coping with modern problems.

The anthropologist, an Episcopalian, said there should be no polarizing issues in environmental questions since they effect everyone "and no one will be here to practice any values in two generations" if answers are not found now.

Fate and Destiny

By Alfred B. Starratt

Rector of Emmanuel Church, Baltimore

ONE OF THE BEST STORIES I know as an illustration of fate is the very brief tale told by Somerset Maugham called *Appointment in Samarra*. It runs as follows:

Death Speaks

THERE WAS a merchant in Bagdad who sent his servant to market to buy provisions and in a little while the servant came back, white and trembling, and said, "Master just now when I was in the market place I was jostled by a woman in the crowd and when I turned I saw it was Death that jostled me. She looked at me and made a threatening gesture; now, lend me your horse and I will ride away from this city and avoid my fate. I will go to Samarra and there Death will not find me." The merchant lent him his horse, and he dug his spurs in its flanks and as fast as the horse could gallop he went. Then the merchant went down to the market place and he saw me standing in the crowd and he came to me and said, "Why did you make a threatening gesture to my servant when you saw him this morning?" "That was not a threatening gesture," I said, "it was only a start of surprise. I was astonished to see him in Bagdad, for I had an appointment with him tonight in Samarra."

That story is a beautiful example of what is meant by belief in fatalism. Turn and twist as you will, according to this theory, there is no way to escape what has been foreordained for you. As the song has it, "What will be will be."

Of course there are many varieties of such belief. Some people have held that all of us are unconsciously playing parts in a divine drama the whole of which has already been written by the deity. Our every gesture, every word, simply expresses what is in the divine manuscript and our feeling of free, self-originated action is an illusion. In this view everything without exception is controlled by fate.

Freedom Within Boundries

Other views allow from some free will within boundaries set by fate. It is not unusual, for example, to find Christians who believe in free will but who yet are convinced that the length of their life is foreordained by God. The relevant Bible text for fundamentalists is the sixteenth verse of Psalm 139: "... in thy book were written, every one of them, the days that were formed for me when as yet there were none of them." Similarly in Psalm 39 it is written: "Lord, let me know mine end, and the number of my days, that I may be certified how long I have to live ..."

Passages such as these may lie behind the common expression among soldiers that a man dies "when his number is up". Such fatalism about death in time of great danger somehow eases the burden of personal anxiety.

But all views of fate are not religious. The most common kind of fatalism found in recent centuries grew out of past scientific theories in which the universe was interpreted as a vast cause and effect process in which every present event is the inevitable outcome of previous causes, and in the temporal sequence every present event becomes part of the constellation of causes that determine the events that follow. The simplest illustration of such mechanistic fatalism is a series of dominos standing on edge and so placed that each one in falling hits and knocks over the one next in the series. Once you have pushed over the first domino the fall of all the others in sequence is inevitable. Scientists who accepted the Newtonian model of the universe as a gigantic machine believed that everything that happens is determined by past causes. If they accepted the idea of a god at all, it was only to round out the neatness of their theory by supplying a "prime mover" — the finger that pushed over the first domino.

Many people I know tend to be theoretical fatalists in this sense. In theory they hold that the fate of the individual is predetermined by two classes of causes: heredity and environment. But their belief is only theoretical, for in practice they behave all the time as if they could determine their future by exercise of their own free choice.

It seems to me that there is some truth in fatalism, but not the whole truth. Fate, if you want to call it that, sets certain limits around our lives that we did not choose and can not change — the time and place of our birth, the particular heritage of our set of individual genes, a very large part of the environmental conditions in which we live our days. The existentialist psychiatrist Viktor Frankle calls such limitations our "destiny." They determine the possibilities open to us during our life time, but they do not control what we shall do within the limits of those possibilities. For example, a high level of intelligence opens the way to being a doctor, a lawyer, a dentist, a teacher, etc., but the choice between such options is not predetermined. It is up to the individual.

Personal Destiny

Such an understanding of destiny helps some of us to accept the wide varieties of roles played by men as something given in the nature of things and hence to be more tolerant of those whose values differ from our own. It also helps us to realize that each person who fulfills the possibilities of his own destiny is to be counted as worthwhile. We don't blame a frog for not being a turtle. Neither should we look down on a bricklayer for not being a theoretical physicist. The Creating Power provides for variety by the conditions of individual destiny and each of us is co-operating with the Power when we realize what values we can within the limits of our unique personal situation.

Such is the destiny of some people that they can only realize passive values rather than active values. They make their contribution through what they are rather than through what they do. A few of the most inspiring people I know are people incapacitated by accident, age or illness and who take a very difficult situation with such a shining spirit that inspiration and goodness radiates from them into the lives of all others around them.

Jesus of Nazareth did that. His destiny led him at last to death on a cross. He took a very tough

thing and made a triumph of it. Such a possibility is open to most of us within the boundaries of our personal destiny.

And, of course, it makes a real difference to accept the limitations of your individual destiny not as blind mechanical accident but as a gift from God, who will accept the value of our contribution within the limits laid upon us. This saves us from resentment, and it leads to a trust that can only be expressed in metaphor — that after this life the words “Well done” await those who accepted the challenge of their personal destiny and fulfilled its possibilities however large or small they seemed to have been in the eyes of men.

Those Who Mourn

By George W. Wickersham II

Rector, St. Luke's Church, Hot Springs, Virginia

“BLESSED are those who mourn . . .” Why?

All sorts of people mourn over all sorts of things, often over things for which we wish that they would stop mourning.

Most of us are altogether too familiar with the perpetual griever, the mourner who bewails the loss of some loved one until it becomes a dominant personality trait. Not only is this trait totally self-absorbing, but also it tends to be destructive. There is nothing blessed about it. A parent, for instance, who continues to dwell on the loss of a child year after weary year invariably inflicts incalculable damage on the other children.

Then there is the man who mourns the loss of health. People soon learn never to say to him, “How are you?”, for fear that he will tell them.

And the hapless lady who cannot get over some long-passed ill-fortune — she loves to tell you about the scheming sister who inherited everything, and tell you until you begin to understand why

I once went to comfort a widow who had recently lost her husband. Here I encountered still another example of mourning which hardly seems blessed. We conversed for some time about how much she missed him before I made the amazing discovery that I was talking about her husband, and she, her cat.

Blessed are these who mourn? I find it hard to believe. And shall they be comforted? These people are never comforted. That is the whole point of their mourning: it is entirely self-centered and carefully designed to attract attention and pity.

To be comforted is the last thing which they want.

What in the world, then, is the meaning of this enigmatic beatitude? Whether you translate it with the word, “blessed”, or with the word, “happy”, there is a great deal of mourning which is definitely neither.

What Mourning Is

WHENEVER we find a questionable coin in the treasury of the New Testament, we can often find an answer to that question simply by turning the coin over. The opposite question in this instance is, plainly, “What about those who do not mourn? Are they blessed or happy?” Instantly the thought of the cold and the self-concerned comes before us and we realize why those who mourn are blessed.

Your dissatisfied, your chronic complainers, your perpetual grieverers are not really mourners at all. Something happens to you, or to someone else, and they hardly notice it. Tell the man who is hipped on his health, for instance, about your own. See how far you get. Such people never truly mourn. Their entire attention is focused on themselves. The heart which appears to be warm is actually stone cold.

It is the old story — to which we are always returning in the New Testament. Jesus is dealing with love. People mourn because they love. It is a matter of compassion.

Do we have compassion or do we not? Do we see the poor around us: the poor, the problematic and the pitiful? Do we see people? I say that if we really see them, we mourn. But if we mourn, God is with us, because all compassion comes from him.

Criminals are to the point here, and the whole question of how society should deal with them. When we suffer a great and terrible loss as a result of criminal action, the initial reaction is bound to be “find and punish”. For one thing, nobody wants to see the crime repeated. For another, anger enters, intense anger. This is only natural and, indeed, right. Any other reaction would, I think, indicate a lack of care.

St. Paul tells us, “Be angry but do not sin; do not let the sun go down on your anger . . .” In other words, get over it. To harbor one’s wrath only indicates a lack of greater care, of wider concern, of broader charity. Besides, as St. Paul also suggests, a nourished grudge gives too much opportunity to the devil. We think of that unhappy man who dwelt on his feeling against the truck driver who carelessly ran over his son. He ate,

drank and slept on them until they destroyed his judgment. Ultimately he shot the driver to death. The devil had turned one killing into three.

The Real Question

Punish! Punish! Punish! — this is society's way of turning its back on the obvious problem: how do you rehabilitate criminals? This is the question. At least it is the question for those who mourn.

True mourners — those referred to, I believe, in the beatitude — mourn not simply the loss of their own, they also mourn for those who have become so callous and calculating that they can kill in cold blood. Compassion

Compassion? What is it worth? What can it do? Well, lives have been completely turned around by compassion. *Les Misérables*! The point being that the least that we can do is try.

Maybe it will fail. I am sure that failure will be our lot, and more than once. People are still people, and we are still people. But win or lose, we

will have been engaged in an endeavor which is worthwhile.

And this is what the pot boils down to. Do we give our lives to what we really respect, or do we fritter them away on this and that — on whatever happens to offer the most obvious rewards?

If we take what is quite evidently the nobler path, the path of patience and pardon — the way of compassion, there will be no obvious rewards. Believe me, we are going to mourn: mourn the griefs, the problems and the sins of our fellow men — and they are myriad. Yes, and we are going to mourn our own griefs, problems and sins — and they are myriad too. Mourning will be our daily diet.

But believe me also, before, behind, above and beneath us will be the Everlasting Presence: the Source of compassion. Inner strength will be ours. We will need no other reward, no further comfort.

Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted.

Czech Christian Peace Group Demands Nixon Remove Troops

★ The president and general secretary of the Christian Peace Conference have issued a public letter to President Nixon in which they demand that he end the involvement of American forces in the Vietnam war.

"As Christians, we demand in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ that you immediately stop killing people and destroying large territories," says the letter signed by Metropolitan Nikodim, president, and Karoly Toth, general secretary. "We demand that you withdraw all American forces from South East Asia."

The letter refers to Nixon's

religious associations — belonging to the Quaker tradition, attending worship services and sponsoring services in the White House.

"Therefore," it continues, "we reckon you cannot ignore the fact that not only the various Quaker meetings held in your country, but the greatest Christian organizations, are most decidedly against the weapons of mass destruction used by U. S. forces in Indochina. Unprecedented bombings of defenseless civilian population, of churches, schools and hospitals, the use of

napalm, of biological and even electronic warfare, have shocked and revolted all humanity to such a degree that it cannot be passed over."

The letter denounced American policy in Vietnam as "the greatest and most damnable crime, the most terrible genocide, a demonic and automated ecocide." And it says President Nixon bears "the greatest personal responsibility for these

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crimes considered by the whole Christianity as sins against God and man."

The Christian Peace Conference was formed in 1961 by the late Dr. Joseph L. Hromadka of Czechoslovakia and served for a number of years as a major agency for cooperation between churchmen in communist countries and liberal churchmen of the west.

However, a deep rift developed in the organization following the 1968 invasion of Czechoslovakia. Dr. J. N. Ondra, a Czech who was general secretary, was forced out of office, and Dr. Hromadka, who was president, resigned in protest. Metropolitan Nikodim of the Russian Orthodox Church then emerged as the dominant figure of the conference, and at its fourth assembly, held in 1971 in Prague, he was named president. Dr. Toth of Hungary is now general secretary.

NON-UNION LETTUCE PUSHED BY U. S.

★ Cesar Chavez, director of the United Farm Workers, and an agency of the Chicago Roman Catholic archdiocese have protested in separate actions the "promotion" of non-union lettuce by the U. S. department of agriculture.

Chavez, whose union is conducting a nationwide boycott of iceberg lettuce, said in a protest note to secretary of agriculture Earl Butz that the U. S. official had become "nothing more than an agent of the growers."

The U. S. plentiful foods program, which produces Spanish-language tapes and issues them to radio stations across the country, named lettuce as "food of the month" for August.

The union learned of the tapes through the Chicago archdiocese's Latin American committee which uses tapes on its regular program. The archdiocesan committee refused to use the tapes and sent a letter stating its support of the lettuce boycott.

Chavez, in his letter to Secre-

tary Butz, protested the "use of the power and influence of the U. S. in a deliberate effort to crush the union and our non-violent boycott of non-union lettuce."

He said "if lettuce has become plentiful, it is because many Americans of good conscience have stopped eating it in order to help the farm workers. Your action is an offense against both the farm workers and those many good people who support them."

"We do not expect or think it right that taxpayer's money — as much from our sweat as that of the growers — be used in an advertising and promotional scheme to fight our boycott," Chavez added.

The farm workers leader went on to note that "all farm workers are asking for are the same benefits other American workers take for granted — the right to bargain collectively, the right to have enough food to eat, the right to make a better life for their families They are not asking the government to provide them with these things, but they do not expect the government to oppose them."

WCC RENEWES APPEAL FOR MORE FUNDS

★ The WCC policy-makers concluded their meeting with a letter to be sent to the member churches: "The church does not have to seek out where she can enter the battles of our times; they are raging through our own community." But despite deep alienation, "at least we can witness to our experience that there is in Christ that which binds us together despite ourselves."

The committee renewed an appeal to churches to set a target figure of 2 per cent of their regular income for development. Impact to date of the appeal was described as "limited but significant." The 2 per cent fund does not aim at "more monetary resources with old-aid mentality." It is intended for "human development" in all countries.



Laymen speak out

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