

German Youth Queried On Religion Role

Hamburg — (NC) — According to a survey among 1,000 young Germans, only 62 per cent consider religion to be of any importance to them personally. And only 43 per cent believe in a life after death.

THE SURVEY was made by the North West German Radio corporation in an effort to probe the mentality of Germany's youth between the ages of 15 and 24. Few, if any, of them saw service in the German army, but most of them received at least part of their education while the schools were under the domination of the Hitler regime.

The survey showed a considerable difference between young Catholics and Protestants regarding their attitude toward religion. Seventy-eight per cent of the Catholics but only 53 per cent of the Protestants answered "yes" when asked: "Is religion of importance to you personally?"

The overall figures revealed an affirmative answer from 62 per cent, and a negative answer from 38 per cent, while 12 per cent voiced no opinion. The answers also showed some interesting differences in the attitude of the two sexes. In the case of boys and young men, the importance of religion apparently decreases as they grow older. In contrast, girls and young women evince declining interest in religion between the ages of 15 and 24. Then it suddenly rises to reach 78 per cent among those 24 years old.

THIS TRENDSHOWING is interpreted as showing an increased appreciation of religion on the part of young women who are engaged or married.

Condemned Bishop Reported Still Alive

Vienna — (RNS) — The Austrian Catholic Press Service here said today that Bishop Eugene Tisserant, who had been sentenced to death by a Bulgarian Communist Court in October 1952 on charges of espionage and subversive activity, is believed to be in the prison of Plovdiv, near the Greek-Bulgarian border. Press authorities are reported to have advised the bishop's relatives that he had been permitted to receive food parcels.

Bishop Turner Ousted From Red China

Hong Kong — (NC) — Canadian-born Bishop Kenneth Turner was among a new group of the swiftly mounting number of missionaries forced out of communist China.

Bishop Turner, a 48-year-old native of Montreal and a missionary in China for 13 years, was the first member of the Scarborough Foreign Missionaries to be raised to the hierarchy. He served as Bishop of Lushu for five years, two of them under house arrest.

Bishop Turner's ouster came as somewhat of a surprise to Catholic circles here because it was only months ago that the Reds freed him from house arrest, restored his cathedral and permitted him to conduct services there.

These freedoms were granted during the short-lived communist "peace offensive" immediately after Stalin's death. Later the Bishop was again placed under house arrest.

Bishop Tissot had been under arrest since 1950. With heavy chains hanging from his legs, the Bishop was placed on "trial" in October of this year. He was accused of the usual charges of "imperialism, reaction and opposition to the independent Church movement."

His sentence was two years in prison — after having already been confined for three years. The Bishop suffered from a heart ailment and other complications so the communists decided to expel him.

Vatican Aids Sit-In Strikers

Rome — (RNS) — Aid given by the Pontifical Assistance Commission to sit-in strikers at the Salvissona engineering plant at Florence "does not signify that the Vatican backs principles of class struggle," Vatican circles explained here.

The Pontifical Commission, they said, simply offered its help to workers who were in dire need and who "without this help, would have been unable to exist while awaiting a solution of their problem."

The strikers staged the sit-in demonstration to protest the announced closing down of the plant. The Pontifical Commission provided them with camp beds and blankets and cash sums for their families.

Florence's Catholic Mayor Giorgio La Pira, who earlier had received a letter of sympathy from Vatican Secretary of State Magr. Giovanni Battista Montini, attended a Mass celebrated inside the factory for the workers.

New Blanshard Book Seen As Travesty On Catholic Ireland

Born and educated in Ireland, the author of the following article is thoroughly familiar with religious social and economic conditions and problems there. During his 27 years as a newspaperman in the United States he has returned at intervals to visit his native land.

By THOMAS F. DOYLE
(Staff Writer, N.C.W.C. News Service)

America's top-mouthpiece of secularism has sounded another all-out anti-Catholic alarm—this time against what he calls the Irish Catholic threat to American democracy.

The alarm has been raised by Paul Blanshard in a new book entitled, "The Irish and Catholic Power," which musters a great array of facts, but does not do more than prove once again how impossible it is for a secularist to grasp the essential meaning of Catholicism, or, indeed, of any truly spiritual concept of life.

Catholicism in Ireland and the "Irish Catholic power" in the United States are the dual themes of Mr. Blanshard's book. It promises to add fuel to the fires of controversy set off by his two previous volumes, "American Democracy and Catholic Power" and "Communism, Democracy and Catholic Power."

Mr. Blanshard calls Ireland "the No. 1 exhibit of Roman Catholic power in the English-speaking world" and "the best yardstick for the measurement of Catholic social policy in the West." He pictures Irish Catholic "power" as a dire menace to the principle of Church-State separation in this country. He does so in the face of the fact that American Catholic leaders have been traditionally united in upholding such separation in their country.

Essentially, Mr. Blanshard's book is an attempt to create in American non-Catholic minds a nightmarish conception of what would happen if Catholics were to become predominant in America. Pointing to the Irish influence in the United States, he pictures Irish Catholicism as "a super-natural and distinctive form of the original Faith... more dogmatic than the spirit of Rome itself."

Mr. Blanshard was in Ireland six of the twelve months he spent writing his new opus, which is crammed with what he claims are thoroughly documented facts. Facts, however, can be chosen to fit any thesis, and "The Irish and Catholic Power" is no exception. The crucial weakness of the book is the author's utter incapacity to understand what Catholicism is. He betrays, in particular, a complete incomprehension of those traditions that have given to Irish Catholicism a special quality. His book cannot be a travesty.

MR. BLANSHARD devotes the major part of the book to the Catholic Church in Ireland, in the apparent belief that if America ever became Catholic, "Ireland would be the living model of a new order in which the policy of Church-State separation under a democratic government."

According to Mr. Blanshard, although the Church in Ireland has "no official share" in the government and all religions are guaranteed equal treatment under the Constitution, there is an "oblique acknowledgment of clerical authority." He calls Ireland a clerical state in which the hierarchy resorts to "political intervention" when it deems it. Pressing the charge that Ireland is a "mutilated" democracy, Mr. Blanshard refers to the occasion in 1950 when the Irish Bishops cautioned the Dublin government against a Mother and Child Health Service bill because of moral dangers inherent in it. The bill was withdrawn and another measure to which the Bishops opposed no moral objection was subsequently enacted.

THIS CASE is given considerable airing by Mr. Blanshard, who apparently does not accept the right and duty of Catholic Bishops—especially in a country where all but a comparatively handful are Catholics—to speak out on the spiritual or moral implications of any legislation. Significantly, the only Irish newspaper to protest the Bishops' intervention was the (Protestant) Irish Times of Dublin, a publication which Mr. Blanshard frequently quotes in his effort to depict Ireland as a "priest-ridden" country.

Mr. Blanshard cannot understand why Prime Minister de Valera or any other high government official should genuflect at public ceremonies to kiss the ring of the Papal Nuncio or of any Irish Bishop.

Lacking any idea of the exalted status of the hierarchy in Catholic eyes, he doubtless finds it impossible to accept the definition given by the late Cardinal Suhard of Paris, who spoke of the Hierarchy as "the astounding prolongation in time of the mystery and the very person of Christ." When he speaks of the Bishops being Ireland's "second parliament" and of priests acting as "moral policemen," he stands exposed as rejecting the supremacy of the spiritual in the lives of men—a supremacy which is reflected in Ireland in the fervent Catholicism of its people.

Criticizing the "control of sex" by Irish priests, Mr. Blanshard does the full panoply of the anti-Catholic propagandist. He implicitly belittles the demands of chastity prevailing among the Irish, and makes much of the laxity of the few. He throws an attempt to encourage young people in professions of piety, or in ambitions to enter the religious life.

He refers to Matt Talbot, the reformed Dublin Drunkard whose sanctification came in new being considered in Rome, as a "fanatic."

He charges the priests with trying to keep the Irish in "a state of moral childhood." He ridicules the Catholic doctrine of Purgatory and indulgences. In certain Irish circles, he claims, there are many who are possible about democracy and cherish pro-fascist tendencies.

With the spiritual myopia evident all through his book, Mr. Blanshard naturally must object to the strong censorship which Ireland exercises to keep its young people uncontaminated by anti-religious and morally dangerous books, newspapers or films. He reports with evident indignation that he says are signs that "the foreign cinema is helping to break down the Catholic isolation promoted by the priests, and to give the common people glimpses of a world in which moral values do not necessarily center in the Catholic Church."

MR. BLANSHARD takes particular exception to the Irish system of denominational schools. He would abolish the segregation of the sexes, the compulsory teaching of Irish, and, above all, the close identification of education with religion. The fact, as he himself points out, that these schools tend to protect the faith of the children, does not hinder him from complaining of children who "tend to think of the priest as the central figure in their moral universe."

Two of Mr. Blanshard's chapters—one tracing Irish history from ancient to modern times, and the other dealing with the complex issue of Partition—are, in the main, "acceptable" enough. For the rest, he has depicted Ireland as a "priest-ridden" Catholic. If somewhat milder, counterpart of Calvin's Geneva of the 16th century.

The final chapters of Mr. Blanshard's book mainly rehash, with some new information added, all of the stock charges that have been made against the Irish Catholic hierarchy in the United States by anti-Catholic propagandists.

Mr. Blanshard continues, divorce would be abolished, birth control outlawed and the present public school system replaced by a denominational system entirely supported from public revenue. He contends, in short, that the Church would run counter to traditional American practice, especially among independent liberals, "not committed to any form of denominational partisanship."

ON SUCH specious premises, all colored by a deeply secularistic spirit, Mr. Blanshard poses an imaginary challenge to the democratic people of America. It would take not one, but many books, to refute all the charges and insinuations which he has incorporated in his newest work.

It suffices here to stress, as so many others, both non-Catholics and Catholics, have done, that loyalty to American traditions has been a characteristic of the Irish Catholics of this country from the beginning. Furthermore, there has never been any basis to the most glaring implication, if not charge, of Mr. Blanshard's book, namely, that Catholics in every country are puppets dancing to political tunes played by the Vatican.

Students Begin Crusade Of Prayer

Jersey City, N. J. — (NC) — Students of St. Peter's College here have pledged themselves to a continuous crusade of prayer in commemoration of the Marian Year.

Site Of Marian Year Opening



Rome—In this beautiful Basilica of St. Mary Major here, dedicated to the Virgin Mary, Pope Pius XII will officially open the 1954 Marian Year on Dec. 8, the Feast of the Immaculate Conception. The Marian Year, which will mark the 100th anniversary of the definition of the dogma of the Immaculate Conception, was proclaimed by the Pontiff in an encyclical letter dated Sept. 8. Special indulgences have been decreed for the faithful during the Year which will run from Dec. 8 to the same day next year. St. Mary Major is the fourth of the patriarchal churches and its site is said to have been chosen by the Virgin Mary herself when she appeared in a dream to Pope St. Liberius. (RNS Photo).

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