

By DR. CLAUD D. NELSON (Special from Rome)

Rome — (RNS) — Protestant leaders, by and large, have welcomed the Second Vatican Council not only as a potentially valuable stimulus to the movement for Christian unity and understanding, but as something that has been long overdue.

Even before the inspiration came to Pope John XXIII to summon an Ecumenical Council, Protestant churchmen — in Italy and France, especially — had suggested that the time was ripe for such an event.

In this connection, it is interesting to recall that as far back as 1922, Pope Pius XI, in his first encyclical, Ubi Arcano Dei, hinted at the need for a Council. Furthermore, this correspondent is informed, a suggestion that he summon a Council was made during the pontificate of Pope Pius XII by Ernesto Cardinal Ruffini, Archbishop of Palermo.

It is hardly necessary to stress that the need for a fresh approach to the problem of Christian division has been felt for some time by

Roman Catholics in increasing numbers. A Waldensian lawyer called my attention to an article, "At What Point is the Ecumenical Movement?" published in the Catholic-oriented Il Quotidiano di Rome on Jan. 21, 1959 — four days before Pope John's historic announcement.

The article was written by Father Charles Boyer, S.J., founder of Unitas, a Catholic postwar movement for the reunion of all Christians. The author spoke of Pope John's 20 years of activity in the Near East as a former Vatican diplomat and his deep concern over Christian disunity, which he was to voice on his election to the papal throne. In Father Boyer's opinion, the advent of the new pontificate at a time of "full ecumenical movement" was "truly providential."

In its issue of February, 1961, the French Protestant publication, La Revue Reforme, expressed the thought of a multitude of Protestants both in France and abroad that Pope John had introduced a new tone into the ecumenical dialogue, without, however, modifying Rome's

claims or demands in regard to unity. Published in the magazine was a 70-page article in which Pierre Bourgeois, its editor, said he found three possible motives for the calling of the Second Vatican Council.

One motive, he suggested, stemmed from the pressure of internal problems, among them a French Catholicism that sometimes was too adventurous for the Roman Curia's peace of mind, as in the case of the worker-priests a few years ago.

For the second motive, he pointed to the growth of the non-Roman ecumenical movement, now assuming new importance with indications that the Russian Orthodox Church and the World Council of Churches are drawing closer together. The third motive, in the editor's opinion, may have been the Catholic Church's concern over ground lost in the East during the past several years.

The recent announcement that the Russian Orthodox Church has applied for membership in the World Council brought no negative Catholic reaction here, so far as

this writer would find. However, a German Protestant publication, Christ und Welt (The Christian and the World), in its May 3 issue, reported that "Catholic circles" in Germany viewed the Russian move as "an affront to the Pope," who was "well known" to have had in mind closer relations with the Orthodox.

The writer of the article speculated whether Rome will now assiduously cultivate Ecumenical Patriarch Athenagoras in Istanbul, or become "more absolute than ever."

According to the writer, the Russian Church's move was a clever strategy in a policy aimed at strengthening its influence throughout the Orthodox world. However, he believes that nevertheless, it constitutes a step toward the widest possible Christian unity.

Reactions of the World Council of Churches to the Second Vatican Council appear to be still much as they were when the organization's Central Committee met at St. Andrews, Scotland, in the summer of 1960.

The WCC finds the creation

of the Secretariat for the Promotion of Christian Unity — set up by the Pope as preparations for the Council began — of great significance. The reason given is that it denoted a marked change from the "wholly negative interpretation" of the ecumenical movement provided in the encyclical Mortalium Animos (Promotion of True Religious Unity), issued by Pope Pius XI in 1928.

Now, as the WCC sees it, the Vatican has "decided to become active in the ecumenical conversation," no longer leaving it to "individual Roman Catholics."

"The full meaning of the new secretariat... will become clear in the coming years, the Central Committee declared in regarding its reaction in five points, whose substance may be summarily indicated as follows:

- 1, Dialogue is welcomed. 2, It is too early to abandon informal discussions; they help to remove misunderstandings. 3, The WCC is prevented by its constitution from speaking for its member Churches in matters concerning church union; each must speak for

itself. 4, But the WCC may properly make known to the new Vatican secretariat "certain basic convictions which have been expressed by the WCC Assembly or its Central Committee (for example, on the issue of religious liberty, Christian social action, etc.). 5, The creation of the secretariat "does not mean that any of the fundamental differences... have been solved. The change is a change in procedure and in climate. The opportunity for dialogue is to be grasped."

Dr. W. A. Visser 't Hooft, the World Council's general secretary, emphasized in conversations with this correspondent in Geneva, at he did at St. Andrews, that the WCC is "a body sui generis which refuses to become the adversary of any Church or group of Churches, because it stands for unity and it is not a rival or a counter weight to the Roman Catholic Church."

Nor, added Dr. Visser 't Hooft, can the World Council disown part of its ancestry (inter-church bodies devoted to missions and to "life and work") to dedicate itself exclusively, as some Roman Ca-

tholic ecumenists think it should, to "theological study and conversation about the issues of reunion of the Church."

There is a clear implication here, as there is in many statements by Pope John concerning the Second Vatican Council, that the small practical steps in the direction of unity that are now conceivable will, if taken, prepare and disclose the way to larger steps and greater progress.

The issue of religious liberty to which the WCC Central Committee referred is of very special concern to ecumenically-minded Protestants, and nowhere more so than among the Waldensians, followers of Peter Waldo, who separated from Rome several centuries before the days of Martin Luther.

The Italian counterpart of the Presbyterians, the Waldensians—or, more specifically, some of their leaders with whom this writer has conversed — have found some encouragement in the announcement of the Second Vatican Council and particularly in the creation and ac-

tivities of the Secretariat for the Promotion of Christian Unity.

The Waldensians' concern over religious liberty is shared also by Protestant minorities in traditionally or predominantly Catholic populations. Participating recently, as a fraternal delegate from American Methodists, in the centennial celebrations of Italian Methodism, the writer heard Methodist representatives from Spain and Portugal speak of the handicaps under which they labor in those countries.

In Italy, under the new postwar constitution, there is a juridical safeguard not found in some Latin American countries. This is not only of immediate and practical help when cases of anti-Protestant discrimination are carried to the highest court, Waldensian friends informed the writer, but also is gradually bringing about a civic acceptance, locally and nationally, of Protestants — at least of the denominations long active in Italy.

'Massive Surge' Common Sense Or Bias?

Two top officials of the National Council of (Protestant and Orthodox) Churches have called for a "massive surge of concern at the grass roots" to spur Congress to approve federal funds for public schools only.

The massive surge is meant to block any financial aid to parochial schools.

"If loans cannot properly be made to churches from public funds for the construction of houses of worship, neither can they properly be made to churches for the construction of schools which are an integral and organic agency of such churches," the Protestant spokesman said.

According to them, "Citizens ought not to be asked or required to support or assist schools established by those of another faith."

The two who issued the warning are Rev. Dean M. Kelley and Dr. Gerald E. Knoff, officials of the Protestant Council.

Their statement opposing both loans and grants to parochial schools was sent to all members of Congress and to state and local councils of the national organization. It pointed out that action was required by Protestants between July 10 and the end of the turrent Congress — an obvious hint for Protestants to flood Congress with letters and telegrams to cut pupils in Catholic schools from any education aid legislation.

Catholics and other Americans who believe in "liberty and justice for all" had best write their Congressmen too lest a one-sided viewpoint prevail.

The National Council's call to action comes on the heels of reports that Congressional committees have approved loans (not outright grants) for parochial schools to build "science and health" facilities — laboratories, gymnasiums, lunch rooms, language classrooms. The loan program is a feature of a proposed revision of the National Defense Education Act. The strategic House Rules Committee has given the NDEA priority over the President's aid to public schools legislation.

Protestant fears that even loans for Catholic schools will change the American pattern of separation between Church and State puzzle many Congressmen who ask, "How can you say 'no aid for parochial schools' when you take government money for your own colleges and hospitals?"

This week at least twenty church-related colleges — none of them Catholic — received federal grants to expand existing courses or launch new ones. The funds are made available as scholarships and the students in line to benefit are selected by the colleges — including Methodist Duke University, Congregational Claremont in California, Baptist Brown. Federal funds will also be used to finance four students at the University of Wisconsin to do advance studies in Buddhism.

But funds to help six million pupils in Catholic schools learn science or to help them become healthier citizens — that must be opposed, Rev. Kelley and Dr. Knoff say, because it is "the beginning of such subsidization" which threatens "the religious liberty of all Americans."

We think common sense and fair play are characteristic of most Americans and these virtues will assure a final solution that includes all pupils in any federal aid program. It is unfortunate that narrower views cloud the issue and impede progress in education precisely at a time when time ought not to be wasted in petty prejudices.

Vatican Paper Marks Century

Vatican City — (RNS) — Osservatore Romano, Vatican City newspaper, is now 100 years old.

One of the world's most widely quoted periodicals, and also one of the most intensely read, Osservatore is not an official Vatican organ, but it is generally regarded nevertheless as the voice of the Church.

The Vatican Post Office is issuing a new series of postage stamps commemorating the paper's centenary. Meanwhile, the Vatican Radio, in a special broadcast recalled that Osservatore, as a staunch upholder of human dignity and moral values, had attracted particular attention in recent decades for its fearless opposition first to fascism and nazism and now to communism.

The Vatican station recalled that Italian Black Shirts once publicly burned copies of Osservatore Romano. Today, it said, the paper is repeatedly assailed by the Communist press and radio.

Dignified, austere and marked by a style of high literary quality, Osservatore has pursued its career unperturbed by the clash and violence of modern history.

The day after the Allied liberation of Rome in 1944 only one of the free world's newspapers did not come out with an eight-column spread over the front page. Osservatore tucked the news away on the last page and condensed it into a few lines. A major religious ceremony in St. Peter's Basilica was given top treatment.

The then editor-in-chief of Osservatore Romano, dynamic, cultured and hard-working Count Giuseppe Dalla Torre, did not wish to snub the liberators. What he wanted, and succeeded in doing, was to show the world that wars are won or lost, empires rise or crumble, regimes flourish or decay, but the Church is eternal because its power is spiritual and not material.

In 100 years of publication, Osservatore has maintained the same attitude.

Anti-Communist, anti-materialistic as it is, and reflecting not only the opinions of the Roman Curia and the Supreme Pontiff, but also its own editors—their freedom of expression has grown con-

siderably over the years—Osservatore has stood firmly on the side of God against every encroachment of Caesar on the human and spiritual rights of man.

Director of the Vatican daily for over 40 years and through five pontificates, Count Dalla Torre maintained a completely objective viewpoint on world events. He was so respected as a journalist and student of world affairs that, after the liberation of Rome, he even received a special pass from an underground Communist group, the Morelli unit. "I shall keep it," he said. "You never know what may happen."

During the final phase of the battle for Italy, Count Dalla Torre was called upon to report on the Italian political leaders most likely to govern the country after its

liberation. He included in the report a biography of the late Alcide de Gasperi that so impressed President Roosevelt, British Prime Minister Winston Churchill and a Free French representative that the future Premier of Italy won their full support.

Count Dalla Torre's fame was so well established that years later, when he was introduced to President Charles de Gaulle of France, the latter nodded knowingly and said: "Of course, it's you!"

Does Osservatore, whose staffers still write with pens, never typewriters, represent the thoughts of the Holy See?

The question was answered by Count dalla Torre shortly before he resigned last year and was replaced by 62-year-old Raimondo Manzini, another famous Italian journalist and a noted Christian Demo-

cratic leader. "Osservatore," he said, "is a Catholic newspaper in which the Holy See publishes its official bulletins. Nothing else."

The interest in Osservatore, it was pointed out, is due to the fact that while it is not the official newspaper of the Vatican (only the fortnightly Acta Sedis Apostolicae is official), it regularly reflects the opinion of the most authoritative Vatican quarters. But neither the Pope nor the Vatican Secretariat of State inspire most of what is written.

The editor-in-chief and his two veteran assistants, Professor Federico Alessandrini and Professor Cesidio Lolli, have complete freedom save in certain vital issues dealing with Church policy which are subject to the rules and regulations of diplomacy. And Domenico Cardinal Tardini, the Secretary of State is quoted as saying: "The freedom of Osservatore is such that it could almost be an anti-clerical newspaper. No other publication gives me such worry."

Osservatore was started by two political refugees—Nicola Zanichini and Giuseppe Bastia, both lawyers—who came to Rome after King Victor Emmanuel II's Italian nationalism had brought about the downfall of the Papal States. They sought permission to publish a daily paper for the papal government which then ruled Rome and the surrounding Lazio province.

Their application was strongly supported by Marcantonio Pacelli, grand-nephew of Pope Pius XII, who at the time was substitute Minister of the Interior of the papal government. The aim of the newspaper was officially stated as being "to denounce and refute all calumnies against Rome and its pontificate." In 1884, Pope Leo XII purchased the paper from its two founders.

Osservatore Romano has had seven editors-in-chief, all deeply committed to the defense of "law and justice as the solid foundation for the life of each human being." As a fighter for peace and understanding, the paper has held its own through World Wars I and II and the current Cold War, denouncing especially the threat of communism and the persecution of religion in Red-ruled lands.



Saints of Unity

ST. SIMEON STYLITES... is the best known of the Pillar Saints. He became a monk in a Syrian monastery while still a boy; later he was dismissed from another monastery for his imprudent austerities. After some years as a hermit, people used to throng to him, and to avoid them he took up his residence on a platform at the top of a pillar (stylis). Emperors, bishops and crowds of simple folk came to consult him. He died on his pillar in 459 A.D. His feast-day is January 5.

Reapings at Random

By GERARD E. SHERRY Editor, Central California Register

Adolf Eichmann tried to deny his guilt at his trial in Jerusalem for the mass murder of Jews. His defense laid the responsibility at the door of his superiors. Even his own signature authorizing executions was brushed aside as the responsibility of others.

What a different picture is presented by one of Eichmann's fellow countrymen. In Germany the Catholic Bishops recently issued a joint statement which recalled the Nazi War of genocide against the Jews and which urged their fellow countrymen to do everything possible to make restitution for the crimes committed.

The German hierarchy, far from repudiating responsibility for the anti-Jewish excesses committed by the German nation not only admitted that such crimes took place, but asserted that all Germans should share the blame.

They went further. They published a special prayer (see page one) both for the murdered Jews and their persecutors. They asked that this prayer be recited in all the

Nazis Not Alone In Persecuting Minorities

German Churches. They also called on the Faithful in Germany to "implore God in a spirit of atonement to forgive the sins committed by the members of our nation."

Modern day Germany, we feel, has learned its lesson well. The Church there is especially concerned that youth shall learn from the crimes of the past; that it build new bridges of understanding in reparation for the horrors of Belsen and similar concentration camps.

What must never be forgotten, however, is that even at the height of persecution against the Jews, there were Germans willing to stand up against the crimes being committed in the name of the Fatherland. One has only to think of the late Cardinal von Preysing, Bishop of Berlin, who risked his life to help the Jews. There were many others, too, both Catholic and Non-Catholic who stood up to the Nazis.

The trouble is, there wasn't enough of them. And the Nazis continued their blood path until they met their own day of reckoning.

We have in America... also been in the

Malaya Mongrel

Malacca, Malaya—(RNS)—Every morning under a back pew at the church of St. Peter here, a black mongrel dog named Jackie can be found reclining while his master attends Mass.

Marcus Carvelho, the dog's master, has stopped trying to discourage Jackie from following him to church. "I don't know why he does it or what fun he gets out of it, but nothing will keep Jackie away from church," said Carvelho. "I have tied him up at home and even locked him in a room but if he can escape, he will be at the church about the same time as I get there," he added.

At 60, Carvelho is a retired foreman mechanic whose daily routine includes attendance at morning Mass.

SERMONETTE

ANGER By Rev. Richard Madden, O.C.D.

Anytime you feel the need for a good laugh take a peek at an angry man. With his eyes popping, his jaws quivering, his face emanating every possible shade of red, and his throat emitting an endless variety of wheezes and grunts he is indeed, the world's greatest comic. You look at him and you have to laugh.

And in looking at him, you know something else about him, too. You know that the only person he is really hurting by his raging is himself. For anger has a way of adhering to its creator. The only purpose anger serves, especially if it is habitual, is to develop ulcers, high blood pressure and dyspepsia in the one who begets it.

Of course, you soreheads could say, "But Christ was angry." And you are quite right. He walked into the temple court one day, saw what a scandal the money changers and merchants had made of the house of God, took a whip into His Hands, and proceeded to create a shambles of the whole sordid mess. But His anger was just. It was cold, calculated anger used as a weapon for good. He knew what He was doing. He knew how to use it.

Others are not so intelligent. Their anger-weapon is born of idium. They use it as a cleaver to hack their selfish way through the already bleeding heart of society. They help no one. They improve no situation. Theirs is a childish, immature way to get things done. The only thing wrong with their system is that they never do get anything done.

The Divine Teacher promised heaven to the meek. And with all due respect to the "big man" who thinks that the only way to operate is in violence and noise, it is still no pipe dream to believe that this earth would enjoy a wee touch of heaven if we would take Christ at His word.

Today there is entirely too much violence at the conference tables of nations. And it is violence such as this that finds its outlet on Okinawas, Anzios and Koreas.

Somebody should try meekness. He might be surprised at how well it works.

Hey, and maybe that somebody should be you and me.

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More important, we should pray for them. Finally, we should also pray that we will all have the courage to be with them in the hour of trial.