

# Freedom of Faith, Still a Rare Item

(By Religious News Service)

It is estimated that at the present time half the human race is deprived of religious freedom by atheistic Communist regimes. This is totalitarian Communism's starkest indictment. But even in countries of the so-called free world, religious freedom is often infringed upon to a serious or minor degree.

It is little wonder, therefore, that the declaration on religious liberty slated to come before the Second Vatican Council when it opens its fourth and final session in September has been hailed as of primordial and universal importance by both Catholic and non-Catholic observers.

Cardinal Cushing of Boston has been quoted as saying that if the Council fails to deal with the issue, the entire ecumenical movement will collapse. Protestant leaders have agreed to religious liberty as vital for continued ecumenical discussion. Catholic missionaries, on their part, have insisted that religious freedom is a central problem in achieving harmonious contacts between Christianity and the non-Christian religions.

With every likelihood seen that the Council will adopt it without any substantial change, the draft on religious freedom declares that in human society, religious liberty is to be respected not only by Christians and for Christians, but by all and for all persons, individuals and religious groups.

Marking the first time that the Catholic Church will make a solemn, official proclamation on the question, the document inevitably constitutes an implicit rebuke to countries around the world where, for one reason or another, religious rights are not fully respected.

The sharpest reproach will be aimed, naturally, at the Communist nations which insist that religious beliefs and adherence should be under state control, and where policies of ruthless anti-religious persecution have been followed, at least until recent years when pressures have been eased or modified.

But there will also be good reasons for soul-searching in nominally Christian countries where religion flourishes, but where Protestant or Catholic minorities experience some degree of discrimination. There are, too, non-Christian countries which have failed to respect the rights of religious minorities.

In the latter category are free India, from whence persecuted Moslems have been forced to flee, and Islamic Pakistan where Hindus have found it necessary to take flight, even without any of their possessions. In Nepal, a Hindu State, Protestant and Catholic missionaries are largely restricted to holding services, with evangelism and conversions banned.

In some Moslem countries, religious discrimination is openly rampant. Who could, as one writer asked recently, conceive of a Catholic cathedral or a Protestant church in Saudi Arabia?

In London recently, reports disclosed that more than 1,400 people were killed during the July massacre in the Southern Sudan when the Northern Moslem Arabs vented their fury on Southern Christians and Animists.

This bloodshed recalled the brutal violations of elemental human and religious rights in the Congo where, according to Vatican sources, 187 Catholic missionaries have been slain by rampaging rebels. In another African country — Somalia — the constitution makes it illegal "to spread or propagandize any religion other than the true religion of Islam." This is in contrast to the situation in predominantly Moslem Morocco, whose constitution guarantees religious freedom and which is a signatory of the United Nations statement branding religious intolerance as a violation of the U.N. Charter and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

Among the Western countries, where the anticipated Vatican II declaration is regarded as of especially vital significance, is Spain. In this traditionally Catholic country, a bill has been drafted granting full legal status to the small Protestant minority and easing restrictions against which it has long complained. However, parliamentary action on the bill has been held up pending the promulgation of the Vatican declaration.

The Spanish Protestants have experienced many restrictions obviously prompted by fears of the effect of unhampered Protestant proselytizing on the Catholic unity of the country. However, some important concessions have been granted in recent years, and sentiment is growing in important Catholic circles in favor of a new and genuinely ecumenical atmosphere in the country.

Greece, predominantly Eastern Orthodox, is another country where fears of proselytism have created what outsiders regard as grave infringements of religious freedom. In 1961, Dr. E. Stanley Jones, the famed American Methodist missionary-evangelist and author, declared that in all his world travels he had found more religious tolerance in a non-Christian country like India than he did in Greece.

Italy has long been a classic example of a country where Catholicism occupies a privileged place and the Protestant Churches are forced to accept a second-class status. Here, or the Republic of Ireland, differs in this respect inasmuch as Protestantism enjoys full and equal rights there along with Catholicism, even though this is the recognized religion of the great majority. However, in Northern Ireland, which has strong Protestant traditions, Catholics, according to recurrent reports, are exposed to much bigotry and subjected to many economic and social disabilities.

In some countries, religious discrimination survives not in any conscious or deliberate form but solely because of reasons of tradition or history.

Thus, in England, the King or Queen and the Lord Chancellor must be members of the Church of England, and all the Church's archbishops and bishops are ipso facto members of the House of Lords.

The Vatican Council draft clearly stresses the obligation of the state to protect and encourage religious liberty, saying the Catholic Church expects from state authorities a recognition of the right of religious liberty in social co-existence.

# Methodist Leader Hails Council Effect

(This is one in a series of interviews with leaders of the principal non-Catholic Christian churches in the United States dealing with their pursuit of Christian unity and the status of their churches in the age of religious renewal.)

Stockholm, Sweden — (NC) — Catholics and Methodists have been brought closer together by the movement of Church renewal initiated by the ecumenical Council, one of America's best known Methodist leaders said here.

Bishop Fred Pierce Corson of Philadelphia was interviewed in Stockholm where he presided over a meeting of the World Methodist Council. Although only one of 44 bishops of the Methodist Church in the U.S., Bishop Corson's experience with world Methodism and as an observer at the ecumenical council gives him a unique vantage point to view the movement toward church unity.

"In the first place," said Bishop Corson, "the council has deepened our fellowship by the appreciation of the contributions which both churches make to the course of Christianity.

"It was a divine inspiration which caused Pope John to call non-Catholic groups 'separated brethren' rather than 'heretics.' The recognition of the validity of properly administered baptism has strengthened the common basis for Catholic and Protestant unity."

Bishop Corson's enthusiasm for Pope John reflects a viewpoint that is both intensely personal and typically Methodist. Two years ago, after he received an honorary degree from St. Joseph's College in Philadelphia, he remarked that Luther may not have left the Church if Pope John had been sitting in Rome in 1521.

Personal enthusiasm, as well as simple piety and concern for the underprivileged shared by Pope John, have been hallmarks of the Methodist movement ever since it emerged from the Church of England in the 18th century. John Wesley and his disciples felt the Anglican Church was too formalized, too rooted in the upper classes and too little concerned with individual piety.

"The Methodist movement began as a renewal movement within the Anglican Church," explained Bishop Corson. "It was forced out by the resistance of the bishops who were critical of what they called the 'enthusiasm' of Methodism. The Methodists had a deep conviction about their faith and were willing to give witness to it."

The Methodist conviction of holiness realized through a personal experience of redemption and practiced in the framework of a structured church. Their creed is the Bible clarified by the writings of Wesley, although, unlike Catholics, they tolerate wide theological diversity.

American Methodists adopted an episcopal structure for their church. Their bishops are not

mere figureheads but have power to assign clergy and regulate many church affairs.

The vast majority of American Methodists belong to the 10.2 million member Methodist Church, which was created through the merger of three Methodist bodies in 1939. The second largest group, the African Methodist Episcopal Church, has about 12 million members and was born nearly two centuries ago when a group of Negroes withdrew from the Methodist Episcopal Church in Philadelphia. The African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church, also a Negro group, has about 780,000 members.

As the second largest Protestant denomination in the U.S. (after the Baptists), Methodists are bound to have a powerful impact on the ecumenical movement in this country. Bishop Corson enumerated some of the areas in which the Vatican council has helped to clarify religious differences.

"The recognition of the New Testament as a primary authority for faith — along with the authority of tradition, which Protestants call the authority of experience — has clarified a common bond between Protestants and Catholics," he said.

"The right of Catholics and Protestants to worship together under certain conditions has strengthened our fellowship. The recognition that the Catholic Church must be purged, formed and renewed has brought trust and confidence to the two great Christian bodies.

"A positive effort of each church to understand each other more fully has broken down many barriers of separation. The recognition of the work of the Holy Spirit in individual lives is another important contribution which the Second Vatican Council has made to the church in the modern world."

Bishop Corson said there is a "very widespread conviction" that reform and renewal are also needed within the Protestant denominations. "This affects not only structural reorganization," he said, "but it touches on spiritual and moral renewal, and the return to the disciplines of the Christian life."

Among many Methodists, the process of renewal is centered on the problem of Negro fellowship in their church. For years, the Methodist Church has been divided into six jurisdictions. Five of them were purely geographical, and one — the Central Jurisdiction — was reserved for Negroes.

Many church leaders were anguished by the situation that sometimes resulted in having two church buildings, both belonging to The Methodist Church, in one neighborhood. Negroes would attend one; whites would attend the other. An unofficial group called Methodists for Church Renewal was formed in 1963 to work for a reform in the jurisdictions.

One year later, the church's General Conference held at

Pittsburgh moved to hasten the abolition of the Central Jurisdiction and integrate it with existing regional jurisdictions. The work of integration is progressing rapidly. Three jurisdictions have already integrated their Negro churches, and it is hoped the rest will follow before 1968. Already there are two Negro bishops in the regional jurisdictions, both serving predominantly white areas.

Once The Methodist Church heals its internal racial divisions, it is likely that concrete progress will be made toward merging the Methodist Church with Negro Methodist bodies. Talks with that aim have been underway since 1964.

Methodists are also looking toward merger with other Protestant denominations. They are members of the Consultation on Church Union which may lead some day to a merger of Methodists, Episcopalians, Presbyterians, the United Church of Christ and the Christian Churches (Disciples) under the so-called "Blake Plan."

More immediately, solid progress has been made toward a merger of The Methodist Church with the 736,000-member Evangelical United Brethren Church. The two bodies will conduct simultaneous General Conferences in Chicago in November, 1966.

There are obviously more formidable barriers to be overcome between Methodists and Catholics, but Bishop Corson observed there are areas of

agreement as well. "In many ways," he said, "Methodistic doctrine is closer to the Catholic Church than the doctrines of other Protestant bodies."

As two examples, he noted that Methodist churches have accepted the place of bishops, and, unlike many reformed churches, they have not rejected the Catholic teaching of "works" as well as "faith" as means for salvation.

Methodism, said Bishop Corson, has always had an ecumenical current. "John Wesley was recognized as the first great ecumenical leader in the church of the Reformation as early as 1749 in a letter he wrote to a Catholic in Dublin when the persecution of Catholics there was at its height," said the bishop. "He (Wesley) pointed out our common heritage and the necessity of Christians to love, strengthen and protect each other. Pope John, in his statements, strikingly reflects the sentiments expressed in that letter."

While feelings of brotherhood are necessary, Bishop Corson added that the real Christian unity must progress in the area of doctrine. He listed three areas in which Methodism can contribute to this dialogue. "First," he said, "it stresses the reality of personal redemption through the saving work of Christ. Next, there is the success of its structural organization, combining central authority with local flexibility. And, finally, it emphasizes a return to the necessity of holiness and the disciplined Christian life."

# Judaism Reported Strong in France

By FATHER EDWARD DUFF, S.J.

Paris — (RNS) — Judaism in France is today numerically stronger than ever in its history but is confronted with two major problems: the paucity of spiritual guides and a doctrinal confusion, defined as a "Judaism a l'americaine" where a folklore substitutes for a religion, and where inherited traditions, common memories and like destinies form the bonds of the community."

Such is the verdict of Robert Sommer, identified as the founder of the Israeli cooperative and former member of the Communist Party, writing in Le Monde, outstanding Paris daily.

Mr. Sommer recalls that at the beginning of the century there were in France, Alsace-Lorraine (then annexed to Ger-

many) and Algeria 170,000 Jews. By 1939 natural growth and the influx of refugees increased that figure to 300,000. Of these one-third were deported and died on the way or in Nazi murder factories. Today there are a half-million Jews in France including those driven in recent years from Egypt, Morocco, Algeria after its independence and most recently from Tunis. Because of their small families French Jewry will undoubtedly diminish, it is thought.

In nineteenth century France, the reader is told, Jews were concentrated in a small number of urban centers, except for Alsace where they were spread throughout the towns, although always recognized as Jews and living a separate social existence. In the cities great sacrifices were made to maintain the bonds of the community to

build a synagogue and pay the rabbi. Though its worship might be only seasonal, the Jewish community possessed a definite solidarity in mutual recognition, friendship and assistance.

Legal emancipation, inviting social assimilation, threatened a progressive de-Judaization, a danger less pressing for the emigrants from East Europe, separated by languages as well as religion from the average Frenchman.

The new immigrants from Algeria, however, are French citizens of long standing; they speak the language as well as the next person. Many of them were minor functionaries in the French colonial administration. In reassigning them, the government has not stopped to inquire if there was a synagogue in the locality. Those returning to the mainland who were free to choose their place of abode had as their primary preoccupation to find a job and housing wherever possible near a Jewish center or not.

Such a situation is serious, Mr. Sommer points out, because Judaism is essentially communitarian and can survive only in a community. Alone in his isolated sanctuary in the Sahara, Pere Charles de Foucauld could be a perfect Catholic. Not so the Jew. He has "need of man and of religious institutions without which he cannot survive as a Jew, no matter how sincere his desire to do so."

Providing the instrumentalities to serve this expanded spiritual community is a gigantic task. A number of temples have been constructed, particularly in the suburbs of Paris, but the spiritual leaders to staff them are in short supply. Protestantism is also a minority religion in France, numbering 800,000 in all. Yet there is a pastor for each 700 church members. Today in France there are scarcely 50 rabbis, or only one for every 10,000 Jews. A synagogue can be built in a few months but to train a rabbi takes five to ten years. And what of the spiritual care of the household of Juda in the meantime, even if suitable candidates for the rabbinate could be found in sufficient numbers?

More threatening still, in Mr. Sommer's view, is the attenuation of the religious bonds of the Jewish community in

France and their replacement by a vacuumous fellowship where the word Jew is given the widest possible meaning or, better still, is left undefined.

History has much to do with this situation, history and the ambient spirit of materialism of our times.

From 1791 to 1840 the loyalty of French Jews to their country was unquestionable. At that latter date the legal government of France excluded them from membership in the national community. They lost their positions, their homes, their savings, often the esteem of their fellow citizens, and for a third of them their lives in the Nazi concentration camps. Shortly after the liberation of France the State of Israel came into existence.

Can those be censured, asks Mr. Sommer, who choose to change their national allegiance to abandon the country which for five years had abandoned them? In less harsh circumstances French Protestants, expelled by the Edict of Nantes, became Prussians; under other conditions Catholics left for Canada.

A small number of French Jews left for Israel. Many more feel a bond stronger than mere sympathy with the new State and celebrate its national holiday with a solemn ceremony in the chief synagogue.

But French Jewry, the writer argues, is not and cannot become a colony of Israel. Its members propose to remain French but Frenchmen different from the majority by their religious affiliation.

In pursuit of this determination a dozen Jewish schools have been created, many instructional manuals have been published, important Hebrew texts have been translated. This return to authentic sources comes at a time when Hebrew studies are being fostered, although for different reasons, in the public schools.

But all these efforts reach only a tiny minority, Mr. Sommer feels. The great majority of French Jews are satisfied with a vague cultural identification. To serve this group community centers have been opened in many cities. These hope to attract certain intellectuals in danger of drifting from the ancient faith. Colloquia are arranged, radio and TV utilized.

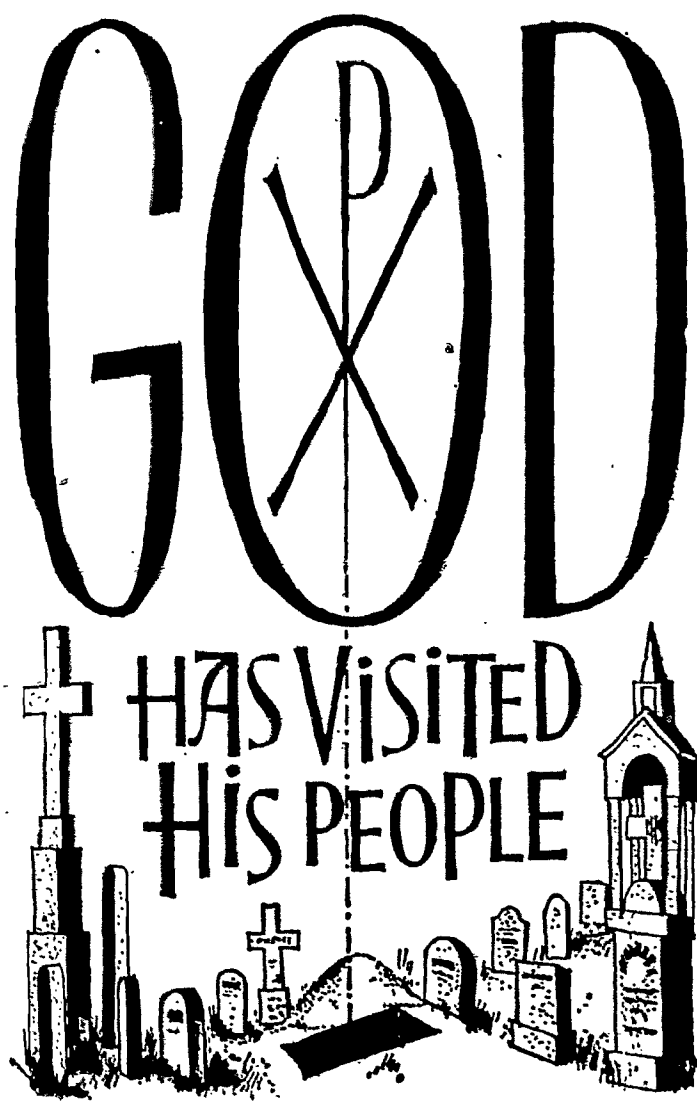
# Anglicans Lift Divorce Ban

Vancouver, B.C. — (RNS) — The Anglican Church of Canada, in an historic action, approved a new marriage canon which lifts its absolute ban on the remarriage of divorced persons while their former spouses are still living.

This action of the 22nd general Synod climaxed four hours of legal wrangles and eloquent speeches between theologians and lawyers of a legal committee of assessors, ending at midnight, and is subject to confirmation at the next Synod in 1967.

It marked the first time in history that a General Synod had approved a new canon dealing directly with doctrine; the Church previously assumed the doctrines of the Church of England. Until 1955, when a name change was approved, the Church was called the Church of England and Canada.

Observers saw the action as a momentous one in church annals in Canada, where the only ground for divorce is adultery.



Text and Symbol, 15th Sunday after Pentecost

# Church Of the Poor, or Church For the Poor?

By GARY MACEOIN

Rome—The bishops of the United States, I am told, want to see the creation before the Council closes of a Church body to deal with world poverty.

The project seems, on the face of it, non-controversial. It would be a logical follow-up to the magnificent statement of American lay auditor James Morris to the Council Fathers last November. "The gap between rich and poor is rapidly widening," he told them. "It presents the Christian conscience of the western nations with a challenge, because for the first time in history... they have the means to wipe out poverty in the rest of the world."

There is more involved, nevertheless, than meets the eye. Poverty has been a divisive issue all through the Council. There has been no formal discussion of the subject but an infinity of comments in the course of other discussions. Stress has been placed particularly on the Christian obligation to serve the poor, to bring the good news of Christianity to the poor, to rescue the Church in poverty.

The last is, of course, the aspect that raises practical difficulties. Is it possible for the Church to apply to itself as an institution the evangelical counsels, to live and express itself in terms of the Beatitudes? Here in Rome a study group has been working on the subject under such enthusiasts as Cardinals Gerlier and Lercaro, Archbishop Helder Camara of Brazil and Bishop Georges Mercier of the Sahara.

"One fact that stands out," says French Bishop Alfred Ancel, a member of this study group, "is that in many countries the Church appears to the poor as a stranger, even as an enemy. They believe it is rich and powerful, linked to the wealthy and to the power structures."

Many feel that the trappings of medieval princedom which surround bishops in their "palaces" and the baroque dress, ornament and decor of Church services are more to blame than any real wealth or power of the Church. They hailed the Pope's gesture in giving his tiara for the poor, were quickly set back when those who run Roman ceremonial explained that the Pope had given away a tiara but had

not given up the tiara. To confirm this interpretation, Archbishop Felici, Secretary of the Council, blocked a movement to make a collection of episcopal rings by announcing that bishops who wished to follow the Pope's gesture should give cash.

An even sorer point concerns the capital resources invested in profit-making enterprises. Some question the wisdom. "In Italy," to quote a very moderate critic, "the man in the street who pays his monthly gas, electric, telephone and water bills to companies in which the Vatican holds shares, and from time to time interest on his loans from the Bank of the Holy Spirit, is understandably irked by the whole business." For myself, apart from everything else, I find the name of the bank distasteful.

Nor do the worldwide charitable activities of CRS-NWCW, the relief organization of the United States hierarchy, escape criticism. A priest in Hong Kong last year told me very emphatically that in his parish there are no "rich Catholics." In Africa I met many who interpreted the distribution of surplus food donated by

the U.S. government as a cold war weapon at the service of the State Department. Others, with more reason, deplore the duplication of relief agencies operated by different denominations, accentuating the division of Christianity. Thus, Catholics and Methodists have separate if equal administrations side by side in Saigon.

The limitations of giving were stressed at the congress of Latin American charity organizations in Bogota early this year. "It is easy for the Church to play the role of generous giver by distributing the surplus spent out by the markets of the capitalist countries," it was said. "But we must not forget that when we succumb to the old temptation of turning the stones into bread, that what we really do is to paralyze the arms in order to open the mouths, that is, that we create beggars."

Vatican II is helping Catholics to recognize how far their practices have slipped from the standards set by Christ. But we are still far from agreement on how to apply these standards today. We are not even sure if Christ intended the Church to be of or for the poor.

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