

# Difficulties and Tensions Beset God's Household



Following are excerpts of the talk given by Father Leonidas Contos of the Greek Orthodox archdiocese of North and South America at the ecumenical service at the Eastman Theater, Rochester, Sunday, March 27.

A great yearning and nostalgia comes over us when we read about the New Testament Church; a deep longing for its simple and uncomplicated unity in the face of the broken and fragmented spectacle we have made of Christ's body. . . . The Book of Acts, carelessly read, is a dangerous book. Inherent in it is the temptation to read its chapters as past history, when in reality they are only installments in a story that has no ending. . . . It is the one unfinished book of the New Testament; its people go marching off the map, and we are part of the same procession. . . . that solid line, sometimes wavering but never breached, which still divides the history of this world into before and after Jesus, the Christ.

It is a dangerous book because it tends to give us the image of a utopian Church. . . . And while the Jerusalem Church was holy, as ours is holy. . . . It was also blemished, as ours is blemished. . . . It had within it the seeds of division.

And this is the book's greatest peril, because it is the subtlest: that "having detected this fatal flaw in the primitive Church, we came to accept it as normal and inevitable. Yet the one thing we have any hope of recovering of the New Testament ideal, indeed the only thing, is that outward evidence of its inner unity which the early chapters describe. . . . But it is its essential feature, essential and abiding because it derives from Christ alone. The difficulties and tensions that beset the Christian household almost from the beginning have their source in the fact that men of faith, even of good faith, concerned themselves, as we also do, more with what we have believed than in Whom we have believed.

What better way to say this than we have this night said it, in the General Confession? Having "followed too much the devices and desires of our own hearts. . . . We have left undone those things which we ought to have done; and we have done those things which we ought not to have done."



Bishop Casey talks with leading participants in ecumenical rite prior to the service at Eastman Theater in Rochester. With him are Greek Orthodox Father Leonidas Contos, Episcopal Bishop George W. Barrett and Baptist minister Rev. George Hill, president of the Rochester Area Council of Churches.

Perhaps the most significant, surely the most dramatic and poignant, demonstration of this deep sense of guilt was given to the Christian world a few weeks ago. . . . when, on the throne of St. Peter, Paul VI, Bishop of Rome and Pope, on the throne of St. Andrew,

Athenagoras I, Bishop of Constantinople, the New Rome, and Patriarch; in sonorous Latin and ageless Greek, each read what amounts to a mutual act of penitence, undoing what their counterparts of nearly a millennium ago "ought not to have done."

The clear inference of the Book of Acts is that God's diagram for the redemption of this world consists in three dimensions: "koinonia," "diakonia" and "apostole" — communion, service and witness — all undertaken in agape, love. And while koinonia, communion,

must remain an elusive and difficult ideal. . . . under our present circumstances, yet service and witness offer a base of mutual concern and common experience broad enough to accommodate all of us and engage all of our strengths in a redeeming ministry to a world that stands in critical need of it. . . . We have now a clear vocation to answer God in history as He holds up to our purer vision the image of our lost oneness.

The ecumenical enterprise is likely to be prejudiced rather than advanced if we mistake the true nature of communion. . . . The ecumenical commitment has been posited as a great question. . . . Since Christ prayed that we may be one in the manner that He and the Father are one, there are dimensions of our oneness that are yet to be disclosed to us all of consistent with the early Fathers someone has written, "We know where the Church is, but we cannot be sure where it is not."

The Orthodox layman Khomakov put it this way in a small tract written more than a century ago: we may be "united by ties which God has not willed to reveal." . . . Our vocation is to seek to know these ways. . . . For while we have been idle, God has been at work. And while God's Spirit has blown where it listeth, often we have been unaware. And perhaps God has caused the sands of time to drift in just such a way as to erase or blur the markings of our separate paths. So much the better. It leaves us freer to explore the forgotten precincts of our common origins where the joy of discovery awaits us.

## 'Death of God' Haunts Theologians

Santa Barbara, Cal. — (RNS) — The only future theology has to become the theology of the future, Dr. Harvey Cox of Harvard Divinity School told a symposium on "Theology in Ferment" at the University of California at Santa Barbara.

"Its attention must turn to that future that God makes possible but for which man is inescapably responsible," he said. "The fate of theology will be determined by its capacity

to reappropriate its prophetic role."

Dr. Cox, church history professor and author of the best-seller "The Secular City," addressed some 900 persons, while another 450 heard him via closed-circuit television.

Other speakers at the symposium, sponsored by the university's Department of Religious Studies, included Father Francis Xavier Murphy, C.S.S.R.,

professor of patristic moral theology at the Lateran University in Rome, and Rabbi Abraham J. Heschel, professor of Jewish mysticism and ethics at Jewish Theological Seminary of America, New York.

In his talk Dr. Cox described three senses in which the phrase "death of God" is used in contemporary theological thinking. It can be used to mean, he said, that "Christianity has been mistaken or confused all along in attributing any reality to a being transcendent to human life and experience. As Paul Van Buren has said, 'Christianity is about man and not about God.'"

The "death of God" phrase also is used in the context of cultural analysis, Dr. Cox said. "Here the phrase simply means that the culturally conditioned ways in which people have experienced the holy have become eroded in our time. . . ."

"The reason for the 'death of God' in this sense is to be found in the shattering transitions which have come into our culture, due to the advent of modern technology, the breakdown of our isolation from radically different culture systems, and the change in life style brought about by massive urbanization. . . . As these changes have conspired to further the process of secularization and the erosion of Christendom, the culturally conditioned modes of experiencing the holy disappear also. The 'God' of Christendom is thus 'dead.'"

A third sense in which the phrase is used is to refer to the increasing ambiguity of the word "God" in common English usage, he said. The word "God" is almost useless, he said, "because it means so many different things to so many different people that it has become ambiguous and misleading."

Dr. Cox said the "death of God" movement is more "the symptom of a serious failure in theology than a contribution to the next phase. . . . The experience of the 'death of God' springs from the dissolution of traditional symbols that no longer illuminate the shifting social reality. . . ."

It serves man right, he added, "that our unwillingness to do the work we should have done on the problem of God has now produced the 'death of God'."

movement which, if it makes no constructive contribution toward extricating us from the quagmire, dramatizes with chilling cogency the bankruptcy of the categories we have been trying to use."

His response to the movement "is to continue to move away from any spatial symbolization of God and from all forms of metaphysical dualism," he concluded. "I am trying to edge cautiously toward a secular theology, a mode of thinking whose horizon is human history and whose idiom is 'political' in the widest Aristotelian sense of that term, i.e., the context within which man becomes fully man."

FATHER MURPHY spoke on how modern theology is changing and why it must continue to change. Much of the theological approach of the Vatican Council, the priest observed, was based on the "mutability of all things, human and divine, including man's ability to answer questions raised by modern existence. . . ."

The Council, said Father Murphy, succeeded in analyzing and describing "the life of the Christian dealing with the practical conclusions to be drawn from his engaging in Christ, while still an interested pilgrim sojourning in the 20th Century."

Christianity, the priest said, has an antidote for man's fears and gropings, but its message must not be like a cold, rigid and massive "architectured Medieval cathedral."

"Modern man," he said, "is asking for bread, and it is useless to hand him the many-faceted and expertly carved stone of the scholastic system."

The church now must use the terms, symbols and images of the 20th Century to demonstrate its answers to the "burden of morality," the priest said.

Tomorrow's theologian, Father Murphy said, "must find a technique and a language that will make the commitment to Christ an acutely desirable achievement for the majority of mankind."

"Our present generation, however, haphazardly, has at least broken through the structure of a monolithic approach to theology, and has supplied the elements for a basic renewal and reorientation of human values."

Dr. Kishi Chitose, head of the Lutheran Evangelical Church, is also credited with a big part in the improvement of the ecumenical climate. He contributed significantly to the success of the first meeting of Christian denominations, held at the International Christian University in Tokyo, in January of this year. Four leading Catholics participated.

Notwithstanding this renewed interest and this improved atmosphere, there is no easy optimism among Christian missionaries. Japan offers them full freedom to live and to preach. It listens to them respectively. But there is no meeting of mind and spirit. The task of translating the message of Christ into relevant concepts has hardly begun.

### Liturgy and Life

Msgr. Martin Hellriegel, pastor of Holy Cross Church, St. Louis, Mo., since 1940, was the first among U.S. pastors to lead parishioners in full participation in communal prayer and worship, according to the spirit of renewal now advocated by the Second Vatican Council. As a young priest, in 1918, he undertook the chaplaincy at the motherhouse of the Sisters of the Most Precious Blood in O'Fallon, Mo., where he introduced the dialog Mass and wrote influential books and pamphlets on that form of the Holy Sacrifice. His pastoral homilies and writings continually stress the "manifestation of Christ" in the seasons and feasts of the "Church Year."

### Bishop Kearney's Appointments

- APRIL
- 1 Friday—St. Joseph Church—St. Monica Sodality Mass — 9:00 a.m.
  - St. Francis of Assisi Church — Family Rosary for Peace — 7:00 p.m.
  - 2 Saturday—Nazareth Academy Chapel — I.F.C.A. Mass — 8:30 a.m.
  - St. John Fisher College — Glee Club Concert — 8:00 p.m.
  - 3 Sunday—St. Mary's Hospital—Alumnae Association Mass— 9:00 a.m.
  - St. John Fisher College—Ground Breaking Ceremony for Becket Hall Building — 3:30 p.m.
  - 5 Tuesday—Holy Family—Confirmation—7:30 p.m.
  - 6 Wednesday—Nazareth Academy — Closing of Retreat — 11:00 a.m.
  - 7 Thursday—Sacred Heart Cathedral—Mass of the Christ— 9:00 a.m.
  - 10 Sunday—Sacred Heart Cathedral—Pontifical Mass—11:00 a.m.
  - 17 Sunday—Good Counsel College, White Plains—Alumnae Mass—11:00 a.m.
  - 19 Tuesday—Vince's 50 Acres — Catholic Committee on Scout-ing Dinner — 6:30 p.m.
  - 20 Wednesday—St. Francis Xavier—Confirmation—7:30 p.m.
  - 21 Thursday—St. Agnes High School—Alumnae Dinner—6:30 p.m.
  - 22 Friday—Mercy High School—Spring Concert—8:00 p.m.
  - 24 Sunday—New York City—Address 4th Degree Banquet of Knights of Columbus
  - 30 Saturday—Oak Hill Country Club — Address Women's Notre Dame Alumna Group — 1:00 p.m.
  - St. Agnes High School — Concert by Sisters of St. Joseph — 8:00 p.m.

### Bishop Casey's Appointments

- APRIL
- 3 Sunday—Sacred Heart Cathedral—Solemn Blessing of Palm, Procession, Solemn Pontifical Mass—4:00 p.m.
  - 5 Tuesday—Covenant Orthodox Presbyterian Church Hall, Greece — Council Talk, Pastors' Association of Greece 12:00 noon.
  - Holy Ghost Church, Coldwater—Confirmation—7:45 p.m.
  - 7 Thursday—Sacred Heart Cathedral — Solemn Pontifical Mass of the Lord's Supper — 7:45 p.m.
  - 8 Friday—Sacred Heart Cathedral—Solemn Liturgical Service of the Passion and Death of the Lord—2:30 p.m.
  - 9 Saturday—Sacred Heart Cathedral — Easter Vigil Service— 7:30 p.m., Solemn Pontifical Mass of the Easter Vigil— 8:45 p.m.
  - 11 Monday—Sheraton Hotel—Serra Club Dinner—8:00 p.m.
  - Sacred Heart Rectory Hall—Rosary Guild Mother-Daughter Party—8:00 p.m.
  - 14 Thursday—Sacred Heart Rectory Hall—Men's Club Supper Meeting—6:30 p.m.
  - 17 Sunday—St. Mary's Church, Auburn—Low Mass and Blessing of New Altar—5:00 p.m.
  - 19 Tuesday—St. Mary's of the Lake Church, Ontario—Confirmation — 7:45 p.m.
  - 20 Wednesday—Church of the Assumption, Fairport—Confirmation — 7:45 p.m.
  - 21 Thursday—Sacred Heart Rectory Hall—Home-School Association—8:00 p.m.
  - 22 Friday—26 Tuesday — Sacred Heart Retreat House, Auriesville — Retreat.
  - 30 Saturday—Sacred Heart Cathedral — Farewell Mass for Sisters of the Diocese — 9:00 a.m.
  - St. Agnes High School Auditorium—Sisters of St. Joseph, Spring Concert — 8:15 p.m.

## The Eastman, a Cathedral

Ancient barriers dividing Christians were not in evidence when Rochester's Eastman Theater became a Cathedral for an hour Sunday evening.

The often hesitant and sometimes impetuous ecumenical movement came of age in Rochester at that time.

Scripture readings, prayers, hymns — and a collection — united a congregation of more than 2000 in a service which lacked none of its spontaneity despite its postponement due to a January blizzard.

Bishop George W. Barrett of the Episcopal Diocese of Rochester began the rite with prayer and Bishop Casey of the Catholic Diocese concluded the ceremony with a litany and a blessing.

An Orthodox priest from New York City, with soft humor and quiet eloquence, spelled out the progress and the pitfalls on the Christian road to greater religious unity.

Excerpts of his talk are printed in a separate article on this page.

Participants — both on the stage and in the audience — were agreed at the end of the service that they hoped it was but a beginning of a continuing dialogue of prayer and study for all churches of the Rochester area.

Japan is taking a new look at Christianity, and it seems legitimate to give primary credit to the Vatican Council. This is a country of intense mass movements. People live close together and react in a highly organized way to sociological pressures scarcely identifiable by the outside observer. . . . After World War II, during the Occupation, a great upsurge of interest in Christianity was recorded. Part of it represented a reaction from the jingoism which had served Japan so poorly, and with which the traditional beliefs were associated. It was also in part an adjustment to the reality of life under the Occupation. The Christians had won the war. By joining them, one might find the secret of their success. In addition, for job or influence seekers, it was sound business.

Reaction was inevitable when the Japanese regime consisted of their destinies. It was, of course, no naive to imagine that they have no rancor or defeat, and no memories of Hiroshima and Nagasaki. Their national pride, nevertheless, does



Christians sang of their faith together at Eastman Theater ceremony Sunday evening.

## Japanese Welcome Church's Peace Efforts

By GARY MACOIN

not seem to urge them to restore what was destroyed. They are a people always eager to experiment, and that characteristic was reflected in their religious response in the 1950s.

Instead of a reflowering of the traditional beliefs, accordingly, new syncretist cults became popular overnight. They are thoroughly Japanese, ethical more than theological. Christianity in its foreign cultural and philosophical dress could not compete with them. They quickly became, and remain, a major social and political force.

One of the decisions made under the Occupation with which Japan still lives is the rejection of war as an instrument of national policy. In today's atmosphere of tension in Asia, the defenseless Japanese are peculiarly sensitive to the need for peace. Their experience makes them uniquely conscious of the destructiveness of nuclear war.

When the Vatican Council last fall, in its discussion of Schema 13, showed that these issues were equally its concern, it quickly became front-page news. Pope Paul's UN trip was featured as a further

confirmation of the commitment of Catholics to peace, and also as an indication of the extent of their influence on world affairs.

Pope Paul has, in addition, won favorable comment for his approaches to non-Christian Japanese religious leaders. There was widespread satisfaction when he praised the moral and spiritual values of Buddhism in a message he handed to Riri Nakayama, president of the Japanese Buddhist Federation. That was when the Buddhist leader visited the Pope at the Vatican last year, his second talk with Pope Paul in 18 months.

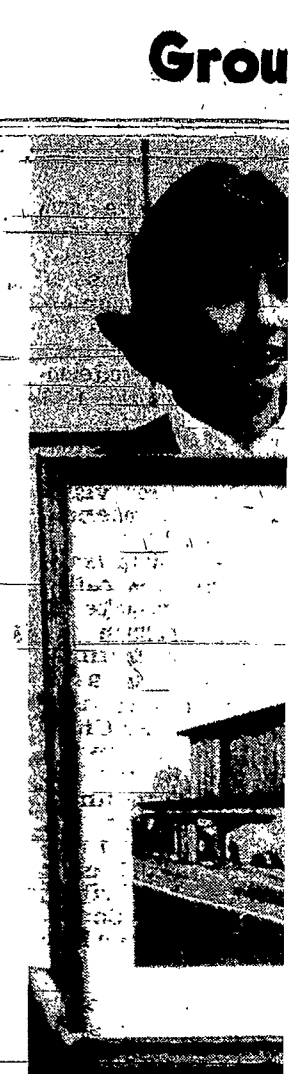
The Japanese were even more impressed when Pope Paul received Dr. Niwano Nikkyo, cofounder and head of Rissho Kosei Kai, one of the major "new religions." It is a modernized version of Buddhism for lay people. In discussing the event after his return home, Dr. Niwano stressed the Pope's anxiety that all religious bodies should coordinate their efforts for peace.

Catholics and Protestants in Japan are agreed that the new ecumenical attitude of Catholicism as a result of the Council

is a principal factor in the reawakened interest of the Japanese in Christianity. Relations between Catholics and Protestants have, in fact, improved significantly. The United Church of Christ, the most important Protestant denomination, had an observer at the second, third and fourth sessions of the Council, first Dr. Doi Masatoshi and later Dr. Ariga Teisutaro.

Dr. Kishi Chitose, head of the Lutheran Evangelical Church, is also credited with a big part in the improvement of the ecumenical climate. He contributed significantly to the success of the first meeting of Christian denominations, held at the International Christian University in Tokyo, in January of this year. Four leading Catholics participated.

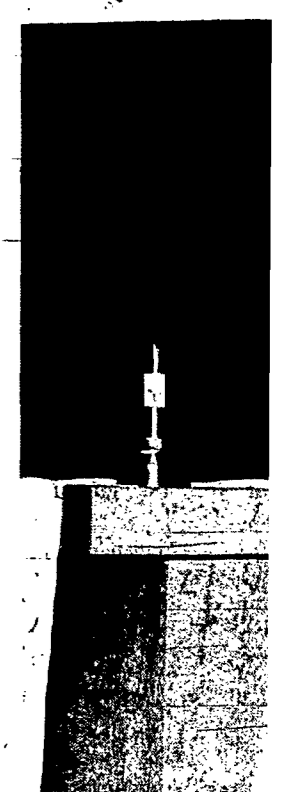
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### Geneva and New S

Geneva — Monsignor K. Ball, pastor of St. de Sales Church, has indicated that the complete water church will open Sunday, April 3.

The church was burnt disastrously during Week last year.

Monsignor Ball states Mass schedules will be as in the past. Confessors will be heard in the church day, April 2.

The three-ton marl which cost \$3,000 and dated by Mr. and Mrs. Ashley of Geneva in their two sons, was con