

### A Question at Notre Dame Conference

## Who Decides How Big a Family Should be?

By FATHER JAMES T. McHUGH

Father McHugh is the director of the Family Life Bureau of the National Catholic Secretariat formerly the National Catholic Welfare Conference.

(NC News Service)

A group of scholars and family life specialists met at the Center for Continuing Education at the University of Notre Dame and discussed "The Family and Population Change."

This was the fifth such conference in as many years, and according to many of the participants, it had a markedly different spirit from the earlier meetings.

According to Dr. William Liu, director of the Institute for the Study of Population and Social Change and chairman of the conference, this meeting attempted to bring together representatives from different disciplines and from different specialized areas of study for an interchange of ideas and the results of research projects.

The focus was not so much on discussing the morality of family planning methods, but rather, to examine how fertility control affects or is influenced by the values of the family unit and the interaction of its members.

In the past, demographers have studied population from the aspect of numbers and the factors that contribute to or limit its growth on a large scale. The family sociologists have focused on the family unit, and the elements that contribute to successful family living or to tension, stress and family breakup.

Family size is a major issue for both groups, but has not generally been discussed jointly in a meeting of this type. Although a certain tension existed in the opening sessions, the conferees came to a greater understanding of the value of their dialogue and scholarly interchange.

Dr. Marvin Sussman of Western Reserve University, in a paper on Family Interaction

and Fertility, distinguished between social emphases, such as the changing role of woman, and personal variables, such as feeling, sentiment, intelligence.

Donald Barrett, of the University of Notre Dame, noted that population research in Latin America show that effective fertility control can be a negative factor in the interpersonal relationship of husband and wife, and that it often fails if people do not understand their roles in a changing social system.

John Kane of Loyola University in Toronto questioned whether there is any real decision making in regard to hav-

ing a child for most couples, or whether it just happens. The Rev. Stanley Kuts also emphasized the non-rational element in decision making.

Dr. Charles Westoff of Princeton University and Dr. Norman Ryder of the University of Wisconsin, who are collaborating in a study of fertility control in the United States, gave some preliminary reports of their findings.

Dr. Westoff cited three important factors that influenced their study; first, the birth rate has been declining steadily since 1957; secondly, the oral contraceptive, the "pill," has emerged as a leading method

of family limitation; and thirdly, the Catholic Church is currently involved in a deep study of its teaching on family planning.

The authors showed a definite overall increase in women using the pill as a method of birth control during the past five years. This increase was also true for Catholic women, and there was a continued drop in percentage of Catholic women who relied solely on rhythm. Dr. Westoff attempted to correlate the number of women conforming to Catholic teaching on contraception with their frequency of church attendance, and he shows a drop

in conformity from 78% to 56% during the past 10 years. By "conformity" Dr. Westoff means the use of rhythm or total abstinence.

This statistic does not allow for those women who use the pill as an aid to rhythm, nor for those who are confused as to the moral evaluation of the use of the pill. At the same time, Father Andrew Greeley observed that we have no valid studies that show that birth control is directly responsible for non-conformity in religious practice.

Father John L. Thomas, S.J., maintained that a serious reappraisal of sex, marriage and the family is long overdue. Father Thomas cited the Augustinian influence that long pervaded our teaching and its recent demise; the gradual recognition of marital love as a valuable asset to family life by the theologians, and the acceptance of the female's rights, desires and ability to express love sexually as factors forcing a reexamination. In effect, this would toll the death knell of this double standard and force a dual responsibility regarding parenthood.

Harold T. Christensen of Purdue University discussed the possibility of a "normative" sexual morality in his paper. Speaking as a sociologist rather than as a theologian, he said he would define normative in a relativistic sense, meaning that a thing is good or bad because of its effect on the culture in question. In his analysis of three different cultural groups, strict, moderately permissive, and permissive, he found that certain patterns were present in all three cultures. Hence, not everything is relative, and cross-cultural research can help us to discover human values that are somewhat generally accepted.

Notre Dame once again gathered a distinguished group of specialists to confront some real sociological problems. Answers were not easily arrived at. In fact, the need for continued research seemed to be the general conclusion. The conference was successful in initiating a dialogue among the demographers and family sociologists that defined the intricacies of planning family size theoretically and working out the plan in the day-to-day experience.



Notre Dame, Ind. — (RNS) — Dr. William T. Liu, director of the Notre Dame Institute for the Study of Population and Social Change (right), welcomes participants to the university's fifth annual population conference. From left are: Prof. Norman Ryder of the University of Wisconsin; Father Raymond Potvin of Catholic University of America; Prof. Charles Westoff of Princeton University; and Dr. Thomas P. Carney, vice-president for research, G. D. Searle Co., a Chicago pharmaceutical firm. Taking part in the conference were 50 specialists in medicine, theology, sociology, biology and law. General theme was "The Family and Population Change."



### Liturgy and Life

"Glory to God in the Highest and on earth peace to men of good will . . . We praise You. We bless You. We worship You. We glorify you. We give You thanks for Your great glory, Lord God, heavenly king, God the Father Almighty . . ." The angelic "Canticle of Bethlehem," opens the Glory of the Mass and brings with it man's highest aspirations for peace.

## Can a Catholic Be a Christian?

"The Christian does not live his life of faith as an isolated individual. He has his faith as a member incorporated into the Church of Christ. . . . When Christ established the Church he set up a community with a corporate faith. It is in and through the corporate existence and life of that community that the Christian faith is continued and brought to men."

That is what Father Charles Davis, noted English scholar and author wrote in 1962.

Five days before this past Christmas, the 43-year-old priest announced at a press conference in London that he was quitting the Church because, he said, its claims do not have an adequate biblical or historical basis.

"I have come to see that the Church as it exists and works at present is an obstacle in the lives of the committed Christians I know and admire," he stated.

"It is not the source of the values they cherish and promote. On the contrary, they love and work in a constant tension and opposition to it.

"For me Christian commitment is inseparable from concern for truth and concern for people. I do not find either of these represented by the official Church."

His action in leaving the Church is somewhat comparable — in reverse — of Cardinal John Henry Newman's becoming a Catholic just about a century ago.

Father Davis has been one of England's top Catholic theologians, considered by many actually to be that nation's best expert and writer on Catholic theology. He is well known in the United States, particularly as editor of the Clergy Review, published in London but with a circulation throughout the English-speaking world.

He told the press conference he considers the Church to be "a pseudo-political structure" and that "it is now breaking up and some other form of Christian presence in the world is under formation."

He also announced he was going to marry Miss Florence Henderson of Farmingdale, N.Y., a former student of his, who said, "I have also decided to leave the Church."

Father Davis said his intention to marry was not the reason for leaving the Church since "to marry it would have been enough to leave the priesthood."

How can such a loss be explained?

Some will undoubtedly be quick to say it's all the fault of the aggloramento, the open windows, the new freedom — all of which is too heady a wine for Catholics to take.

Father Davis actually has raised one of the fundamental questions of our time — Can a Catholic be a Christian? And when a man with the stature of Father Davis says no then we should at last realize that we are far beyond the era of the easy answer.

Even his question, however, isn't the ultimate one.

The world's Catholic bishops at the Vatican Council said that basic belief in God is the chief theological question of our time.

The spate of articles and books by such men as Altizer, Dewart, Fromm, Vahanian and Hamilton indicate the bishops indeed had their thumbs on the pulse of theology. The "death" or "eclipse" of the traditional God, everyone seems agreed, is the result of man's conquest of his own destiny. Precisely because God is no longer the Great Mr. Fix-it of popular religion, He is, as Herder Correspondence magazine says, "less amenable to enlistment in the crass theologies of those preachers of whom Norman Vincent Peale has elected to be the prime paradigm."

The exodus of Father Davis should shake not the faith of those of us who elect to stay in the Church but certainly it should shake us from our lethargy in our continuing to proffer handy nostrums. We must at last get down to some possible solutions for a new generation. If we don't, Father Davis will not make his exodus alone.

—Father Henry A. Atwell

## Is Church Cracking Up in Holland?

ROME—(RNS)—A crisis has developed in Dutch Catholicism, but that does not mean Netherlands Catholics want to break with Rome and establish their own Church.

What is happening instead is that the Church in Holland wants to "show its own face" to the modern world and "there is a kind of impatience that says we should go ahead, even if Rome does not want it."

This briefly, was the answer given here by Father Theodore Steeman, a Franciscan priest who is a professor at the Institute for Socio-Theological Research in The Hague. He was replying to rumors stemming from a ferment among Dutch Catholics over such issues as birth control, clerical celibacy, a controversial new catechism which have spurred complaints to Rome.

It was recalled that more than a year ago, Bernard Cardinal Alfrink, Archbishop of Utrecht, rejected rumors of a Dutch schism. Taking issue with statements in the Italian press that Dutch Catholics were involved in a "serious doctrinal crisis," he said: "As regards the loyalty of Dutch Catholics to the See of St. Peter, I am so optimistic as to believe this loyalty is so deeply rooted in the Dutch Catholic society that the idea of a Netherlands schism can only find its origin abroad."

Speaking at a press conference here, Father Steeman took the same stand saying:

"Schism wouldn't have sense or meaning. There is no question of us trying to establish a Church of our own. There isn't even an organized group

wanting a schism, but there is an impatience which says we should go ahead, even if Rome doesn't want it."

The Harvard-educated priest added that "the Church (in Holland) isn't breaking down, but there is an internal process of self-criticism inside the Church. It isn't any longer a bishops' or priests' Church, but a community where the structure of authority must find its place. It is more a crisis of confidence in the structure of authority."

Father Steeman startled newsmen at the conference by appearing in an ordinary blue suit, with collar and check tie, and smoking a cigar. In Rome, priests normally wear cassocks and monks appear in their distinctive robes.

The priest defined the situation in the Netherlands as that of mature, highly educated Catholics — representing 40 per cent of the general population — trying to find a way of being Christian that accords with their status as men of the modern age.

He said this had taken the form of advanced experiments in ecumenism, or relations with non-Catholic Christians; a permissive attitude on birth control; an open challenge to the tradition of priestly celibacy by more than one-quarter of the parish clergy; and the adoption of a new "progressive" Catholic catechism.

Discussing the catechism — more than 300,000 copies have already been sold — Father Steeman said it was "a very good book" which showed a man how he could live in the world today

as a good Catholic. However, he noted, a small group of Dutch Catholics had been urging the Pope to condemn it as being at variance with Church teaching.

The catechism, a 624-page exposition of the faith for adults, embraces such modern topics as nuclear war and conscientious objection.

However, it was charged that the catechism departed from the Church's traditional teaching on such matters as the perpetual virginity of Mary, eternal life, Original Sin and the presence of Christ in the Eucharist.

It is now under examination by the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith and the Congregation of the Council which supervises catechetical matters.

Father Steeman said progressive theologians in the Netherlands have, among other things, tried to explain in what they regard to be modern terms the Catholic doctrine of Transubstantiation — teaching on how Christ's presence in the Eucharist is brought about.

(In his encyclical, Mysterium Fidei, issued in September, 1965, Pope Paul was seen as implicitly condemning certain unorthodox Dutch views on the Eucharist. In a recent message to the bishops of Holland, he called for a halt to "certain ill-advised and erroneous opinions which at this time have obscured . . . the purity of the Catholic faith on some points and troubled the firmness and serenity of many believing Catholics.")

Referring to the issue of birth control, Father Steeman said

the question has already been solved by Dutch Catholics at the popular level, and it is not any issue any more."

"They are," he said, "implementing the views of one of their bishops recently that the final responsibility about the size of the family belongs to the parents."

Touching on the question of clerical celibacy, the Franciscan sociologist and theologian disclosed that the Dutch hierarchy planned to order a full-scale inquiry into the matter among the country's 10,000 priests. It was expected that preparations for the survey would begin in January.

Although he painted a picture of a very active and mature Catholic community in Holland, Father Steeman said "there is a serious and rather sudden crisis in traditional religious practices."

In his statement last year, Cardinal Alfrink replied to comments about "Catholic practice" in his homeland by saying that 80 per cent of his flock were "practicing Catholics" and that since the new laws on the Eucharistic fast, the number of Communions had increased by 20 to 25 per cent.

Taking exception to the rumors of a "Dutch schism" the Cardinal said: "If, in the past, my person has been attacked in the Italian press, I have always kept silent. Now that the community over which I preside has been attacked, I feel my faithful are entitled to words of defense and correction."

## Santa Claus Put on Trial As Heretic

MILWAUKEE — (RNS) — Santa Claus was tried here for heresy, charged with, among other things, "competing with Christ in miraculous image . . ."

The case was heard during a Sunday morning service at Unitarian Church West. Members did not return a verdict, but they were clearly on Santa's side.

No one could find Santa to serve a subpoena, but the trial went ahead nevertheless.

Neither was it clear who investigated the proceedings. The case was argued by three black robed men who portrayed the roles of a bishop, a professor, and "Mr. Joiner" who was described as "a small businessman, right-winger and stalwart in the church men's club."

The "bishop" said that symbols associated with Santa — reindeer, yule logs, decorated fir trees, fireplaces, chimneys, holly, mistletoe and roast goose — were pagan.

"Mr. Joiner" said companies that make Christmas toys and the businessmen who sold them knew what "made America great."

"It was initiative and know-how and having the God-given freedom to run their own companies in their own way—and making profits," he said. "Using Santa Claus to get those kids to want the goods to turn the wheels of commerce is no crime."

The Rev. Christopher Raible, minister of Unitarian Church West, said each person should reach his own verdict.

## Can the Parish be Made Human Again?

By GARY MacEONIN

Paris—Here in Europe I've been hearing two negative criticisms of the recent meeting in Washington at which the American bishops set up a National Conference with goals of making power, in pursuance of the Vatican Council recommendations.

One was regret that the first headline-making act was a repetition of positions already clearly on the record regarding government support of birth control programs. The other was surprise that no concrete pastoral reforms affecting size of dioceses and parishes, and distribution of the clergy, were announced.

I found it hard to disagree with the first of these criticisms. The bishops were, of course, right in protesting the mounting threat of coercion of the poor. Many Catholics favor similar coercion of unwed mothers on relief, and we already have too much of such class legislation and class administrative discrimination.

To suggest, however, as the timing of the announcement did, that this is prob-

lem No. 1 of the Catholic Church in the United States makes us look a trifle foolish. Even the statement on the current crisis in race relations released at the end would have been a more appropriate opener, in spite of it being shot through with the "separate but equal" theory which our courts and the national conscience have left behind.

I do not think that the second criticism was entirely fair. I know that some in the United States were expecting action on the pastoral issues, especially on the distribution of priests, nuns and material resources. No doubt a declaration of principle on these points might have been appropriate, plus a reminder that the response to Pope John's appeal in 1961 to religious orders of men and women in the United States to send 10 per cent of personnel to Latin America is snail-paced.

To go further would require a long period of study and evaluation, the work of the committees which have just been named or which presumably will shortly

be named by the executive board of the Conference of Bishops. To act now would be to act without knowledge, I pointed out.

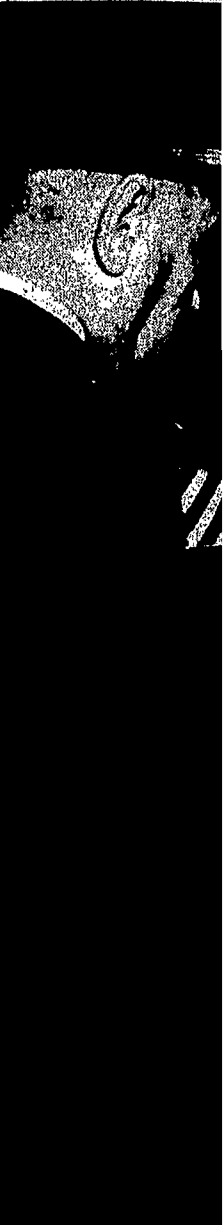
Even that answer didn't get me off the hook. "The United States scoffs at the sluggish tempo of European life," my friends countered, "but you tell me you are still at the pre-planning stage, while we have forged ahead. Do you think the Church over there needs to do nothing about the megapolis, the anonymous parish, the allocation of priests to non-pastoral jobs for which professionals are available?"

Here in Paris they are entitled to ask such questions. A structural reform already introduced creates a pastoral zone for Greater Paris, a population of 4 million. Nine dioceses, created by the restructuring and division of the three former ones, will create local and inter-diocesan structures to deal with problems of commuter living, dormitory towns, weekend escape from the city center. Income and personnel will be shared on a collegial basis, while the size of the diocese will permit each bishop to know his priests and many of his people.

Canonically, the region has become a province presided over by the archbishop of Paris. Ignoring historical boundaries in favor of functional needs, Chartres, Blois and Orleans have been transferred to the province of Bourges. A provincial council formed by all the bishops, coadjutors and auxiliaries will meet each three months. His broad powers include the exclusive right to speak authoritatively for the Church on regional issues.

"The first objective," according to Archbishop Pierre Vuillot, coadjutor to Cardinal Felin of Paris, "was to create diocese cut to human measure, so that the bishop would be closer to priests and people. But we had to do this without destroying the pastoral unity of what is in fact a single agglomeration of humans."

Parishes, it is anticipated, will also be cut to human size, and current experiments with functional rather than territorial parishes will be extended. The results will surely interest the United States, where continuing urban growth has long since outmoded many of our ecclesiastical structures.



Chaplain  
Rochester priest was decorated here at an awards presentation was Yancey, Commanding U.S. Army Corps N.Y. Father Sr. Nam, is attending Hamilton.

## Rochester Plaques

Salmon — (NC) — (Lt. Col.) Gerard J. priest of the Rochester deputy staff chaplain U.S. Military Advisor here, blessed a plaque to the Maj. Dale D. Deford, engineer who helped orphanage build a new plane crash at Dalat.

The inscription on reads: "This ward is to the memory of Maj. Deford, Esq., USA, Military Advisor here, killed on April 25, 1966, a generous contribution and talent toward the construction of this building, the orphanage of the Fric Vap Orphanage."

The Association of of Go Vap orphan Vietnamese and foreign who organize help forphanage.

## Father Walsh Retreat House Priest Dies

Father William C.S.R., of Notre Dame House, Rochester, died this morning (Dec. 29) the Redemptorist House, St. Joseph, N.Y.

Father Walsh, 67, passed away at St. Joseph's Hospital.



FATHER WALSH  
Order in 1924 and in the priesthood in 1926. Prior to his assignment to the local retreat center, he served in the Puerto Rico missions, in Pittsburgh and other houses of demerit Fathers. He is a member of the Funeral Mass was taken place Wednesday at St. Clement's in Springs.