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God Said, Let there be Light ...



...and Light was Made

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# The Search For Sound Theology

Lucy and Linus of comic fame were once shown looking out a window at a drenching rain.

Lucy says, "Boy, look at it rain . . . What if it floods the whole world?"

Linus assures her, "It will never do that . . . In the ninth chapter of Genesis God promised Noah that would never happen again. And the sign of the promise is the rainbow."

Lucy, much relieved, replies, "You've taken a great load off my mind."

Linus then comments, "Sound theology has a way of doing that!"

This week a galaxy of the world's most famous Catholic scholars met at Toronto to probe for a sound theology for the final years of the twentieth century.

Conference speakers include Cardinals Michael Browne, the pope's representative, Paul-Emile LeGer of Montreal, Leo Joseph Stuenkel of Belgium and Franz Koenig of Austria as also Dominican Fathers Yves Congar and Edward Schillebeeckx, Jesuit Fathers Bernard Lonergan, Henri de Lubac and Karl Rahner, Redemptorist Father Bernard Haering, Talze monk Max Thurian, layman Etienne Gilson and Anton C. Pegis, Rabbi Abraham Heschel, Lutheran Jaroslav Pelikan and a score of others.

Many people might remark that there are perhaps more appropriate subjects than theology to get excited about in August.

But August has a way of inevitably being followed by September and that's when thousands of young Christians come trooping back to parochial schools and religious instruction classes and when a comparable number of adults begin a quest for an answer to those questions which are increasingly agitating men's minds today —

• How are we to bring peace to our cities, to our world?

• How are we to fulfill the expectations of impoverished people without impoverishing the affluent?

• How are we to speak convincingly of God when it is

widely proclaimed that He is dead?

• And what about the pill, the bomb — and such specifically Catholic questions as how often and what to say for Confession, why stand for Communion, why wait for Confirmation . . . why so many questions?

To try to ignore these questions or to pretend that they do not exist, as Jesuit Father Mark Link said recently in the Catholic magazine, "is naive at best, or dishonest at worst. To give a clever evasive answer that will temporarily stop the inquirer from further questioning is equally devastating . . .

"What I am getting to is this," wrote Father Link, "We must purify the way we talk about God and divine realities," and this Jesuit, like so many other theologians at the Toronto conference, stressed the need of Catholics, as Bishop Sheen has done so repeatedly, of a far more thoroughly biblical formation . . . not just knowing about the Bible but a personal experience of the values it articulates.

Father Link explained his point as follows:

"Each age seems to discover some dimension of the Gospel that speaks in a relevant way to the people of that age. I propose that the part of the Gospel that can attract and speak most eloquently to our age is none other than the corporal and spiritual works of mercy. The war on poverty, the war on ignorance, the war on disease and injustice seem to point to this.

"Feed the hungry, clothe the naked, visit the sick, tutor the ignorant — these are modes which are captivating young people today."

"The Gospel message places the war on poverty, disease and injustice into focus and gives it ultimate meaning. It opens up for modern man a vision of what Christianity is all about, and of what the redemption and restoration of all things in Christ really means."

The methods to accomplish this ideal effectively have varied through the centuries — and no one week of discussion, nor any one conference of scholars will achieve the ultimate answer . . . but to those who have faith, which is, after all, quite fundamental to any theology, the quest for God is our present task. And He has assured us that this search shall not be in vain.

—Father Henry A. Atwell

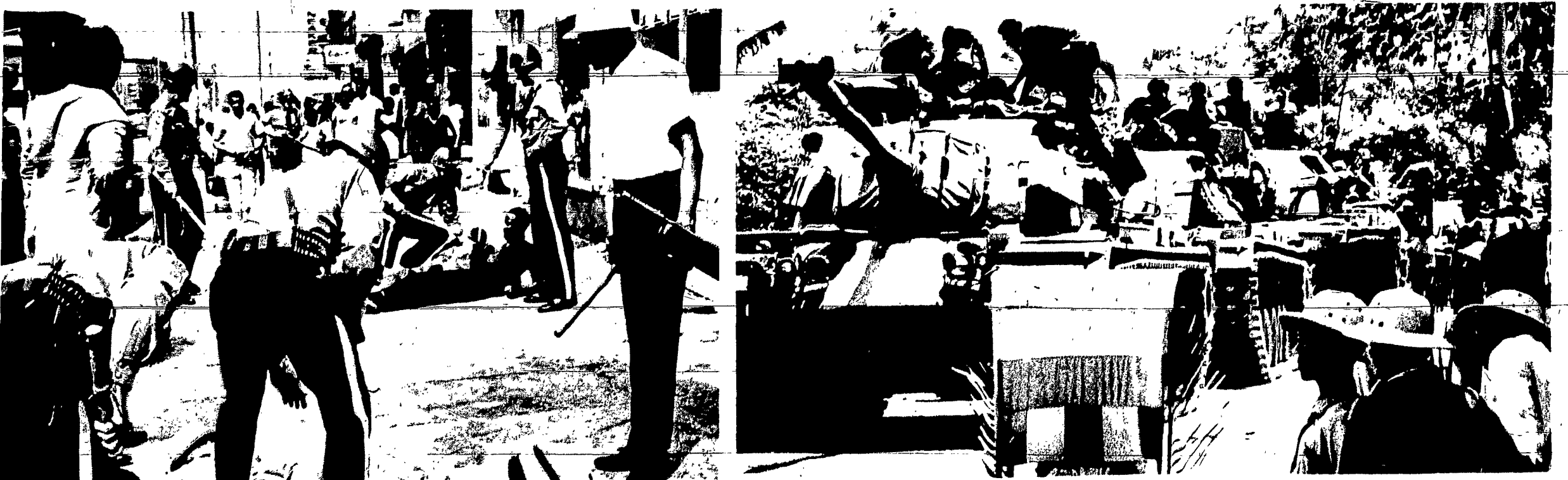
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He said, Let the Earth bring forth seed-bearing plants



... and it was so done.

Jesus said, By this shall all men know you are My disciples—



... if you have love one for another!