

Stereotyping: The Way it Was

New York — When "Gone with the Wind" is re-released this month, audiences should get a better picture of the damage that film "stereotyping" did to the Negro's struggle for equality.

For in addition to being a "landmark in the history of motion pictures," comments the national Catholic film office, the 1939 classic "treats the Negro in a stereotyped manner in keeping with the tradition of its time."

"Basically," said the film office in a review of the film in its official newsletter, "it portrays the Negro as a simple soul who needed someone to take care of him and who was lost when he was put on his own."

The film office gave a lengthy commentary on "Gone With the Wind" shortly after reclassifying the film from "B" or "morally objectionable in part for all (mostly for the "low moral characters" of the principals) to A-2, or morally unobjectionable for adults and adolescents—a change that reflects the film office's new approach toward films.

In its review, the Catholic film office stressed that "Gone With the Wind" should be viewed as "pure romance, celebrating the myth of the Old South with its plantation aristocrats and sweet-talking belles. It represents a popular but un-historical vision of life around the Civil War created in the literature of the late Nineteenth Century, promoted by Hollywood during the Thirties as an American Ruritania, and ultimately destroyed in the realistic works of Ellen Glasgow, William Faulkner, Tennessee Williams, Eudora Welty, Carson McCullers and other southern writers.

"This over-sentimental vision, with its nostalgia for a happy and simple life that never existed, was a pleasing fiction for many. Its view of the 'civilization gone with the wind' conveniently ignores the facts of history, such as the degrading institution of slavery upon which the southern economy was based."

(Catholic Press Features)



Hattie McDaniel, as Mammy and Clark Gable as Rhett Butler, in a scene from "Gone With the Wind." The Catholic Film Office has noted the re-released film as a classic example of stereotyping Negro characters.

'Wind' Rating Now an A

New York—(RNS)—Throughout the country this fall, a new generation of Americans will be able to view the film classic "Gone with the Wind." It will arrive with a new dress and an upgraded rating from the National Catholic Office for Motion Pictures.

For the first time in its history, NCAMP has changed a rating on a film without any alterations in the motion picture.

When "Gone with the Wind" first appeared nearly 30 years ago, the Legion of Decency (NCAMP's name at that time) placed the film in its "B" category, morally objectionable in part for all. The Legion gave the following reasons:

"The low moral character, principles and behavior of the main figures as depicted in the film; suggestive implications; the attractive portrayal of the immoral character of a supporting role in the story."

In changing the classification for GWTW from "B" to "A-2" (morally unobjectionable for adults and adolescents), NCAMP observed:

"In response to a general request from Catholic audiences,

critics and educators, NCAMP with its board of consultants has re-examined the "B" rating is "C" (condemned), the film subsequently received an "A-3" rating (morally unobjectionable for adults) when a scene involving nudity was altered.

The NCAMP action drew high praise from Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer. Its president, Robert C. Brown, said:

"Flexibility has been the key work in the modern operation of the National Catholic Office for Motion Pictures.

"This flexibility is manifested in the first reclassification of a film, 'Gone with the Wind,' to reflect the changing attitudes and mores of the times. When 'Gone with the Wind' was originally released in 1939, the use of the word 'damn' was a subject for a full-scale debate by the directors of the Production Code Administration and was partially responsible for the 'B' rating which 'Gone with the Wind' received.

"We are delighted that now the film has been re-rated 'A-2'

In the past, when NCAMP has changed the rating on a film it has been because some edit-

ing has taken place. A notable recent example is "The Pawnbroker," classified originally as "C" (condemned), the film subsequently received an "A-3" rating (morally unobjectionable for adults) when a scene involving nudity was altered.

"Gone with the Wind," when it is shown this fall, is the same film that first was presented at a premiere in Atlanta on Dec. 15, 1939. The only change, and it is a major one, will be in its means of presentation.

M-G-M has taken the motion picture classic and placed it on 70mm. film making it capable of being shown on a large screen. Its sound track has also been reworked so that it can be presented in stereo. These changes involved complicated laboratory processing which cost the company \$250,000.

The statistical history of "Gone with the Wind," according to M-G-M reads something like this:

It has been seen by an estimated 125 million persons; subtitled in 24 languages, dubbed into six, and made an estimated \$65 million. Its original cost was \$3.9 million.

Joseph Breig

Authoritative, Not Authoritarian

Sometimes I wonder to what extent words like "hierarchy" and "authority" may be responsible for the feelings of alienation from the institutional Church which we find among some of today's Catholics.

Such terms seem jarring at a time when the emphasis is on the humble Church, the servant Church, the pilgrim Church of people painfully groping toward God through the thorny thickets of life.

Our eyes are on the gentle Jesus, the Jesus who turns the other cheek, who undemandingly, self-effacingly, sacrificially Jesus whose approach and message are couched in limitless patience and love. And of course all this is true of Christ; but nobody who is at all acquainted with the Scriptures imagines for one moment that it is the whole truth about Him.

The Christ who called himself the Son of Man called himself also the Son of God. More, he applied to himself God's own name for God. "I am who am," God said to Moses on Sinai; and "before Abraham was, I am," said Jesus.

His hearers heard him rightly. When they took up stones to kill him for blasphemy, he did not tell them that they misunderstood him. He meant exactly what he was saying; and so he simply hid himself from their eyes, lest his death be other than the death on the cross which he had chosen for himself from eternity.

On trial before the chief priests in the court of the Sanhedrin, he was asked by the high priest, "Are you the Christ, the son of the Blessed One," and his reply was not only, "I am," but furthermore, "You shall see the Son of Man sitting at the right hand of the Power and coming with the clouds of heaven."

That was why the high priest tore his garments and cried, "What further need have we of witnesses? You have heard the

blasphemy," and so Jesus was condemned to death.

This is the Christ — God as well as man — who, in one of the least gentle passages in the annals of mankind, addressed the enemies of truth, the deceivers of the people, as liars and spawn of the Devil "who was a liar and a murderer from the beginning."

Gentle, humble, compassionate, forgiving? Yes, Christ was all that. But Christ was also, not authoritarian, but authoritative.

He commanded we He commanded as well as pleaded. He spoke as God in selecting Peter to be the rock on which to build his Church, and in appointing that impetuous, that very human Apostle to confirm the brethren in the faith, and to provide for the people the spiritual food they would need.

As God Jesus was speaking, too, when he commissioned his followers to teach all mankind,

telling them that whoever heard them that he would be despising him, and whoever despised them would be despising him.

That was the beginning of the "institutional Church" — the Church of the Apostles and of the bishops and priests they chose and ordained, as well as of the people. If we are alienated from that Church, which Christ promised would abide in him, and he in it, to the end of time, we are in some way alienated from him.

This does not mean that the institutional Church should not be criticized, reformed, renewed, updated. It should; that is why Pope John summoned an ecumenical council.

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God's World

Thoughts on the Diaspora Church

By DENNIS J. GEANEY, O.S.A.

There are writers who are saying that the walls of the institutional church are crumbling and an underground church or the "other" church is coming into being. The evidence they offer is the authority "fall-out" that rears its head in a different place and a different situation each day.

This week I have received flak from an angry parent over the new grade school religion series. Next week it will be something else somewhere else, but the focus will be on the authority structure.

The attacks are coming from the flanks. At one extreme are the right wingers who figure the hierarchy and clergy has sold out to the liberals and left permitting every kind of change so that there is little left of the good old-fashioned religion of their childhood which was good enough for their parents and grandparents

and should be good enough for their children and grandchildren. They are bitter and do not always fight clean, but they are not going to leave the Church.

On the other extreme are the liberals, progressives or members of the "open" Church. They are divided into two camps. One segment seems willing to fight clean and within the framework and rules of the institution. Some are extremely skilled in the dynamics of social change and have forced some significant changes. The other sector is the younger generation of Catholics who see the weaknesses of the institution and have no stomach to do the gritty work of organization of their forces to pressure for change.

A Re-forming Process
It seems to me that these people who see the shifts in terms

of institution and anti-institution are taking too narrow a view of what is happening. To me it is a shift from one form of institution to another; from one form of authority to another. The Church is merely shedding old forms and taking on new ones. Indeed, there is much turmoil, confusion, and agony in the process, but this is simply to describe birth and growth.

To me it is the breaking up of one sociological type of church and the formation of another type. This has happened before in history. In the first three centuries we had a loosely structured church that put emphasis on the autonomy of the local community and fellowship in the Lord through the liturgy. In the fourth century we saw the beginning of the Constantinian era during which the church became a political and cultural entity that embraced and ruled the lives of all people in the West and parts of the East.

This sociological type of church is no longer possible in an open culture in which Catholics are an integral part of world history. We are simply coming to some kind of twentieth century adaptation of primitive Christianity.

Rahner's Diaspora Idea
Karl Rahner developed this thesis some years ago in an essay: "The Present Situation of Christians: A Theological Interpretation of the Position of Christians in the Modern World."

The kind of Church that has existed until now has presumed the kind of political structures which gave the church or churches a place of prominence, or at least permitted room for it to build up a kind of ghetto culture. Everyone was baptized, everyone had a church wedding, and a church funeral. There were no personal choices. One could hardly defy Church customs and survive.

It did not mean a personal commitment to Christ, but the acceptance of church structures as a condition for survival. The medieval church survived long after the Middle Ages. Now we are witnessing its burial and the birth of what Rahner calls the church of the Diaspora. (Diaspora refers to the early Christians who lived in pagan communities.)

Here are a few quotes from the essay: "The Church of the Diaspora will be the Church of an age in which other institutions, state and cultural, will be exercising functions in the field of education, research, creative culture, etc. which were formerly exercised by the Church. . . . It follows that the Church of the Diaspora will be more immediately religious in aspect."

"If we live in the Diaspora, then — just another example — it is important to teach young people how to read non-Christian books, periodicals, and magazines, which are going to be read anyway, so as to instruct them to take the Catholic papers . . ."

"Let us get away from the tyranny of statistics. For the next hundred years they are always going to be against us. If we ever let them speak out of turn. One real conversion in a great city is something more splendid than the spectacle of a whole remote village going to the sacraments. The one is an essentially religious event, a thing of grace; the other is to a large extent a sociological phenomenon, even though it may be a means of God's grace."

Fasten your seat buckle as we go from the medieval church to the Church of the Diaspora.

A Disservice At McQuaid

The Courier-Journal's penchant for bizarre sensationalism in religious journalism was again evident on page 1 of your October 6th issue.

That photo of a Nazareth College sister against the background of a huge Planned Parenthood banner accomplished its purpose. We were dutifully shocked. We were also dutifully disgusted.

On the very same page that our Holy Father warned of "insidious dangers" to Catholic faith and morals from within the Church, the adjoining column (with its usual supercilious tone of adolescent glee) treats Catholic readers to the miserable spectacle of supposedly Catholic speakers — priests, nuns, and laymen — saying "the Catholic Church's reasons against birth control were wrong." More over, "No one spoke in defense of the Church's prohibition against it."

This melancholy parade of lay and religious sophists ("The speakers didn't say Catholics could disregard their Church's ban on birth control," but "agreed contraception was a necessary first step") brings to mind these words of the prophet Isaiah: "their words and their deeds affront the Lord, insulting his glory. Their insolent airs bear witness against them, they parade their sin like Sodom. To their own undoing, they do not hide it, they are preparing their own downfall." (Isaiah 3:8-9)

Strange (and significant?) — we looked in vain in the pages of the Courier for the following words carried in other Catholic papers of one far more authoritative in the interpretation of the Divine Law than those pseudo-intellectuals who at McQuaid failed to give due witness to the blessed yoke of Christ.

"Not without great sorrow have we learned that doctrines

worthy of reproach are being diffused by some who, ignoring the ecclesiastical magisterium, and falsely interpreting the Council, incautiously link Christian doctrine regarding behavior with the inclinations and perverse opinions of their century, almost as if the law of Christ must conform itself to the world rather than the world to the law of Christ. . . . Therefore, today more than ever, there must be the firmest kind of adherence to the living magisterium of the Church with complete fidelity and humble and docile intellectual compliance." (Pope Paul VI to a Roman faculty of moral theology)

Dialogue with contraceptive Planned Parenthooders is one thing; shameful capitulation to their ideology is another.

The Jesuits at McQuaid, responsible for the symposium, have done a disservice to our Catholic people, and to the Diocese.

Mr. and Mrs. James Likoudis Watkins Glen, N.Y.

Convert Helper Dies in England

London—(NC)—Four bishops attended the Requiem Mass in Westminster cathedral for Frederick Walter Chambers, who for 45 years helped convert clergy and their families.

Chambers, 86, had since 1922 been the secretary and driving force of the Converts' Air Society here. The society gives thousands of dollars a year to Anglican clergymen, often with families, who gave up financially secure positions to join the Catholic Church. Ex-Anglican nuns are also helped.

A Page Of Items To Stir You To Think . . . and Reply

On the Right . . .

What's Right with the Church

by Father Paul J. Cuddy

Editor Father Henry Atwell has invited me to write a column for the Catholic Courier. Since we eat of opposite sides of the ecclesiastical plate, his invitation is magnanimous. He suggested that the column be entitled "ON THE RIGHT," presumably because of his ideas of my ideas.

My first reaction to the title was negative. It seemed to infer a vague position. On reflection I rather like the title. It can indicate a point of view which many of our Catholic publications have bedimmed: the point of view that the Church is right-ous as well as weak; the Church guides as well as walks on pilgrimage; the Church is the holy and sanctifying Body of Christ as well as an institution in travail; the Church is the Voice of God speaking in the world.

The Church and her bishops, priests, nuns and brothers have been so flagellated these past few years that we have begun to reap the fruits not only of anti-

clericalism, but also of anti-Nuns, anti-authority, anti-stability, anti-Church: all in the name of love, openness and freedom.

To illustrate. Recently I asked a perceptive woman who is enrolled in one of the Diocesan Adult Education Courses: "How was the opening lecture?" (There had been only one.) "Oh," she smiled, "you wouldn't have liked it." "No? Why not?" "Well, the instructor told us that for too long priests have been using the pulpit to talk about money, building and the like, taking away from the time that should be given to the Word of God. The pulpit, he said, is the place to bring the Word to the hearts of the people. He told us that the course we will be getting will bring the real message of Christ."

Four things struck me.

1. The calm assumption that demands for cash is a preoccupation of priests;
2. The captiousness of the

remark to a group who came to grow in love and loyalty.

3. The gracelessness to use a school built through the generosity of Catholic people including priests, to infer that the money needed somehow was diverted from spreading the Word;

4. The mystery that one would use an occasion given to develop the spirit of love and unity to engender the spirit of suspicion and discontent.

I asked the woman: "Were there any priests in the class?" She replied: "No." I said: "I wonder would the lecturer have been so self-assured had one been present." I wish I had one here. It is wrong to be unjust. It is RIGHT to expose those who use their platforms and papers to undermine faithful priests, dedicated nuns, loyal lay people, and Christ's Holy Church—all in the name of the WORD. This column will emphasize what is RIGHT in the Church.

Canadians Think Their Bishops Are Very Special

By DR GARY MacEON

Toronto—"You know what happened to me this morning," said the priest from Pennsylvania. His tone indicated that he knew I wouldn't believe him. "I was in line in a cafeteria just down the street from the hotel. Three others dressed exactly like me, each with his tray, were in front of me at the counter. At the checkout, one invited me to join them. As we squeezed into a booth and exchanged introductions, I discovered I was breakfasting with three archbishops."

The incident occurred during the recent Congress on the Theology of Renewal held here under the auspices of the hierarchy to mark the centenary of Canadian Federation. I had no difficulty in believing my friend's story, for the participation of the Canadian bishops was a source of constant edification and comment for the European and United States participants.

Although the bishops had come from even the most distant parts and were in fact everywhere, you had to search to identify one. They shunned platforms, except for the absolute demands of proto-

col. No colored markings were displayed. Pectoral cross and chain were discreetly concealed. The ring was the extremely simple one distributed by Pope Paul at the end of the Council.

The bishops participated enthusiastically in both formal discussions and informal exchanges. "Isn't it wonderful" to quote 55-year-old Bishop Gerald Carter, "that bishops are talking to theologians?" The bishops were excellent listeners and informed debaters. They always seemed to have time to fulfill any request.

The chairman of the commission for the media, 42-year-old Bishop Remi de Roo, particularly won the admiration of newsmen. A daily participant in the press panel, he never dodged a question. His is a rare combination of intelligence, frankness and charm.

The many Canadians with whom I have talked both during and since the Congress are unanimous in agreeing that they have a very special group of bishops. "It was no accident," one observed, "that our hierarchy was the first anywhere (at its plenary meeting in April) to urge that the press be given complete and accurate

information on all discussions at the Synod of Bishops, so that the participants would have the benefit of the feedback from all the people of God. That is precisely how they themselves behave."

The openness to dialogue was stressed by several with whom I talked. "All Canadian cardinals and bishops are under 75, and many are very young. The English-speaking bishops are familiar with a pluralist society and its requirements. The French-speaking, for their part, are long familiar with such thinkers as Congar, Chenu, and Teilhard. They live in the electronic age. Just to give a small example, more than twenty of them came to Toronto last year for a special course in TV-speaking arranged for them by the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation."

A comparison with the United States situation was implicit in all this discussion, and not infrequently it became explicit. "We are a newer people. We have less inertia to overcome. We do not have the United States ideology of law." Such was a typical comment.

"Although many of our bishops were and are the Irish ancestry, we never

experienced the phenomenon of Irish power, not even in English-speaking Canada," went another. "We always had and still have a multi-cultural Church. We only had the advantages of pluralism not only in our society but within the Church itself."

English-speaking Canadians, although quite conscious of the problems posed by a two-language culture, are grateful to the French for this result. "The fact of Quebec," they say, "started us on a very different cultural road from that of the United States. We always kept close to our respective European roots, were never tempted to cultivate a self-sufficient isolationism."

"The result has been to incorporate into Canadian life the positive values not only of the English and French, but also of the many other European peoples who have settled here. We have avoided the 'melting-pot' approach of the United States, leading to a Dewey-type homogenization. We encourage our differences, are proud of the strengths they confer."

Is that why Canada's bishops are the way they are? If it is, I'm all for it.