

Hans Kung

Dutch Church Is Doing All Right

(NC News Service)

Amsterdam, The Netherlands — Much of what is heard about the Church in the Netherlands is nonsense and sensationalistic, Father Hans Kung said here.

The Swiss-born priest, who is a theology professor at the University of Tübingen in Germany, admitted that there are shortcomings in the Church in this country, as there are in the Church everywhere. But he said that the picture as a whole is a favorable one.

Father Kung spent two weeks in the Netherlands and participated in parish life as a priest without revealing who he was. He said that Dutch Catholics are being called the Church's troublesome children, but added that unduly docile children seldom become outstanding adults.

Father Kung said that he thought his stay had given him a more accurate impression of the renewal of Church life in the Netherlands than it is possible to get from distorted news accounts.

He listed six points in giving his impressions of the Church in the Netherlands:

—**MASS:** Although everything is not done according to the rubrics still in force and much has been simplified, there is a great feeling of community and spontaneity. The whole community of the faithful joined in the prayers and songs. The prayers were related to the realities of present-day life and the songs had unsentimental modern texts.

—**SERMONS:** They are not rhetorical fireworks, but convincing proclamations of the joyful message of Christ. Priests explained the contents of the Epistle and Gospel of the day in terminology that could be understood by laymen. Preachers appeared to be abreast of modern theology, but did not allow faith to be lost in "love" or the

encounter with God to be lost in fellowship. The Christian message was not neglected in favor of anthropology, psychology and sociology.

—**COMMUNION:** Nearly all those attending Sunday Mass receive Communion. The practice of making individual private confessions has declined sharply, but this does not indicate a deterioration of the religious life. The decline in the use of confession can be attributed to a growing realization that certain acts are not mortal sins. The beginning of changes in Church doctrine on the subject of birth control, formerly the main sin confessed, has contributed to this situation, he said.

—**RENEWAL:** While the Church in other countries seems to have fallen asleep since the Second Vatican Council, the Church in the Netherlands, through its pastoral council, is trying to effect renewal as extensively as possible. The parish councils that have been established in many parishes are also contributing to this process.

There are special meetings for all the members of the parish and for special groups within the parish, such as teachers and young people. At these meetings, the parishioners discuss the Sunday Mass and topics such as sin, law, conscience and married life. In the parish he visited, each parishioner received a summary of the parish revenues and expenses, he reported.

—**NEW CATECHISM:** The theology of the new Dutch catechism is healthy, much healthier than that of the catechisms of the counter-Reformation.

—**ORGANIZATION:** The efficiency of the Dutch Church can be seen in various fields. In other countries, one often sees only programs and commissions that do nothing, whereas in the Netherlands new ideas are rapidly put into practice.

Indonesians Probe Church Burnings

Hong Kong—(RNS)—The Indonesian authorities as well as Christian leaders throughout Southeast Asia are still trying to find an explanation to the burning of 16 Christian churches and religious schools at Makassar, South Celebes, on Oct. 1.

Smaller incidents had occurred a few weeks earlier in North Sumatra and even in Djakarta, breaking a long period of "exceptional tolerance" in religious affairs.

The Indonesian constitution refers to "belief in One Supreme God" without reference to a particular faith and guarantees "freedom to every resident to adhere to his respective religion and to perform his religious duties in conformity with that religion and faith." This has been steadfastly followed

in all fields. There is complete freedom of worship and missionary work and there is no discrimination against Christians in public or in the government.

Development of the Christian religion in Indonesia has been a matter of much pride to the missionaries and the Christian community and has been described as "one of the greatest movements of Christianizing in modern years."

Catholic and Protestant Churches have recorded an increase of 250,000 in their membership in the past 20 months and there is such eagerness to study the Bible that copies are short in supply.

In such conditions the firing of the Makassar churches and that religion and faith. This schools is difficult to understand.

Israel-Arab War Showed Dialogue Need, Jews Say

Kiamesha Lake, N.Y.—(RNS)—A need for dialogue between Jews and Christians has become "especially apparent" as a result of the recent Arab-Israeli conflict, according to a resolution adopted here by the biennial convention of the United Synagogue of America.

Another reason for continuing exchanges, the Conservative Jewish laymen's group declared, was "misunderstanding with respect to the Israeli position on Jerusalem" by Christians and other non-Jews.

Melvin Weisz of Southfield, Mich., chairman of the Michigan regional advisory board of the Anti-Defamation League of

B'nai B'rith, said that the thrust of the resolution was about five years "out of date" in urging formal dialogue because structured exchanges resulted in "very little follow-up."

Informal "living room" dialogues had been found by his organization to be more effective, Mr. Weisz said.

"We have to be careful that we don't engage in dialogue for the purpose of proselytizing people to a Zionist point of view, in much the same way that we are suspicious and of fended when we think that Catholics may be engaged in Jewish-Catholic dialogues for the purpose of conversion," he added.



Early Christmas at Battlefront

South Vietnam—(RNS)—Sgt. Clarence Lacey of Philadelphia holds up a tiny Christmas tree he had just received in the mail. Looking on is Pfc. Steven McDonnell of Santa Anna, Calif. They are members of the 4th Infantry Division which saw action in Dak To, South Vietnam.

Heart Research Grants to Honor Late Cardinal

Pittsburgh — The Fraternal Order of Eagles announced today that the Fraternity would award \$250,000 in a series of grants for cardiac research in New York City, a favorite charity of the late Cardinal Spellman of New York. The man, who was an honorary Life first \$25,000 is being awarded today to St. Clare's Hospital of

COURIER-JOURNAL
Friday, Dec. 8, 1967

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Pope Paul Urged To Delegate Duties

Vatican City—(RNS)—Pope Paul's health continues to improve at a rate which medical observers in Rome consider "better than is to be expected for a man of his age," but unofficial sources said that the Pope's associates are concerned about the heavy work load he must carry.

It is reported unofficially that the Pope is considering delegating more of his many routine duties to various members of the College of Cardinals. This idea has been a subject of private discussion among cardinals here since the Pope's illness began in early September.

At the time, a member of the Roman Curia told a Religious News Service correspondent that the illness showed that the Pope's "strength has its limits."

"We must help him to relieve the nervous tension that makes him a prey to illness,"

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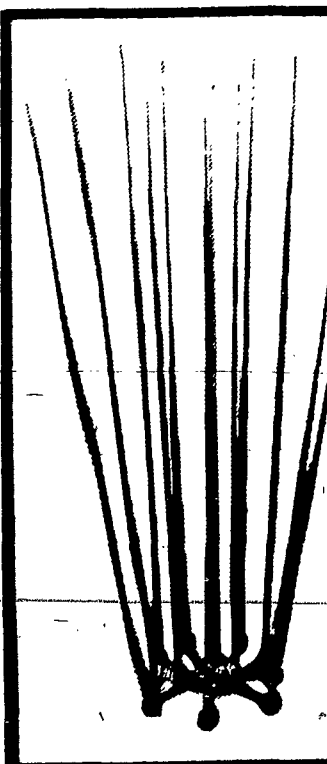
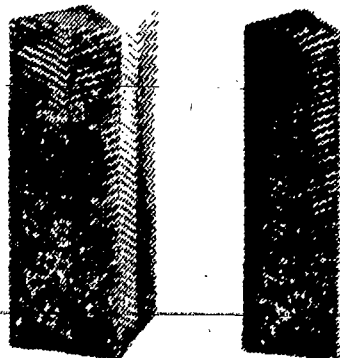
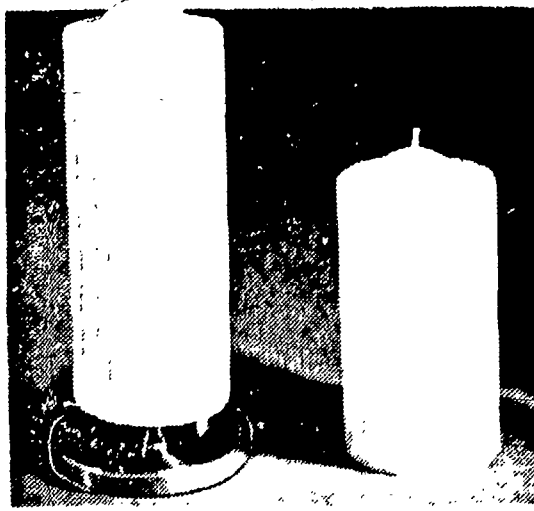
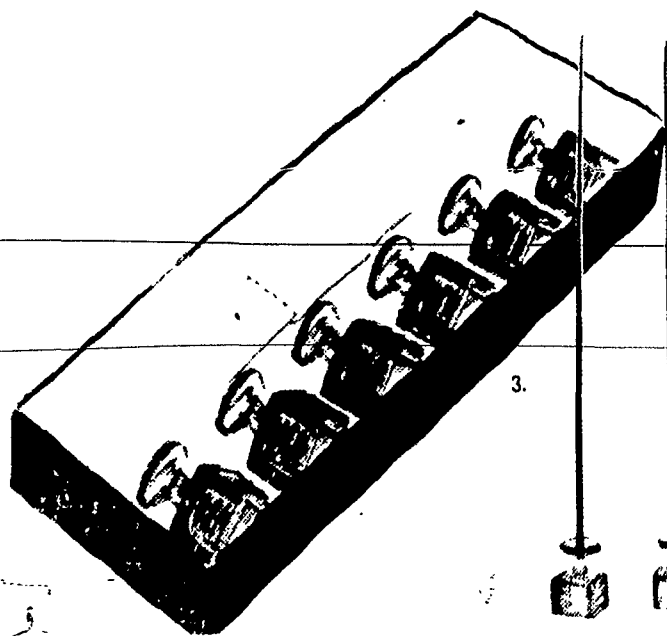
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