

Things Much the Same as Here

Big Problem in Tonga? That's Right, Education

Auckland, New Zealand (NC)—The high proportion of young people in Tonga without jobs and without land is the major problem in that Pacific island kingdom under British protection. Bishop John Rodgers, S.M., of Tonga said this difficulty is forcing the Church to take a new look at its educational priorities.

"No one, not even the Tongans, can own any land in Tonga," he said. "All land is vested in the British Crown."

"Furthermore, as only some 3 per cent of the population is in any paid employment, we have the serious situation in which thousands of men, many of them young and not yet

married, have no land and no job, and no prospect of either.

"This, too, is further aggravated by the fact that many of them have received some secondary education and feel frustrated by the fact that there are no white-collar jobs available."

The rapidly increasing population of Tonga has more than doubled in a generation and is now about 82,000. If the land tenure system were revised, Tonga could probably support twice the present population, Bishop Rodgers said, but he sees little likelihood of this coming about.

As a solution the government of Tonga has decided on birth control and for some years now

has been making strong propaganda for this, the bishop said.

"The problem of so many dissatisfied young men is undoubtedly the most pressing difficulty the Church is facing in Tonga," Bishop Rodgers stressed. "Hence the duty we now have of looking into our whole educational system and of deciding whether or not it is to the ultimate advantage of the Church to give up a section of our children in order to devote more of our resources in personnel and finance to the apostolate of the youth."

Bishop Rodgers pointed out that Tonga has had compulsory education since the 1880s, "nearly as long as Britain."

All children from 5 to 14 are obliged to attend school. At present, there are 2,600 pupils in Catholic primary schools, or 95 per cent of the Catholics in that age group. The other 5 per cent are mostly in remote areas without a school. Catholics number 13,500, or one in six of the population.

Catholic secondary schools care for about 1,100 pupils, who pay \$9 a term. No fees are charged for primary pupils.

Secondary schools are managing on their fees, but primary schools are running into serious financial difficulties. The Catholic people are asked to pay the teachers' salaries in the primary schools.

"The rapidly increasing number of children, plus other expenses, have now forced us to consider seriously if we will be able to continue accepting nearly all our children in primary schools or whether it will be for the greater good of the Church to turn over to the government schools say our first two or three primary classes," Bishop Rodgers said.

"I say for the greater good of the Church," he said, "because in our present situation the material resources of our Catholic people are strained to the limit to maintain our schools, which they barely do, but there is nothing being done in any of the other fields of the

apostolate, which are also important for the well-being and progress of the people of God."

The education burden on Catholics is not helped by the fact that the "government makes absolutely no financial contribution toward independent schools," he said, despite the fact that 40 per cent of all primary school children are cared for by church schools and no less than 90 per cent of all secondary pupils.

Speaking of the running of his diocese, Bishop Rodgers said that it exists entirely on a grant of about \$13,000 from the Society for the Propagation of the Faith, plus about \$4,500 from the Holy Childhood Association, which is handed over to the Sisters.

Although he said it is not good for people to receive too much aid from outside, he estimated that an income of \$33,000 a year "would see us really comfortable for running expenses and to assist local projects."

Bishop Rodgers said he feels it is vital for the Church in developing countries to become self-sufficient. He said that local vocations to the priesthood—13 students in major seminaries, including two in Rome—make the future look bright for Tonga.

"We are there to do ourselves out of a job—to set up the Church and get out," he said.

Negroes Called 'Theological Stepchildren'

Washington, D.C. (RNS)—The "unique spiritual experience both personal and collective" of American Negroes demands a theological evaluation, a black theologian said here.

Dr. J. Deotis Roberts, professor of Christian Theology at Howard University's School of Religion told some 400 participants at a conference on "Black Church/Black Theology" that Negroes "as Christians have remained stepchildren to the WASPs in the theological field."

The meeting was sponsored by the Graymoor Ecumenical Institute and the Georgetown University department of theology.

"The black man," Dr. Rob-

erts said, "must find some theological meaning in the Christian faith if he is to be faithful and honest to his commitment or find it in another faith-claim."

Some are now turning to classical Islam and others find it difficult to maintain their Christian commitment because they inherited it from white slave-masters, he said.

Contemporary theology, whether the theology of hope or the radical theologues' death of God or the secular city, Dr. Roberts said, "are theologues for the 'haves' or are based on white experience." They have "little appeal to black men with their backs to the wall."

"Black men need the assurance that God has sufficient power to sustain His love and justice," he added, and also that God will have the last word.

Dr. Preston Williams, associate professor of social ethics at the Boston University School of Theology, saw the obligation of the black church as a "willingness to make plain the actual relationships among white and black Christians — we are separated brethren."

Black theology, he said, "is seeking to transform black life so that it more closely resembles the life of Christ" and to apprise the black man of his "Christian responsibility to be a disruptive force in

a racist society and a racist church."

The historical development of the Christian church was traced by Dr. Walter L. Xates, professor of church history at Hood Theological Seminary in Salisbury, N.C.

The Christian church became the Empire church, he said, and identified itself with imperial concerns. This identification was carried by its missionaries into Africa where they served to reinforce the interests of the state.

In America, he said, "those

Churches that have been loudest in emphasizing the Bible have also been the most reactionary in recognizing civil rights and practicing democracy."

Father Augustin Taylor, who said he is the only black Catholic priest in Steubenville, Ohio, declared that the "Negro is made to feel like a resident alien" in the Church.

"The 'honky' Christ must go," Father Taylor said, because He is the "exclusive white man's God," and the universal Christ who came for all men must replace him.



Catholic-Southern Baptist Dialogue

Brooks Flays, left, director of the Ecumenical Institute of Wake Forest University, discusses a workshop program with Father Godfrey Diekmann, center, of St. John's University in Collegeville, Minn., and Dr. Judson B. Allen, professor of English at Wake Forest and secretary of the Institute. The workshop, held at the Southern Baptist-related institution in Winston-Salem, N.C., featured papers which were devoted largely to what Southern Baptists and Roman Catholics can learn from each other. (RNS)

'Dissenting' Jesuit Dismissed

Rome — (RNS) — An Italian Jesuit theologian who supported the Isolotto parish in its conflict with the Archbishop of Florence has been dismissed from his order, it was learned here.

A spokesman at Jesuit headquarters here said Father Vincenzo Barbieri, 40, was dismissed from the order last January for "internal disciplinary reasons" but had appealed to the Vatican Congregation for Religious. In early April, the Vatican announced its refusal to hear the case and the dismissal took effect immediately, the Jesuit official said.

Father Barbieri had joined the Isolotto pastor Don Enzo Mazzi and others at the First National Conference of Dissenting Catholics earlier this year. Along with others, he accused Church officials of blocking the social and economic progress of Italian workers. Father Barbieri also was known for his participation in marches urging peace in Vietnam.

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