

Church in Cambodia... Outlook is Cloudy

Early Confession For Children Backed

Vatican City — (NC) — An internationally reputed theologian, writing in the Vatican City weekly, said he cannot understand the current practice of delaying children's confessions until the age of 12.

Parents, teachers and psychologists "are emphasizing more and more the precocity of modern children," remarked Archbishop Ferdinando Lambruschini in his article in L'Osservatore della Domenica.

Today's children are "regarded as capable of distinguishing between good and evil long before they are 7," he said.

"Therefore, we cannot understand on what ground arises the suggestion to abolish confession of children under the age of 12."

Educators and priests, psychologists and parents "know perfectly well that the great majority of children are exempt from grave sin before God, before society and before their conscience, yet all agree that when they are about seven, and even before that, they are endowed with the awareness of good and evil."

Archbishop Lambruschini was professor of moral theology at Rome's Lateran University and a theological consultant of the Holy See before becoming archbishop of Perugia, Italy.

The moral theologian recalled that in the course of history the sacrament of confession, more than any other, has been subjected to profound changes.

"This is understandable since this sacrament's matter, which consists in the acts of the penitent, is subject to diverse yet valid interpretations according to time and place, within limits which safeguard its basic requirements."

'Older' Teachers Get Praise from Survey

(NC News Service)

Washington — Teachers over 30 and other senior citizens should get a welcome boost from a recently completed study funded by the U.S. Office of Education here.

The study found that classroom teachers with from 15 to 30 years experience tend to be more professional, more helpful and less hostile than younger teachers. While older teachers took upon "problem" children as youngsters with learning or academic difficulties, their young colleagues tend to view them as disruptive and annoying, the report said.

The study learned, moreover, that so-called sensitivity training sessions or group dynamics training made "older teachers... even better and the younger teachers... even worse!"

Some people say the findings support what they've long suspected: That people over 35 may be good for something, after all, in addition to being astronauts.

Research for the OE report was directed by Dr. S. Alan Cohen, associate professor of education at the PERKINS Graduate School of Humanities and Social Sciences at Yeshiva University in New York. Based on a one-year pilot study of 79 New Jersey teachers, its purpose was to learn the effects of sensitivity training on the classroom instructors.

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Ethics of Heart Transplants Stir Controversy in England

By JOHN A. GREAVES
 (NC News Service)

London — Concern about the legal and ethical aspects of heart transplants reached a peak of public controversy in Britain this week. Both Catholics and Anglicans had their say.

The British medical profession, which regards itself as one of the ablest in the world, has always been cautious about organ transplants. It has performed only three heart transplants.

The third, in mid-May, suddenly stirred a national row with the revelation that the heart of the donor, a student nurse whose head had been smashed in a road accident, was still beating when a breathing machine was switched off so that the operation could be performed. Two doctors had decided that her condition was irreversible.

Now doctors, as well as churchmen and laymen, are arguing about the ethical and legal definition of death.

Meanwhile, Anglican Bishop Ian Ramsey of Durham has complained that the controversy and publicity around heart transplants is making the public regard the medical profession "solely in terms of experiments and death rather than in terms of health and life."

Lord Soper, a prominent Methodist, has spoken of this head-over-heels, helter-skelter to produce as many heart grafts as possible.

Father John Mahoney, moral theologian at the senior seminary of the Westminster archdiocese, commented that in general Catholics have no reservations about the removal of organs after death. The difficulty, he said, is in the definition of death.

Bishop Ramsey heads a Church of England theological group now looking at the relationship between medicine and religion.

He has called for a wide-ranging inquiry — possibly at the international level — to elaborate on public policy toward transplants. The Church should, he thinks, consider its moral aspects both because of its concern for the advancement of truth and the development of medical skill and also because of its concern for human values.

Lord Soper also favors a general inquiry in which theologians would be consulted.

The British General Medical Council held two private conferences on the subject last year. Participants represented a wide section of opinion — lawyers, lay people, Anglican, Catholic, Jewish and Protestant ministers and surgeons.

Sr Hector MacLennan, gynecologist and member of the General Medical Council, said the second conference in particular was "very well chosen and their views were sound."

In addition to making recommendations regarding permission for transplants, the conference, he said, suggested that death of the donor should be certified by at least two doctors, each independent of the transplant team, and that a system should be devised under which people could record objections to transplants and know that these would be respected.

A special committee of the General Medical Council has been studying the subject and hopes to report its findings to the government this month.

Ecumenical Group Established in Japan

Tokyo — (RNS) — One hundred Protestant and Roman Catholic clergy and lay, acting as individuals, joined here in forming the Japan Ecumenical Association, an organization to encourage and conduct research and study on common concerns.

Most participants are members of the Catholic, Episcopal, Lutheran and United Churches but not official representatives of their confessions.

Dr. Chitose Kishi, president of Japan Lutheran Seminary and a prominent planner of the association, explained that it is toward the resolution of our differences and into dialogue with those who do not hold our common faith," he said.

Father Joseph Spaer noted that Japan is the most appropriate place for an ecumenical breakthrough. "It is obvious to those outside of Japan, although perhaps less obvious to those in it, that Japan is the place where the differences between Christians can most easily be crossed."

The Immaculate Heart father will operate an office for the association within the Orient Institute for Religious Research.

"When a Japanese comes to the church," added Father Spaer, "he comes because it is a Christian church. The question of whether it is Catholic or Protestant, or one denomination or another, is usually a matter of happenstance."

Association goals include the fostering of contact and cooperation aimed at Christian unity; strengthening of Christian dialogue with non-Christians and to encourage ties with other domestic and foreign groups.

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Phnom Penh, Cambodia — (NC) — Although the Catholic Church has been in Cambodia for several centuries, its present situation and outlook for the future are cloudy.

Not the least of the problems confronting the Church in Cambodia is the diversity of viewpoints among the missionaries themselves as to the proper pastoral approach in a country that is interlaced with a complexity of racial and social relations. Immigrant minorities have taken root but have not integrated, or been integrated, with the basic native, or Kmer population.

The Church in Cambodia — where Buddhism is the state religion — is regarded by many Cambodians as a foreign implantation, with the majority of the 37,000 Catholics in the country, Vietnamese. There are 3,000 Kmer Catholics and an equal number of Chinese Catholics.

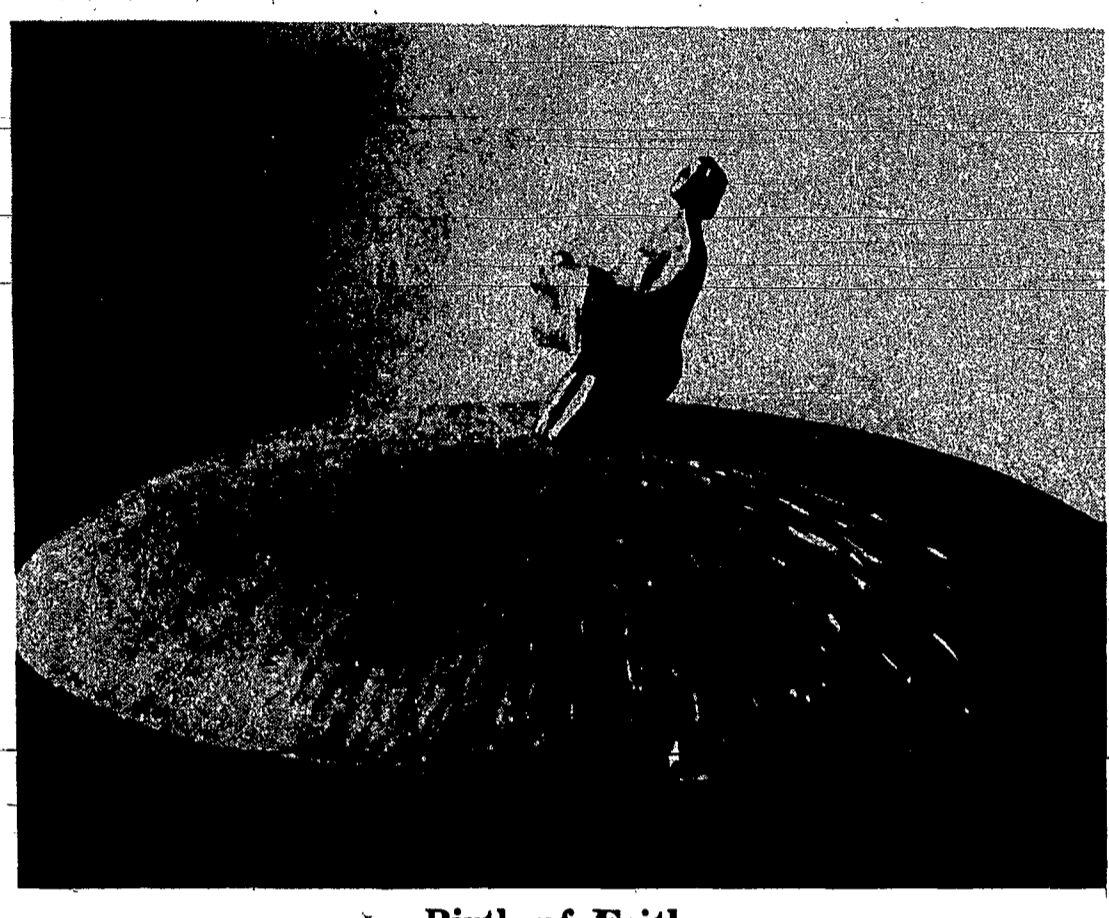
Thanks to Prince Norodom Sihanouk, Cambodian head of state, the Church is free to carry out its apostolate. Another factor favorable to the Church is that the priests in this country are French and, politically, the French at this time are generally welcome.

In actual practice, the Cambodian authorities pay little attention to the activities of the Church.

Many observers believe, however, that this helpful climate for the church could change overnight were Sihanouk and his attitude of tolerance and neutrality out of the picture. Because leftist elements in the government are powerful and active, some observers believe that the country would go Communist in a minute were the prince to leave the scene.

The lack of integration of the country's minorities in the Kmers seeking to "protect" themselves against immigrants. The result has been that the various racial groups — Malay, Chinese, Vietnamese, Eurasians — have, in turn, developed a position of self-defense and have fought to retain their native languages, traditions and religion.

The Vietnamese and Chinese have come to Cambodia in search of work. Their high birth rate and steady flow have caused the number of



Birth of Faith
 This inspirational baptismal font by Knud Knudsen is called "Birth of Faith." It is in the Church of the Holy Spirit in Frankfurt, Germany. (RNS)

According to Cardinal

Many Priests in Chile Want Out

Santiago, Chile — Raul Cardinal Silva Henriquez of Santiago says that close to 20 per cent of his See's priests have asked for laicization.

In a televised press conference, he also had praise for "rebel" priests, said the Church in Latin America is working for social reform and admitted the existence of conflict in the Church.

"I know indeed that within the Church there are opposing groups," he said.

"I get praise and reprobation from either group, and at times from both together. Yet I accept such a role with gratitude and an open heart."

Concerning the "so-called 'rebel' priests," he said he admired their goodness, their vocation and love for the Church, their desire that things improve for the service of men.

"They do not seek any schism; they want to fight within the Church for their views, and that is a very valuable attitude."

Cardinal Silva said he believes that instead of "deadly crisis," the universal Church is undergoing "tensions of vitality."

"The Church is not inert matter, nor an obsolete institution, but a living organism, subject to the ups and downs of everyday life. Much of this tension emerges from points debated during the Second Vatican Council," he said.

Among these points, Cardinal Silva stated, are the priest's new freedom to continue or resign if his conscience so dictates; the drive for social justice and change; the exercise of authority and obedience within the Church.

Cardinal Silva revealed that of his 340 diocesan priests, some 60 have asked to be reduced to lay state. Among the reasons given, he added, only one shows a crisis of faith. Celibacy is more often cited, and after that the question of authority is mentioned.

"However, the majority of them wish to continue working within the Church," the cardinal added.

"The Latin American bishops in many parts of our continent are squarely tackling social problems," the cardinal went on. "One has only to read their pastoral letters."

"Yet, let me remind you that when we say 'Church,' that also means the laity. Lay leaders have a duty to transform the social and economic structures of present day society into something more human and more Christian."

"The Church has paid dearly for underdevelopment, such as that which exists in Latin America; for instance, the shortage of priestly vocations is due in part to cultural and social underdevelopment."

CRS Soup Kitchen a Success

Salmon — (NC) — A soup kitchen sponsored by U.S. Catholic Relief Services (CRS) has become an important adjunct for the benefit of South Vietnamese workers in the Pham The Heim district along the Kinh Doi canal in Cholom on the edge of Saigon.

The area served as an infiltration route for the Viet Cong for their 1968 Tet and May offensives. The fierce fighting in this area south of the "Y Bridge" left 95 per cent of the homes destroyed. As soon as the fighting stopped, U.S. armed forces went to work building semi-permanent wooden houses for the people. These were handed over by the end of July 1968 and the people moved in to start on the road back to normal living again.

Most of the population in this area are unskilled laborers, refugees from the Viet Cong terror and the fighting in rural areas. The average monthly wage is about \$34. The 12,000 people in the refugee area found that prices had risen sharply following the Communist offensives. A bowl of noodle soup that cost 15 cents before Tet now cost between 35 and 50 cents.

CRS decided this was an ideal location to start a soup kitchen selling a bowlful at pre-Tet prices.

Spec: 4 Jack Wilder, Tuscaloosa, Ala., on temporary duty with CRS from the U.S. Army in Vietnam, was put in charge of the project. Enlisting the help of the Civic Action office of the Army Headquarters Command here, Wilder first acquired a small area of ground from the mayor's office.

The Navy Seabees built a wooden structure similar to others in the area. Oxfam, British overseas relief organization, supplied money to buy and install the machinery, pay the laborers and purchase a supply of utensils.

They covered the cost of the project which came to \$2,388.50. CRS gave the cooking oil and rolled wheat and by utilizing PL 480 four and CSM (A blend of meal, soya flour and milk powder) the kitchen was able to serve a soup containing 300 gram of noodles plus vegetables, meat and spices. Best of all it was able to sell the soup at 15 cents for a medium bowl and 20 cents for a large bowl.

The soup kitchen supplies what is in reality "a standard breakfast" for the laborers in this area. Most roadside soup vendors sell this same amount for 35 and 50 cents depending

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