

'Elite' Catholics Give Support to Parochial Education

Washington — (NC)—An important "elite group" within the Catholic population has expressed support for Catholic education, confidence that it is improving, commitment to educational reforms, and a willingness to help if given the opportunity.

It also gave a clear message to the American Catholic hierarchy: "The lay people should be dealt into the game."

Father Andrew M. Greeley drew these conclusions from responses to a 55-item questionnaire.

The "elite" who answered the questions are consultants to the National Council of Catholic Men (NCCM). These rejected overwhelmingly suggestions that the schools are not changing to meet the new needs of the Church, that they are academically inferior, and that they have a divisive effect on American society.

Father Greeley, program director, at the National Opinion Research Center, University of Chicago, was asked by the NCCM to analyze the survey results.

Some 600 consultants from all walks of life, but for the most part from the business and professional leadership class, participated in the NCCM program. They have completed surveys also on such issues as the U.S. bishops' pastoral on the Church; Humanae Vitae, Pope Paul's encyclical on artificial contraception, and on the revision of the Church's code of canon law.

Father Greeley termed this questionnaire "the most intensive ever developed to measure Catholic attitudes toward Catholic education."

"The findings of the NCCM survey are relevant, not because they are representative of the American Catholic population, but because they give some indication of how an important elite group within the Catholic population reacts to the parochial schools," he stated. "The findings in the NCCM study confirm earlier research: Catholics are still sympathetic to-

ward their schools. They are aware of the improvement that has gone on and they want to see still more change."

Detailing results of the survey items, Father Greeley said the consultants apparently did not think that a certain proportion of priests or nuns was important to maintain the "Catholicity" of a school.

He said the consultants had "dramatically endorsed" new educational activities on which Catholic schools have embarked. Only 5% disagreed with the new emphasis on social justice and world peace and only 14% disagreed with sex education "at all levels."

"Those bishops in the country who are harassed by the anti-sex-education campaign and who think that the fanatics behind this campaign are representative of an important element of their dioceses should ponder carefully the NCCM results," Father Greeley stated. "Curtailling the sex education program may appease the fanatics but it will profoundly offend important leaders within the Catholic community," he asserted.

Even though their position was generally sympathetic toward Catholic schools, Father Greeley said, the NCCM consultants also had some "strong reservations."

He noted only 33% thought it would be desirable for every Catholic student to receive all his Catholic education in Catholic schools, but 80% of the respondents thought every Catholic child should have some Catholic schooling.

The consultants had even more reservations about Catholic parents, Father Greeley stated. Only 13% thought that most Catholic parents are capable of giving their children a good religious education and 58% thought that even if parents did a good job Catholic schools were still necessary. A similar percentage also thought that Catholics did not have a clear idea of why they were sending their children to Catholic schools.

Seventy per cent of the consultants supported the idea that more finances and personnel should be given to programs like the CCD—even though 74% did not think the CCD does as good a job as Catholic schools.

"There are obviously certain problems involved in this pattern of responses," Father Greeley said. "More money should be given to the non-school programs but the school programs should be maintained, especially because they are more successful than the non-school programs."

"One is forced to conclude," said Father Greeley, "that more money is needed for the whole system."

A total of 81% of the consultants endorsed a higher priority for adult education—but only 31% thought most Catholic adults would be willing to participate in such programs.

Approximately three-quarters of the respondents endorsed stronger support of the Newman apostolate and only 28% thought attendance at non-Catholic schools was likely to expose young people to harmful religious and moral influences.

On the subject of Catholic colleges, 74% of the respondents thought the Church should concentrate on a small number of high quality colleges. Some 72% supported the idea of independent boards of trustees.

Only 28% doubted that Catholic colleges have a strong influence on the development of enduring social attitudes.

"However," Father Greeley noted, "if a considerable number of Catholic colleges are to be closed down because they are not of high quality, one wonders how the consultants expect these social attitudes to be developed."

More than 90% thought that lay people should have more of a voice in school policy and that laymen should be represented on parochial and diocesan school boards; and 72% thought they should be elected, not appointed.

"The message of the consultants is clear," said Father Greeley. "The lay people should be dealt into the game."

When asked which level should be phased out, if it became necessary to close one, 38% said elementary, 23% said secondary and 29% said college. Yet elementary education received the backing of the highest number of respondents in

another question in which level was an element.

"Much further analysis would be required to determine why elementary school was thought to be the most important but is also the leader on the list of the one that should be phased out," Father Greeley observed.

He also reported there was no uniformity expressed about financing Catholic education. Some 42% thought that the present system of financing is basically unfair and should be changed, but 41% disagreed.

"Any statistical study has about it something of an ink blot," Father Greeley said. "It is possible to read into empirical findings support for almost any kind of preconceived conclusions one has had."

"But it is difficult to escape the feeling," he continued, "that NCCM consultants are sympathetic to Catholic education, confident that it is improving, unclear about its finances, committed to the need for reform, and probably willing to help if given the opportunity."



St. Joseph Sisters Plan Christmas Concert

The Sisters of St. Joseph Choral Group, rehearsing already for the annual Spring concert tour, have a special Christmas engagement, twice. They are shown preparing a program to give their families and friends at 7:30 Monday night, Dec. 22, in St. Agnes High School auditorium. This will go on television at 11:30 Christmas Eve on Channel 13, immediately preceding the midnight Mass from St. Patrick's Cathedral in New York. Sister Virginia Hogan (formerly Sister Claudia) is director.



From the Office of Human Concern

By Father John J. Hempel

From: Rev. John J. Hempel, Office of Human Concern

Memo to the Bishops of New York State: You are to be congratulated on your forthright stand on the Welfare issue as outlined in your recent pastoral letter. You manifested not only a strong approach to a major issue but you struck at the very heart of the problem.

Too often we categorize all welfare recipients as having victimized themselves through neglect or carelessness. However, an honest evaluation indicates the majority as being victimized by old age, sickness, tradition, history and factors beyond their control.

A society that experiences so much good life finds it difficult to experience living on the meager sustenance afforded a welfare case. It would be interesting to ask our people to undertake voluntarily a welfare diet for one week in an effort to be more empathetic to welfare needs. This has been done in other areas and has been an "eye-opener." Following such a diet I am sure the legislators would receive an abundance of mail suggesting their rethinking welfare legislation.

Incidentally, I sent personal letters to the state legislators of Monroe County expressing the stand of this office on the welfare issue. A few were gracious enough to reply.

Memo to St. Christopher Guild, North Chili: Many thanks to your organization for the canned food collected for the Secular Mission. This food will be distributed from the House of Concern recently opened in Lyons.

Memo to the Catholic Daughters, Court of St. Michael, Penn Yan: Requiem Mass was celebrated Dec. 9 at Our Lady of Perpetual Help Church, with interment in Holy Sepulchre Cemetery.

Mrs. Sohn: Margaret T. Sohn, formerly of 450 Remington St., died on Dec. 5. She is survived by her daughter, Mrs. Edward (Lorraine) Hasenauer, a son, Father Fred H. Sohn, CSB., of Gary Indiana, one grandchild and several nieces and nephews.

Declaring his support particularly for the Black Panthers, Abernathy said he planned to travel to Chicago to "say in person there that the United States is seeking to suppress the Panthers and we don't like it." "If the nation can get by with suppressing one group, it won't be long before they suppress another," he said.

Urban: Office of Human Concern, Diocese of Rochester, 841 Genesee Street, Rochester, New York 14619

Rural: Secular Mission, Diocese of Rochester, 75 Fairport Road, East Rochester, New York 14445.

Memo to the Aquinas Mission Unit: Thanks to you for your recent generous donation to our office. It formed the basis to begin a fund that I hope will be supportive of the specific programs begun on the urban scene.

Requests have been coming in for the memorandum to be used in making donations for our work on poverty in the Diocese. The funds set up for this are as follows:

Urban: Office of Human Concern, Diocese of Rochester, 841 Genesee Street, Rochester, New York 14619

Margaret Mealey, executive director of the National Council of Catholic Women, and a member of the council, said President Nixon promised a strong interest in the recommendations of the council.

Council Cites Prejudice

Washington — (NC)—Women are discriminated against more than blacks, the chairman of the President's Citizens Advisory Council on the Status of Women declared here Nov. 11.

Mrs. Jacqueline G. Gutwillig of Scottsdale, Ariz., said "a black man will get a job quicker than a white woman."

She made her remarks after the 20-member council, which has three Negro members, met with President Nixon.

Margaret Mealey, executive

director of the National Council of Catholic Women, and a member of the council, said President Nixon promised a strong interest in the recommendations of the council.

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Black Action's Big Four Air Attitudes

Newton, Mass. — (RNS)—Official spokesmen for four of the nation's best known organizations for black people shared a platform for the first time at a Boston College conference.

The spokesmen included the Rev. Ralph Abernathy, president of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC); Roy Wilkins, executive secretary of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP); Roy Innis, director of the Congress of Racial Equality (CORE); and Masai Hewitt, minister of education of the Black Panthers.

Some 2,500 students attended the conference, which was sponsored by a student government committee.

The four black spokesmen outlined different approaches to U.S. racial problems—three favoring non-violence, one indicating an impatience with their philosophy—but agreed that community strife would intensify unless the status of black people improved.

Mr. Abernathy, successor to Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., reaffirmed the SCLC's commitment to non-violence. He also said the SCLC is organizing a new "department of peace" to counsel young men to say "no" when they are drafted for military service in a "senseless, Godless, unwinnable war."

Deaths

Mrs. Sohn

Margaret T. Sohn, formerly of 450 Remington St., died on Dec. 5. She is survived by her daughter, Mrs. Edward (Lorraine) Hasenauer, a son, Father Fred H. Sohn, CSB., of Gary Indiana, one grandchild and several nieces and nephews.

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