

Nine Denominations To Ponder Merger

Princeton, N.J. — (RNS) — The "unity of the whole church" is the ultimate goal of a plan of union for nine Protestant denominations released here.

A draft document developed by a commission of the Consultation on Church Union (COCU) was made available at Consultation headquarters. It will be proposed to COCU's annual meeting at St. Louis, March 9-13.

The plan declares that the "Church of Christ Uniting" — the proposed name for a 25-million member Church — will "seek communion and union with other Churches in the U.S. and world."

No timetable has been set for implementing or rejecting the plan, but COCU hopes merger might be accomplished by 1980.

COCU is made up of the following Churches: African Methodist Episcopal, African Methodist Episcopal Zion, Christian Methodist Episcopal, Disciples of Christ, Episcopal, Presbyterian, U.S. (Southern), United Presbyterian, United Methodist, United Church of Christ.

As proposed, the New Church would have an episcopal form of government. The ministerial offices of presbyters and deacons would be retained. Laymen would have a 2 to 1 ratio over clergy in decision-making units.

Clergymen are not scheduled for "reordination." Membership of all now in the nine COCU Churches

would be recognized and the new Church would be open to all regardless of race, age, sex, wealth or culture.

The plan:

- Affirms the Lordship of Jesus Christ and the authority of the Bible.

- Stresses the importance of worship as a key ingredient in renewal of the church and provides a variety of worship forms.

- Pledges the "Church of Christ Uniting" to include "the public as well as the private sphere, embracing the market place, the factory, the laboratory, the government, and the leisure and entertainment industries, amidst the dehumanizing influences and pressures that tend to reduce morality to an expedient ethic."

A parish system would be basic. Parishes would be grouped into districts and regions.

On the national level, a presiding bishop would be the chief officer. The plan stipulates that the first must be a black bishop from a COCU member Church.

An Assembly would be presided over by a moderator, and a General Council would function.

The Consultation idea originated in 1960 in a sermon preached by Dr. Eugene Carson Blake, now general secretary of the World Council of Churches. The first meeting took place in 1962. Drafting the plan of Union was first authorized in 1968.



Visits Prime Minister

Mayor Carl Stokes of Cleveland presents a key to his city to Prime Minister Golda Meir during his visit to Israel. Mayor Stokes, the first black man to head a major American city, was making a European and Mid-East tour devoted to discussions and study of urban problems. He described his meetings with Mrs. Meir and Pope Paul as "quite impressive experiences." (Religious News Service)

Surprise in Georgia... Abortion Reform Loses

(By NC News Service)

Legislation to liberalize current anti-abortion laws was killed off in a surprise move in one state, approved in another and set-back temporarily in a third.

At the Georgia legislature in Atlanta, in a surprise secret ballot move, a House Committee killed off for the time being legislation which would permit relaxing the laws. Supporters of the bill had expressed confidence the measure would clear the legislature at the current session.

The Washington legislature in Olympia cleared an abortion-on-demand bill, which now will be voted on by the people in a November referendum.

Bishop Bernard J. Topel of Spokane set aside Ash Wednesday as a day when Catholics could express their regret over the legislature's action. Bells at the cathedral and other Catholic churches were tolled for an hour at mid-day. Bishop Topel expressed belief that if the measure is approved by the voters it "will be a leap back into paganism."

In Seattle, Auxiliary Bishop Thomas E. Gill, speaking for the Washington Catholic Conference, said the "hands washing" action was "truly a sad day" for the legislature. He added: "It is our earnest hope that the humane instincts of voters will stamp down a vicious attack which might

well undermine the foundations of American society."

A temporary setback slowed consideration of a measure in Hawaii which would give the island state the most liberal abortion law in the nation. The legislation, which would permit any abortion to be performed by a licensed physician at the request of a pregnant woman, cleared the Senate in Honolulu by a 17-7 vote.

When the legislation came to the House, it was sidetracked in a committee. Under the arrangement three senators and three House members were named to work on a compromise measure. Under consideration is a residence requirement designed to keep Hawaii from becoming an "abortion mecca."

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Finch's 'Disincentives'

Birth Limit Plan Decried

By KIM LARSEN

Washington—(NC)—Father James T. McHugh, director of the Division for Family Life, United States Catholic Conference condemned Health Education and Welfare Secretary Robert Finch's suggestion that families be limited to two children, saying the government might have to invoke "disincentives" to discourage large families. Father McHugh said the proposal was "irresponsible and simplistic."

On Feb. 23, a few days after the confrontation between Finch and Father McHugh, Sen. Robert Packwood (R-Ore.) announced he will introduce federal legislation allowing a maximum of three children per family for personal tax exemptions and legalizing abortion in the District of Columbia.

Packwood said at a news conference he expects religious opposition to his two proposals, especially to the abortion legislation.

"Let's not kid ourselves," said Packwood. "Something dramatic must be done if we are to stem this tide of pollution which has reached epidemic proportions." He said his legislation was an effort "to ease the strain on an over-taxed environment."

Packwood's proposal, if made law would provide that the first child in a family qualifies as a \$1,000 personal tax exemption, the second child as a \$750 exemption, the third child as a \$500 exemp-

third child as a \$500 exemption for any additional children.

Packwood said his abortion legalization bill was being in-

troduced in hope it would lead to similar laws in all 50 states. "If I could have my way," he declared, "similar legislation would be enacted in each of the 50 states."

Jesuit Wins Backing For Congress Race

Concord, Mass.—(RNS) — Father Robert F. Drinan, SJ, educator, lawyer, and Vietnam "dove," has the endorsement for Congress of the independent Democrats of the Third Congressional District at its caucus here.

The Jesuit priest, sounding very much the candidate, told the 352 delegates at the gathering: "I suggest and submit to you that if the incumbent in the Third District can be defeated by anyone in 1970, that person is myself."

Father Drinan, vice president and provost of Boston College and dean of its law school must now oppose incumbent Congressman Philip J. Philbin in the Sept. 15 Democratic primary. It will be a three-way race, with State Rep. Charles O'Hanian completing the triangle.

Political observers concede that the 49-year-old Jesuit stands a good chance of upsetting the 71-year-old Philbin who has served in Congress for the past 14 years. Since the last election, the district has been reapportioned and a section near Boston has been

added to it. The district now runs roughly from Worcester, in the center of the state, to Newton, a suburb of Boston and the locale of Boston College. Father Drinan appears to be strong in this newly added area of the congressional district.

The priest-lawyer asserted that he saw no particular church-state problem in his candidacy. When told that the American Civil Liberties Union was preparing a statement in support of his bid for a congressional seat, he said:

"I can't believe such a statement is necessary. The Commonwealth of Massachusetts, which sent the first Catholic to the White House in John F. Kennedy and the first Negro, Edward W. Brooke, to the Senate, would have no problem in sending the first Jesuit to Congress."

Father Drinan will not be the first priest to serve in Congress. Father Gabriel Richard of Detroit was elected to the House in 1822 where he served a single term. Several Protestant ministers have served as congressmen.

Cardinal Marty Visits Queen

London — (NC) — A small but noisy group of extremist Protestants demonstrated here against the visit of Francis Cardinal Marty of Paris with Anglican Primate Michael Ramsey.

The demonstrators, including supporters of the Rev. Ian Paisley of Northern Ireland, waved "No Popery" banners, sang militant anthems and jeered outside Buckingham Palace, as Cardinal

Marty and Archbishop Ramsey began their visit with a courtesy call on Queen Elizabeth.

Eighteen demonstrators, including clergymen, ended up in court, charged with a variety of offenses such as insulting behavior, obstructing traffic and holding an illegal procession. They were then released on bail. Several later managed to get into Westminster Abbey and shout

their anti-Catholic slogans before being hustled out of an ecumenical service led by Archbishop Ramsey and the French prelate.

The upshot, aside from the expected fines and jail sentences, has been to give Cardinal Marty's visit wider notice in the British press.

At Lambeth Palace, Archbishop Ramsey's London headquarters, Cardinal Marty was honored at a reception attended by 100 representatives of Catholic, Anglican and Orthodox churches here.

At a later evensong service at Westminster Abbey both prelates gave the concluding blessing, Cardinal Marty in French. In the address of welcome Archbishop Ramsey alluded to the welcome given him in April 1967 on his visit to the archdiocese of Paris.

Archbishop Ramsey also said of his visitor: "Your visit is made in the spirit of the common declaration which was signed by His Holiness the Pope and myself in the Basilica of St. Paul Without-the-Walls in Rome on March 24, 1966. That declaration called for theological dialogue, practical cooperation and brotherly love between the Roman Catholic Church and the Anglican Communion. These things are happening. Your Eminence's visit will help them to happen still more."

In reply, Cardinal Marty said: "I have great joy because it is as a brother and a friend that you have received on his first visit the Cardinal-Archbishop of Paris. The title 'brother' was a valued one. Indeed, it is true. We are adopted sons and co-heirs with Christ. I am not in an alien land, although in another province."



Francis Cardinal Marty of Paris, left, the senior Roman Catholic archbishop in France, walks with Dr. Michael Ramsey, the Archbishop of Canterbury, during the Cardinal's "largely ecumenical" visit to London. (Religious News Service)

JUST 6 MORE DAYS TO SAVE DURING SIBLEY'S FEBRUARY FURNITURE BEDDING AND FLOOR COVERING SALE

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