

# NCC Charges IRS Pressure

Charlotte, N.C. (RNS) — Policy-makers of the National Council of Churches spoke out strongly here against what they consider government attempts to chill Christian social action through tax law pressures.

The General Board of the NCC, representing 33 Protestant and Orthodox Churches, said involvement in public issues is part of the "free exer-

cise of religion."

The statement came as a floor resolution after the NCC board heard a 15-page statement detailing cases of Internal Revenue Service investigation of active church organizations. The National Council has itself been subjected to an IRS audit.

Delegates were told the South Carolina Christian Action League, the state's only inter-

church organization, had lost its tax-exempt status and is involved in a lawsuit involving IRS.

The report on church-state relations, prepared by Dean M. Kelley, director of the NCC's governmental relations unit, charged a pattern of governmental interference with churches. The report said:

"Whatever the cause, we may suspect that few federal audits are directed at exempt organizations that are not trying to affect the world outside their walls . . . it is a singular development in our national life that tax exemption should be thought to require political neutrality."

According to current law, tax-exempt organizations may utilize "no substantial part" of their resources or energies in "carrying on propaganda or otherwise attempting to influence legislation." They may not endorse political candidates.

The General Board resolution contends that private, voluntary organizations that have resulted from Christian concern must not only be free to aid individuals but free to work to change the conditions that produce need.

"It is ironic that the Internal Revenue Service has thus become a bar to effective collective action (of) these groups most likely to serve the public interest while corporations organized for profit can deduct as 'cost of doing business' the expense of their extensive lobbying efforts, which are usually designed to advance their own private interests," the resolution said.

## U.S. Press Criticized On Ulster Reporting

New Orleans (RNS) — The Roman Catholic archbishop of New Orleans has accused portions of the U.S. American press of repeating the "lies" of the English government in reporting on the crisis in Northern Ireland.

In his weekly column in The Clarion Herald, the archdiocesan news-weekly here, Archbishop Phillip M. Hannan wrote:

"Curiously, the American press repeats the lies of the English government; for instance in the Feb. 7 issue of The (New Orleans) Times-Picayune the AP dispatch from Newry stated 'The Catholics accuse British paratroopers of deliberately shooting down unarmed demonstrators. Refusing this, the army says 200 shots from IRA gunmen provoked the troops' fire.'"

"The correspondent does not state," the archbishop wrote, "that this lie of the British army was refuted by all the

correspondents who saw the British massacre and the TV cameras at the scene did not record a single shot against the British before the massacre. The lying of the British has completely undermined the confidence of the Irish in the words of the English."

Archbishop Hannan, episcopal chairman of the Communications Department of the U.S. Catholic Conference, recently visited Ireland.

The prelate criticized Reginald Maudling, Britain's home secretary, for refusing to blame British paratroopers for the Derry shootings, adding: "Bernadette Devlin, a member of Parliament, representing Northern Ireland, was not even permitted to speak in Parliament although she was the only member of Parliament who had been an eye-witness of the massacre in Derry. In utter desperation from the outrageous and open lying of the British government, she personally attacked Mr. Maudling."



Automatic weapon at the ready, a British soldier mans a barricade in Newry, Northern Ireland, scene of a massive civil rights march. A woman stands a few feet away from him. The march, held in defiance of a government ban, was shortened to avoid a confrontation with police and British troops who had set up the barricades. (RNS Photo)

# Catechetical Aim: Conscience Formation

Last in a Series

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In practice, how do we form conscience? Again another distinction is in order, based on the age-development of the child: pre-school, pre-adolescent and adolescent.

For the pre-school CHILD, conscience is best formed through parental example and the family spirit in the home. In the book *Will Religion Make Sense to Your Child?* Larsen and Galvin write to parents: "Just as your children are 'vacuum cleaners' of ideas, attitudes and values in regard to everything else, so too, they absorb Christianity. Children are blotters! You have been and are teaching them more about Christianity by your living example than any number of words you, or anyone else, will ever speak to them."

Earlier, they write: "Kids pick up everything, especially attitudes. They are 'learning' on a far-deeper level than just word-communication. They are picking up your attitudes toward life, toward the Church, toward the Mass, toward each other." So ineradicable are these home "lessons" that most couples adopting children will not take them if they are over two years old. It is felt that the child's future growth has already been determined. He can be taken out of the home, but the home cannot be taken out of him.

For the pre-adolescent, we best form conscience by making good alluring. This involves reversing the concept of scandal. Scandal is not simply doing something bad in the presence of another. It is doing something bad in his presence in such a way as to make the evil so alluring that he chooses to do that very thing.

In conscience formation we must reverse this process. We must make the good so alluring to the child that he will choose to do it.

Therefore, for the pre-adolescent, the most important thing in conscience formation is again **EXAMPLE** — children are lovers, not

philosophers. Conscience is formed through personal relationships: the teacher's example and the example given by the community of the home, of the school, of the Church and of society.

**The Teacher.** The child learns religion best not so much from good textbooks or all kinds of media, but basically from the example of good teachers who themselves love the Faith and cherish it. For a spirit is caught quicker than taught. "For outstanding human and Christian qualities in the catechists will be able to do more to produce successes than will the methods selected" *General Catechetical Directory #71; see also #114*.

The child also learns from the teacher's instruction, which itself is concerned with the example of persons. Thus in grades one to three, the Come to the Father approach to religious education is personal. The lessons are based on Persons of the Trinity and their relationships to each other and to the child. In grades four to six, Christ's life and teachings are revealed by the words and example of those who had seen the Lord.

**The Home.** Parents educate, not so much by being teachers, as by being parents. Parental example and the family spirit in the home are of superlative importance, for children learn what they live.

Parents are teachers always, whether they realize it or not. A father buying a movie ticket for his son lied about the boy's age. The child's protest was cut short by a knowing wink from his Dad. Should the father be surprised to hear the boy's remark: "Gee, Dad, you're smart. When I grow up, I hope I can cheat like you"?

**The School.** In pre-adolescence, values are absorbed from the example of the school community. There, "an atmosphere enlivened by the gospel spirit of freedom and charity" must prevail (*Christian Education, #8*). Freedom is essential for choices, and charity is essential for teaching responsibility to others.

**The Church.** The liturgy has been renewed

precisely to create a worshipping community whose example would also teach and impart values.

Society. Movies, TV, press are such powerful influences for good or evil that no parent can be indifferent to the example they give.

**FOR ADOLESCENTS,** conscience is best formed by value education.

What are values?  
How do we arrive at them?

A value is something that is important to one's life — something one has thought, and freely chosen from alternatives. A value represents something one esteems so highly that it affects his life: he lives for it, he would die for it. The problem of religious education is to make what is a value to us — the Christian Faith — become a thing of value for the student. Not just something to learn; but something to esteem, to love — yes, to value even more than life itself.

We arrive at value by a 7-step process according to Sidney B. Simon in *Values and Teachings*. The basic steps are the first two in the process: **thinking a thing out** and **freely choosing it**. We must examine all the angles before choosing something so that we know exactly what we are doing and we do it because we want to. This thinking process involves becoming fully conscious of who we are and of who we are in relation to others and to God.

That is why, especially for teenagers, prayerful meditation is a necessity for growth in Faith, for Faith to become a precious value. Meditation is ruminating on the truths of Faith, in relation to everyday experience. When one discovers, under the light of the Holy Spirit, that a truth of Faith has a particular meaning for life, then he perceives it as good and is impelled to choose it.

The response of such choices builds up the habit of choosing good, which is the formation of conscience.