

Catholic Bishop Quits Committee

NCC Statement on Tax Credits Causes Rift

New York [RNS] — The executive head of the National Council of Churches expressed confidence here that "full relations and understanding" can be restored between the council and the U.S. Catholic Conference in the wake of tensions involving aid for parochial education.

Dr. R.H. Edwin Espy, the NCC general secretary, referred especially to the withdrawal of Bishop James Rausch, general secretary of the Catholic Conference, from an interreligious committee composed of the bishop, Dr. Espy and Rabbi Henry Siegman of the Synagogue Council of America.

Bishop Rausch withdrew because he was not informed about a statement opposing tax credits for parents of children in non-public schools filed with a congressional committee in the National Council's name.

One section of that statement said Catholics are "unwilling" to support parochial schools and asking society to do it. It said

Catholic giving levels are low with only \$30 to \$40 per capita given annually for education.

Dr. Espy and the Rev. W. Sterling Cary, president of the NCC, repudiated the section. The filing of the document was termed "unauthorized," although the Protestant-Orthodox Council affirmed general opposition to tax credits.

Bishop Rausch had found the statement "offensive" and said he was "dismayed" that it was filed without the U.S. Catholic Conference being notified, in light of the interreligious cooperation developed over the past few years and symbolized by the committee made up of himself, Dr. Espy and Rabbi Siegman.

The bishop welcomed the repudiation of the section and acknowledged the NCC's right to oppose tax credits. But he did not elect to rejoin the interreligious committee until "vital" questions were resolved.

Dr. Espy was interviewed on May 18, the day after Bishop

Rausch issued a public statement on his withdrawal. The NCC head said he had not known about the statement presented to the House Ways and Means Committee until he received a call from Bishop Rausch at noon on May 16.

"Shock" was the word Dr. Espy used to describe his reaction — first to the bishop's decision to withdraw from the committee and, second, to the reason given. It was only after that call, Dr. Espy said, that he read the text of the statement.

"It is perfectly clear that we must re-establish, without delay, a basis of understanding and take steps to bring the restoration of full fellowship and operating collaboration that we have enjoyed in the past," Dr. Espy said.

"All of us, the NCC and the Roman Catholic Church, need to be completely open to one another," he added. "We need in the fellowship of Christian commitment to listen and then to

be sure we hear what is being said and what has been felt on both sides."

On the filing of the statement without his knowledge, Dr. Espy said that it was "the result of some honest mistakes within our staff. It is unfortunate that these combined to bring such results — results that were not intended."

The document was drafted by the Rev. Dean Kelley, the NCC's specialist on civil and religious affairs, and by the Rev. James A. Hamilton, head of the Protestant-Orthodox Council's Washington office.

Mr. Kelley said on May 16 that he had shown it to Dr. David Hunter, the NCC's deputy general secretary, and thought it was approved for filing.

Dr. Espy said he particularly regretted that a chain of events initiated by the National Council had a "bad fall-out effect" on the Synagogue Council, the third partner in the interreligious committee.

He said that one of the persons he contacted after Bishop Rausch's call was Rabbi Siegman.

The NCC general secretary stressed that the situation had not led to a breach in personal relations or mutual respect between himself and Bishop Rausch. He said he has spoken with the bishop on several occasions since May 16.

Dr. Espy was interviewed the day before he left for London for a meeting of the Joint Working Group of the World Council of Churches and the Vatican. He said he had considered not going in order to "expedite the restoration of relations" with the Catholic Conference.

But, he said, failure to go might be interpreted as an indication the NCC wanted greater distance from Catholics and just the opposite was true.

After the week abroad, he added, he would be in touch with Bishop Rausch to see what can and should be done about the "very unfortunate" turn of events.

Courier-Journal Captures National First Prize

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"the flood coverage was the work of the entire staff and all can share equally in the praise."

He also said that the award was particularly meaningful because "the Courier-Journal, as any newspaper should, strives to be a public servant. It amounts to a particular honor to receive national recognition in this category."

Costello said that the Keefe prize-winning photo "is only one of dozens of outstanding photos taken by Keefe which deserve prizes."

Earlier this year, the New York State Press Association, composed of more than 200 newspapers in this state, awarded the Courier-Journal prizes in four categories, Community Service, Best Front Page, Photographic Excellence, and Best Photo Feature.

Other major CPA winners this year are:

General excellence, Catholic Standard of Philadelphia; best front page, Southern Cross, San



Laurence E. Keefe's national award photograph.

Diego, Calif.; best news story, National Catholic Reporter, Kansas City, Mo.; best in-depth story, Central Catholic Register, Fresno, Calif.; best editorial, Catholic Herald, Sacramento, Calif.; best editorial page, The Evangelist, Albany, N.Y.; best human interest story, Catholic

Universe Bulletin, Cleveland; best column, Catholic Times of Columbus, Ohio, "Sports of the Times"; Best Youth coverage, The Long Island Catholic, Rockville Centre, N.Y.; best photo story, Tennessee Register, Nashville; best photograph, Catholic News, New York City.

New Call-In Radio Show To Feature Church Spokesmen

The diocese is producing a new call-in radio show which began broadcasts over WROC last Saturday night. Entitled "Call for Renewal," the show will run weekly at least until Aug. 4.

Father William Graf of St. Bernard's Seminary will be host for the show, which will feature a different Church or community topic and weekly guest and give listeners the opportunity to call in.

The diocese, in announcing the program, stated that the aim is to "develop a public information program using radio phone-in dialogue which will enable the public to ask questions, debate and pose statements to Church spokesmen."

The schedule, topics and Father Graf's guests:

Problem Pregnancy?
For free confidential help call Birthright: 716-328-8700.
Office Hours: 10 a.m. to 2 p.m., weekdays; 24 Hour record-o-fone to receive messages.

May 26, Henrietta Drug Guidance Council, counselor Jerry Dagonese; June 2, Parish Life Today, James Carroll, president, St. Christopher's Parish Council; Sister Margaret Mary Mattle, director, diocesan liturgy; June 9, Personal Side of Religion, Father Louis J. Hohman; June 16, What is the Role of the Church, in Public Issues? Father Charles Mulligan, director, Office of Human Development.

June 23, Providing Adequate Legal Defense, Douglas Dodge, attorney coordinator of crime control projects for the 4th Appellate Division; June 30, The Need for Additional Promotion on the Subject of Prison Reform, Rev. Carl Smith, Executive Presbytery of Genesee Valley, Inc.; July 7, A Case for No Financial Assistance for Private Schools, Martha Laties, MC-PEARL; July 14, A Case For Financial Assistance for Private Schools, Father Daniel Brent, superintendent, Catholic Schools Diocese of Rochester.

July 21, Senior Citizen Power, Florence Carpenter, Willard Knoper; July 28, Monroe County Charter Commission, Gene

DePrez; Aug. 4, Problems Puerto Ricans Face in Rochester Today, Robert Burgos, Father Laurence Tracy.

The show will be heard from 11 p.m. to 1 a.m. Saturday nights and the telephone call-in number is 482-7080.

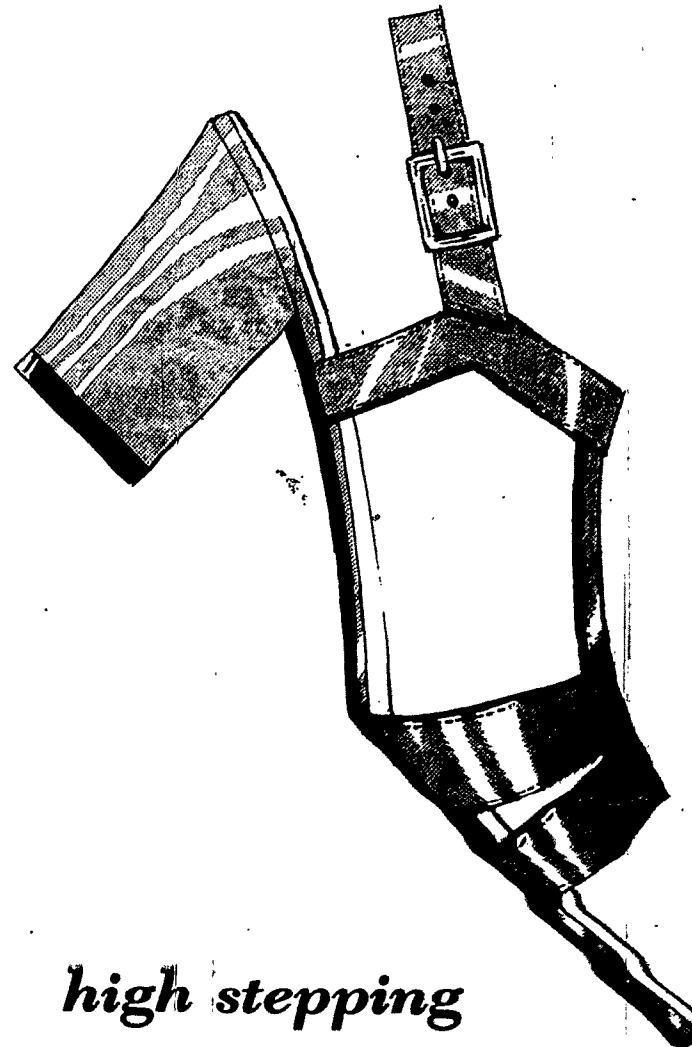
CHILI AARP

The Chili Area Chapter of the American Association of Retired Persons will meet on Wednesday, May 23, 1:30 p.m., at the Community Christian Church, 2647 Chili Ave., for the chapter's first annual meeting. All retirees 55 years of age or older are welcome. Membership applications will be available.

READING LAB

The McAuley Reading Laboratory at 1437 Blossom Road will offer remedial work at the primary level June 28-July 30, the new director, Sister Mary Austin, announced this week. Tuition is \$50. Registration day is Tuesday, May 29, 3-5 p.m. The director may be reached at 586-6018.

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