

Pastoral Perspective

By Bishop Joseph L. Hogan

Youth in the Church

[The third in a series of four articles]

BRIDGING THE GENERATION GAP

All that we have written about youth for the past two weeks might lead us to wonder whether we can bridge the generation gap. It is true that this intelligent, searching, oftentimes idealistic generation is different but, at the same time, I propose that, while it is different, they have the need to be accepted and assisted just as any previous generation. Let us not make the differences unique by denying the established fact that adolescence in every generation always means a certain amount of rejection in order to achieve independence and maturity. It is all a matter of the attitudes and methods used to achieve the goal. This searching and curious generation is greatly in need of adults who care for them and with whom they can share their values.



How do adults respond? Objections frequently heard in the adult world when talking about today's youth are "we can't manage them." If an adult is really to relate to youth, he cannot do it as a "manager," someone who has all the answers. Rather the adult must be a resource person, someone who has gone through this stage of life before

and is willing to share what he has learned. Other people say they do not have the time. It is true that living today is at a very pressured and fast pace, but should not the question of our youth and their relationship to society in general and the Church in particular be a priority for all of us? Others feel they are inadequate. They do not speak youth's language. The fact is, youth does not want adult teenagers. They relate best to honest and stable adults who try to understand what they are saying. Others feel that youth is always looking for an argument. It is true that they do ask questions and are demanding and curious, but more often than not they are simply testing reality rather than denying it. They need adults who are able to hear and search out truth with them.

And there are still many others of us who think that what youth believes is just too different for us. While the words used may be different, deep down they are striving for the same values as the rest of us. When they speak of community and brotherhood, is not this also what the Church speaks out and what She should be by definition? When they seek peace, is this not also what is Christ's gift to us? When they speak warmly of Jesus, is He not the same Lord and Brother of us all? While there are different emphases in each generation, there are also common bonds in belief. Let us not just accept the fact of indifference; let us acknowledge and build upon what we have in common. Many contemporary youth alienated from the Church as an institution are indeed attracted

to religious and spiritual values, which is to say, to a quest for life's meaning and search for peace, social justice, strong interpersonal bonds, a self-fulfilling life, and service to others. For the Christian, religious and spiritual values are those bound up with the cross and the resurrection of Jesus. The spirit poured forth upon the Church is His Mystical Body, which is pilgrim, servant, and sacrament of salvation for mankind. For young and adult Christians alike, every spiritual value must find its center in Jesus as Lord.

How do young people receive the Church today? If the visible Church in 1973 came across to the young people as the Church is described in the documents of Vatican II or if it seemed to be approaching the realization of this description at a somewhat more rapid pace, then young people would be among the more ardent supporters of the Church and would not be alienated from the Church. The values presented in the Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World and the Dogmatic Constitution of the Church are values that could be very much appreciated by young people. However, some young people get discouraged by the vastness of the gap between what the Church should be and what they experience it to be in their own parish or diocese or country. Many who have never had a positive experience of what the Church can be and is meant to be just get turned off by some of the impressions they have of the Church from their ordinary experience.

vatican news

Kueng Reply to Vatican Assailed by Cardinal

By Religious News Service

Father Hans Kueng, Swiss Roman Catholic professor of theology at Tuebingen University in West Germany, has labeled a Vatican document criticizing his views as "nothing but assertions, without valid substantiation."

In an interview, Father Kueng said he would disregard an order from the Vatican to accept its doctrine on infallibility, as reiterated in a declaration, issued on July 5, or go to Rome to defend himself.

The theologian's remark drew almost immediate repudiation

from Cardinal Julius Döpfner of Munich and Freising, president of the Bishops' Conference of West Germany.

Cardinal Döpfner, in a formal statement, declared that Father Kueng, had, by his comments, made it "very difficult to continue discussions in a serene and well-grounded manner."

The Vatican's declaration, published in a document by the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, reaffirmed the teaching of Vatican Council I that the Pope, under specific circumstances, cannot err or teach error in matters of faith and morals.

In a clear, though implicit, reference to Father Kueng's theory on infallibility, as set forth in his book, "Infallible? An Inquiry," the Vatican document declared: "The faithful are in no way permitted to see in the Church merely a fundamental permanence in truth which, as some assert, could be reconciled with errors contained here and there in the propositions that the Church's (teaching authority) teaches to be held irrevocably..."

A letter sent by the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith to Father Kueng, accompanying a text of the declaration, ordered him to accept the doctrine as set forth in the text or to appear as a defendant in a Vatican proceeding.

The theologian, who served as an expert at the Second Vatican Council, said he was willing to go to Rome, "but under fair conditions, not as a defendant who had no right to examine the record, no way of choosing his own counsel, and no possibility of appeal."

He said the Vatican's Doctrinal Congregation was originally called "the Holy Office of the Holy Inquisition when it condemned Galileo, burned Giordano Bruno at the stake, and proscribed more than 4,000 books. It has changed its name — but not its methods."

He added that, in his opinion, the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith was "not capable of making a contribution which will help us to answer questions on the Church, on the ministry, or on papal infallibility."

Cardinal Döpfner lamented Father Kueng's attitude. "In my position as president of the German Episcopal Conference," he said, "I decisively repudiate Dr. Kueng's statements as regards the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith."

"In consideration of the importance of the matter, I am waiting for Dr. Kueng to consider giving an explanation (of his

remarks) in a satisfactory manner. It is only in this way that greater damage can be avoided."

Rome Condemns Terrorism to U.N.

United Nations, N.Y. [RNS] — The Vatican has told the United Nations that international terrorism must be condemned because it entails violence against the innocent, takes or endangers innocent lives, and jeopardizes in other ways basic human rights and human freedom.

Responding to a questionnaire on this subject circulated to all countries of the world by U.N. Secretary-General Kurt Waldheim, the Holy See held that international terrorism "subordinates the human person, whose freedom, dignity and rights must be held sacred, to unrelated interests. No matter how just the cause, the end never justifies the means."

The Waldheim questionnaire was requested last year by the U.N. General Assembly, which then debated the problem of international terrorism. It decided to create an ad hoc committee to come up with specific proposals to be debated by the upcoming General Assembly this fall. The 35-nation ad hoc committee is scheduled to review comments from 34 countries in mid-July.

In its communication to Waldheim, the Vatican said that a fundamental measure that should be taken by the world community against all terrorism was "the development of an international consciousness that condemns the basic causes of terrorism and that aims at removing them."

Noting that international conventions against terrorism are an important measure, the Vatican suggested that new international instruments were

necessary for protecting the lives of the innocent victims and of potential victims. It said that the basic human freedoms of such persons should be protected through the enactment of appropriate international legislation without delay.

"The community of nations should endeavor to define specific norms of international law in the matter, and as long as multilateral conventions cannot be fully implemented, the rights and lives of the innocent should be safeguarded also through bilateral agreements," the communication stated.

The underlying causes of terrorism, the Vatican note said, are almost always the misery, frustration, grievance, and desperation that result from intolerable social, political, and economic conditions. It then stated: "Often the misery against which terrorism is a protest is the result of policies to oppress a certain group by depriving its members of fundamental rights. Misery gives rise to grievance; uncorrected misery and unlistened-to grievances cause frustration; frustration can grow into a desperation that leads to terrorism — anarchical or organized — which has little effect but which hopes to mobilize the mass media in order to draw the attention of the entire world to situations of injustice or oppression hitherto often forgotten by the comity of states."

These observations, said the Holy See, were being submitted in conformity with the specific nature of the Vatican, which cannot be identified with any other state either by reason of purpose or by reason of the means employed.

Helsinki Conference Hears Papal Legate

Helsinki, [RNS] — Archbishop Agostino Casaroli, secretary of the Vatican's Council for Public Affairs of the Church, said the Holy See regarded the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe as "an initiative that is probably destined to become one of the major historical events of the old continent."

The archbishop, who is known as Pope Paul's "foreign minister," represented the Vatican at the Conference of Foreign Ministers of 35 nations which was held here during the week of July 1.

All the countries of Europe, with the exception of Albania, were represented at the conclave, which included the foreign ministers of the U.S., Canada, and the Soviet Union.

"Speeches and discussions at the sessions in Helsinki focused on the reduction of tensions in Europe by allowing for a freer flow of ideas among all European nations and by the exchange of information on such matters as large-scale military maneuvers.

In his address at the Conference, Archbishop Casaroli

pointed out that there are different grades of security "from the reduction or abolition of the risks of armed conflicts to the installation of relationships of reciprocal trust and friendship."

He expressed the Holy See's "encouragement of efforts in favor of a more real and complete security, a security which goes beyond the fragile equilibrium of terror and finds guarantees in ways and means that truly prepare for peace."

The Vatican prelate declared that "the old saying — 'if you want peace, prepare for war' — should be changed to assert: 'if you want peace, prepare for peace.'"

He said the Holy See was convinced that the setting up of relationships among states, "which are founded on peace" represents "the only valid alternative" to the ever-present danger of world destruction.

"True peace," the archbishop insisted, "presupposes justice. Peace which is not based on justice — or worse, contradicts justice — can never be true and lasting."