

TOWARD TOMORROW

Fr. Henry Atwell

A silver jubilee slipped by with scant notice — the 25th anniversary of the founding of the World Council of Churches, Sunday, August 26.

Several international conferences in the first few decades of the 20th century paved the way for the formation of the World Council in 1948. The three most notable earlier conferences were the World Missionary Conference in Edinburgh in 1910, the Christian Life and Work Conference in Stockholm in 1925 and the Faith and Order Conference at Lausanne in 1927.

As a result of these and similar meetings, churchmen realized that all churches were increasingly worldwide in membership, in concern and in service, and that is why they needed a structure or organization so they could think and plan and work together on a worldwide basis.

Although initial Vatican response was most cautious, Catholic interest in the World Council has grown rapidly since Vatican Council II, and was dramatized by the personal visit of Pope Paul to the Council's headquarters in Geneva, Switzerland, in 1969.

One of the major areas for Vatican-World Council cooperation at present is emergency relief to people stricken by war or natural disaster.

The Council is somewhat like a religious United Nations with 263 member churches. The Catholic Church is not a member but studies are in progress on this matter.

In the United States, two agencies are at work toward the goal of church unity — the National Council of Churches, somewhat of a nationwide counterpart of the World Council, and the Consultation on Church Union (COCU) which has just marked its 10th anniversary.

Catholics here also were initially reluctant to participate but the extent and the tempo of participation has intensified in recent years.

The American Catholic bishops through their Committee on the Liturgy approached the COCU

churches early in 1972 to explore an issue of mutual concern and one of the major pastoral problems in our day — mixed marriages, both the ritual for the wedding and the way these couples are to relate to one another and to their own churches after the wedding day.

At present there are ten specialists (five from COCU and five Roman Catholics) at work on the project, with a target date for their first report this autumn.

Here is an example of a specific objective and prompt action, with a satisfactory solution expected.

Catholics have also been at work with COCU's ten churches (most of the major Christian denominations in the U.S.) in developing a mutually acceptable rite for the Eucharist (1968) and for Baptism (1973). Dr. Paul A. Crow, Jr., COCU's general secretary, has advocated "Interim Eucharistic Fellowship" as a prelude and a prayer for ultimate Christian unity.

The Benedictine monks at Mt. Saviour Monastery near Elmira recently were hosts to a study session on prayer and contemplation. Not only were the various Christian groups represented, but also Buddhists and Moslems.

All of which indicates few of us are isolated any longer in a denominational ghetto. We are increasingly enriched by the insights of others and, hopefully, we enrich them.

Northwest Schedules 2 Meetings

The Northwest Region will hold its First General Assembly meeting tonight at St. Bernard's Seminary, 2260 Lake Ave., according to Father Thomas M. Reddington, regional coordinator.

The agenda includes reports on topics such as human development (Dr. Evelio Perez-Albuerne), education (Father Leon Hart), youth (Father Timothy Weider), parish council report (George Pfeifer), treasurer's report (Father George S. Wood) and presentation of amendments to the constitution.

The region's Liturgy Committee will meet on Sept. 24 at Nazareth Academy Convent, 16 Lake View Park, beginning at 8 p.m.

The committee will discuss individual parish liturgical problems.

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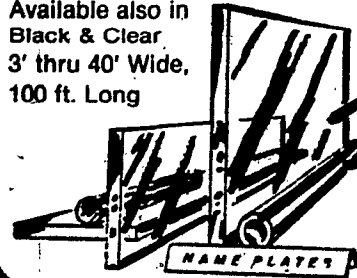
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In private law practice with Sidney Z. Davidson. Served as Assistant District Attorney and as a Deputy County Attorney. Tried numerous lawsuits, both criminal and civil. Served in U.S. State Dept. Councilman and Lector. Member of Blessed Sacrament Church, Monroe County Bar, University Club, Elks, American Legion. Lives at 445 Harvard Street with wife Nancy, and daughter, Elizabeth.

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If interested contact:

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