

Neighborhood

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the National Conference of Catholic Bishops to implement a priority concern to improve the quality of life in rural areas.

In order to assist the church to address itself to the needs of rural America, we recommend:

1. That the National Conference of Catholic Bishops continue its support of the National Catholic Rural Life Conference as the American church's voice for land, town and country related concerns and that it urge grassroots support adequate for carrying out this role. Each diocese will have a Catholic Rural Life Office assisting community organization and serving rural needs. In the dioceses that are primarily metropolitan this office will serve as liaison for urban rural issues. These designated bodies will interpret rural concerns to church organizations and the general public.

2. There should be an evaluation of church structures and programs of ministry to the rural community in the light of present needs for social action, religious education and social services.

3. That these same offices and other appropriate agencies support those movements and organizations designed to preserve the land both as a gift from God and as a precious natural resource which should have a wide distribution to all the people. The activities of these offices and agencies will include support of legislation to stop the abuse of land speculation, exploitation of agricultural workers including the undocumented alien, large agribusiness, and concentrated land holdings, and will express continued support of the family farm.

4. That our bishops be encouraged to address a pastoral letter to the people of their diocese on the dignity of rural life for Christian living.

5. That our bishops re-evaluate their policies, disbursement of funds, and personnel placement in rural communities beginning June 1, 1977.

6. That the bishops, in consultation with the people of God, develop new structures and ministries appropriate to the needs of rural communities, such as mobile teams of resource persons, and new forms of lay leadership and ministry.

7. That the pastoral formation focus on rural as well as urban parish ministries.

8. That national church organizations consider the needs of more rural dioceses in the location of meetings and allotment of funds.

Specifically that the church in its concern for the principles of economics and social justice, given special consideration of the long-standing instabilities of rural America, urge that the Campaign for Human Development give a high priority for allocating its funds to community organizing activities, including especially rural communities.

9. That a special task force be set up through the National Catholic Rural Life Conference to address and develop legislative action relative to the problems of rural poverty, rural health and housing, land use and theology of stewardship; estate, property and income tax reform; rural financing (redlining); corporate tax deduction (loss) farming; use of food products as a national and international political tool.

10. That the national church support the people of Appalachia and the program and values outlined in the pastoral, This Land is Home to Me.

A follow-up plan of action should be developed in consultation with Appalachian organizations and the Commission on Religion in Appalachia. The follow-up program should include a focus on the pastoral and social action concerns of Appalachian migrants.

11. That the national church support legislative and self-help programs for the rural poor that they may share in God's spiritual and temporal gifts.

12. That the church support efforts to improve conditions for all farm workers (including but not limited to migrants) rather than encourage their departure from agriculture.

13. That the church support the God-given rights of the poor rural wage earners, migrants, sharecroppers, and family farmers, and the rights of small and independent businessmen; that the church recognize and encourage their rights to organize.

RECOMMENDATION: ONGOING IMPLEMENTATION

That the National Conference of Catholic Bishops through the bicentennial office establish a representative task force drawn from delegates to this conference:

a. To sustain the Call to Action momentum.

b. To promote the implementation of all the recommendations.

c. To set in motion another consultation within five years to evaluate the results of this program and to suggest goals for the next period.

mandate toward justice means that we must be educated for justice. Such education touches every part of the Christian's life, and places every aspect of society under the judgment of the gospel. In the words of the Synod of Bishops in 1971, education for justice demands a "renewal of heart, a recognition of sin in both its individual and social manifestations."

Education aimed at renewal of heart cannot be merely theoretical. It must obviously involve the whole person — putting us with Christ on the side of the poor and the oppressed. Such involvement demands a constant process of experience, prayerful reflection, informed analysis, and ever bolder actions when our Christian discernment leads us critically to reject certain values and structures of our national and world societies.

Education for justice dares to challenge Christian thinking, and commitment to take "the rebirth of utopias" seriously in its search for a vision of a more just and peaceful world beyond present forms of either capitalism or socialism. As Pope Paul reminds us in his Call to Action, "There dwells within man a power which urges him to go beyond every system and every ideology." For Christians, faith and justice are inseparable. We recommend:

1. That the National Conference of Catholic Bishops strongly urge that by June 1978, there be established and supported in each diocese an office for justice and peace.

2. That the Office of International Justice and Peace of the USCC be encouraged and supported in its work. That office should assist diocesan justice and peace offices which should be separate and distinct from social services. This assistance shall include guidelines for the development and evaluation of programs and provide a vehicle of communication among those offices and between them and other organizations and movements concerned with international justice and peace. This national office will also serve as a resource for the local bishop.

3. That the USCC, through its Office of International Justice and Peace, establish and maintain in New York an office with professional staff as a center of information and liaison with the United Nations headquarters so that the U.S. Catholic community will have close contact with international and national organizations concerned with UN-related global issues and a channel for the expression of its views.

4. That the USCC, through its Office of International Justice and Peace, collaborate with other national ecclesial communities, the National Council of Churches, the Jewish community and with other religions and that it enter into dialogue with other world religions on the issues of justice and peace.

5. That the Office of International Justice and Peace and the Department of Education of the USCC begin immediately to build on and support present efforts (USCC, NCEA, etc.) to develop new models of justice education at all levels; affirmative of the different cultures among us, and stimulate research and evaluation in regions throughout the country (e.g. Catholic educational institutions, universities, etc.).

6. That comprehensive programs be developed to train persons in the content, strategy and spirituality of justice and peace education. These should be continually evaluated, researched, and shared on a national basis. Education for justice programs generated by this research and training should be implemented in all the church's educational endeavors by 1980 and be evaluated on a continuing basis. The above recommendations should be considered in the context of lifelong learning and every effort should be made to ensure the

active participation of diverse socioeconomic, racial, religious, cultural and generational groups.

7. That the NCCB should invite all scholars to participate in the ministry of justice and peace by collaborative research into questions of global justice, including the relation of Catholic and other (e.g., socialist, Gandhian) traditions to contemporary situations. Further, the NCCB should investigate the possibility of establishing and supporting Catholic centers for research on global justice, including support for those already in existence.

We also recommend a stronger focus by the bishops in their communications with each other and with the faithful on issues of justice and peace, including regular evaluation of the effectiveness of their communication on these subjects.

8. That active efforts be made in every diocese to initiate on a parish level the development of the education for justice process in the following manner:

a) By 1979, experiential models should be developed within the diocese which would utilize all the resources available to the faith community, namely, in the dimensions of teaching, sacrament and witness.

b) Introductory workshops should be held in dioceses for the preparation of clergy and laity involved in the teaching mission of the church.

c) Recognizing the unique leadership role of the bishops in the faith community, the NCCB should schedule workshops which will build the awareness, understanding, and support of the bishops for the justice education process.

9. That bishops and missionary societies initiate a mission program with the following elements:

a) Invite indigenous representatives of the Third World to raise critical consciousness of the people in the United States regarding their situation in order to engage us in solidarity with their aspirations and struggle for justice and peace.

b) Plans should be completed by the mission societies and the NCCB/USCC for utilizing returning missionaries more advantageously in justice and peace education programs.

10. That the Catholic Church should use television, radio, press and other means of social communication as vehicles for bringing a larger and more comprehensive view of global justice before the public. In particular, the Department of Communications of the USCC and Unda-USA should give a high priority to using the means of social communication at every level to inform all peoples on the issues of global justice and persuade them to effective action.

11. That the role of small intentional communities, such as Catholic Worker and other ecumenical grass-roots groups, be recognized and promoted in the work of education and formation for justice. These communities are focuses of evangelization, effective instruments of conscientization and creative political and social action, and support for the persons involved in the struggle for justice. They have also proven to be first-line outreach to the orphan, widow and the stranger in the land at a time when we have more and more people sleeping in the streets and refugees coming from other countries. Families and single people should consider linking up with such grass-roots communities for justice and peace.

RECOMMENDATION: DEFENSE OF HUMAN RIGHTS

The Catholic Church has increasingly seen the defense of human rights as inseparable from its gospel mandate. We reaffirm the expression of these rights by many

nations through the UN Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Therefore, we recommend:

1. That the NCCB, the USCC and the Catholic community of the United States advocate before their government a foreign policy that is in keeping with the defense of human rights as stipulated in the UN Universal Declaration of Human Rights. We have openly reaffirmed during this bicentennial year many traditional national ideals such as the right of self-determination; we should acknowledge this same right in our foreign policy by allowing the development of political and economic systems that differ from our own.

We urge that no economic or military support be extended to any government which displays a pattern of gross violations of human rights, whether based on political or religious grounds. We call upon the people of the United States to restrict any further government or corporate involvement in these nations, allowing exceptions only for specific humanitarian needs.

2. That this assembly express its appreciation for the leadership on the issues of human rights given by the NCCB and the USCC. We urge both of these groups to continue examining the moral dimensions of the policies of our government and to address particular attention to the operational effects of multinational corporations with large investments in Third World countries. The results of these examinations, and the statements and teaching of the hierarchy on these subjects, should be better publicized than in the past. We ask the bishops to utilize the programs of education for global justice recommended above.

3. That all Catholics and Catholic institutions review their purchases and investments, applying moral ethical criteria suggested in the "guidelines" published by such groups as the National Federation of Priests' Councils, the Justice and Peace Center in Milwaukee and the National Council of Churches.

After such review, a representation should be made to the corporations in question, and whether divestment or continued ownership is called for, institutions should give public reasons for their decisions in this matter. The work of the National Catholic Coalition for Responsible Investment and the Interfaith Center on Corporate Responsibility should be commended and supported by participation.

4. That the church in America affirm the right of every person to a nutritionally adequate diet. That in the light of the urgency of world hunger and malnutrition, the U.S. Catholic community continue to implement the bishops' pastoral plan on the world food crisis and that Operation Rice Bowl become a regular element in the annual observance of the Lenten season. It is strongly recommended that any communal effort to express solidarity with the hungry of the world be coupled with redistribution of resources and with public policies necessary to make that distribution possible.

5. That parishes promote enrollment in organizations such as Bread for the World, the Christian citizens' organization enlisting members who in turn contact government leaders on policy matters that have a direct bearing on world hunger, and that maximum use be made of its publications in parish bulletins and other available media.

6. That the Catholic community respond even more generously than in the past to the needs of the peoples in the Third and Fourth Worlds through the American Catholic Bishops' Overseas Appeal (Laetare Sunday). We further recommend that the bishops responsible for Catholic Relief Services evaluate the policies, programs, activities and structures of Catholic Relief Services toward making it an even more effective

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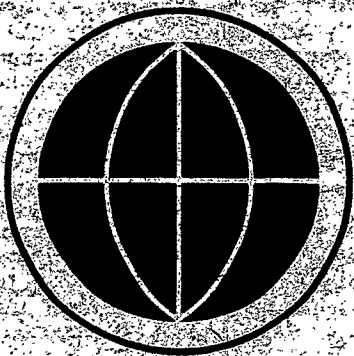
Humankind

PREAMBLE

The challenge facing the church in the United States and in the world today is to give the prophetic witness of Christ through effective action on behalf of justice. (Justice in the World, Synod of Bishops, 1971, par. no. 6)

While we affirm with gratitude all the positive elements in our heritage, we are conscious of our complicity in the many injustices committed at home and abroad through our uncritical acceptance of the system in which we participate.

We hear the cries of our oppressed brothers and sisters. The following recommendations are our expression of dedicated solidarity with them as together we struggle in the defense of human life in all its forms and in the creation of a just society.



RECOMMENDATION: EDUCATION FOR GLOBAL JUSTICE

To hunger and thirst after justice, both within and beyond our national boundaries, is a mandate laid upon us by both the Old and New Testaments.

The history of both our church and our nation clearly shows, however, that to accept the