

## THE INITIAL DEBATE ON INTERRELIGIOUS COOPERATION

[ADD: EUROPEAN DISCUSSION, “VIE INTELLECTUELLE” AND MARITAIN?]

The Sword of the Spirit Movement  
Intercredal Cooperation in the United States  
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Obstacles to Cooperation

John Courtney Murray first emerged as a significant American Catholic theologian as a participant in a public discussion that took place in the United States in the early 1940s on the possibility, desirability, and nature of cooperation between Catholics and members of other religious communions. To appreciate the nature of the debate and Murray's part in it, it is helpful to have a knowledge of its background and of the causes that led Catholics to reconsider their relationship with other faiths.

Earlier European discussions: M. de Gandillac, *Vie Int*, Dec 25, 1935, “Un prétendu libéralisme;” “Christianus,” *Vintel*, Oct 10, 1937, “La théologie de la collaboration”; J. Maritain, “Qui est mon prochain?” *VieIntel*, 65 (Aug. 1, 1939) 165-91; Max Pribilla, *Um kirchliche Einheit* (Freiburg im Br. (1929). [Or put this with reviews of literature by Murray and Connell?]

### *The Sword of the Spirit Movement*

A first stimulus derived from the movement for interreligious cooperation that began in England as “the Sword of the Spirit Movement.”<sup>1</sup> On August 1, 1940, Arthur Cardinal Hinsley, Archbishop of Westminster, inaugurated the movement in part to respond to accusations that Catholics were sympathetic to the fascist regimes, but principally as a response to an appeal articulated by Christopher Dawson that Catholics participate in the effort to save western civilization

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<sup>1</sup> See Michael J. Walsh, *From Sword to Ploughshare: Sword of the Spirit to Catholic Institute for International Relations 1940-1980* (London: CIIR, 1980); idem, “Ecumenism in War-time Britain: The Sword of the Spirit and Religion and Life (1940-45),” *Heythrop Journal*, 23 (1982) 243-58, 377-94; Thomas Moloney, *Westminster, Whitehall and the Vatican: The Role of Cardinal Hinsley, 1935-43* (London: Burns & Oates, 1985) 186-204; Christina Scott, *A Historian and His World: A Life of Christopher Dawson 1889-1970* (London: Sheed & Ward, 1984) 137-47; Christopher Dawson, *The Judgment of the Nations* (New York: Sheed & Ward, 1942) 151-202. There is also a chapter on the SOS and its context by Joan Keating, “Discrediting the ‘Catholic State’: British Catholics and the Fall of France,” in *Catholicism in Britain and France since 1789*, ed. Frank Tallett and Nicholas Atkin (London: Hambledon Press, 1996) Stuart Mews, “The Sword of the Spirit: A Catholic Cultural Crusade of 1940,” *Studies in Church History. Vol. 20 The Church and War*, ed. William J. Sheils (Oxford, 1983) 409-30; Kester Aspden, *Fortress Church: The English Roman Catholic Bishops and Politics, 1903-1963* (Leominster: Gracewing, 2002) 234-61; J. C. Heenan, *Cardinal Hinsley: A Memoir* (London: Burns, Oates and Washbourne, 1944) 182-210.

from the crisis into which it had been thrown by the rise of totalitarianism and the outbreak of the Second World War.<sup>2</sup> Hinsley described the purpose of the new movement as "the restoration in Europe of a Christian basis for both public and private life, by a return to the principles of international order and Christian freedom."<sup>3</sup> Although originally a Catholic movement, the Sword attracted the attention and support of large numbers of non-Catholics; the need to cooperate with them was stated clearly by the Archbishop of Birmingham: "We are too small a body by ourselves to influence the social order; so the only alternatives which face us are either to cooperate with other Christians or to abandon altogether the social order to the atheists and secularists who have already done such appalling harm."<sup>4</sup>

The movement received international attention with the publication on December 21, 1940, of a letter to the London *Times*, signed by Cardinal Hinsley, the Anglican Archbishops of Canterbury and York, and the Moderator of the Free Church Federal Council. After an opening assertion that "no permanent peace is possible in Europe unless the principles of the Christian religion are made the foundation of national policy and of all social life," the letter went on to endorse the five points of Pope Pius XII's peace plan and added five other "standards by which economic situations and proposals may be tested."<sup>5</sup>

The objections of some Catholic theologians and canonists to the idea of intercredal cooperation, the reservations of several British Catholic Bishops, and the insistence of some Protestants that Catholics acknowledge full religious freedom for all churches soon threatened the nascent movement.<sup>6</sup> It was eventually decided not to have a joint organization or movement, but to establish parallel organizations, the Catholic Sword of the Spirit Movement and the Religion and Life Movement of the Anglicans and Free Church members. On May 28, 1942, the two movements issued a "Joint Statement on Christian Co-operation," in which they agreed on their common obligation "to maintain the Christian tradition and to act together to the utmost possible extent to secure the effective influence of Christian teaching and witness in the handling of social, economic and civic problems, now and in the critical postwar period." They noted "the large area of common ground" on which, despite doctrinal differences, they could cooperate and they committed themselves to the defense of certain essential freedoms and to the effort to unite Christians in common action. The two movements would be united by a Joint Committee, through which they

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<sup>2</sup> For one such plea from Dawson, published just before the founding of the movement, see "Editorial Note," *The Dublin Review* 207 (July 1940) 1-3. See also his *The Judgment of the Nations* (New York: Sheed & Ward, 1942) for his diagnosis of the crisis and the role that the Sword of the Spirit could play in meeting it.

<sup>3</sup> As quoted by Thomas F. Doyle, *Inter-religious Cooperation in Great Britain* (New York: National Conference of Christians and Jews, n.d. [1943?]) 11.

<sup>4</sup> As cited by Frank J. Sheed, "The Sword of the Spirit," *The Ecclesiastical Review*, 107 (August, 1942) 91.

<sup>5</sup> The text of the letter is given by Sheed, *ibid.*, 89-90.

<sup>6</sup> Robert Speaght described the Movement as "a first breath of ecumenism which the canon lawyers did their best to extinguish;" *The Property Basket: Recollections of a Divided Life* (London: Collins & Harvill, 1970) 220. For the canonical controversy, see Walsh's articles.

would "work through parallel action in the religious, and joint action in the social and international field."<sup>7</sup>

At a meeting in May, 1941, Cardinal Hinsley claimed the support of Pius XII for this effort and also read passages from a letter he had received from Archbishop Edward Mooney of Detroit, pledging his support for this "providential initiative."<sup>8</sup> Hinsley had written to Mooney on 23 February 1941, apparently sending a copy of the joint letter to the *Times* and perhaps making the same suggestion he had made when he had sent it to Archbishop John T. McNicholas of Cincinnati: "that a like acceptance in U.S.A. of these fundamental conditions for peace would make of America a radiating centre of real world peace."<sup>9</sup> Mooney's reply to Hinsley described the "profound impression" the joint statement had created in the U.S., particularly the adoption of Pius XII's five points. He promised to work with Hinsley to obtain wide recognition of the principles and to bring the matter to the other bishops on the Administrative Board of the National Catholic Welfare Council at its April meeting. While cautioning Hinsley that "effective and united action on our part will probably encounter difficulties which you do not have to meet," he added that the adoption by the British Government of the principles as expressive of its war aims could rally support and "effectually silence opposition to the declared policy of our own government."<sup>10</sup>

What difficulties Mooney expected similar actions by U.S. bishops to encounter he did not reveal to Hinsley. But perhaps he was thinking of the peculiar character of the debate about intercredal cooperation that was being agitated in the U.S. Catholic press at the very time he was considering Hinsley's request and that would affect the way in which the Sword of the Spirit experiment would be received and appreciated in this country when news about it began to appear in Catholic journals late in 1941.<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> The text of the joint statement may be found in *The Catholic Mind* 40 (Aug 22, 1942) 23-26; see also Doyle, "Inter-religious Cooperation in Great Britain," 21-23.

<sup>8</sup> See John C. Heenan, *Cardinal Hinsley* (London: Burns, Oates & Washbourne, 1944) 192. Note that John Courtney Murray mistakenly identified the Archbishop of Detroit as McNicholas in "Intercredal Co-operation: Its Theory and its Organization," *TS* 4 (June 1943) 283.

<sup>9</sup> Hinsley to McNicholas, London, 28 February 1941 (copy); AADetroit. McNicholas sent the text on to Mooney, who was then the chairman of the NCWC, with his own comment: "There might be some advantage in publicizing very generally the five points of Our Holy Father. If it be advisable for us to go ahead with any movement, and on this I have no conviction up to the present, should we not formulate five points that might show more definite application to our conditions here?" (McNicholas to Mooney, Norwood, OH, 22 March 1941; AADetroit).

<sup>10</sup> Mooney to Hinsley, Detroit, 29 March 1941 (copy); AADetroit. I have not found any record of the NCWC discussion of the matter in 1941.

<sup>11</sup> See "Sword of the Spirit," *Commonweal*, 34 (Oct. 17, 1941) 614-17; F. J. Sheed, "The Sword of the Spirit," *The Ecclesiastical Review*, 107 (August, 1942) 81-92; Barbara Ward, "'Sword of the Spirit' Crusade is a Clear Call out of Chaos," *America*, 67 (Aug. 29, 1942) 566-67; John Murray, "English Catholics Meet War Problems," *America*, 67 (Sept. 12, 1942) 626-27; see also Cardinal Hinsley, "The Sword of the Spirit Movement," *Catholic Mind*, 39 (Nov. 22, 1941) 14-19. *The Christian Century*, 59 (July 1, 1942) 843, made brief notice of this "first cooperation since Reformation days."

*Intercredal Cooperation in the United States*

Nothing quite like the Sword of the Spirit Movement emerged in the U.S. Church.<sup>12</sup> Here the question of intercredal cooperation was largely framed in response to the activities of the National Conference of Christians and Jews (NCCJ). This organization had come into existence in 1928 in part to counteract the recrudescence of religious bigotry which had followed the First World War and which had been displayed openly in the presidential campaign of Alfred E. Smith and in part because of Jewish fears of a new conversion-campaign by American Protestants.<sup>13</sup> As part of its effort to promote understanding and mutual tolerance among the three chief religious bodies in the United States, the NCCJ held public forums, Round Table discussions, and "tri-faith meetings," at which a representative explained each group's positions and responded to questions. By the early 1940s the movement was claiming 25,000 members and reporting that more than 40,000 tri-faith meetings had been held across the nation.<sup>14</sup>

The attitudes of U.S. Bishops to the NCCJ differed greatly: some were suspicious or openly hostile; some set down strict guidelines; some approved or at least tolerated the involvement of the clergy; some limited participation to the laity; some were indifferent<sup>15</sup> As early as 1932, Archbishop

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<sup>12</sup> In 1943, commenting on Dawson's description of the Sword of the Spirit in his book, *The Judgment of the Nations*, the editors of *The Commonweal*, 38 (April 23, 1943) 15-16, offered the following explanation of why American Catholics were not likely to follow the example of their British confrères: "In this country, at any rate, religion is still for most Catholics a private matter. It does not color their views on activities in political, economic, social or cultural matters. The difficulty is greater than that of knowing and applying the social encyclicals, much as that would help. The sorry fact is that American Catholics do not see the connection between their religion and their life activities. Their religion is a private sphere apart. In consequence more friendliness toward those of other persuasions would have little influence in re-Christianizing their communities. Most present-day American Catholics have little to contribute to the solution of current political and social problems beyond a friendly smile."

<sup>13</sup> No critical history of the origins and development of the National Conference of Christians and Jews exists. James W. Pitt's book, *Adventures in Brotherhood* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Co., 1955), is uncritical and passes over the opposition the new organization encountered among all three religious bodies. For a more critical study from the Jewish side, see Benny Kraut, "Towards the Establishment of the National Conference of Christians and Jews: The Tenuous Road to Religious Goodwill in the 1920s," *American Jewish History*, 388-413. For the early participation of a Paulist Catholic priest, see Patrick J. Hayes, "J. Elliot Ross and the National Conference of Christians and Jews.." *Journal of Ecumenical Studies*, 37 (2000): 321-333, and Lucinda A. Nolan, "Men of Good Will: J. Elliot Ross and the National Conference of Christians and Jews," *Religious Education*, 104/5 (2009) 509-26. For post-war efforts of the NCCJ, see now Kevin M. Schultz, *Tri-Faith America: How Catholics and Jews Held Post-war America to its Protestant Promise* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011).

<sup>14</sup> These are the figures drawn from NCCJ literature and cited by Francis J. Connell, "Catholics and 'Interfaith Groups,'" *The Ecclesiastical Review*, 105 (November 1941) 341. For descriptions of lecture-tours sponsored by the NCCJ, see J. Elliot Ross, "An Ounce of Prevention," *The Commonweal*, 19 (February 9, 1934) 399-401, and T. Lawrason Riggs, *The Commonweal*, 21 (April 12, 1935) 669-70. On Fr. T. Lawrason Riggs, the Catholic chaplain at Yale University, see tributes to him upon his death by Philip S. Bernstein and Mabel LaFarge in *The Commonweal*, 38 (July 16, 1943) 318-21.

<sup>15</sup> See Fogarty, *The Vatican and the American Hierarchy from 1870 to 1965* (Wilmington: Glazier, 1985) 346-58. Responding to the claim that Catholic clergy had not been permitted to serve on executive committees of the NCCJ, Everett R. Clinchy wrote: "Continuously from the beginning in 1928 a Catholic priest or Catholic priests have been on

McNicholas had issued guidelines, citing the danger of indifferentism and eclecticism and a fear that an audience might consider themselves "*a jury passing on the conflicting claims of religion*."<sup>16</sup> While New York Chancery records document Bishop Francis J. McIntyre's long-standing opposition to the movement, which he regarded as an organization to defend Jewish interests and to promote a vague "Brotherhood" without doctrinal reference to God or to Christ, across the East River Bishop Thomas E. Molloy of Brooklyn appointed a priest to participate in the Round Table meetings and gave a public statement of endorsement.<sup>17</sup>

### *A Debate in America Magazine*

The terms of the American debate on intercredal cooperation are illustrated by a lively debate which took place in the pages of the Jesuit weekly *America* in the first half of 1941. It began when Leslie Rumble, M. S. C., an Australian theologian visiting the United States, published an article in the Jesuit journal in which he argued that interfaith meetings ran the danger of indifferentism and that, when it came to gaining converts, "mild commendations of what is good in Protestantism" had been less successful than "severer declarations of its errors, and insistence on the opposing Catholic doctrines."<sup>18</sup>

This article provoked several letters in the following weeks, one of them from Francis J. Connell, C.S.S.R., a moral theologian at The Catholic University of America, who considered it "a most opportune protest":

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the executive committee or governing board of the National Conference. In a number of local round tables priests are members of the executive committees, and in a number of others Catholic bishops have formally designated priests to act as Catholic advisers, with Protestant ministers and Jewish rabbis, and have assigned priests to speak on programs. Scores of times Catholic bishops have spoken for us on public platforms. For many years members of the Roman Catholic hierarchy have been financially contributing supporters;" *The Christian Century*, 59 (November 4, 1942) 1361. In 1945 Archbishop McNicholas relayed to Cicognani the estimate given him by a man interested in promoting interfaith groups that "ninety Catholic Bishops have given some approval of the Conference of Christians and Jews;" McNicholas to Cicognani, Cincinnati, February 16, 1945; AACinc 17/52. In 1946, the NCCJ gave this analysis: Of the approximately one hundred Catholic bishops, a score were opposed to the organization; about 50 permit cooperation "ranging from neutrality to fair support;" the other 30 gave "enthusiastic cooperation;" Warren C. Taylor to Clarence Issenmann, Cincinnati, June 13, 1946; AACinc, McNicholas papers, 25/85.

<sup>16</sup> See the instruction he issued on January 6, 1932, "Public Forums, Debates, Conferences," ASJS.

<sup>17</sup> The ASJS have a host of papers dealing with McIntyre's conflicts with the NCCJ. Bishop Molloy's approval of the NCCJ became a factor in the debate summarized below. Pitt's book, *Adventures in Brotherhood*, gives many, unfortunately undocumented references to Catholic bishops' approval of participation in the NCCJ's activities.

<sup>18</sup> Leslie Rumble, "Are American Catholics Growing Soft and Satisfied," *America*, 64 (Jan. 4, 1941) 342-44; for an autobiographical sketch of Rumble (1892-1975), see Walter Romig, *The Book of Catholic Authors*, 3d Series (Grosse Pointe, MI: Romig, 1945) 235-40, which lists among his books: *Cobblestones and Catholicity*, *Correspondence Course in Catholic Doctrine*, and three volumes of *Radio Replies*. See now Edmund Campion, 'Rumble, Leslie Audoen (1892-1975)', Australian Dictionary of Biography, National Centre of Biography, Australian National University, <http://adb.anu.edu.au/biography/rumble-leslie-audoen-11584/text20679>, published first in hardcopy 2002, accessed online 23 March 2020.

Whatever advantages may be procured by "three-faiths" conferences, and whatever safeguards may be taken by the Catholic representatives to avoid compromise of principles, there is undoubtedly grave danger of the impression being given that it makes no essential difference what particular religion a person may profess, provided he worships God and is faithful to his religious convictions. Certainly it is difficult to reconcile such gatherings with the traditional attitude of the Church, and particularly with the principles laid down by Pope Pius XI in his Encyclical *Mortalium Animos* of January 6, 1928.<sup>19</sup>

The generally favorable comments on Rumble's article provoked concern at the NCCJ. Two of its officers wrote to Wilfred Parsons, S.J., and asked him to respond in *America*.<sup>20</sup> Parsons sent a letter to its editors, denying that the kind of meetings sponsored by the NCCJ fell under papal condemnation and arguing that they had episcopal approval and confined themselves to civic and not to dogmatic or moral issues. Criticism of the meetings, he said, usually comes from people who have never taken part in one.<sup>21</sup>

A month later, a Brooklyn priest, Edward F. Brophy,<sup>22</sup> submitted an open letter that took issue with Parsons' letter and argued that "the Inter-Faith Movement" was promoting indifferentism. Francis Talbot, the editor of *America*, gladly accepted Brophy's letter, saying, "I am sure that it will

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<sup>19</sup> Connell, Letter to the Editor, *America*, 64 (Jan. 25, 1941) 438.

<sup>20</sup> AWC, Box 10, File 44: Louis Minsky, Director of Public Relations, NCCJ, to Parsons, February 11, 1941, New York; Reginald T. Kennedy to Parsons, February 18, 1941, New York. In his letter Kennedy said that he had consulted a Father Reilly, a Redemptorist, who replied that he did not think that the papal Encyclicals necessarily applied to the NCCJ. "However, the reference to canon law would apply to us unless we had received permission, either explicitly [*sic*] or implicitly [*sic*], from the Diocesan offices for Catholics to participate in our work. Here in the New York Archdiocese laymen are permitted to participate and in Brooklyn the Bishop has appointed a priest to our Round Table. This, to Father Reilly, seemed to cover us as far as canon law was concerned." Then he added: "I have the definite impression that if Father Connell were more familiar with our organization he would have made an exception in his criticism." Kennedy reported the same information in a letter to John LaFarge, New York, February 18, 1941; AWC, LaFarge Papers.

<sup>21</sup> Wilfred Parsons, Letter, *America*, 64 (March 1, 1941) 577. Parsons said he knew of no Catholic participation without episcopal approval and noted that the previous December, three Catholic bishops had taken part in a meeting sponsored by the NCCJ in Chapel Hill, N.C. .In letters dated respectively February 26th and 27th, Minsky and Kennedy thanked Parsons for his letter; AWC.

<sup>22</sup> Brophy (1877-1954), long-time pastor of Precious Blood Church in Queens, was a supporter of Fr. Coughlin and participated at a mass meeting in January, 1939, to protest the decision of radio stations to drop Coughlin's broadcasts; see *NY Times*, Jan. 23, 1939, p. 19. In a chapter on Coughlin in Michael Sayers and Albert E. Kahn, *Sabotage: The Secret War Against America*, Brophy is described as the "ideological leader of the Eastern division of the Christian Front and author of one of its chief propaganda works, an anti-Semitic tract entitled *The Christian Front*." He seems also to have supported the anti-Semitic candidate in 1940 for the Republican nomination for Congress in the largely German section of Yorkville, Joseph McWilliams, whom the *NY Times* described as "the nearest approach to a Fascist candidate we have yet had in this city", Nov. 4, 1940, p. 18. When Wendell L. Willkie repudiated McWilliams' support, he included Brophy in his rejection. Brophy later published two pamphlets, *The "Brotherhood" Religion: Is it Anti-Christian?* (Reseda, CA: C.I. Schreiber, 1954), which the *American Jewish Yearbook* for 1955, p. 226, described as attacking "prominent persons, both Jewish and Christian, for their participation in the movement, whose purpose, he charged was to 'de-Christianize America.'" The other pamphlet was *Pro Deo, pro Christo, pro Maria, pro Patria: In hoc signo vinces* (Hawthorne, CA: Christian Book Club of America, 1954).

raise a lot of controversy and will be combatted. But the matter certainly needs an airing."<sup>23</sup> When Talbot sent a copy of Brophy's letter to Parsons, noting again that it would "make good controversy" and asking if Parsons wished to respond, the latter sent an indignant reply, referring to Brophy's "fanatical anti-Semitic campaigns," rejecting the implication that he favored indifferentism, expressing outrage that he himself should be thus "pilloried" in *America*, which he had once edited, and suggesting that a defense of his good name should come from Talbot rather than from himself; he would be content with a telegram of protest when the open letter appeared.<sup>24</sup> Parsons then wrote to Reginald Kennedy at the NCCJ asking for a letter stating that he had never been employed by the NCCJ, as he thought Brophy had implied, and for the Conference itself officially to reject Brophy's implication that "Catholics have betrayed their faith and would have to give up all participation in it." Kennedy replied immediately, outlining the response he would draft, which would include the fact that Bishop Molloy of Brooklyn was a member of the NCCJ and had endorsed its work. He found some comfort in the fact that *Social Justice* and other organs, "generally aligned with anti-Semitism or what could certainly be termed an undemocratic outlook in current matters, have begun to shoot at the National Conference. These attacks indicate to me that the Conference program is beginning to go over with Catholics and that we are beginning to worry the reactionaries."<sup>25</sup>

Talbot immediately moved to remedy the situation. On May 2nd, he wrote to Brophy informing him of Parsons's protest and explaining that he would append to the latter's telegram an explanation of the background of the controversy and a statement clearing Parsons of any doubt of his orthodoxy; he also suggested that Brophy might wish to join him in the latter statement: "Father Parsons certainly cannot be questioned as to his Catholicism, even though there is an open question on the right to collaborate with non-Catholic organizations."<sup>26</sup> Talbot then wrote to Parsons, explaining that an editorial decision to remove Parsons' name from Brophy's letter had by mistake not been carried out, expressing his regret at the disturbance he had caused his fellow Jesuit, and

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<sup>23</sup> Edward F. Brophy to Francis Talbot, Brooklyn, April 7, 1941; Francis Talbot to Edward F. Brophy, New York, April 21, 1941; AWC, *America* Papers, Box 4, File 13. Brophy's letter appeared as "An Open Letter on Inter-faith Meetings," *America*, 65 (May 3, 1941) 95-96.

<sup>24</sup> Talbot to Parsons, New York, April 26, 1941; Parsons to Talbot, Washington, April 28, 1941; AWC, *America* Papers, Box 7, File 19.

<sup>25</sup> Parsons to Kennedy, Washington, April 28, 1941 (copy); Kennedy to Parsons, New York, April 29, 1941. On May 2, 1941, Kennedy wrote again to Parsons, expanding on his comments in the earlier letter: "These direct criticisms of the Conference are coming from questionable and reactionary sources and it is more important than ever that we have the support of outstanding Catholics at this time." As supporters he mentioned Archbishops John Gregory Murray (St. Paul-Minneapolis), Joseph Fraancis Rummel (New Orleans), and Robert E. Lucey (San Antonio). "This indicates to my mind that the intelligent leadership of the Catholic Church is beginning to appreciate the value of the National Conference and that if we can withstand such attacks as are being made upon us we will convince a large number of Catholics that our program is worthwhile;" ACW, Parsons Papers, Box 6, Files 12; Box 10.

<sup>26</sup> Talbot to Brophy, New York, May 2, 1941. In his reply Brophy asked for a copy of Parsons' letter published in *America*, adding "I shall be glad to make any compensation to Father Parsons, within the bounds of reason and justice;" Brophy to Talbot, Brooklyn, May 6, 1941; AWC, *America* Papers, Box 4, #13.

explaining the course of action he would take in the next issue of *America*.<sup>27</sup> In reply Parsons accepted the apology but explained his own views at some length. He did not object to a discussion of the question in *America*, but only to the thought of debating Brophy, "known around New York as a crackpot," who was simply carrying on a personal feud with another Brooklyn priest and delivering a rebuke to his own bishop for having approved the NCCJ. Brophy's interest, he felt, "is not to protect Catholics from heresy but to stop them from cooperating with Jews." He denied the claim that NCCJ was part of an "Inter-Faith Movement" and described his efforts to make sure that its formulas did not compromise the Catholic position. He then offered a broader description of the work of the NCCJ:

It has been particularly useful in the South, and there most of the Bishops have jumped at the opportunity to appear under its auspices on the same platform with Protestants especially where otherwise they would have no opportunity for that. One Bishop recently expressed to me his alarm lest anything would happen to put a stop to it. While still at *America*, I more than once appeared on NCCJ platforms in the North at the express request of the Ordinary.

And he had a further reason for considering Brophy's efforts to be "peculiarly ill-timed and blundering":

Finally, it seems to me that at this time it is highly important to bring about close cooperation of Catholics and non-Catholics wherever we can. This was urged by Pius XI before he died, and Pius XII has repeated the request, on the ground that all believers are called to join in defending our common interests against the principal enemy of Atheism. This has gone very far in England under Cardinal Hinsley, and also in France and Germany. This can always be done, I think, without any harm to the Faith itself.<sup>28</sup>

Parsons' telegram of protest appeared in the May 3d issue of *America*, accompanied by Talbot's note of support: "Father Parsons is one of the soundest theologians in the United States, one of the clearest thinkers on the relation of Church and Society, and one of the outstanding opponents of religious indifferentism." Shortly afterwards, John LaFarge sent a confidential letter to Parsons which indicated that there was some division within the editorial staff of the Jesuit journal itself: "PLB [probably Paul L. Blakely, S.J.], as you know, has *gravissima dubia* about the NCCJ. Some of these, I have reason to believe, are shared by the local Ordinary or Chancery, but I doubt if they will make their *dubia* known. Jesuits, however, who take part in these programs are not regarded with much favor at 51st St."<sup>29</sup>

Brophy, however, did not go away quietly. On May 13th, he sent back the check Talbot had sent him for his open-letter and repeated his view that the Inter-faith Movement "is doing harm to Christianity and is certainly of no benefit to Jews." Talbot replied a week later informing him that *America* would soon print an article by Carlton Hayes and another communication from a man at

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<sup>27</sup> Talbot to Parsons, New York, May 5, 1941; AWC, *America* Papers, Box 7, File 19.

<sup>28</sup> Parsons to Talbot, Washington, May 7, 1941. Relieved by Parsons' letter, Talbot replied on May 9th that, after a discussion with Kennedy, he would be glad to publish an article by Carlton Hayes or another reputable layman; AWC, *America* Papers, Vox 7, File 19.

<sup>29</sup> LaFarge to Parsons, New York, May 9, 1941. LaFarge also indicated some reservations of his own: "While I am not against them, I grew a little cooler towards them after an experience I had of their peculiar point of view last year. They did not seem to me wholly logical." Parsons replied on the 10th, repeating his claim that Brophy was an anti-Semite out to embarrass his own bishop (copy); AWC, Parsons Papers, Box 6, File 12.

UCLA and adding, "This cooperation of Catholics with non-Catholics is, to me, most important and I would wish to explore it further and further."<sup>30</sup> But Brophy wrote on the same day to protest the comments Talbot had appended to Parsons' telegram:

America, attempting to placate Father Parsons, but, deserting the question at issue, says, in its May 10th. issue: "Most regrettably, a statement was used by Father Brophy that carried implications, which neither he nor the Editor intended." This is not entirely consistent with the truth. Also, it is clearly unfair. Whatever 'implications' there may have been were abundantly borne out by the contents of Father Parsons' letter, in the March 1st. issue. I came near to quoting him verbatim. Moreover, I believe that America exceeded its rights and violated mine, when, without consulting me, it presented me to its Readers, in the penitent guise of one making a retraction, in favor of Father Parsons' views, which would be tantamount to making a retraction in favor of the Inter-Faith Movement. Of course, I make no such retraction. It would constitute a denial of the truth."<sup>31</sup>

The May 31st issue of *America* carried a one-page defence of the NCCJ by Carlton J. H. Hayes, professor of history at Columbia University, one of the founders of the organization and its current Catholic Co-Chairman:

It is not an inter-faith movement, in the sense condemned by the Holy See. It is an acceptable medium for the necessary cooperation of Catholics and non-Catholics in allowable matters, along the lines called for by Pope Pius XI and Pius XII for common defense of our civilization against the forces of atheism and materialism....

At this juncture in our national life, when a war psychology is exacerbating prejudice and increasing tensions of many kinds there is more need for the ameliorating influence and activities of the National Conference than for many years. The Catholics in the Conference, then, strive for civic tolerance, not theological tolerance. This is the end for which the National Conference is working.<sup>32</sup>

On June 2nd, Brophy returned to the attack, sending Talbot a reply to the articles defending the NCCJ. Two weeks later, Talbot answered, explaining why it was not "lack of courage" or "an overdose of prudence" that led him to decide not to publish Brophy's latest piece:

In instituting this controversy, I had thought that we would be able to shed more light, but I find that we have only turned on the heat all at once on all sides and created a great deal of antagonism. It was my intention, from the very beginning, to explore this subject in order that the Bishops might take up the matter, analyze it, clarify it and give us their decision. They have not done so, and from what I can learn, are hesitant about doing so. Many of the Bishops seem to give approval, at least condonation of such meetings. I have been receiving some releases from the new USO in which the Bishops themselves participate in the so-called Inter-Faith meetings.

The controversy, it seems to me, becomes less and less constructive. I am afraid that presenting viewpoints of it in AMERICA will never get us anywhere. The question should be settled, once and for all, by a duly appointed conference in which the limitations and the liberties of association would be put down in clear form.<sup>33</sup>

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<sup>30</sup> Brophy to Talbot, Brooklyn, May 13, 1941; Talbot to Brophy, New York, May 19, 1941 (copy); AWC, *America* Papers, Box 4, #13.

<sup>31</sup> Brophy to Talbot, Brooklyn, May 19, 1941. On May 22, 1941, Brophy wrote again expressing astonishment that *America* would allow the NCCJ, Hayes, and UCLA to respond to his criticisms; AWC, *America* Papers, Box 4, #14.

<sup>32</sup> Carlton J. H. Hayes, "Cooperation with Non-Catholics," *America*, 65 (May 31, 1941) 207. A month later *America* published a favorable review of a volume on the three faiths within American democracy.; see Florence D. Cohalan, review of L. Finkelstein, J. Elliot Ross, and W.A. Brown, *The Religions of Democracy*, in *America* 65 (July 5, 1941) 357-58.

<sup>33</sup> Brophy to Talbot, Brooklyn, June 2, 1941; Talbot to Brophy, New York, June 17, 1941 (copy); AWC, *America* Papers, Box 4, #14.

*Francis Connell Returns to the Question*

Use somewhere: Connell directed the dissertation of fellow-Redemptorist John R. Bancroft (the other members of his committee were Fenton and Fr. Alfred Rush, C.S.S.R.) defended at CUA and published as *Communication in Religious Worship with Non-Catholics* (CUA Studies in Sacred Theology, No. 75; Washington, D.C.: CUA Press, 1943). It would appear that the author agrees with the views of his director.

Frustrated by Talbot, Brophy wrote to Francis Connell, praising the latter's earlier letter to *America*, explaining his correspondence with Talbot, arguing that *America's* "turning turtle" was an implicit condemnation of Connell himself, and expressing the hope that the Redemptorist would return to the question: "You have the theological skill and the position to make *America* [*i.e.* the Jesuit weekly] correct its false and unorthodox stand. I hope that for the integrity of the Faith and for the protection of the poor groping and scandalized Christians, you will not hesitate to use both, generously and courageously."<sup>34</sup>

Connell did not need such encouragement; he had already decided to address the issue in *The Ecclesiastical Review*. On February 27th, he wrote to seek the counsel of Archbishop Amleto Cicognani, expressing his concern about the interfaith meetings but asking the Apostolic Delegate's advice, "since it may be that some circumstances unknown to me would render such an article inopportune at present."<sup>35</sup> Apparently at least not discouraged by Cicognani, Connell replied to Brophy's appeal on May 20th, indicating that he would address the question in *The Ecclesiastical Review*, where he could write for the clergy "a much longer and more technical article." He also asked for Brophy's help: "If you have anything that might help--such as newspaper accounts of such meetings in which perhaps something was said upholding indifferentism--I should be glad to have them. I believe that in general there is a real danger to faith in such gatherings, but I must have positive facts."<sup>36</sup>

Brophy replied on June 3rd, expressing his disappointment that Connell would not continue the discussion in *America*, which, he said, had refused to publish another essay of his:

On a point of Faith, on a theological matter, *America*, in fear of the Jews and to cater to worldly Catholics, has placed the fate of this question of the morality of the 'Inter-Faith' movement, into the hands of its friends or into the keeping of those who though they are prudent enough not to deny Christ, are without the courage to confess him.

He then went on to offer his own assessment of the situation:

I hope that you will not take it amiss if I say that your contemplated use of the *Ecclesiastical Review* will be almost futile. Not that you will not treat the subject well; not that the priests who read it will not approve of what you

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<sup>34</sup> Brophy to Connell, Long Island City, May 16, 1941; RABP.

<sup>35</sup> Connell to Cicognani, Washington, Feb. 27, 1941 (copy); RABP. A week later, Cicognani asked his secretary, Leo Binz, to discuss the issue with Connell (Binz to Connell, Washington, March 4, 1941; RABP). No record of this discussion is found in Connell's papers.

<sup>36</sup> Connell to Brophy, Washington, May 20, 1941 (copy); RABP.

have to say; but, because they, for the most part, will fear to put your ideas into practice. The silence of the Bishops regarding the Inter-Faith movement and, in some cases, their positive approval, in word and act, deters priests, on the grounds of "prudence." In our diocese, for instance, the Ordinary, under his official seal, on the front page of the Tablet, has given his approval of Brotherhood Meetings and has urged the priests to support them. In the dioceses of New York, Philadelphia, Chicago and Boston the same Damocles Sword hangs over the head of any priest who points out the evil of the Inter-Faith movement. Boston priests have told me that His Eminence has threatened punishment on any priest who speaks on such matters. The fear of losing the loaves and fishes or of having to accept a poorer assignment seems to be a great fear. Many priests with whom I have talked appear to recognize the evil of the Inter-Faith movement, but either are paralysed at the thought of what they would like to do to preserve Christian integrity or allow themselves to be pictured as favoring it, for the hypocritical reasons which are frequently advanced in its favor.<sup>37</sup>

On June 4, 1941, Connell initiated his own survey on the question when he wrote to Archbishop McNicholas to inform him of his project and to ask his advice.<sup>38</sup> McNicholas' reply is not found, but on July 11, 1941, Connell sent him another letter thanking him for sending a copy of his instruction on interfaith conferences and for stating his own views on the subject. Connell added:

I am taking your suggestion to write to a number of the bishops on the subject. I intend to question members of the hierarchy in different parts of the country, so that local conditions may come into consideration. I firmly believe that the vast majority are opposed to such gatherings, and I think that it will be profitable to our priests to have some definite rules of conduct.<sup>39</sup>

To how many bishops Connell wrote and how many responses he received is not known. While his article would maintain that "a considerable number of prudent and experienced members of the clergy from different parts of our country" had expressed their views to him, only two replies are found in his papers.<sup>40</sup>

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<sup>37</sup> Brophy to Connell, Long Island City, June 3, 1941; RABP.

<sup>38</sup> Connell to McNicholas, Washington, June 4, 1941 (copy), RABP, "Inter-faith Movement - Letters." Connell wrote: "I am planning an article, probably for the Ecclesiastical Review, on the 'Three-Faith' and the 'Interfaith' movements that are becoming so common in our country. I think that while some good may be produced, there is much harm being done to our people."

<sup>39</sup> Connell to McNicholas, West End, NJ, July 11, 1941 (copy); RABP. A specimen of the letters Connell sent to various bishops is found in his papers: "I am preparing to write an article for the Ecclesiastical Review on the subject of the "Interfaith" and "Three-Faith" movements in this country - how far Catholics should or should not associate with non-Catholics in meetings to discuss religious or social or allied subjects. I should be grateful if your Excellency would give me your views on this topic, and also an account of any particular cases that may have occurred within your experience that would throw light on the question. I assure you that I shall not quote you by name, but at most, if agreeable to you, refer to you as one of the hierarchy;" Connell to Glennon, July 31, 1941, Washington; RABP.

<sup>40</sup> On the bottom of Connell's letter to him, Archbishop John Joseph Glennon, St. Louis, scribbled a note: "Have not found it to work satisfactorily." Bishop John F. Noll, Fort Wayne, replied: "I have never spoken under the auspices of these interfaith movements, although I have frequently been asked to do so. I have always recommended that a Catholic layman, rather than a priest, speak for the Catholic Church, sometimes coaching him what to say. The meetings afford an opportunity for the Catholic to speak in favor of cooperation among the Catholic, Protestant and Jewish groups in everything *civic*, and defend their mutual cooperation whenever one of the group is persecuted.

"I presume you know that these meetings are organized by the Jews who have feared an anti-Semitic movement in the United States. You can hardly blame the Jews for this after being driven out of so many countries, whether deservedly or undeservedly, and they have no haven to resort to;" Noll to Connell, July 30, 1941, Fort Wayne; RABP.

Connell's article appeared in November, 1941.<sup>41</sup> He argued that two principles should guide a response to the question about interfaith meetings. The first was the "law of fraternal charity," which obliges us to love all men and to interest ourselves in their spiritual welfare, particularly by zeal for their conversion. The second is that Catholicism is the only true and obligatory religion, which prohibits us from participating in other religious services or from approving or assisting in their propagation. While another religion may have some "elements of truth and of goodness," as a whole it is false and opposed to God's will. "As far as the divine law is concerned, it has no right to exist;" and Catholics "are logically bound to hope that non-Catholic denominations will diminish in membership and even cease to exist through the acceptance of Catholicism by their adherents." In addition, it is not unjust for the laws of a Catholic country to "restrict the public religious activities of non-Catholics." The most that can be granted them is "toleration," for the sake of a greater good.

Applying these principles to the question of interfaith meetings requires balance and prudence. Connell focused on the dangers, the first of which was that some Catholics might be led by the discussions to abandon their faith, since "most Catholics are not sufficiently versed in the technicalities of theology to be immune from danger." But the chief threat was indifferentism, which could be encouraged by statements by non-Catholics, such as that we must go beyond tolerance towards an "appreciation of healthy differences" or that we "all three of us have an identical right to our rituals, to our house of God, and to our types of worship." Some statements of Catholic participants could imply indifferentism: recently some Catholics had rejected "the *principle* that a Catholic state may restrict heretical propaganda," asserted that "separation of Church and State, such as it exists in the United States, is the best form of relationship, *in principle*, between the two powers," and given mistaken interpretations of "the extent of the Church's authority over persons."<sup>42</sup>

Evidently therefore there are Catholics--even educated Catholics--who cannot be trusted to appear before an interdenominational group and give a correct and complete account of the Church's teachings on the very subjects that are most likely to be brought up, such as tolerance, the relation of Church and State, the scope of the Church's authority. Such Catholics, if permitted to participate actively in meetings of this kind, are liable to mislead their non-Catholic hearers and to engender indifferentism in the Catholic members of their audience.

Such indifferentism is promoted, Connell added, by "the very fact that a Catholic (particularly a priest) concedes to representatives of other religions in their religious capacity a place of equality with himself," from which people are likely to conclude that he regards their religions as equal to

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<sup>41</sup> Francis Connell, "Catholics and 'Interfaith' Groups," *The Ecclesiastical Review*, 105 (Nov. 1941) 337-53. When the article appeared, Bishop Bartholomew J. Eustace of Camden wrote Connell that it was "so, so timely and so utterly correct. Comforting, too. I have had to break up several of these meetings between Catholics, Jews and Protestants. I cannot understand the mentality of Catholics who take part in them. They love the Jew and the Protestant less than we do, for we want to give the truth to those who do not have it;" Eustace to Connell, Camden, November 15, 1941; RABP, "Inter-Faith Movement, Letters." A month later, Bishop Joseph Hurley of St. Augustine directed his secretary to ask Connell for 175 copies of the article for distribution to his priests; Martin T. Gilligan to Connell, St. Augustine, December 15, 1942; RABP, *Ibid.*

<sup>42</sup> Connell does not document these charges. An article by James N. Vaughan, "On Modern Intolerance," *The Commonweal*, 34 (May 9, 1941) 53-56, had recently been quite critical of the view set out in the recent book by John A. Ryan and Fr. Francis J. Boland, *Catholic Principles of Politics*.

his, or at least that he considers difference of belief as unimportant." For all these reasons, Connell concluded quite negatively:

Are these dangers to indifferentism connected to a serious extent with interdenominational organizations and meetings as they now exist in the United States? I am fully convinced that in most cases they are--that ordinarily the association of Catholics with non-Catholics in such organizations and meetings is a grave menace to the faith of our people. I believe that the spirit of Catholicism is being weakened in our land by "interfaith" gatherings as they are usually conducted, and that whatever good they may be producing is far outweighed by their disastrous consequences. I am confirmed in this view by the opinions expressed to me by a considerable number of prudent and experienced members of the clergy from different parts of our country, who are almost unanimously in the belief that indifferentism is being fostered by the general run of these "interfaith" gatherings.

After quoting several magisterial documents critical of such meetings, Connell left his readers with an exhortation:

Catholics in the United States must not yield to an inferiority complex with respect to non-Catholics. Whatever advantages they may possess over us, taken as a group, in wealth, social prestige, political power or education, we are far more privileged than they in possessing the one true religion of Jesus Christ. We must not regard it as a wonderful favor to be invited to join their associations. There is little personal advantage to us in such assemblies; the advantage is on the other side. Even though we may consider it a benefit to ourselves to have an opportunity of presenting the Catholic side to them, it is ultimately directed to their spiritual good. Our Church has no need of their collaboration to give it strength or perpetuity, whereas many of our separated brethren see their religious organizations crumbling to decay, and are seeking some stability through amity with the one Church that they implicitly acknowledge can overcome the world, even though they do not recognize the indwelling of the Holy Ghost as the source of that power. Our chief objective in associating with them should be to help them come to the knowledge of the truth. Any Catholic who thinks that his Church needs aid from outsiders for its proper functioning and growth shows that he does not understand what the Catholic Church really is--the living Body of Christ....

If we are regarded as narrow, intolerant, illiberal, because we sincerely proclaim that ours is the only religion that has the right to exist, and that the existence of any non-Catholic denomination is opposed to the plan of God's providence for mankind, we must be willing to accept this opprobrium. When there is question of doctrines contrary to the teachings of divine revelation we are narrow, intolerant, illiberal. So too was Christ. If we are persecuted on account of our loyalty to truth, we are only following in His footsteps. "If the world hates you, know that it has hated me before you... If they have persecuted me, they will persecute you also." But if we abide in Him, we have His unfailing assurance: "Take courage, I have overcome the world."<sup>43</sup>

In this exchange of opinions, only Parsons and Hayes invoked the urgency of cooperation in order to meet the critical challenges of the time, when Europe was already being convulsed by war and Americans were debating whether their country should intervene. The other participants

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<sup>43</sup> Connell's article impressed his colleague at Catholic University, Paul Hanly Furfey, who cited it in expressing his reservations about interfaith activities to the Chancellor of the Archdiocese of Baltimore about an invitation to speak at a conference sponsored by the NCCJ. To the regional director of the NCCJ he cited the same points Connell had made: "Although the ecclesiastical authorities did not refuse me the necessary permission, I found, on consulting with a number of persons whose judgment I value, that the common opinion was that projects like this do not accomplish any great amount of good. It is true that they help toward better understandings between religious groups and they aid in removing prejudices. On the other hand, it is the feeling that a Catholic speaker is placed in a somewhat false position. We cannot hold the doctrine that all religions are equally good; yet the circumstances of these meetings tend to produce this impression no matter how scrupulously careful the speaker is to state the opposite viewpoint;" Furfey to Msgr. Joseph M. Nelligan, Washington, July 6, 1942; Furfey to Herbert L. Seamans, Washington, July 17, 1942 (copy); ACUA, Furfey Papers.

confined themselves to debating how real the threat of indifferentism was, an orientation that Connell was to follow even after Pearl Harbor engaged the United States in the war.<sup>44</sup>

### *The NCCJ Statement of Basic Principles*

After the United States entered the war, the NCCJ expanded its vision and began to invoke the crisis of western civilization in pressing its programs and activities. Early in 1942, it prepared a statement of the religious principles on which Catholics, Protestants, and Jews could and should collaborate. Carlton J. H. Hayes sent a draft of the statement to the Chancery of the Archdiocese of New York to ensure that it was orthodox and acceptable. "Something of the sort," he said, "is *much* needed at this hour, I believe."<sup>45</sup> Since Archbishop Spellman had limited cooperation with the NCCJ to "patriotic and civic purposes," Msgr. William A. Scully replied, he did not think it "desirable to issue a statement pertaining to religious beliefs. Such a statement though commendable in purpose might be misunderstood because of the omission of essential Catholic doctrines."<sup>46</sup> Bishop Francis McIntyre agreed, questioning what need there was for such a "creed" since Catholics could find in the Apostles' Creed, the Nicene Creeds, the Ten Commandments and the Sermon on the Mount "eminently basic foundations for good--yes--the best American citizenship." American Catholics "profess the doctrines of the 'Founding Fathers'" and that should be enough:

I wonder if it is necessary, or wise, to signify our patriotism and our love of country through the channel of our religious beliefs. These beliefs and practices, based on truth, revelation, and right reason can in the application of justice, lead only to the support--yes, to sacrifice--for the country whose basic principles are so well founded in that truth, in that revelation, and in that right reason, as is ours. Hence, why change our form of creed, religious belief or the patriotism which flows therefrom?

McIntyre concluded by informing Hayes that at a recent meeting Spellman had confirmed "the long established policy" that "our cooperation would be available in all matters concerning civic and patriotic affairs, but that a coalition on religious beliefs could not be entertained."<sup>47</sup>

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<sup>44</sup> The Connell Papers, RABP, "Inter-Faith Movement," include the typescript of a talk, "Cooperation of Catholics with Non-Catholics," which he gave to the Newman Club at the Naval Academy on October 25, 1942. He encouraged the future officers to display "equal courtesy and fairness" to all men, for the good of society to "collaborate with persons of other religious belief in upholding what is known as the natural law," to remember that "the Catholic religion is the only true religion and the Catholic Church is the only true Church of Christ," not to take active part in non-Catholic worship or "make any statements which would seem to indicate that it makes no difference what religion a man professes, so long as he leads a good life," to shun mixed marriages, and, while sharing the Church's doctrinal intolerance, to be "personally tolerant toward those who hold what we regard as false religious views" and to "help those not of our faith by pointing out to them, by our words and instructions, when possible--but especially by our example, the truth and the sublimity of the Catholic religion."

<sup>45</sup> Hayes to Scully, New York, Jan. 12, 1942; ASJS.

<sup>46</sup> Scully to Hayes, New York, no date (retyped copy); ASJS.

<sup>47</sup> McIntyre to Hayes, New York, Jan. 14, 1942 (copy); ASJS. In early March, McIntyre wrote to Msgr. Michael J. Ready, General Secretary of the NCWC, expressing his surprise that the NCWC News Service had taken note of the Statement, which he called a "creed," and adding, despite the explicit assertions in the Statement to the contrary: "A reading of the creed indicates an effort to find the common denominator in religion and implies that one religion is as

While the New York officials saw no need for the statement, other Catholics were less hostile;<sup>48</sup> and the statement of beliefs was published by the NCCJ on February 15, 1942. Beginning with the fact that the country was now at war, "the present catastrophic result of Godlessness in the world," the signers wished to "affirm the following common and fundamental religious beliefs. We believe these convictions are important to every religious person, and are the foundation of national life." They acknowledged that as Protestants, Catholics, and Jews they remained loyal to their respective religious convictions and admitted differences among themselves on them. "The following statement is, therefore, not a profession of faith to be considered sufficient or complete by any of us, but an expression of certain basic convictions which we share."

Seven of these convictions were then articulated: belief in "one God, Creator, Sustainer, and Goal of the universe;" an affirmation of man's dignity; belief that "God's all holy will is the ultimate sanction of human morality;" the duty of society as well as of individuals to acknowledge man's dependence on God; a belief in democracy as "the only desirable form of government for our nation and for countries of similar self-governing traditions," but with the warning that "no political forms can in the long run bring liberty and happiness to a society in which moral and religious duties are denied or neglected;" belief in God's fatherly providence towards every human being, which implies a rejection of racism and the championing of each person's inalienable rights; and a belief that these rights are "an endowment from God."<sup>49</sup>

Shortly afterwards, John LaFarge, S.J., who had signed the Statement, responded to questions about it raised by his friend, Bishop Thomas H. McLaughlin of Paterson. While agreeing that there could be some danger of misinterpretation and of scandal, LaFarge said that "there is the urgent necessity of some expression of our common religious principles in some intelligible form. If we Catholics are not to be completely isolated in the battle against atheism and paganism and their attendant evils, we cannot conduct the battle alone nor can it be conducted on a purely material, political, or economic plane." He also noted that *Theological Studies* intended to take up the question in the fall and hoped it could be "thoroughly and soundly investigated from every point of view."<sup>50</sup>

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good as another. That Catholics and particularly priests should have signed it, is rather misleading because the doctrine is entirely non-Christian and we know that 'He that is not with Me is against Me,'" McIntyre to Ready, March 2, 1942, New York; ACUA, NCWC/USCC.

<sup>48</sup> McIntyre's files on the NCCJ also include a letter from the President of Fordham University about the statement which he found to be "one of the best I have seen and I would not hesitate to sign it except for the fact that it occurs to me that the Archbishop may have some preference in the matter;" Robert Gannon to McIntyre, New York, January 20, 1942; ASJS. The Rev. George Johnson, head of the NCWC Education Department and a member of the NCCJ's Commission on Educational Organization, wrote to Everett Clinchy, Washington, January 26, 1942 (copy; ACUA, NCWC/USCC, Education Dept.), thanking him for sending a copy of the statement: "I am sure that its issuance at this time will be very, very helpful." But he could not himself sign it since NCWC rules prohibited departmental heads from signing "any statement of any kind."

<sup>49</sup> Found in the materials attached to Hayes' letter to Scully; ASJS. Among the eighteen signers of this statement were the following Catholics: T. Lawrason Riggs, John La Farge, S.J., George B. Ford, Catholic chaplain at Columbia University, and Carlton Hayes.

<sup>50</sup> LaFarge to McLaughlin, New York, March 18, 1942 (copy); WCA.

*The U.S. Bishops Take up the Issue*

In his defense of *America's* editorial policies, Francis Talbot had expressed the hope that the U.S. bishops would provide authoritative guidance on intercredal cooperation; for his part Francis Connell had sought the views of at least some bishops. After the United States entered the War, the bishops received various invitations to such cooperation. The Federal Council of the Churches of Christ in America had established a Commission to Study the Bases of a Just and Durable Peace, with John Foster Dulles as chairman and Walter W. Van Kirk as secretary. In September, 1942, the latter wrote to Msgr. Ready, recalling an earlier conversation between Ready and Samuel McCrea Cavert, General Secretary of the Federal Council, on the possibility of joint efforts in certain fields between Catholics and Protestants. Van Kirk invited Ready or a representative to a meeting the following week "to discuss with us the question as to how and in what ways the Catholics and Protestants might work together in the building of a Christian world order after the war." He also noted that from a long conversation with Cardinal Hinsley in England he had come away "with the very clear conviction that we in this country had not approximated the cooperative efforts in this field attained in that country." A hand-written note by Ready on this letter indicates that, since he himself could not attend the meeting, Van Kirk might invite Fr. LaFarge and C. Gouverneur Paulding from *The Commonweal*.<sup>51</sup>

The invocation of the British example appears to have troubled Ready. When the NCCJ's Religious News Service distributed an article on the formation of the British Council of Christians and Jews, with Cardinal Hinsley as one of its presidents, he asked Frank A. Hall, head of the NCWC News Service, to investigate the matter. Hall cabled England and received the answer that Hinsley had agreed to serve as co-president of the British Council as a sign of his strong protest against persecution of Jews. To Hall's note about the awkwardness of the situation--"If a Cardinal accepts joint presidency of a body it ought to be reported. On the other hand, there is the possibility that there would be misunderstandings."--Ready appended the question, "Can we just ignore the thing?"<sup>52</sup>

Ready met with John Foster Dulles on October 14, 1942, and apparently agreed in principle to an exploratory meeting of the NCWC and the Federal Council's Commission "to see whether or not there can be a meeting of minds on post-war objectives and of principles applicable to their determination." When Van Kirk wrote to him to follow up on this proposal, however, Ready asked that such a meeting be deferred until after the November meeting of the U.S. Bishops.<sup>53</sup>

In his report for the meeting of the Administrative Board, Ready summarized all the proposals "regarding possible joint action in outlining world peace terms." Ready's own view was that "we should have one or two people meet with Mr. Dulles and companions and endeavor to get their support for the Pope's Peace Points."<sup>54</sup> Arguing that this effort was "stimulated by the English

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<sup>51</sup> Van Kirk to Ready, September 8, 1942, New York; ANWC/USCC.

<sup>52</sup> Hall to Ready, October 2, 1942, Washington, with attachments; ACUA, NCWC/USCC.

<sup>53</sup> ACUA, NCWC/USCC: Van Kirk to Ready, New York, October 28, 1942; Ready to Van Kirk, Washington, November 2, 1942 (copy).

<sup>54</sup> "General Secretary's Report to the Administrative Board, November, 1942;" ACUA, NCWC/USCC.

example of Cardinal Hinsley and the Sword of the Spirit and by the Religion and Life Movement among the English Protestants," Ready suggested that the bishops reply by urging the Protestants to support the Pope's Peace Points. He also reported on calls from the NCCJ for greater collaboration with the NCWC and other Catholic agencies. He was disturbed that the public seemed to consider the NCCJ as almost an official representative of Catholic views and that the organization was promoting the idea that "we have pretty well abandoned 'sectarian identities' and all clergymen, Protestants, Catholics and Jews, meet together to promote 'Religion.'" The organization had also lately been quoting a phrase of Pius XII's to the effect that "All good men should be united in will;" they had also been arguing that "informed Catholics" saw this as "a clue to the Vatican's attitude toward the growing movement for cooperation between Catholics and non-Catholics in meeting problems of peace and post-war reconstruction."<sup>55</sup>

At its meeting on November 9th, the Administrative Board decided to underwrite the publication of a collection of papal statements on peace from Leo XIII to Pius XII. A letter from Cardinal Hinsley was then read which "proposed the exploration of the possibility of the development in the United States of some sort of plan for carrying out in this country work similar to that being done in England by the Sword of the Spirit, as well as the possibility of a closer collaboration in such work by the Catholics of Great Britain and of the United States." The minutes of this meeting do not report the response of the U.S. Bishops to this request,<sup>56</sup> but with regard to other overtures the Administrative Board reacted very cautiously. To a request from Mr. Robert Wilberforce of the British Information Service to Archbishop Spellman for the U.S. Bishops to make a statement on "world order and questions of peace," which bishops from other countries might then endorse, the Board replied "that joint action in the issuance of statements is fraught with the danger of misunderstanding and misinterpretation and, therefore, out of the question. It was also thought that at this time the most feasible method of collaboration is to be found in parallel action involving exchange of information, the sending of advance copies of statements and the like." Similarly, to Protestant requests for "joint action in outlining world peace terms," the Board's response was "that theological difficulties involved in such circumstances make cooperation as a religious group

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<sup>55</sup> "General Secretary's Report to the Administrative Board, November, 1942;" ASJS.

<sup>56</sup> An indication of McNicholas' attitude towards the Sword of the Spirit movement was revealed in the Report of the General Secretary to the Administrative Board in May, 1943. In response to a letter from William R. Castle, an Episcopalian who had expressed some interest in cooperation in the U.S. along similar lines, Archbishop McNicholas replied: "I have followed with much interest the Sword of the Spirit movement. Much of its work in this country is being done by the National Catholic Welfare Conference. The basic principles governing collaboration will prove very interesting, especially for informed minds who have studied principles and put religion on a high supernatural plane.

"I am sure it will be clear to all who have studied the question that, in the domain of supernatural religion and in the full revelation of Christ, there can be no co-operation between the Catholic Church and other groups of the Christian family. We ought to be able, it seems to me, to meet as citizens. We ought to consider natural religion and the basic morality that arises from the proofs for the existence of a personal, omnipotent God without whom there is no morality and no fixed code of principles to govern our moral life."

At their May 4, 1943, meeting the Administrative Board authorized the Social Action Department of the NCWC to sponsor "a small seminar of Catholic scholars from the United States and England for the purpose of discussing post war problems and specifically present-day Catholic social doctrine in regard to world re-organization."

impossible for Catholics and that the only possible method for cooperation is cooperation as citizens."<sup>57</sup> As for the activities of the NCCJ, the Board approved the motion of Archbishop Samuel Stritch of Chicago that "Archbishop McNicholas be requested to set up a summary of principles pertaining to the question of participation of Catholics and their cooperation in the activities of other religious groups, such as the N.C.C.J."<sup>58</sup>

A month after the Bishops' meeting, the Federal Council of the Churches of Christ in America issued a statement welcoming movement towards cooperation between Protestants and Catholics:

We rejoice in the evidences of growing collaboration between Protestants and Roman Catholics in various countries in the problems of reconstruction after the war.

In countries occupied by the Nazis, Catholic and Protestant leaders are cooperating in their resistance to tyranny and the attempted invasion of spiritual freedom by the state. In great [*sic*] Britain a joint committee has been created representing the Roman Catholic Sword of the Spirit Movement and its Anglican and Free Church counterpart, the Religion and Life Movement. In this endeavor, supported by Cardinal Hinsley, the Archbishop of Canterbury and the Moderator of the Free Church Federal Council, Protestants and Roman Catholics are pledged to "work together through parallel action in the religious field and through joint action in the social and international field." In the United States Protestants and Roman Catholics have been giving much thought and study to the bases of a just and durable peace. Although each group has conducted its studies separately, there is agreement in their thinking on many points.

We record the desire and the readiness of the Federal Council of the Churches of Christ in America to cooperate with the Roman Catholic Church in the United States in a mutual effort for the welfare of society as a whole and, in such ways as may prove possible, to bear common testimony to the guiding principles of the Christian faith in relation to the postwar world.<sup>59</sup>

### *Obstacles to Cooperation*

Despite these indications of a growing desire for cooperation between Catholics and non-Catholics, a series of other incidents illustrate the difficulties it would face. First of all, classic anti-Catholicism was still in evidence. A Kansas publishing company was widely advertising a series of virulently anti-Catholic books and pamphlets.<sup>60</sup> At the request of the Press Relations Committee of the United Catholic Organizations and the editors of *America*, the NCCJ investigated the company and appeared to have received a promise that it would desist from its anti-Catholic activities.<sup>61</sup> Three months later, however, the head of the company was quoted in *America* as continuing to describe Catholicism as "the Blackintern" and "an intellectual cancer."<sup>62</sup>

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<sup>57</sup> This seems to be an early reference to the effort that would result in October, 1943, in the simultaneous publication of "The Pattern for Peace."

<sup>58</sup> "Minutes of the Meeting of the Administrative Board, NCWC, November 9, 1942," pp. 7-8; ASJS.

<sup>59</sup> "Cooperation between Protestants and Catholics," typescript; ACUA, NCWC/USCC, same file.

<sup>60</sup> See Clarence McAuliffe, "Haldeman-Julius' Blue Books are Bigoted and Immoral," *America*, 65 (April 26, 1941) 63-64; "Anti-Catholicism in the Blue Books," *America*, 66 (March 21, 1942) 657.

<sup>61</sup> See the "Memorandum" from Everett R. Clinchy of the NCCJ, August 27, 1942; ASJS.

<sup>62</sup> See *America*, 68 (November 7, 1942) 115.

Secondly, Catholics and non-Catholics continued to be divided over the issue of government aid to parochial schools. In May, 1941, the editors of *The Commonweal* had noted the use of the term "clerical fascism" in a debate in New York City on released-time programs for religious education. A month later Kenneth Leslie, editor of *The Protestant Digest*, defended his use of the phrase, illustrating it by reference to those "demanding state aid for parochial schools."<sup>63</sup> When Msgr. John A. Ryan, along with Fr. Francis J. Boland, published his book, *Catholic Principles of Politics*, a revised edition of an earlier work, *The State and the Church*, as intelligent a commentator as Cyril C. Richardson cited it to justify what he called the American public's "healthy reluctance in supporting Roman Catholic candidates for office," to dispel the illusion of "many thoughtful Protestants" who think that Catholics are "loyal Americans," and to illustrate his own view that "by propagating the Catholic faith Romanists are no less attempting to undermine American liberties than are nazis or communists."<sup>64</sup>

Thirdly, Catholics continued to be accused of sympathy for fascism. While the war raged in Europe, an article appeared in *The Atlantic Monthly*, in which Douglas Miller expressed fear of the consequences for the United States if the Pope were to come under the control of Hitler or Mussolini: the Catholic Church might "have to consent to a political compromise which would endanger our safety insofar as American Catholics follow their Church." The editors of *America* replied: "The 'possibilities' that are 'alarming' are the national disunity and the religious bigotry which Mr. Miller, the *Protestant Digest*, *PM* and the *Atlantic Monthly* foment."<sup>65</sup>

After the United States entered the war, the accusation of Catholic sympathy for fascism was repeated.<sup>66</sup> In *The New Republic* George P. West argued that a period of peaceful relations between Catholics and "liberal humanists" had come to an end with the bitter presidential campaign of 1928. Catholics were now abandoning "their policy of appeasement and conciliation" in favor of "a policy of organized assertion and aggression." This had been so successful that now "it seems to alarmed Americans that the first concern of our local and national governments is the appeasement of Catholic opinion." Catholics had managed to persuade the federal government to its shameful actions during the Spanish Civil War. Anti-Communism had become such a force among Catholics that "the threat looms of a conscious coalition between business para-fascism and reactionary clericalism, joining hands in their fear of democracy and socialism." It was now time for liberals "to organize an open, fighting, opposition to reactionary Catholic pressure on office-holders, the press, the stage, the movies, to organized Catholic attempts to use a fanatically loyal and largely ignorant following to

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<sup>63</sup> See *The Commonweal*, 34 (May 30, 1941) 124-25; (July 4, 1941) 256-57.

<sup>64</sup> Cyril C. Richardson, "Catholics and Religious Tolerance," *The Christian Century*, 57 (November 6, 1940) 1373-74.

<sup>65</sup> *America*, 65 (July 19, 1941) 395. In its July 5, 1941, issue *America* had warned that "a vicious and a violent anti-Catholic crusade is in the making."

<sup>66</sup> See Benjamin L. Masse, "Leftist Myth of Clerical Fascism," *America*, 68 (March 6, 1943) 596-97; excerpted in *The Catholic Digest*, 7 (April, 1943) 86-88.

boycott and blackmail and coerce.... And the time has come for the majority to assert itself against those who would take advantage of our tolerance and generosity."<sup>67</sup>

A week later the same journal published an article by Gaetano Salvemini which argued that Pius XII was pro-fascist in sympathy; Archbishop Spellman's trip to Rome, he wrote, was an effort to work for "a pro-Allied-without-Mussolini clerical fascism in place of the present pro-Germany-with-Mussolini clerical fascism."<sup>68</sup> The editors of *The Commonweal* saw the two *New Republic* articles as "indicative of the anti-Catholic feeling that is growing in certain circles here."<sup>69</sup>

A last source of major tension was the activities of Protestant missionaries in Latin America. In 1941 and 1942, two non-Catholic observers published articles quite critical of the efforts of some American missionaries to convert the "Catholic heathen" there, a problem becoming more critical because of the increased Protestant missionary activity there after the closing of the Far Eastern missions by the war and because the resentment it was causing among Latin Americans was imperilling the "Good Neighbor Policy" of the U.S. government. These articles were widely reported and reprinted in the Catholic press,<sup>70</sup> which chipped in with information and articles of its own.<sup>71</sup> As

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<sup>67</sup> George P. West, "The Catholic Issue," *The New Republic*, 108 (March 1, 1943) 278-80.

<sup>68</sup> Gaetano Salvemini, "Pius XII and Fascism," *The New Republic*, (March 8, 1943) 305-309. Later in the same year Salvemini and George La Piana published a book, *What to Do with Italy*, in which they repeated the charges of Vatican sympathies for fascism. Don Luigi Sturzo replied to it in "The Vatican and Fascism as seen by Salvemini and La Piana," *The Commonweal*, 39 (December 17, 1943) 228-31; see the authors' reply, "Don Sturzo, the Vatican, Fascism," *Ibid.*, (January 28, 1944) 369-71, and Sturzo's rejoinder, "Beyond Salvemini-La Piana," *Ibid.*, (February 25, 1944) 467-69.

<sup>69</sup> *The Commonweal*, 37 (March 19, 1943) 532.

<sup>70</sup> See John Erskine, "Why South America Fears Us," *CD*, 6 (Nov., 1941) 91-96, esp. 95-96 (originally publ. in *Liberty*, Oct. 18, 1941); "Misguided Preachers Bring Discord to Latin America," *America*, 67 (July 4, 1942) 347-49 (reprinted in *The Catholic Digest*, 6 [July, 1941] 1-6); John W. White. "Protestant Missioners to Catholic Heathen," *The Catholic Digest*, 6 (August, 1942) 1-7; "Sabotaging the Good-Neighbor Policy," *The Catholic Digest*, 6 (October, 1942) 1-7; "Mexico's President and the Church," *The Catholic Digest*, 7 (Dec. 1942) 96-99; "South America Bars U.S. Missioners," *The Catholic Digest*, 7 (Dec. 1942) 100-104; "Mexico's Peaceful Counterrevolution," *The Catholic Digest*, 7 (July, 1943) 62-67; "Our Good Neighbor Hurdle," *The Catholic Digest*, 7 (Sept., 1943) 34-37; "Our Responsibility Southward," *The Catholic Digest*, 8 (March, 1944) 1-6. When White's book, *Our Good Neighbor Hurdle*, was published, W. Eugene Shiels gave it a favorable review in *America*, 69 (August 14, 1943) 523.

<sup>71</sup> See Alfonso Junco, "The United States and Hispanidad," *The Commonweal*, 34 (June 6, 1941) 152-54, defending the growth of the idea and referring to "Protestant propaganda, sowing disunion, offensive more often than apostolic in method" (153). In *America*, 67 (June 20, 1942) 305, a letter from Rio de Janeiro appeared on Protestant propaganda telling of a bishop's remarks that it is causing "animosity and misgivings with regard to the United States of America" and asking that the President of the U.S. be so informed. See also Michael Williams, "Views and Reviews," *The Commonweal*, 36 (July 24, 1942) 326-27; "Our Good Neighbor Policy," *Catholic Mind*, 41 (March, 1943) 57-60 (reprinted from *The Catholic Telegraph-Register*, Cincinnati January 29, 1943); John A. O'Brien. "Mexican Synarchism," *The Catholic Digest*, 7 (April, 1943) 1-5; Richard Pattee. "Unnecessary, Unwelcome, Unwise," *The Catholic Digest*, 8 (April, 1944) 89-94 (reprinted from *The Sign*, March 1944).

several editorials and articles in *The Christian Century* illustrate, Protestants noted and criticized the arguments.<sup>72</sup>

At the same November, 1942, meeting at which the U.S. Bishops decided to explore the possibility of cooperation with non-Catholics, they included in their annual Statement, "Victory and Peace," the following reference to Latin America:

We send our cordial greetings to our brother bishops of Latin America. We have been consoled by recent events which give a sincere promise of a better understanding by our country of the peoples of Mexico, Central and South America. Citizens of these countries are bound to us by the closest bonds of religion. They are not merely our neighbors; they are our brothers, professing the same faith. Every effort made to rob them of their Catholic religion or to ridicule it or to offer them a substitute for it is deeply resented by the peoples of these countries and by American Catholics. These efforts prove to be a disturbing factor in our international relations. The traditions, the spirit, the background, the culture of these countries are Catholic. We bishops are anxious to foster every worthy movement which will strengthen our amicable relations with the republics of this continent. We express the hope that the mistakes of the past which were offensive to the dignity of our southern brothers, their culture, and their religion, will not continue. A strong bond uniting in true friendship all the countries of the Western Hemisphere will exercise a most potent influence on a shattered postwar world.<sup>73</sup>

This paragraph immediately became an object of controversy. On November 23rd, Willard Johnson sent all the regional directors of the NCCJ a memorandum on the subject which he said "is bound to be one of the most trying tension points between Protestants and Catholics for many years in the United States. It will probably be more difficult than the Spanish Civil War."<sup>74</sup> After a brief description of the background, Johnson described the Bishops' statement on Latin America to mean "that the culture of the Latin American countries is Catholic and should not be disturbed or substitutes attempted."

Johnson's memorandum went on briefly to state four Catholic arguments on the point: the predominantly Roman Catholic character of Latin America; the threat to hemispheric unity represented by the "Yankee-ism" of Protestant missionaries; the fact that "Protestant missionaries confine most of their activities to the cities where the need for service is negligible;" and that Protestant conversion tactics are not widely or permanently successful. Nine Protestant arguments were then summarized: that democracy should mean freedom of religion, "equal opportunity for all faiths;" the important contributions of Protestants in Latin America; that Protestants work in all areas; that "many Latin Americans are irreligious" so that "there is room for service for both Protestants and Catholics; that the Catholic Church is stronger and most effective in countries where it has Protestant competition; that many Latin American leaders desire Protestant missionaries; that "Nazi propagandists are using the issue to divide us." The eighth Protestant argument addressed the interpretation already being given of the Bishops' comments:

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<sup>72</sup> See *The Christian Century*, 59 (13 May 1942) ; "Religious Liberty or Monopoly," 925-26; George P. Howard, "Protestants are Needed!," 1053-54; "Catholic Bishop Scores Protestant Missions," 1380.

<sup>73</sup> *Pastoral Letters of the United States Catholic Bishops, vol. II: 1941-1961*, ed. Hugh J. Nolan (Washington: USCC, 1984) 42.

<sup>74</sup> I cite this document from the copy of it sent out with the "N.C.W.C. Notes," a sort of information bulletin for the U.S. Bishops, dated December 23, 1942; ASJS.

What reason do Catholics have for making this request? The United States government certainly would not interfere. If Latin American governments would take such action, North American objections would constitute a tremendous breach of hemispheric unity. Protestant churches consider such a request as offensive and are actually increasing missionary activity and will continue to do so, because of the proposal.

"The conflict is a real one," Johnson concluded, asking the regional directors' advice in the formulation of "a working directive" for the NCCJ.

Two weeks after the Bishops' meeting, *The Christian Century* published anonymous comments on their statement, which it called "the Catholic manifesto."<sup>75</sup> The author interpreted the statement as part of a grand strategy in which the Catholic Church was pursuing "a relation with the government in which it will be entitled to make political demands in its own interest." He saw the reference to Latin America as a bid "for government favor in return for the hierarchy's support of the war" and accused the Bishops of caricaturing the Protestant missionary effort in Latin America for political reasons:

They are conscious of having already secured such a privileged position at the center of America's political life-- a position which they now hope to make more secure by impressively blessing the nation's war (despite the Vatican's neutrality)--that they boldly suggest action by the national government to restrain Protestant activity in Latin America because it is "disturbing international relations." The strategy of their profession of patriotism comes unmistakably to the surface at this point. It is the strategy of *quid pro quo*, which reflects the policy of the hierarchy in every land where the Catholic Church is not established but is seeking establishment. The hierarchy has put the church behind the government in fighting the war; now let the government make payment by putting pressure on Protestant missionaries to withdraw from South America, leaving that continent as an exclusive Catholic preserve. The bishops do not say this in so many words, but that is what they mean, and no careful reader of their manifesto can mistake it.

The same meeting of the Federal Council of Churches which praised the growing collaboration between Catholics and Protestants also produced a statement on the Bishops' comments on Latin America.<sup>76</sup> After referring to the work of American Protestants in Asia, Africa, and neighboring Hispanic American countries, by which "innumerable links of understanding and mutual confidence have been forged between the Americas," the document said:

It is with deep concern, therefore, that we have witnessed an effort now publicly endorsed in the United States by the Archbishops and Bishops of a sister Christian communion which constitutes a religious minority in this country, to set the relation of Protestant Christianity to Hispanic America in a perspective which does violence both to historical truth and contemporary fact. We deplore the pretension of the Roman Catholic hierarchy to circumscribe the religious freedom of Protestant Christians in the proclamation of their faith, while by implication reserving for themselves the right to the universal proclamation of their own. We can imagine no policy more certain to project into the New World the baneful intolerance which is now producing such tragic consequences in the contemporary life of Spain. We, accordingly, feel it incumbent upon us to make the following simple and plain affirmations:

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<sup>75</sup> "The Catholic Manifesto," *The Christian Century*, 59 (December 2, 1942) 1479-81; see the journal's earlier summary of the Bishops' statement, 1468. The editors of *The Commonweal*, 37 (December 11, 1942) 195-96, criticized the first part of the editorial but made no mention of the remarks about Protestants in Latin America.

<sup>76</sup> "Our Heritage of Religious Freedom," *The Christian Century*, 59 (December 23, 1942) 1600-1601; a copy of this and of another statement, "Cooperation between Protestants and Catholics," was sent to Ready by Samuel McCrea Cavert, on December 19, 1942; ANCWC/USCC, File "NCWC: Church: Anti-Catholic Propaganda: Latin America, 1923-55." The statement was said also to have been ratified by the Foreign Missions Conference and the Home Missions Conference.

First: The Federal Council of Churches of Christ in America stands, and will continue to stand, for the principle of religious liberty and for the rights of religious minorities in the United States and throughout the world.

Second: The churches represented in this Council will continue to express solidarity with the national and autonomous Protestant churches in Hispanic America, whose numerous members are loyal and patriotic citizens of the countries where they dwell. They will also continue to avail themselves of the constitutional freedom which the republics of Hispanic America grant to the representatives of every faith. Their controlling aim in the discharge of their ministry will be, as it has always been, to have a part, however humble, in interpreting the significance of our Lord Jesus Christ for life and thought in those great and growing nations.

Third: We affirm, with full and first-hand knowledge of the facts, that so far from Protestant institutions and the representatives of Protestant Christianity being a peril to good relations between the Americas, they are today, with some easily explained exceptions, and have been for decades, regarded with great favor by governments and peoples in the countries where they are located.

Fourth: While obliged by circumstances not of our seeking to make this statement in order to clarify the American Protestant position upon a crucial issue, it is nevertheless the judgment and desire of this Council that Protestant and Roman Catholic Christians should combine their influence, in these days of supreme crisis, to work for religious freedom and the other great freedoms, both now and in the post-war world.

In the letter accompanying the copies of the Federal Council's two statements that he sent to the NCWC, Cavert added a note: "If representatives of the National Catholic Welfare Conference should desire to confer with representatives of the Federal Council of the Churches of Christ in America about any matters involved in either of these statements, we should welcome it."<sup>77</sup>

In December, in another editorial comment on the problem, *The Christian Century* recalled that "the most eminent American Catholics proclaim that Catholicism is essentially intolerant, and it is not likely to be less so where it claims a monopoly on historic grounds." It concluded with a prophetic comment:

Back of this whole question of Protestant missions in "Catholic" countries lies the much deeper question of the nature of religious liberty and the quality of our devotion to it. One good result of the current controversy may be to force us to a re-examination of our minds on this subject. And what attitude are American Catholics going to take about the proposal to combine the gospel of the Four Freedoms with the doctrine of a closed continent for Catholics?<sup>78</sup>

At the same time *America* devoted an editorial to the Federal Council's statement.<sup>79</sup> While criticizing the assertion that Protestantism had been the great champion of religious freedom in the United States, it argued that a rehearsing of the past would not contribute greatly to the present need to collaborate on behalf of freedom. With regard to Latin America, the Jesuit editors maintained that whether Protestant missionaries should be allowed to expand their work there was a matter for those people and governments to decide. The U.S. bishops had not tried to settle that issue:

Their statement assuredly went out rather as a plea that our Protestant missionaries do not attempt to embarrass the Latin Americans in their Catholic faith. And their observation that such attempts do factually disturb our international relations and directly make for disunity in the Western Hemisphere, conforms exactly with the testimony gathered from all sources of current information, diplomatic and scientific. It accords, likewise, with the recent pronouncement of prominent members of their own Protestant faith, such as John Erskine...and John W. White....

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<sup>77</sup> Cavert to Ready, December 19, 1942, New York; ACUA, NCWC/USCC.

<sup>78</sup> "Can Catholics Close a Continent?" *The Christian Century*, 59 (December 23, 1942) 1582-83.

<sup>79</sup> "Protestants in Latin America," *America*, 68 (December 26, 1942) 323-24.

For *America* the real issue was different, the one that *The Christian Century* had also identified:

The greatest objective, however, that calls for the united effort of Christian peoples, is that the oppressed nations get from their own rulers a decent respect for the natural right to practise their religion. In both North and South America there is great respect for this right. Not so in Europe, and in many parts of Asia. Our energies may well be organized to bring all the forces of America, in the peace settlement, to establishing this right for our fellow man. All Americans--Protestant, Catholic and Jewish--should stand as one in this demand. We want all men to be free to serve their Creator without fear of persecution. For that cause our soldiers fight, and with them we stand, four-square.

This squabble illustrated the great difficulties that lay in the way of Protestant-Catholic cooperation, the most important of which, from the Protestant standpoint, was Catholic doctrine and practice with regard to religious freedom. Perhaps not so oddly, Catholic opponents of intercredal cooperation, such as Francis Connell, agreed on the issue at stake. Where Connell feared the danger of Catholics being infected by indifferentism, Protestants held back because of fears that Catholics were denying them their rights in Latin America and desired one day to deny them in the United States. The debates on intercredal cooperation already implicitly included the great debate on religious freedom that would occupy minds and excite passions after the War.

If from both the Catholic and the Protestant sides, then, there was interest at least in exploring the possibility of cooperation, it was also clear that it would not be an easy task. Both groups would have to overcome great obstacles.