

THE THEOLOGICAL DEBATE

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The Jesuits Address the Issue

Shortly after Francis Connell's article against intercredal cooperation appeared in *The Ecclesiastical Review*, John Courtney Murray decided to give the question a thorough airing in the pages of *Theological Studies*, of which he had just become editor. Something of the context in which the Jesuit journal would address the issue is expressed in a letter in which John La Farge responded to the concerns expressed by Bishop Thomas H. McLaughlin of Paterson, who had been provoked by an editorial comment in *America* on the recently released NCCJ statement of principles.

We are confronted with, as I see it, two dangers, each of which presents a special problem. There is the ever present danger of such misinterpretations as those to which you point, and a possibility of scandal or of apparent compliance with the views of individuals like this editor; on the other hand, 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.

Noting his view that it could not be "our ultimate prudence to be completely negative," La Farge told the archbishop that the issue would receive a thorough and sound investigation in the fall and future issues of *Theological Studies*.¹

In a note appended to the second article in the series, Murray explained their purpose: "to signalize the existence of a distinctly new and unmistakably urgent problem in our contemporary religious and social life. Discussion of it is at once imperative and delicate by reason of the complex theological values involved." Clarifying and developing the theological principles at stake would help shape a practical solution. The initial article by John La Farge had identified "the new issue created by our unique historical context" and described the *status quaestionis*. The problem was not that of activities seeking "a type of 'Christian union' that would be illusory because effected by superficial and destructive compromises of truth." A new type of cooperation was now under discussion, whose "aims and scope, its organizational forms, its methods, etc., are subject to old and valid norms of judgment, that will determine their legitimacy and necessity." After a discussion of the canonical issues in the article to which Murray's note was appended, further studies would follow:

Moreover, a theological discussion of the question in general (for it is axiomatic that in particular cases Catholic participation in concrete co-operative organizations and activities depends on the definite decision of the local Ordinary) must view the problem in the light of the Church's total concept of herself and of her mission--particularly her mission

¹ La Farge explained to his old friend that he had made several important revisions in the NCCJ text as originally submitted to him and that he had signed it only after showing it to "a keenly critical theologian" who, I suspect, was Murray; La Farge to McLaughlin, New York, March 18, 1942 (copy), WCA, La Farge Papers.

in the temporal order; and it must also define the role of the layman in that mission, since to him the co-operation in question will and should, in large part, be committed. Again, the exigencies in today's situation of the supreme law of all Christian action--that of universal charity--must be realistically estimated. What is decisively important, the utterances of our Holy Father must be seriously pondered, and his wishes carefully and reverently sought, in the light of his views of present perils and needs of the Church, and of the whole human race. Articles on these subjects are in preparation, and will be published in forthcoming issues.²

The series of articles on the topic in *Theological Studies* began in September, 1942, with John La Farge's statement of the question and with a review of the literature by Murray himself. La Farge's essay began with references to the activities of the NCCJ, the Sword of the Spirit movement, discussions in Germany before the war, and the efforts of Christians there to resist the Nazi persecution of the Church.³ He then used Francis Connell's essay to make it clear that he would not be discussing types of cooperation which involved specifically religious discussions or merely civic tasks, but an intermediate form concerned, as the Redemptorist had put it, "with matters that naturally invite the expression of religious ideas." La Farge remarked that Connell's threefold distinction, while useful "as a general guide," was difficult to apply to contemporary circumstances, particularly "the challenge to the Christian synthesis which is placed by the totalitarian ideologies." The defense of the primacy of the spiritual, even on matters that are civic in nature, "tends to break down conveniently established divisions."⁴

The central part of La Farge's essay reviewed many examples of interdenominational cooperation in the United States and elsewhere, ending with Cardinal Hinsley's establishment of the Sword of the Spirit. The next section was devoted to the "principles" to guide cooperation that had been stated by Carlton J. H. Hayes. While repudiating "a lowest common denominator" approach to the question, Hayes had said that "we should be alert to maintain a cultural and religious pluralism." In another statement, Hayes had repeated this point:

Indeed, if we are to make a better world issue from the present awful conflict, we must have more, not fewer, good Jews and good Christians. Debasement of the spiritual values of our Judaeo-Christian heritage has been a central source of Hitlerism and all the evils its is inflicting upon the world. Exaltation of those same spiritual values must be the accompaniment of our national struggle against Hitlerism and the inspiration for the post-war renaissance of freedom and justice.

Here in the United States we differ about religion. I thank God we do, and I pray that we may continue to respect differences. I mean, however, *Differences*--and not *Indifference*. Indifference is quite as dangerous and subversive to the American way of life as intolerance. The task is not to water down Judaism or Protestantism or Catholicism, but to make

² Murray, Editor's Note, *TS*, 3 (December, 1942) 475-76. Murray added: "Other aspects of the problem exist; notably, there is the question of the non-Catholic view; the question of the present state of the Catholic conscience and its equipment rightly to understand the issues involved; and other serious questions that lie close to the main line of investigation proper to a theological journal. It is hoped that they will be touched on insofar as they are germane to the discussion. Suggestions from readers, whether sympathetic or challenging, that are of a constructive character, are again invited."

³ John La Farge, "Some Questions as to Interdenominational Cooperation," *TS*, 3 (Sept. 1942) 315-42, at 315.

⁴ La Farge, "Interdenominational Cooperation," 316-18.

Jews better Jews, Protestants better Protestants, and Catholics better Catholics. And by "better" I mean more informed and more practising.⁵

After a brief summary of the defense of cooperation recently given by Jacques Maritain,⁶ La Farge ended his essay with a series of questions needing consideration in order to reach a practical solution to the question.

Murray's survey in the same issue opened with the fact that needed theological exploration:

One of the most striking characteristics of the religious scene today is the assertion of a growing will among Christians to work together for a more human and Christian world-order, in the face of concerted, organized, and implacable forces that threaten to destroy the possibility of it. Christian co-operation among men of different creeds in the interests of social reconstruction is a fact. The fact, of course, is simply massive in England. In the United States it has nowhere the same proportions, but it is likely to assume them.⁷

Murray's review began with a summary of Connell's essay. After questioning the claim that the co-operative movement had adversely affected Catholics, he said that Connell's insistence on "Catholic exclusivism" needed to be complemented by "an exploration of the dangers to human life, national and international, involved in the failure of Catholics to co-operate with non-Catholics in the sphere of social reconstruction--dangers so great as to create a necessity for such co-operation" and to justify the risk of endangering the faith of some Catholics.⁸ Connell's call for education about

⁵ La Farge, "Interdenominational Co-operation," 325-26. Hayes' remarks appear in a leaflet, "A Message from a Catholic and an Historian," distributed by the NCCJ, undated but including a reference to Hayes that is dated April 30, 1942, and mentions his departure to become U.S. ambassador to Spain.

⁶ Originally given as a talk on July 4, 1939, at the fourth Congrès Mondial des Croyances pour les droits de la personne humaine, "Qui est mon prochain?" was first published in *La vie intellectuelle*, August 1939; Maritain also delivered it at Jewish Theological Seminary in New York, and it was published as "The Achievement of Cooperation among Men of Different Creeds," *The Journal of Religion*, 21 (1941) 364-72, and then was reprinted as "Who is my Neighbor?" in *Ransoming the Time* (New York: Scribners, 1941) 115-40. On March 13, 1940, Reginald Garrigou-Lagrange wrote to Maritain's close friend, Charles Journet, to alert him to the fact that Maritain's talk was being criticized in high circles in Rome because it seemed to be minimizing "what is required as implicit faith necessary for infused charity." Garrigou himself added that for some time he had thought that Maritain "understands implicit faith quite differently than theologians and that he is content with a minimum which can be found even among those who profess atheism or pantheism, a minimum which is not at all infused faith. In addition, the love that follows is not evangelical love, although the name continues to be given it, but a natural élan, quite inferior to infused charity." The Roman Dominican then carried the critique even further: "He is being criticized for no longer giving conferences but for preaching and, while preaching to audiences where Jews and Freemasons are present, of speaking in such a way of the rights of the human person that the rights of God are forgotten, and of presenting a doctrine of love to which any religion could accommodate itself. They recognize his great talent, the beautiful things that his personal faith leads him to say, but there is something suspect on the subject of implicit faith. Similarly, criticisms of Phariseism [*sic*] (which recall Berdaev) made on the whole against Catholics, to audiences where Jews and Freemasons are not unhappy to hear such things; all the more because respect for the human person leads him, they say, to think that the adversaries of the Church are rather in good faith. Liberalism is thus reappearing in a new form, the criticism is, and he is being led to do this in reaction to certain criticisms addressed against him;" *Journet Maritain Correspondance, Vol. III 1940-1949* (Ed. Saint-Augustin, 1998) 52-53; see also the subsequent correspondence and the appendix: "Autour d'une menace de condamnation de Maritain à Rome (1940)," 897-904

⁷ John Courtney Murray, "Current Theology: Christian Co-operation," *TS*, 3 (Sept. 1942) 413-31, at 413.

⁸ Murray, "Current Theology," 414-17.

intercredal cooperation also had to be supplemented by "a whole program of instruction, notably with regard to the great idea which Leo XIII constantly put forward, the mission of the Church in the temporal order. I am inclined to think that the purpose and significance of Christian co-operation will not be grasped, nor the danger of indifferentism obviated, unless the movement is seen by the people against a larger doctrinal background, and in the light of a genuine appreciation of the realities of the present world crisis."⁹ (This was in fact the view that Murray tried to give in his Loyola lectures and a key part of what inspired his plan for a college religion course.)

Murray then reviewed the debate in England on the theological basis for the cooperation already undertaken there, and in particular the question of whether it could be said to rest on a "common Christian ground"; he, too, summarized Maritain's essay on the topic. After a brief discussion of the purposes of cooperation, he quoted at length from the "Joint Statement on Co-operation" issued by the Sword of the Spirit and Religion and Life on May 28, 1942. He gave what appears to be a rather restrictive interpretation of the Joint Statement as calling for a cooperation that "is explicitly based on the ground of a common acceptance of the natural law, and is to be directed towards objectives in social, economic, and international life that are made peremptory by the natural law."¹⁰ This emphasis returns when Murray states what appears to be not only a summary of the English debate but also a personal conviction:

Historically, of course, it was the Incarnate Word who freed human reason from the captivity of ancient darkness and cleared its field of vision both horizontally and vertically--down into the uniqueness of the human personality, and out into the community of nature that makes all men one. But today, at any rate, the natural laws of human life are luminous. Their light is shared by all men who have not completely lost contact with the Christian tradition that has mediated them. And it is difficult to see why that light cannot be a common source of illumination to all Christians, that brings into focus at least the general lines of the reconstructive task that calls for their common effort.¹¹

In the English discussion, Murray found something he praised so highly as to make one wonder if he was not contrasting it with the American situation:

The theologian who views the movement toward Christian co-operation as it exists in England cannot fail, I think, to be impressed by the exact theological intelligence, as well as the great practical tact, that preside over it. This is in greatest part due, of course, to the excellence of its leadership. There is a remarkable clarity of thought, an uncompromising integrity in the maintenance of Catholic truth, which are supported by a genuinely religious and prayerful spirit and protected by a real sense of the dangers to which Catholic faith is exposed. At the same time, doctrinal exactness is joined to a greatly courteous charity, which excludes any tendency to ally orthodoxy with undue suspicion, complacency, or rudeness.¹²

Connell's Objections

⁹ Murray, "Christian Co-operation," 416.

¹⁰ Murray, "Christian Co-operation," 430; I call this restrictive because several of the points quoted by Murray include concern for "the Christian tradition," for "the effective influence of Christian teaching," for "the Christian heritage," to oppose "pagan standards and ideals" and "the present tendencies to set Christianity aside and to treat it as a matter of private concern without relevance to the principles which should guide society" (see pp. 427-28).

¹¹ Murray, "Christian Co-operation," 430.

¹² Murray, "Christian Co-operation," 430-31.

At the end of La Farge's essay Murray had invited readers of *Theological Studies* to comment on the subject. Francis Connell made use of the offer and sent Murray a letter taking vigorous issue with the remarks of Carlton Hayes that La Farge had quoted without comment. Whatever Hayes' intention, he argued, in their objective meaning his words in effect were saying, "We should strive to keep some people outside the Catholic Church. I thank God that there are men and women who reject the one true religion of Jesus Christ."

Mr. Hayes is further quoted as saying that our task is "to make Jews better Jews and Protestants better Protestants." Such an objective is very different from that expressed by the Catholic Church in the liturgy of Good Friday, when she prays for heretics: "Almighty and eternal God, who savest all, and wilt have none to perish, look down on the souls that are seduced by the deceit of the devil, that the hearts of those that err, having laid aside all heretical malice, may repent and return to the unity of thy truth;" and for Jews: "Hear our prayers which we pour forth for the blindness of this people, that by acknowledging the light of thy truth, which is Christ, they may be brought out of their darkness". And evidently, the desire of "religious pluralism" is incompatible with the ardent wish of Him who prayed: "That all may be one" (John, XVII, 21).

It might be acceptable as "the lesser of two evils, when compared to the utter rejection of all religion," Connell conceded, for Protestants to become better Protestants and Jews better Jews, but we ought to avoid such "unqualified and ambiguous statements:

If we undertake to explain to a group of Protestants and Jews our attitude toward them from a religious standpoint, we should not hesitate to assert very explicitly that we believe them to be in error and that our primary desire and objective in their regard is that they become Catholics.

By all means, let us apply in full measure the principles of Christian charity toward those who differ from us in religious belief. But let us never compromise on the basic Catholic doctrine that there is only one true religion, which by the law of God all are obliged to accept--the Catholic religion.¹³

Two days later Murray replied to Connell, thanking him for approving a discussion of the topic and adding:

May I say that I am in agreement with your strictures on Mr. Hayes' statements--in fact, I spoke to Father La Farge about them. (They would never have gotten by an S. J. censor.) But I ascertained that it was not at all his intention to approve the statements. Rather, the fact that they were made in that form seemed to constitute an aspect of the whole trouble, and for that reason they were worth including. The interesting thing is that I have every reason to think that Mr. Hayes is a man of sound views--which makes his "gratitude to God" for religious differences quite unintelligible... I shall be happy to publish your comments.¹⁴

A month later, however, Murray was less convinced. While sending Connell the proofs of his letter, intended for publication in the December issue of *Theological Studies*, Murray wrote that he now doubted it was fair to publish Connell's comments since Hayes, who had since become U. S. Ambassador to Spain, would not be able to reply. He now also wondered whether Connell's paraphrase was not overly severe, in effect accusing Hayes of a heretical statement and calling his understanding of Catholicism, loyalty and courage into question. "Obviously, that is an extremely serious charge, made against a distinguished Catholic and public figure." On the other hand, perhaps

¹³ Connell to Editor, *Theological Studies*, 3 (December, 1972) 621-22; a copy of this letter, dated Oct. 2, 1942 is in RABP, Connell Papers.

¹⁴ Murray to Connell, Oct. 4, 1942; RABP.

his own duty as Editor was to let all views on the question be expressed, and so he left the question of publishing the letter up to Connell himself.¹⁵

In reply Connell insisted that the decision to publish his letter remained Murray's and that he would not be offended were it not published. But he defended his interpretation as "the literal and obvious sense" of Hayes' remarks. If, as he had said, other interpretations might be possible, he did not think them likely:

I am sure that the ordinary person hearing the statements would conclude that a Catholic presents it as a desirable good that a false creed and a false cult should flourish, in the same sense that it is desirable that the true faith and worship should flourish.

It is indeed embarrassing to reprove publicly so prominent a Catholic as Mr. Hayes. But when he sets out to propound publicly a difficult and delicate point of Catholic theology, he must expect to have his statements subjected to public criticism. Indeed, the very fact that so prominent a person makes statements of this sort makes it all the more dangerous. I cannot imagine Blessed Edmund Campion (I have been reading his life) urging Elizabeth of England to be a more devoted Protestant. I cannot imagine St. Peter advising Nero to be more fervent in his worship of Jupiter and Bacchus. I cannot imagine our divine Master telling His disciples (in the phrase of Mr. Hayes) "to be alert to maintain religious pluralism", and praying "ut omnes non sint unum".¹⁶

Murray published Connell's letter in the December issue of *Theological Studies*.¹⁷ But in the following issue, while distancing himself from a theory of co-operation based "on the 'liberal' ground that all religions are simply humanly originated patterns of thought and behavior," which would regard religious pluralism "as a good-in-itself, a social enrichment, etc.," Murray made a point of adding in a footnote:

It may not be out of place to say that I myself would certainly not impute this latter theory to the Honorable Carlton J. Hayes, some of whose statements were criticized in this periodical. It would, of course, be extremely interesting to pursue the question as to the sense in which we can say, "Felix culpa!" with regard to our religious divisions, on the principle that God's permissive will has a good for its object in permitting evil. Moreover, I would agree with Father Sherwood that there is a real sense in which we not only can but should desire a greater fidelity to their traditions on the part of Jews and Protestants, and this, not only as a lesser evil, but as a positive value. But this is a subject hardly to be discussed in brief. It remains true that the prudence of making statements, which are in themselves rightly understandable, must be judged by circumstances.¹⁸

In May, 1943, Murray sent Connell an advance view of a reply from Hayes which he then published in the June issue.¹⁹ Hayes forcefully denied Connell's imputation that "'we should strive to keep some people outside the Catholic Church.' I have some missionary zeal myself." But a massive fact was confronting Catholics, that multitudes of people were being drawn from the great religions "to some kind or other of *Ersatz* religion, Marxian or Nietzschean (Communist or Nazi),

¹⁵ Murray to Connell, Oct. 31, 1942; RABP.

¹⁶ Connell concluded: "In the even [*sic*] that you do not decide to publish my letter (and, as I said, it is entirely left to your discretion) it might be well if you would send my letter to Mr. Hayes. I shall be glad to discuss the matter with him privately, if he wishes;" Connell to Murray, Nov. 10, 1942 (copy); RABP.

¹⁷ "Correspondence," *Theological Studies*, 3 (Dec. 1942) 621-22.

¹⁸ John Courtney Murray, "Co-operation: Some Further Views," *Theological Studies*, 4 (March, 1943) 107-108.

¹⁹ Murray to Connell, May 26, 1943; RABP. Hayes' letter was published in *TS*, 4 (June 1943) 314-16.

which is not theistic but pagan, which is not supernatural but materialistic, which, in a word, is absolutely antithetical to the Catholic faith and quite inimical to its practice." The question is what is to be done in the face of this fact, given particularly that there are so many non-practicing Catholics, Protestants and Jews.

I hazard the guess that we shall be doing something less than nothing if we shut ourselves off from fellow citizens who have *part* of the whole truth and if we confine our efforts to indiscriminate suspicion and denunciation of everyone who differs from us in any degree, including everyone in our own midst who differs about ways and means. This certainly was not the tactic of St. Paul or St. Augustine. Aside from the basic consideration that it offends against Christian charity, it seems to me, in the present crucial circumstances, to put us strictly on the defensive, and to contract our moral influence on the course of events at home and abroad.

Hayes admitted that, if taken out of context, his remarks could be misunderstood, something not likely in the NCCJ where "they had too often heard me proclaim my uncompromising Catholic faith." Within the Conference he had opposed the "common denominator" approach, which he found quite dangerous because potentially totalitarian in effect. "On the other hand, if we Americans will recognize and respect the rights of minorities as well as of majorities, if we will frankly accept the *fact* of cultural pluralism among us, we shall be the better able to escape any centralizing tyranny, to enjoy the liberty of reasonable discussion and persuasion, and to persevere in what I conceive to be the true 'American way of life.'"

Recalling that the NCCJ was a civic organization, devoted to promoting cooperation and to allaying prejudice and intolerance and not pursuing union of creed or worship, Hayes concluded:

Its Protestant and Jewish leaders--and I as a Catholic--are firmly convinced, however, that friendly association and civic co-operation of believers in God, in the supernatural order, and in the moral law of the Decalogue, are essential and can only be useful to our country internally and externally. Furthermore, I personally believe that the Catholic Church in America will thereby benefit. It would appear that "better practicing Protestants" and "better practicing Jews" might provide greater incentive for "better practicing Catholics" than would more and more pagans.

The Jesuit Articles Continue

During this correspondence, *Theological Studies* continued to publish its series of articles on intercredal cooperation. In December, 1942, the Jesuit canonist T. Lincoln Bouscaren discussed the canonical aspects.²⁰ After reviewing at some length the Church's law on *communicatio in sacris*, he turned to the question of doctrinal discussions, exploring the canons and their historical background, and ending with a tight analysis of Canon 1325, #3. Having explained the restrictions this canon placed on public discussions with non-Catholics, Bouscaren permitted himself a set of large questions:

Is the interpretation we have given to this canon to be insisted on in the conditions of the present day? It puts a severe strain on the imagination to try to picture the exigencies of the world reconstruction period which will follow the peace. Organized action must be determined by discussion. Many "ideologies" are already highly organized for pressure, discussion, and action. Which of them is the most deadly? Is it atheistic Communism? Racism with its unspeakable cruelties? "Liberal" indifferentism? At all events, if the light of Christ is to guide the world through the dark days that are still to come, it must be seen; or, to change the figure, the call of Christ to peace and order must be heard.

²⁰ T. Lincoln Bouscaren, "Co-operation with Non-Catholics: Canonical Legislation," *TS*, 3 (Dec. 1942) 475-512.

Will it not be a serious handicap to the cause of Christianity if Catholics are excluded by their own law from taking part in public discussions? Can this law, born of the experience of the Reformation controversies, be applied in the totally changed conditions which will follow this twentieth century peace? In those other days the Church was faced with determined adversaries indoctrinated with falsehood and eager for opportunities to gain publicity for the new doctrines. After this war, perhaps, the great majority of mankind, chastened by suffering and disillusioned by the failure of false systems, may be ready for the true leadership which only the Church of Christ can give them. Shall the Church lose this opportunity and be forced by her own law to remain on the outside, a critic of action rather than a leader in it?

While Bouscaren thought these might be legitimate questions, he noted that they did not affect the *ius conditum*, which continued to prevail. "There may be a question as to whether changed conditions make a modification advisable," he added, "but that question is for the Holy See, which would doubtless welcome advice from the bishops upon it."²¹

In introducing a second survey of the literature in the March, 1943, issue, Murray proposed that the question be broadened beyond particular questions of co-operative techniques to "the more inclusive problem of the relationships between Catholics and non-Catholics in general, not only as individuals, but as religious groups, within the context of a society that will, as a matter of fact, continue for a long time to be religiously pluralistic."²² He turned for light on this larger issue to a pre-war German discussion of the topic. A German Jesuit, Max Pribilla, had argued that Pius XI's Encyclical *Mortalium animos* was directed against conversations and co-operation that seek or presuppose religious unity; it did not settle the issue of the possibility of Catholic and non-Catholic cooperation in addressing temporal issues. Pribilla argued that disagreement on the motivating principles did not exclude agreement, based on the natural law, on the goals to be achieved, which would be sufficient. The search for some common Christian ground had not worked well and had almost always led to a kind of "interconfessionalism."²³ The radical differences between Catholics and Protestants over the concept of church unity here prove to be the main difficulty. But separating the question of co-operation from the question of church unity and agreeing on the nature of co-operation, Murray argued, would reduce the danger of indifferentism to that of the *scandalum pusillorum*. "And the remedy for that is education of the *pusilli*." He wondered also if there were not other reasons for U.S. Catholic reservations about the idea:

I cannot resist the impression that the problem of co-operation would be not a little simplified if we were farther along in our own program of operation in the temporal order. As it is, we are confronted with the necessity of a response to initiatives that come from without; we are invited to step into frameworks that are already prepared. Doctrinal and prudential grounds dictate reserve. This is inevitable, as it is also inevitable that their negative workings would be heightened by the traditional defensive mentality of Catholics in the United States.²⁴

²¹ Bouscaren, "Co-operation with Non-Catholics," 506-507.

²² Murray, "Current Theology: Co-operation: Some Further Views," 4 (March 1943) 100-111, at 100.

²³ Murray noted here his reservations about the recent "Declaration of Fundamental Religious Beliefs Held in Common by Catholics, Protestants, and Jews," published by the NCCJ, in whose title he saw "something inevitably disquieting to the Catholic sense" and inappropriate "when, on reading the document, it appears that one need be neither a Catholic nor a Protestant nor a Jew in order to accept it, but simply a human being, endowed with sufficiently enlightened and unperturbed reason;" "Co-operation: Some Further Views," 105-106.

²⁴ Murray, "Co-operation: Some Further Views," 109.

Murray concluded with Pribilla's response to objections with regard to his focus on the natural law. One of these argued that the appeal to natural law "dismisses the motive power of the Gospel from social and political life." His response was that while "the inner convictions proper to Christians as such are indeed operative as motives..., it is not necessary that these convictions be expressed in the co-operative program, nor put formally as the basis of cooperation [*sic*], since the co-operation as such does not envisage ends beyond the natural order." Another objection was that natural law provides "only partial solutions...to the great evils of political and social life." Murray's summary of the response seems to go beyond reporting to a statement of his own view:

We must build, with what materials we have, a structure that can only be preliminary and imperfect, but that is all that is possible at the moment. At that, the value of the structure should not be underestimated. In a social order based on the natural law in its integrity one would find operative all the moral precepts proper to Christianity; for strictly speaking, Christ instituted no new morality. By His positive will He brought into existence only the supernatural reality of the Church, with its structure, its doctrine, its sacraments. In the moral order His activity limited itself to a clarification of the law already written in the heart of every man, and a confirmation of that law by His divine authority. To which activity, of course, He added the force of His own example, whereby men would be prompted to transcend the limits of the strictly obligatory, and imitate His self-emptying love. The natural law, therefore, would be adequate to base an integrally human social order. It is another question whether there reside in human nature as such the moral energies necessary to call into being such an order. Catholic doctrine holds that the integral observance of the natural law is impossible to man without the aid of grace. As a matter of fact, therefore, integral humanity, whether in personal or social life, is the gift of the Holy Spirit of Christ, who indwells as a divinizing, and therefore humanizing, power in the Church and in the individual. This truth, I take it, is the basis of the objection in question. And the basic answer is the Catholic distinction between the enduring validity of human nature in its order, and its insufficiency to achieve even the perfection proper to its own order. What is insufficient is not therefore useless.²⁵

The June, 1943, issue of *Theological Studies* offered three major articles that continued the discussion. Wilfred Parsons marshaled a host of statements by modern popes on intercredal cooperation in social reconstruction, from which he concluded that "it is the duty of Catholics to initiate a new type of co-operative relationship with non-Catholics." While the field of this co-operation is the temporal, its basis is religious, "a common belief in God and a common love of His law." On the latter point Parsons seems to have differed from Murray; Parsons thought that while the desired renovation would be based on the natural law, "the rational convictions of the ethical philosopher will not, as a matter of fact, furnish a sufficiently powerful motivation to carry it through."²⁶

In the last section of his essay, Parsons admitted that "the renovation of secular society is not the whole Catholic program, nor even the principal part of it." This must remain the integration of all men into "the supernatural unity of the Church of Christ." But, he argued, this would be achieved

²⁵ Murray, "Co-operation: Some Further Views," 110-111. The objections considered here anticipate both one of the points that would be at issue in Murray's dispute with Paul Hanly Furfey and criticisms of Murray's public philosophy that have become more common recently.

²⁶ Wilfrid Parsons, "Intercredal Co-operation in the Papal Documents," 4 (June 1943) 159-82, at 179. As he began work on this article Parsons had asked McNicholas "to exchange thoughts on this matter." McNicholas replied that there could be no association on matters concerning revealed religion but that "we ought to explore the possibilities of the extent of our co-operation" as citizens; Parsons to McNicholas, Washington, December 23, 1942; McNicholas to Parsons, Cincinnati, February 5, 1943 (copy); AACinc, 20/126.

in two successive steps, the first of which is "the healing of the social conflicts that divide men." He attributed to the popes the view that "a natural union must precede any union of the supernatural plane." "Natural society must reflect its Creator before it accepts its Redeemer."²⁷

Parsons concluded with brief remarks on the failure of American Catholics to respond to the papal "command" as eagerly as British Catholics had:

In this country we have not obeyed, and we remain progressively isolated from the course of human events, as the Church was for so many years in Europe. And there is every evidence that the enemies of God and Christ in this country have full intentions of keeping us isolated, by branding us as "clerical fascists" and similar foes to the nation.

Among the reasons for this failure he named the fear of misunderstanding. "We have ingrown in us a feeling that we are the object of suspicion on the part of non-Catholics, who think that whenever we move on the secular field we are merely looking to the political aggrandizement of the Church." But he had his own view of this also:

There is no doubt about this feeling, and there is no doubt, either, about the suspicion. But it seems to me that our social isolation is rather the cause of the suspicion than the result of it. As long as our socio-economic reform movement remains an exclusively Catholic movement, so long will non-Catholics naturally harbor the suspicion that we wish to make society to our image and likeness for our own mysterious and dangerous purposes. The best way to break down the suspicion, as the British experiment shows, is to work along with non-Catholics who believe as we do on the fundamental truths about society, and thus let them see at first hand that our aims are no different from theirs.

And this will also require Catholics to examine their motive for co-operation: "It is, of course, Christian charity. I mean that we have to rid ourselves of that curious crypto-Calvinism which thinks that God gives His grace only to Catholics. We have no right to push our dogmatic exclusiveness into the field of human relations."²⁸

The second article in the June issue was Joseph Bluett's discussion of the Church's mission in the temporal order.²⁹ This was a lengthy summary of the teaching of Leo XIII on the contributions the Church could make to the earthly well-being of mankind, benefits that Bluett interpreted in very strong terms as inherent in the distinct spiritual and redemptive role of the Church. The study began and ended with reminders of the critical condition in which mankind found itself. The Pope's teaching challenged society to recognize "the tragedy of its lost unity" and to turn to the one source by which it can be saved:

God Himself has given to society, in the Church, the instrument which can gather it again into the unity of one family and consecrate it, through the bond of Christian brotherhood, in an even deeper unity than that of its birthright. This is the only provision God has made for that restoration. Society must choose: but it can only choose between chaos and the Church.

But the crisis also challenged the members of the Church:

²⁷ Parsons, "Intercredal Co-operation in Papal Documents," 180-81.

²⁸ Parsons, "Intercredal Co-operation in Papal Documents," 180-82.

²⁹ Joseph Bluett, "The Church's Duty of Man's Earthly Happiness," *TS*, 4 (June, 1943) 183-222. This appears to be the article which Murray's description of the project said would deal with the problem "in the light of the Church's total concept of herself and of her mission--particularly her mission in the temporal order."

Perhaps it is because the Church is so necessary for man's eternal happiness that God made her so indispensable even for our earthly joy, that men might see in the splendor and beneficence of her earthly mission the image of her more glorious, eternal importance. In any event, because Christ has made her what she is, she must gird herself for the rescue of society's temporal happiness today just as solicitously as she has always striven for its eternal salvation.

The world's need of the Church was indisputable, "the adequacy of the Church to meet the fundamental spiritual demands of the social crisis could not be more complete," and Christ's mandate was clear.

The Spouse of Christ will be faithful to that mandate. In that certainty resides the hope of the world in the present collapse. But her awareness of the task and of its urgency must be vividly shared by all her children, and her own devotion to the will of her Founder matched in their lives, if the duty is to be done with the heroic energy and promptness which it deserves.³⁰

The last essay in the June issue was Murray's long article on the theory and organization of intercredal cooperation.³¹ The basic question was whether there could be intercredal cooperation without compromise of the Church's unity, and this could be answered only by considering the nature and purposes of the cooperation. The type of co-operation being urged by the popes posed no real question; but it needed to be understood for what it was:

In order to understand the papal idea, one must first share the papal concern that suggested it. The concern centers on today's cultural crisis, and on the new order that must necessarily issue from it. To find a parallel for it, one would have to go back to the crisis that developed when the infant Kingdom of Christ emerged into the world and came to grips with the absolutism, both temporal and spiritual, of imperial Rome. The uniqueness of the crisis, and the point of the partial parallelism, lies in the fact that it is a spiritual crisis, but located at the heart of the temporal order. And these two characteristics combine to create for the Church a unique task of colossal proportions. The task, briefly, is to effect a spiritual renewal of the social life of humanity, and to direct a structural reform of the social order, national and international.... The task is unique because of its world-wide scope, its complexities, the issues that hang on it, the power of the forces arrayed against its accomplishment, its desperate urgency. But its special uniqueness derives from the initial step that must be taken toward its achievement--not a winning of recognition for the spiritual authority of the Church, but simply a universal reinforcement of the primal law of human nature, the moral law of justice between men sanctioned by the sovereignty of God.³²

It was because the Church realized her "numerical and strategic inadequacy" that she was appealing to all believers to join in the immense task. Murray then described the task in language that recalled his early lectures described in a previous chapter:

The task is spiritual--a spiritual crisis has to be met. Moreover, every "spiritual" man is engaged in the crisis; for it concerns the total work of the Spirit of God on earth, which is not merely the building up of the Body of Christ, but also the preparation of mankind throughout its length and breadth and in all the departments--even the terrestrial and secular departments--of its life, for that "gathering into one" (John 11:52) which is its obligatory destiny. To meet the crisis, therefore, all "spiritual" men must unite as one "spiritual" man.

³⁰ Bluett, "The Church's Duty to Man's Earthly Happiness," 221-22.

³¹ Murray, "Intercredal Cooperation: Its Theory and its Organization," 4 (June 1943) 257-86.

³² Murray, "Theory and Organization," 258. The last sentence in this paragraph may be one of the statements that would arouse concern that social reconstruction was being given priority over winning people to the Church.

The Holy See, therefore, desires “a great unity that is at once interconfessional and spiritual,” including all religious people and with its “bond of unity...no mere political or economic interest, but a religious faith in God and a love of His law as the spiritual source of all order in human life.”³³

As for “the spiritual crisis in the temporal order,” if its “immediate scope...is within the confines of the earthly city,” it “remains fundamentally a spiritual work. For the earthly city must have its spirit renewed, as well as its institutional pattern changed.” This makes the unity desired “a border-line thing,” neither wholly spiritual nor wholly temporal, but “religio-civic.” It is not “ecclesiastical” and not “a means or milieu of ‘grace,’” but something natural. It will be “a spiritual and interconfessional unity on a distinct, non-ecclesiastical plane, and for a distinct non-ecclesiastical purpose.”³⁴ Murray then tried to clarify the new thing by exploring its analogous relation to “Catholic Action:”

...in their concrete realizations, the differences between them are, of course, total. The basis of Catholic Action is the supernatural, divine unity of the hierarchical Church, whose interior principle is the one Spirit of Christ; the basis of the other “Action” is simply the natural spiritual unity of the human race, whose effective bond is belief in God and obedience to the universal moral law. The one, therefore, aims at the penetration of the social order by the leaven of the integral Gospel, the other at its penetration at least by the elemental natural precepts of justice and charity. The action...of Catholic Action is spiritual in its essence, social in its effects; the other action is social in its nature, spiritual in its roots. Therefore, the one is organized confessionally under the ecclesiastical mandate of the Catholic bishops, the other is organized interconfessionally under the universal mandate of conscience, as obedient to the Author of the moral law. In fact, if Catholic Action is the organized participation of the Catholic laity in the apostolate of the Catholic hierarchy, one may say that this “Religio-Civic Action” is the organized participation of all men of good will in the apostolate of the Catholic laity. It is a sort of Catholic action twice removed--removed, first, from roots in the organic unity of the visible Church, and removed, secondly, from organic relation to her pastoral authority.³⁵

For Murray the real question was practical: granted the need for organized activity, what sort of organization was needed? For guidance here he turned to the Encyclical, *Singulari quadam* (1912), in which Pius X had addressed a debate in Germany that had pitted people who defended interconfessional labor unions against others who insisted that Catholics must participate only in Catholic unions. In the literature on the debate Murray found the same issues that were dividing Catholics over inter-religious cooperation, with the Berlin school demanding “integral Catholic faith and a supernatural dynamism” and the Cologne school asserting that “alongside of, or better, within the supernatural and religious sphere of life there is a region of thought and action which the Catholic Christian has in common with adherents of other religions, since it is founded on the nature of man, and only later receives from faith a higher finality, regulation, and clarification.”³⁶ At one point he described the controversy in terms that might have made readers think of the sorts of objections raised by Francis Connell. “As is not infrequent in a good Catholic fight,” he said, “the opponents of interconfessional co-operation, went heresy-hunting with much righteous enthusiasm;

³³ Murray, “Theory and Organization,” 258-59.

³⁴ Murray, “Theory and Organization,” 259-60.

³⁵ Murray, “Theory and Organization,” 261.

³⁶ Murray, “Theory and Organization,” 264-65; this is a quotation from J. Mausbach, *Die katholische Moral und ihre Gegner*.

they flung *Rerum Novarum* at whatever heads showed themselves along the Rhine, and, of course, found the irremediable virus of religious indifferentism in all this interconfessional friendship."³⁷ Murray gave a description of the issue that anticipates his life-long work:

In other words, this theoretical dispute involved the whole problem of the relationship between the Church and society, or better, between the Catholic (who is at once Catholic and citizen) and a society which is not only religiously pluralist but deChristianized. This is certainly a powerful problem. In fact, it has nowhere yet been solved.³⁸

In the end, Murray said, Pius X, while favoring Catholic unions, said that Catholic participation in the interconfessional unions could be tolerated and permitted. The grounds for this Murray traced to the pope's concern for the common good, a commitment that could allow a practice despite the dangers it could pose for Catholic unity.³⁹ The pope's insight into the German situation suggested a wider application of his decision:

He had a keen insight into their particular problem (which is substantially ours, too, but in an aggravated form): how to preserve both the unity of the Church herself and her effectiveness for the common good...in a society that was religiously divided, filled with religiously neutral elements--and hence of low spiritual potential--and that at the same time was feeling the disruptive influence of a powerful materialist social force, whose action cut across the frontiers of existing religious differences to undermine the common good itself....⁴⁰

The Pope's decision also implied that there was a common ground on which Catholics and non-Catholics could cooperate, and this in turn suggested a distinction between "interdenominational Christianity as a religious system," which must be rejected, and "interconfessional agreement on certain necessary religious and moral bases of a just social order," which could be accepted. "In effect, the Pope was demanding that Catholics live in their characteristic state of tension between demands that might be felt as opposed--the maintenance of their spiritual integrity as an organic and 'different' group, and their organic integration with a larger national whole."⁴¹ That is why the Pope's permission of the Cologne idea of interconfessional cooperation had a lesson:

What was being sought in Germany then, and what is being sought everywhere today, is a practical solution to a concrete problem, whose terms we cannot change at will. Whether we like it or not, we are living in a religiously pluralist society at a time of spiritual crisis; and the alternatives are the discovery of social unity, or destruction. The imperative thing is a social unity based on sound principle with a universal appeal, and not on error or emotionalism. It seems to me that the Cologne idea is the solution. It is Catholic because it follows the way of affirmation--the affirmation of the natural order of human life; it is likewise Catholic because it entails no negation of the supernatural, no diminution of the life of the Church. In fact, it is ultimately based on the essence of Catholicism, the fact of the Incarnation--that Christ was God and Man at once, and that therefore in the order of grace human nature exists in its integrity, elevated,

³⁷ Murray, "Theory and Organization," 266.

³⁸ Murray, "Theory and Organization," 265.

³⁹ Murray may have had the U.S. situation in mind when he wrote that "it was, therefore, an injustice when this recommendation was interpreted in Germany as implying that Catholics were to isolate themselves from the common problems of the nation and simply attend to their own souls;" "Theory and Organization," 270.

⁴⁰ Murray, "Theory and Organization," 270-71.

⁴¹ Murray, "Theory and Organization," 272-73.

not destroyed. This practical solution, consequently, has the capital advantage of being the way to the ideal one: every affirmation of human nature, insofar as it is an affirmation, puts one on the way to Christ.⁴²

The final organizational question concerned the personnel to be brought into cooperation. Murray maintained that the popes were committed to a mobilization of the masses of men, of "the people," in the great effort of social reconstruction.

It is impressive to see the conviction of the Holy See that the Spirit of God somehow still dwells in the masses of men as a dynamic power which, if roused and organized, will prevail against the evil spirit who seemingly directs the godless minority now in control of the destinies of the masses.... Behind this hope is the ancient Catholic doctrine on the universality and spontaneity of the idea of God in the heart of man, His image--an idea that is all but innate, and is quite inextinguishable. Likewise, behind this hope is the doctrine that the Spirit of God, who dwells in the Church as the organizing principle of her unity, also animates much holiness beyond her visible borders, and acts in every man of good will. Every inarticulate groan after spiritual freedom is His voice, every glimpse of human unity is His grace, and every blow struck at the chains that bind men, or at the particularisms of race and culture that divide them, has His strength behind it.⁴³

But also necessary is the training of an elite professional corps, Catholic laymen competent in the fields in which problems arise. The Church would contribute to the common good spiritually, through the holiness of her members, theologically, through her doctrine of man, and programmatically through her social doctrine and the corps of laymen trained for the social apostolate.⁴⁴

While laymen would be primarily responsible, it would require of the priest-theologian two great tasks. To Church-members themselves he would explain the papal concern over the present crisis and lead them to share it, while to non-Catholics he would explain the Catholic position on cooperation. The latter might also lead him into certain interfaith meetings "not regarded with favor in certain Catholic circles," for the sake of "the education of the public conscience on the religious and moral implications of the present crisis."⁴⁵

Murray went on to describe with "complete admiration" the organization of the Sword of the Spirit movement in England, which had adopted the "federation" or "cartel" principle proposed by Pius X: "parallel action in the religious, and joint action in the social and international field." Murray praised also its non-centralized character, something important for Americans to recognize, "as against our national tendency to organize from the center out, and from the top down." He ended by pointing to the movement's international scope which he hoped might come to include Americans:

⁴² Murray, "Theory and Organization," 274-75. These comments echo Murray's unpublished lecture on Christian culture and on the Incarnation as the basis for a Christian humanism. It illustrates that for him even the appeal to natural law could have a Christological basis.

⁴³ Murray, "Theory and Organization," 276.

⁴⁴ This is the context in which to locate the two articles Murray published in the next year, "Towards a Theology for the Layman: The Problem of its Finality," *TS*, 5 (March, 1944) 43-75; "Towards a Theology for the Layman: The Pedagogical Problem," *TS*, 5 (September, 1944) 340-76. Murray's argument for a distinctive theology for the laity entirely turns on his view of the spiritual crisis in the temporal order in meeting which the laity would be the principal actors.

⁴⁵ Murray, "Theory and Organization," 276-81.

I am myself naive and perhaps uninformed enough to suppose that it would be vastly advantageous in a Catholic (and catholic) sense if we in the United States were to form part of that force. It is, of course, a "British" initiative, but the movement itself is about as British as a papal Encyclical is Italian. And perhaps affiliation could be effected without too great damage to the existent and rather rigid structure of Catholic life in this country. Naturally, the difficulties attendant on the Christian co-operation for which it stands are not to be minimized; but at least one of them would be lessened by an American Catholic alliance with its ideals and program--I mean the almost complete lack of "sociability" (in the Latin sense) between Catholics and other religious groups in America.

But alongside that social phenomenon lay a more basic problem in the acceptance of the papal challenge:

The real, fundamental difficulty, to my mind, lies in the relative absence from our midst of what must be the dynamic of the whole idea--a profoundly felt and widely operative concern over the spiritual crisis that confronts us today, perhaps more starkly in America than elsewhere, because its depth and menace are so inadequately realized. Until this concern, which certainly exists to the point of poignancy in the heart of the Church, is somehow thrust into the center of our consciousness (and for that tragic events are perhaps needed), discussion of intercredal co-operation will be little more than a pleasant academic task, or possibly an outlet for dogmatic emotion.⁴⁶

Francis Connell Returns to the Subject

Murray's articles, and indeed the general lines of the other essays published in *Theological Studies*, represented a refusal to allow the issue of interreligious cooperation to be reduced to or settled by the terms in which Francis Connell had posed it: the danger of indifferentism. While the Jesuit theological journal pursued its systematic treatment of the subject, Connell, at the suggestion of the Apostolic Delegate, used *The Ecclesiastical Review* to express his continuing reservations. In March, 1943, he published a summary of several recent essays on the question, but did not refer to any of the essays in the Jesuit journal.⁴⁷ In October he devoted a whole article to a translation of and commentary on the apostolic letter Leo XIII sent to Archbishop Satolli criticizing Catholic participation in the 1892 World Parliament of Religions in Chicago. While acknowledging that Pius XII had recently called for cooperation with non-Catholics for social purposes and on the basis of natural religious truths and the natural law, Connell argued that Leo's letter was a useful reminder to U.S. Catholics "lest their faith suffer from the spirit of religious indifferentism that is so prevalent in our land to-day." This spirit was being encouraged by mass mobilization into the armed forces of Americans of all faiths and by the emphasis on freedom of religious worship as one of the "Four Freedoms" for which Americans were fighting. This freedom was widely understood in a way that

⁴⁶ Murray, "Theory and Organization," 285-86. When Murray reprinted a revised version of this article, his last line was softened to read: "discussion of intercredal cooperation--a problem allied to today's spiritual crisis--will command only academic interest, or perhaps be regarded as annoying." See Wilfred Parsons and John Courtney Murray, *Intercredal Cooperation* (Washington: The Catholic Association for International Peace, 1943) 43.

⁴⁷ "Recent Theology," *The Ecclesiastical Review*, 108 (March, 1943) 224-26. Connell here reviews and evaluates much the same material which Murray had discussed the previous year in "Current Theology: Christian Co-operation." The origin of Connell's article is explained in a letter from Cicognani to McNicholas, August 24, 1943 (AACinc, McNicholas Papers, 24/27: "Your Excellency should be interested in knowing (confidentially, of course) that the discussion of the matter by Father Francis Connell, C.S.S.R., in the "Recent Theology" section of the March 1943, *Ecclesiastical Review* was undertaken at my suggestion and with my full approval."

failed to distinguish between subjective rights and obligations and a real right, which is "something objective, based on truth." "Accordingly, Connell warned, a Catholic may not defend freedom of religious worship to the extent of denying that a Catholic government has the right, objectively speaking, to restrict the activities of non-Catholic denominations, in order to protect the Catholic citizens from spiritual harm."⁴⁸

In the following years Connell continued to urge his position both in private and in public. On May 21, 1944, he wrote to U.S. Supreme Court Justice Frank Murphy to rebuke him for having acted as godfather at a Protestant baptism: "I feel you should be reminded that participation of this nature in a non-Catholic rite is strictly forbidden to a Catholic."⁴⁹ The following year he published two survey articles on cooperation, warning especially against tendencies towards compromise with latitudinarianism and indifferentism. In the first of these he doubts that many American Catholics in public office would be as militantly Catholic as English Catholics:

And it is precisely because a considerable proportion of our prominent and educated lay Catholics are inclined to "soft-pedal" the unqualified exclusiveness of the Catholic religion that it is dangerous for them to participate in "intercredal" meetings, even when the purpose of these meetings is limited to the fostering of better understanding among citizens, the promotion of social welfare, or other like objectives of a purely natural character. Not a few of our Catholics would take occasion in such surroundings to state that every one has the God-given right to practice any religion he chooses, that the most ideal type of relation between church and state is realized when a government accords equal rights to all forms of religion, that we all have the duty of promoting the religious activities of the various churches, etc.--statements which are being incessantly repeated in our land today, but which no Catholic can approve if he wishes to be consistent with the principles of his faith.⁵⁰

None of these articles took any notice of the articles on the subject in *Theological Studies*.

The most striking thing about Connell's approach to the question is its nearly total neglect of the conditions under which the issue was being urged practically in England and the U.S. and was being defended in theory by the Jesuits. His first survey article notes rapidly that "the question is very practical at the present day" in England, and the second refers to "the many new aspects of this problem occasioned by wartime conditions" there. While in both he refers briefly to the Sword of the Spirit movement, he does not note that the English hierarchy had initiated it and that it involved cooperation with non-Christian religious groups. Apart from these references he could have been writing under any conditions in any decade. The following comment was published early in 1946, in the aftermath of the War:

⁴⁸ Francis J. Connell, "Pope Leo XIII's Message to America," *The Ecclesiastical Review*, 109 (Oct., 1943) 249-53; Connell added: "American Catholics may indeed uphold the feasibility of complete freedom of worship *as far as the United States is concerned*. For, all things considered, the most practical policy for our land is equality for all denominations; and Catholics would strenuously oppose any violation of this feature of the Bill of Rights, no matter what religious denomination might be the victim."

⁴⁹ Connell to Murphy, Washington, May 21, 1944 (copy); HRAC, "Inter-faith Movement - Letters." Murphy sent a crisp reply two days later: "I do not need to tell you that my faith means more to me than anything in life." Connell was to refer to this incident again in "Communication with Non-Catholics in Sacred Rites," *AER*, 111 (Sept. 1944) 185; "Preserving the Faith Inviolable," *AER*, 114 (Jan., 1946) 42, and in a letter to Msgr. Tardini in 1947 (see below).

⁵⁰ Francis J. Connell, "Recent Moral Theology," *AER*, 111 (Aug., 1944) 105-108, at 108; see also "Communication with Non-Catholics in Sacred Rites," *AER*, 111 (September, 1944) 176-88.

Today men are waging deadly conflicts over problems that are relatively unimportant, such as the possession of small portions of territory and political power and economic advantages, while they are neglecting or ridiculing the questions of supreme importance, such as the existence of God, the immortality of the soul, and the obligations of the moral law.... We must not seek the good will of our fellow-men or temporal advantages by modulating or palliating the Catholic Church's claim to the exclusive possession of truth and to divinely granted authority over all mankind.⁵¹

Two years later he criticized a Jesuit for devoting "two pages toward describing the willingness of Catholic leaders to have the co-operation of non-Catholics in promoting peace and good will..., while there is not a single word about such fundamental Catholic doctrines as eternal punishment, purgatory, indulgences, the power to forgive sins, and the Church's appeal to miracles of the present day to improve [*sic*] her claims."⁵²

Connell's whole focus is on the exclusive claims of the Catholic Church, which Catholics should not be surprised or distressed to find characterized as intransigent, narrow, bigoted, etc., and on the danger that Catholics will soften them and fall into indifferentism. As a remedy he warns against "the excessive fraternization of Catholics with those not of the household of the faith" and urges them "to cultivate primarily the friendship of their co-religionists."⁵³ He cites with apparent approval an English author who speaks of "enthusiasts" who "have too readily made the mistake of talking vaguely of the application of 'Christian principles' to national and international life, when, so far as cooperation is concerned, they have sought rather for the application of the principles of the natural law by people who, chiefly through the Christianity they profess, are themselves conscious of the natural law."⁵⁴ Two years later, his warning against misleading use of the word "Christianity" uses language similar to his first article on interfaith groups when he had referred to Protestant religious organizations as "crumbling to decay":

Thus it is sometimes stated that "Christianity is the only influence that will save the world." This is quite true if by "Christianity" is meant Catholicism, the only religion that is Christianity in the proper sense; but it certainly is not true if applied to the meagre elements of the Christian revelation that are held in common by all the Protestant sects.⁵⁵

When this Catholic exclusivism and separatism is joined to Connell's nearly total neglect of what Murray called "the spiritual crisis in the temporal order," one can measure the gulf that separated the two theologians.

Paul Hanly Furfey Objects

Catholic separatism and exclusivism may have marked a new critic of Murray who intervened in the debate in the summer of 1943, but not indifference to the problems of the social order. On June 16th, Paul Hanly Furfey, professor of sociology at the Catholic University of

⁵¹ Francis J. Connell, "Preserving the Faith Inviolable," *AER*, 114 (January 1946) 45.

⁵² Francis J. Connell, "If the Trumpet Give an Uncertain Sound," *AER*, 118 (January 1948) 29.

⁵³ Connell, "Preserving the Faith Inviolable," 45.

⁵⁴ Connell, "Recent Moral Theology," 106.

⁵⁵ Francis J. Connell, "Recent Dogmatic Theology: An Approach to Compromise," *AER*, 112 (February 1945) 125

America,⁵⁶ responded to Murray's invitation to correspondence on the topic by sending a lengthy letter for publication in *Theological Studies*. While agreeing with Parsons and Murray on the legitimacy of Catholic cooperation with others in political, civic, and economic matters, Furfey argued that things were far less clear on matters directly affecting fundamental moral and religious principles, on which complete agreement was impossible. "Co-operation in practice implies agreement on principles." On such questions, what sort of co-operation might be possible?

Furfey proposed a distinction between two types of cooperation: conjoint and parallel. The first would mean a joint organization and a platform of common principles, the second pursuit of common objectives in separate organizations. Furfey read Parsons and Murray as stating that the popes were urging the first, while he himself argued that the papal exhortations intended parallel cooperation and discouraged conjoint cooperation on the grounds that the latter would run the danger of religious indifferentism. He acknowledged that there were some common grounds between Catholics and Protestants, but to focus on them is to neglect other truths not held by the latter. "An intercredal movement which uses only a part of God's truth is basically unsatisfactory. A Catholic who agrees to discuss social questions with Protestants on the basis of 'a common ground' tacitly agrees to keep in the background a part of his integral Catholic doctrine." Furfey's idea of parallel co-operation he saw operating well in the U.S. political system, where several interest-groups, acting independently but in parallel fashion, had proven to be quite effective. Furfey did not believe that Catholics would become more effective through conjoint intercredal co-operation; "in the political field," he said, "the maxim *In union there is strength* needs certain qualifications."

Furfey ended his letter with a vigorous exhortation:

If we Catholics want to become effective in this country, what we need is to become more Catholic, not less Catholic. Without any watering down of our doctrine, without any apology for the hard sayings in our social teaching, let us exhibit the full and integral beauty of our doctrine to our non-Catholic brethren. Once our doctrine has been presented fully--not apologetically, not partially, but fully--then they will rally to our side. Then there will be real co-operation. After all, if you will reread the texts quoted by Father Parsons, you will see that what the Holy See asks for is not that Catholics should co-operate with non-Catholics, but rather *vice-versa* that non-Catholics should co-operate with us. That seems to me like a pretty good idea!⁵⁷

⁵⁶ On Furfey, see his autobiographical reflections, "From a Catholic Liberal to a Catholic Radical," *America*, 127 (Nov. 11, 1972) 391-92; "From Catholic Liberalism to Catholic Radicalism," *AER*, 166 (Dec. 1972) 678-86. The fullest treatment of Furfey is by Nicholas K. Rademacher, *Paul Hanly Furfey: Priest, Scientist, Social Reformer* (New York: Fordham University Press, 2017). For discussions of Furfey's views and of his debate with Murray, see Joseph A. Serano, "The Social Mission of the Church in the Writings of Paul Hanly Furfey and John Courtney Murray: Analysis and Assessment", *The Catholic University of America: Studies in Sacred Theology* (Washington, 1981) 2-35 (life and writings), 447-84 (debate with JCM); Charles E. Curran, "Paul Hanly Furfey: Theorist of American Catholic Radicalism," *AER*, 119 (Dec. 1972) 651-77; Curran, *American Catholic Social Ethics: Twentieth-Century Approaches* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1982) 130-71 (Furfey), 172-232 (Murray), 187-92 (debate between Furfey and Murray).

⁵⁷ Paul Hanly Furfey to Murray, Washington, June 16, 1943 (copy); ACUA, Furfey Papers. In Furfey's papers there is also an undated text, "Co-operation All Around," on which he himself wrote: "Ironical." In an exercise probably modelled on Ronald Knox's satire on ecumenism, *Reunion All Around*, Furfey mocks the view of Murray and Parsons and suggests as its logical corollary Catholic cooperation with Communists. The articles by the Jesuits cited are the 1943 pieces in *TS*, which might suggest a date around the time of his letter to Murray. But the tone is so different that I am

Murray replied to Furfey a few days later, welcoming his letter, but asking him to abbreviate it slightly. But he also added some lengthy comments, questioning whether what Furfey proposed could really be considered "co-operation" at all, since it lacked any "real community of effort." He did agree with Furfey that "the effort at coming together must be an effort to bring non-Catholics over to us, and not by any means a going over to them." And yet he was discouraged: "are we in a position to invite others to go along with us, given the fact that we are hardly going along?" He also agreed with Furfey's "underlying thought, that intercredal co-operation must be only a subsidiary effort.... The main papal idea is certainly that involved in the concept of Catholic Action--the mobilization of integral Catholic truth, and of the total Catholic lay personnel, toward the re-Christianization of society. Whatever co-operation we attempt with non-Catholics must be subordinate to that." But here too Murray was not optimistic. Catholic Action in the U.S. was "clerically dominated in a way that seems to me to be at variance with Catholic Action ideals. And I see vast masses of our Catholic people being educated exclusively in an individualistic type of Catholicism that is outdated, since it is not creative of any sense of the "collective responsibility of all for all" which is of the essence of the Church's concern today." He concluded:

I agree, therefore, that the papal emphasis is on all that Catholic Action implies. But it seems to me that the Popes realize that, even if the specifically Catholic effort were intense, universal, and highly organized, it would be still remain [*sic*] inadequate to the task to be done. We would still be a minority, and would need allies. I frankly do not agree with your restrictions on the principle of "in union there is strength." We would never be the *kind* of minority that could enforce its will. Moreover, there is the strong psychological factor: if we maintain our social effort on a rigidly exclusive basis, and pursue it quite apart from others, without seeking to get them "in" on it, it seems to me that the more perfectly we get organized, and the greater our potentiality for influence becomes, the greater will be the fear of us (already so manifest), the more potent the persuasion that we pursue purely partisan interests, and consequently, the greater the opposition that we shall encounter. It is a fact, for instance, that the oft-noted "wave of Catholicism" that swept Europe, notably Germany, after the last war, provoked a violent reaction--the "evangelical Alliance," and all the rest of it, culminating in the outbreak against "political Catholicism."⁵⁸

In the letter which accompanied his revised letter, Furfey explained his position more frankly than he felt he could in print:

There are a few facts which are very relevant but which it would be very awkward in say in print. You mention some of these. We have no very genuine Catholic action in this country. We are not exerting much leadership. This is only too true!

But possibly I differ from you in assigning reasons for this lethargy. I think our social action is stagnant, not because we are unco-operative, but because we are too co-operative! We are so very co-operative that we are not distinctively Catholic.

Our co-operation is not so much with Protestants as with liberals. Look at our Catholic social leadership. To me it seems to represent merely an expurgated liberalism. We co-operate with the New Deal so uncritically that the intelligent non-Catholic must think that we Catholics have no independent social thought of our own.

Of course there is much in the social legislation of the New Deal which is quite in accordance with the Encyclicals, but I can never persuade myself that the Encyclicals contain nothing else.

tempted to place it at a later date, perhaps after it became clear, either from Murray's response in *TS* or from his remarks in the pamphlet on intercredal co-operation, that the Jesuits were not persuaded by Furfey's argument.

⁵⁸ Murray to Furfey, Woodstock, June 20, 1943; ACUA, Furfey Papers.

Consider, for example, the enormous emphasis which the Encyclicals place on the use of spiritual means. We are co-operating so energetically with the New Deal that we soft-pedal such things. Our friends in the Administration might not understand!

The remedy for this weak-kneed attitude, it seems to me, is to be very aggressively Catholic. Why in the world should anybody listen to--let us say the NCWC as long as its representatives merely echo the liberalism of the New Deal? They can read the same things better presented in the *New Republic*.

This seems to me to be the unfortunate result of too much and too enthusiastic co-operation. We forget our distinctively Catholic principles. We do not deny them but we do not emphasize them.

After a few paragraphs repeating his preference for parallel co-operation, Furfey returned to his complaint:

But when we agree to unite in one organization part of the time with non-Catholics and above all when we draw up a common affirmation which is supposed to represent a joint position then we weaken ourselves to a tragic degree. Let us do anything rather than that.

At least don't you think we ought to try out the idea of being thoroughly Catholic and see how it works? It might at least be worth trying. It has yet to be tried in the United States.

A student of mine wrote a very fine doctoral dissertation on the social thought of Catholics in the United States from 1634 to 1829. His conclusion was that Catholics merely conformed to general American thought on every issue. There was almost no evidence of distinctively social thought of a Catholic nature.⁵⁹

I fear that intercredal co-operation will make this unfortunate Catholic conformism more conformist still. It will make it more difficult than ever to develop a really Catholic view on American society. I can't help feeling that it would be a big step backward.⁶⁰

Furfey's revised and published letter reflected these private concerns only in its penultimate paragraph:

⁵⁹ These comments are illuminated in the letter in which Furfey outlined the argument for a possible article entitled "Are Catholics Conformists?": The thesis would be that Catholic social thinking in the United States tends to a large measure to conform to the pattern of non-Catholic thought. [The second chapter of Furfey's *The Mystery of Iniquity* would be entitled "Catholic Conformism"; see below.]

"We have uncovered a certain amount of evidence to this effect in our department here. A Mr. Murphy published a doctoral dissertation on Catholic attitudes on the immigrant and Negro to 1925. The Catholic attitude, he concluded, was not markedly different from the general attitude. Mr. Nuesse has just finished a dissertation of [*sic*] the social thought of American Catholics, 1634-1829. His most striking result was conformism. Fr. Lauerman, in another unpublished dissertation, found that Catholic social workers were pretty ignorant of Catholic doctrine and quite well informed on the tenets of materialistic philanthropy. I have a good many concrete facts to support my theory.

"My argument would be that Catholics have to follow the line laid down by Isaias and quoted by St. Paul: Go out from among them and be ye separate" (2 Cor. 6:17). To be a Catholic means to be different in a good many respects. We American Catholics aren't so very different. In general, European Catholics do a lot better in this respect. But here there is a tradition of conformism which goes back, as I say, to colonial days;" Furfey to Gillis, April 23 1943; ACUA, Furfey Papers.

The dissertations mentioned are: John C. Murphy, *An Analysis of the Attitudes of American Catholics toward the Immigrant and the Negro, 1825-1925* (Washington: CUA Press, 1940); C. Joseph Nuesse, *The Social Thought of American Catholics, 1634-1829* (Washington: CUA Press, 1945); Lucian L. Lauerman, *Catholic Education for Social Work* (Washington: CUA Press, 1943).

⁶⁰ Furfey to Murray, Washington, July 6, 1943 (copy); ACUA, Furfey Papers.

From Father Parsons and Father Murray I get the impression that they feel that Catholics in the United States have been ineffective in social matters because we have been too little co-operative with non-Catholics. Strangely enough, my own view is precisely the opposite. We have been ineffective because we have been too uncritically co-operative. We have been so feverishly anxious to co-operate with liberals and all sorts of people that we have kept our distinctively Catholic social doctrine in the background. To the general public we have not emphasized our faith in supernatural means, in all that is distinctively Catholic in the Encyclicals. Our Catholic social doctrine, as presented by many of our leaders, must appear to outsiders as a sort of expurgated liberalism.⁶¹

In a private reply to Furfey's letter, Murray expressed the hope that they might be able to discuss things one day:

There are many points of agreement between us. For instance, what you say about Catholic conformism is unfortunately too true, I think. But I do not think that intercredal co-operation, if intelligently carried forward, will increase it. Rather contrarywise--it will make us more conscious of our own position, and force us to greater definiteness, etc. of thought.⁶²

In his published reply to Furfey's letter, Murray clarified his position, insisting that the "common agreement on certain principles that would form the basis of a religio-social unity" did not mean "common agreement on the partial, vague, and unsatisfactory principles of some interconfessional code." He did not believe that the agreement he had in mind would itself be adequate but that it was necessary to meet "today's spiritual crisis in the temporal order." After a brief comment on the dossier of papal texts that Furfey had invoked, Murray raised questions about the "parallel co-operation" that his correspondent had promoted. He admitted that the Holy See had not specified "the organizational form of the union, since so much depends on local circumstances" and he expressed his reservations about "a single organization with general mixed membership," chiefly because he did not consider the Catholic laity "educated up to that." Murray concluded his reply with a restatement of his basic position:

But the Holy See, as I understand its position, does require that the union be deliberately constituted, as the result of formally sought and consciously arrived at agreement on principles--the principles, I mean, of the natural law in their social application. The concept of parallel co-operation would hardly permit an essential part of the papal program, namely, a respectful but vigorous educative action on the thought, attitudes, sympathies, etc. of our separated brethren, with a view to persuading them that our social doctrine and program does appeal to the collective conscience of mankind, and can command their honest assent. This is the imperative thing. How much common action would thereafter ensue is a matter for prudent judgment.⁶³

When Furfey first criticized Parsons and Murray for their views on intercredal cooperation, he was already preparing the book that would be published in 1944 under the title, *The Mystery of Iniquity*.⁶⁴ This work, the most radical statement Furfey had yet given of his "supernatural sociology," was a ringing criticism of the "Catholic conformism" to which he had alluded in his

⁶¹ Furfey, "Correspondence," *TS*, 4 (September, 1943) 467-72.

⁶² Murray to Furfey, Woodstock, July 14, 1943; ACUA, Furfey Papers.

⁶³ Murray, "Correspondence," *TS*, 4 (September, 1943) 472-74.

⁶⁴ Paul Hanly Furfey, *The Mystery of Iniquity* (Milwaukee: Bruce, 1944). The work was granted the *imprimatur* on January 8, 1944.

second, private, letter to Murray.⁶⁵ For Furfey, the "radical antithesis between the Catholic viewpoint on the root cause of social problems and the current materialist viewpoint" means that "Catholic social action must be fundamentally different from the type of social action which is current in the modern world." "In all logic one is forced to choose the one or the other."

But there are Catholics who hesitate to make this choice. "They betray their hesitation, not by positively denying any supernatural social doctrine, but by talking as though such doctrines did not exist." "Such persons may be appropriately dubbed *Catholic conformists*; for they are Catholics in the sense that they deny no doctrine of the Church outright and they are conformists in that they conform as closely as they dare to the viewpoint of unbelievers." There is no logical explanation for this pose. "The phenomenon cannot be explained by logic. It can be explained only in terms of cowardice. It requires unusual courage to break sharply with current opinion, and this courage the conformist lacks."

After describing the subtle ways in which modern society rewards conformism and punishes unpopular views and reminding his readers of Christ's prophecy of persecution--"when Catholics are not punished by society for being Catholics, there is something wrong with them"--Furfey admitted that some agreements were possible between Catholics and others, but this itself represented the danger:

The fact which makes Catholic conformism possible is that there actually are a number of points on which Catholics and unbelievers can apparently agree.... By advocating clamorously these things and by remaining studiously silent about the social significance of the Holy Eucharist, the union of Church and State, the Catholic doctrine on extreme nationalism, hell as a penalty for social evil, and all such unpopular teachings, one may try to make oneself acceptable to materialistic social thinkers without breaking with the Church. Indeed by choosing one's steps cautiously it may even be possible to build up quite a reputation as a leader of Catholic social thought.⁶⁶

Catholic conformism is fundamentally dishonest because it professes to find a common ground with unbelievers, whereas such a common ground is not possible in any real sense. It is true enough that Catholics and materialists can agree on certain immediate practical measures, and therefore both groups can to a certain extent do their work side by side in economic and political life. But the ultimate reasons why Catholics and materialists advocate this or that measure are as different as they can possibly be. Catholics can maintain an appearance of agreement only by keeping a constant guilty silence about their real social doctrine, by systematically suppressing all reference to the supernatural when the pros and cons of some social issue are being discussed. At the price of this guilty silence they are able to create an impression that their agreement with unbelievers is deep, whereas it actually cannot be other than superficial. This dishonest silence is the price one must pay to become and remain a Catholic conformist.

Furfey went on to relate this type of conformism with the mistaken accommodation to modernity condemned by Pius X and Pius XI as Modernism. He repeated his claim that "the Holy See has shown scant sympathy for those compromising Catholics who water down their doctrine to make it more acceptable to non-Catholics." Recalling Pius X's rejection of Le Sillon, he again quoted the Pope's sarcastic comment: "What is one to think of a Catholic who checks his Catholicism at the door as he enters his study club so as not to shock his comrades?" In a footnote to this citation,

⁶⁵ "Catholic Conformism" is the title of the second chapter of the book, pp. 30-41, from which all the following quotations in the text are taken.

⁶⁶ One is tempted to think that this last sentence is a dig at Msgr. John A. Ryan.

Furfey refers to the articles by Parsons and Murray on intercredal cooperation and to his own letter to *Theological Studies*. Furfey then explained the papal stance:

The reasons for the unfavorable attitude of the Holy See toward all that savors of Catholic conformism is brought out very clearly in these quotations. The Catholic ideal must be a civilization based on the supernatural principles of the true religion. Anything short of that is unsatisfactory. Mere material prosperity will not even assure happiness in this life, to say nothing of the life to come. The Catholic conformist who remains silent about his supernatural principles for fear of offending unbelievers thereby discards the only weapons which are effective against the mystery of iniquity.

The quotations given above indicated what was distinctive about Furfey's Catholic radicalism. It also helps to explain his opposition to Parsons and Murray, not because he necessarily ranked them among Catholic conformists--although they might have been excused if they drew this conclusion⁶⁷--but because they shared neither the almost Manichean dichotomy with which Furfey set out the basic challenge facing both the Church and the modern world nor, consequently, the exclusive emphasis on supernatural means with which he insisted the challenge had to be met. These differences appeared when Furfey and Murray once again confronted one another.

Late in 1943, the articles on cooperation by Parsons and Murray were brought together in slightly abbreviated and revised form in a pamphlet.⁶⁸ Among the revisions Murray made were a few which appear to have been intended to respond to Furfey's objections. He insisted that the type of cooperation he was defending was not "ideal, or adequate, or free from dangers. Still less would anyone be deceived into thinking that intercredal cooperation would somehow absolve us from the obligation of pursuing more intensively our distinctively Catholic program of prayer, study, and organized action."

Murray then offered a basic clarification of the theological aspect of the question which surely had objections such as those of Furfey in mind. The key was "the familiar Catholic distinction between two orders of truth and of human life":

On the one hand, there are the doctrinal truths, contained in the Christian revelation and taught by the Church of Christ, which are the pillars of her unity and the inspiration of her total life. These truths are a body which may not be dismembered by any selective, intercredal affirmations. But there is, too, a body of religious and ethical truths, imbedded in the human conscience as such, and promulgated by its imperative, which are the bases of a just social order on earth. There is a natural law, and its precepts, in themselves and in their essential social applications, may be made the object of a common affirmation by men of different religious creeds, without prejudice to the integrity of faith.⁶⁹

⁶⁷ As Parsons was to note, the only Catholics whose names appeared in the chapter on "Catholic Conformism" were those of Parsons, Murray, and Marc Sangnier, whose Sillon-movement had been condemned by Pius X; see his review of *The Mystery of Iniquity*, *American Catholic Sociological Review*, 6 (March, 1945) 49-51.

⁶⁸ Wilfred Parsons and John Courtney Murray, *Intercredal Cooperation* (Washington: The Catholic Association for International Peace, 1943). The decision to sponsor this republication was made at the same time that a common statement on principles of peace was under consideration. Fr. R. A. McGowan, acting executive secretary of the Catholic Association for International Peace (CAIP) asked and received Bishop Alter's permission for his organization to sponsor the pamphlet on the grounds that it would have "a weighty influence on the attitude of Catholics toward cooperation with Protestant and Jewish bodies, as well as other non-Catholic organizations, in the development and promotion of peace plans that will win national acceptance and backing;" McGowan to Alter, Washington, 19 Aug 1943; AAToledo.

⁶⁹ Murray, *Intercredal Cooperation*, 33-34.

Murray was not expecting agreement on the first truths, but thought one could be reached on the truths of the natural law. He then entertained an objection which was clearly meant to represent Furfey's view:

It is, indeed, sometimes objected that on the basis of the natural law alone only partial solutions can be given to the great evils of modern life, and that a full solution must be preceded by a general acceptance of the total law of Christ--His divinity, the supernatural reality of the Church in which His Spirit dwells, all her doctrine, sacraments, and spiritual authority. The Church is--so the objection runs--the principle of mankind's unity; until all men are gathered into her, they will not be gathered into one, and have peace and order; let us, therefore, concentrate exclusively "on our own program"; others can supply us with nothing that we have not already got; let us leave them to whatever devices they can contrive, and go our own way.

The objection does not lack power. In the practical order it derives strength from the lamentable fact that our own social program, particularly with reference to international order, is still so undeveloped as to need intensive concentration. In the theoretical order it has behind it the awesome doctrine that integral humanity, whether in personal or social life, is the gift of the Holy Spirit of Christ, who indwells by faith in the souls of the just. It rests, too, on the doctrine that the Church alone has the spiritual authority authentically to interpret the moral law. Finally, in the emotional order, it has behind it the power of a great fear of indifferentism.

As powerful as the objection was, Murray went on, it had against it the fact that it ran counter to the Holy See's position, which called for "intercredal agreement on the religious and ethical bases of human society." The "supernaturalist" position did not reflect Rome's realism:

Moreover, this position fails to give due weight to a truth that is central in the papal thought, namely, that if mankind's political, economic, and social thinking and activity and institutions could be brought under the governance of the natural law, the result would be, not indeed a paradise on earth, nor yet a blanket assurance that all men would be eternally saved, but at least a recognizably human social order, within which a man could lead a human life, and be free from today's inhuman tyrannies that imperil both his body and his soul.⁷⁰

These revised paragraphs did not escape Furfey's attention, who returned to the discussion in September, 1944.⁷¹ He began by recalling how Catholics had always participated with others in the public life of the United States and by stating that he knew no Catholics whose view could be accurately stated in Murray's words: "Let us leave them to whatever devices they can contrive, and go our own way."⁷² The question concerned, not whether cooperation was possible or necessary, but what form it should take. Furfey ascribed to Murray the view that a new type should have three characteristics: involvement of both Catholics and non-Catholics, based on a common set of religious and ethical principles, and withdrawn from the hierarchy's direct authority. With this description in mind, he again reviewed the papal statements invoked by Parsons and Murray, again added to their dossier Pius X's condemnation of Le Sillon, and again concluded:

Clearly, recent Popes have favored a sane and prudent co-operation between Catholics and non-Catholics for social reform; they have gone out of their way to bless it. But the Holy See has never betrayed the slightest enthusiasm

⁷⁰ Compare these paragraphs to the similar argument in *TS*, 4 (March, 1943) 110-11.

⁷¹ Paul Hanly Furfey, "Intercredal Co-Operation: Its Limitations," *AER*, 111 (September, 1944) 161-75. This article was also translated into Portuguese and published in *Revista Eclesiastica Brasileira* 4 (December 1944) 789-804.

⁷² In his letter to Gillis, however, Furfey said something very like this: "My argument would be that Catholics have to follow the line laid down by Isaias and quoted by St. Paul: 'Go out from among them and be ye separate' (2 Cor 6:17). To be a Catholic means to be different in a good many respects. We American Catholics aren't so very different."

for the specific brand of intercredal co-operation which is based on an organizational unity, with a program that is partly ethical and partly religious, the whole being divorced from an organic relation to the Church's pastoral authority.

Furfey then turned to an issue that was more basic to his differences with the Jesuits. After quoting Parsons' distinction between "two distinct and successive steps that have to be taken before society can be really organized on the basis of a full and integral Christianity," that is, healing social conflicts and then religious unity, Furfey commented:

I am afraid that an incautious reader might gather from this language that the big job for Catholics at the moment, the first item on our *agenda*, the principal challenge to our social action, is intercredal cooperation which will operate, for the most part, on a more or less natural level, while the reconstruction of society through distinctively Catholic and supernatural methods is a "farther goal" which can be postponed at present. I do not think that Father Parsons intended to convey this meaning. I do not think that he meant that our fully Catholic and supernatural program should be, so it speak, relegated to the background for the time being while we concentrate on intercredal co-operation. But it is possible for the hasty reader to understand him in that sense and, as a matter of fact, I have spoken to more than one intelligent Catholic who read the pamphlet, *Intercredal Cooperation*, and came away with that impression.⁷³

For Furfey the view of the popes is that "the *fundamental* remedy for the evils of our times is the action of Catholics applying the doctrine of the New Testament." "Those who overemphasize the importance of intercredal co-operation," he went on, "are apt to underestimate the supernatural element in Catholic social action." He criticized Parsons' statement that Leo XIII's concrete proposals were drawn, not from Christian revelation, but from human reason. "It would seem," he said, "that some Catholic thinkers read the encyclicals with a particular attitude of mind," and this leads them to neglect "the enormous differences between Catholic and non-Catholic techniques for meeting modern social problems." For the popes, he concluded, "the basic Catholic solution for the evils of society is a supernatural solution." Because the supernatural includes the natural, there will be areas of agreement with non-Catholics, but this will mean, not our cooperating with them, but their cooperating with us. "By all means let us continue our collaboration with non-Catholics, but until we put an enormously greater emphasis than we do now on the supernatural and distinctively Catholic elements in our social program we shall not be doing our full duty in the struggle against the evils of society."⁷⁴

Murray replied to Furfey's article in March, 1945. Besides defending and clarifying his own position, he also suggested that the differences between the two men rested on more basic questions. From a reading of Furfey's work he derived the suspicion that "the root of Fr. Furfey's lack of sympathy with organized co-operation can probably be found in his rather individual theories of 'supernatural sociology' and of a 'pistic society,'" which led him to advocate as methods of social reform "the technique of non-participation" and "personalist social action."⁷⁵ He thought their dispute on cooperation also rested on Furfey's "individual ideas on the meaning and the consequences of the statement that 'only on the basis of the full Catholic teaching can society be saved.'" On this Murray commented:

⁷³ Furfey, "Intercredal Co-operation: Its Limitations," 172.

⁷⁴ Furfey, "Intercredal Co-operation: Its Limitations," 172-75.

⁷⁵ John Courtney Murray, "On the Problem of Co-Operation: Some Clarifications," *AER*, 112 (March, 1945) 194-214, at 197.

The statement comes from no official document. Superficially, it seems to have a good Catholic ring to it--sort of an echo in the temporal order of *extra Ecclesiam nulla salus*. But what does it mean? It might, for instance, mean: Society cannot be saved. (Remembering that society cannot be saved by a minority group, and that the majority, as a sheer matter of fact, will neither accept nor practice the full Catholic social teaching.) Moreover, what does it mean when translated into a program of social action?... Where the Popes say: "We must make society human in all its dimensions," Fr. Furfey says, "We must make a society of our own" ... Perhaps one may be cryptic in footnotes; therefore, I shall hazard the conjecture that we shall probably have in America some time soon a debate over *Sozialpolitik* rather similar to the one that raged between the *Richtung München-Gladbach* and the *Berliner Richtung*.⁷⁶

The larger part of Murray's reply was devoted to defending his interpretations of the papal documents and to criticizing Furfey's interpretation as "unhistorical, incomplete, and tendentious." Towards the end, he adduced the example of the cooperation that had produced "The Pattern for Peace" the year before,⁷⁷ suggesting that its elaboration and reception might serve as an empirical test of the fears and judgments of those concerned about the dangers of indifferentism. Among the questions that might be asked were several aimed at Furfey's concerns:

Were our own specifically Catholic efforts at realizing the complete papal program inhibited by this co-operation, or were they supplemented in any valuable way? Has there been too much or too little co-operation in the field of international peace? Would it have been better to devote all this energy to personalist social action? Considering the power and strength and enormous activity of highly organized non-Catholic and secular bodies now working for a just peace, would it perhaps be better for us to apply in their regard the technique of non-participation, what time we devote all our efforts to creating an international "pistic" society "of our own," that will be "founded on faith"?

The papal texts, Murray argued, "compel us to face the fundamental question: Do we really want to see a new order established? If we do, we have to ask ourselves: Can we ourselves, by ourselves, establish it?"⁷⁸

The debate between the two men came to an end with the publication two months later of Furfey's rejoinder to Murray. Furfey now referred to the Jesuit's position as "social intercredalism," a term that appears to be of his own coining. Yet again Furfey reviewed the papal teaching and insisted on "the supremacy of the supernatural in Catholic social action." While noting Murray's rejection of many of the errors in *Le Sillon*, he added: "But the root error he does not repudiate. He shares the vain hope that an intercredal organization can reform civilization, 'a primarily religious task.' Pope Pius X ridiculed the idea!"⁷⁹ He explained the popes' warnings about interconfessional indifferentism:

A code of social principles, partly ethical and partly religious, comes very near to being a philosophy of life. If *socio-religious intercredalism* be defined as a program of social reform based on such a common ethico-religious code,

⁷⁶ Murray, "On the Problem of Co-Operation," 208n; the reference, of course, is to the debate in Germany before the First World War over Christian trade-unions.

⁷⁷ The text of this statement, recommended to their constituencies by Protestant, Jewish, and Catholic leaders, may be found as an Appendix to *Pattern for Peace: Catholic Statements on International Order* (Westminster, MD: Newman Press, 1962) 93-94.

⁷⁸ Murray, "On the Problem of Co-operation," 210.

⁷⁹ Paul Hanly Furfey, "Why Does Rome Discourage Socio-Religious Intercredalism?" *AER*, 112 (May, 1945) 364-74, 367. This article was also translated and published in the *Revista Eclesiastica Brasileira* 597-609.

to be applied by an intercredal organization, then it may be said that socio-religious intercredalism is the one danger which determines the varying papal attitudes towards inter-religious organizations for social reform.

"Reading Fr. Murray," Furfey went on, "one feels sympathy for his generous social idealism and his enthusiasm for social reconstruction; yet it is hard to avoid the conviction that for the attainment of his purpose he has chosen precisely the one form of intercredal co-operation which the Holy See has uniformly discouraged."

Furfey's reply does not refer directly to the "Pattern for Peace" which Murray had invoked as a concrete example. Behind this omission may lie Furfey's strong criticism of the Catholic Association for International Peace which had promoted the statement and published Murray's lengthy commentary on it. Furfey's papers include a letter written during World War II in which he explained his unwillingness to join the organization or attend its meetings: "I wish there were a more aggressively Catholic peace movement which I could support with a clear conscience." Three years later he is far less oblique: "I consider the CAIP a very ineffective organization which has never made a statement which would offend militarists and I feel that they have been very ineffective all through the war." Twenty years later, he was even stronger. A first, rather polite explanation of his abstention--"the activities and expressed attitudes of the CAIP were so extremely weak and so little in accord with the strong directives of the Holy Father during the Second World that I do not feel, in good conscience, that I can associate myself with such an organization"--became this vigorous criticism:

My considered opinion is that the CAIP's policy during World War II was mendacious, extremely cowardly, and--in the strict theological sense of the word--scandalous. I would consider that I had betrayed my responsibility as a professor of sociology if I allowed my name to be associated with the organization in any way.⁸⁰

Furfey may have regarded the "Pattern for Peace" as an illustration of an action that was not "aggressively Catholic" enough and refrained from mentioning it because it was signed by many Catholic bishops.

Repeating his earlier description of the three aspects of Murray's proposed organization, Furfey concluded with a challenge:

If Fr. Murray still feels that Rome encourages the specific form of intercredal co-operation which he advocates, then let him cite one papal document which not merely tolerates but encourages intercredal organization with the three specific marks mentioned above. In particular, let him find one papal document which encourages Catholics to work out with heretics a *partly religious* set of common principles on which to base their joint action. When Fr. Murray can find one such papal document, the present writer will be glad to resume the discussion. Until then it may best be regarded as closed.⁸¹

⁸⁰ Furfey to Catherine Schaefer, Washington, April 22, 1943; Furfey to Albon Man, Washington, July 19, 1946; Furfey to Henry W. Flannery, Washington, August 10 and September 25, 1963; ACUA, Furfey Papers, Box 5.

⁸¹ Furfey, "Why Does Rome Discourage Socio-Religious Intercredalism?", 372-74. An interesting footnote to this debate: Eugene Burke, CSP, saw these dismissive words of Furfey as decisive proof of the need for an organized forum in which theologians could address their differences more effectively and more promisingly by personal contact and debate than by exchanges in periodicals. He therefore took the initiative that led to the formation of the Catholic Theological Society of America. See his manuscript memoir, ACUA, CTSA Papers.

Furfey's article did not mention the rather severe review of *The Mystery of Iniquity* which Parsons had just published in the journal founded by Furfey.⁸² The Jesuit regretted the lack of specific documentation in Furfey's description of Catholic conformism and the implications of his citation of the two Jesuits' essays on cooperation. He agreed that "the full Christian thesis must include the supernatural," but insisted that Murray and he had stated the same truth. The problem raised for Americans by the papal call to cooperation, Parsons went on, "is not solved by a mere insistence of this obvious truth, or by a consequent policy of withdrawal." He criticized Furfey for arguing "as if there were only two groups concerned, materialists and atheists on the one hand and Catholics on the other," thus neglecting other believers in God. Because he reduced the problem to "a conflict between Catholicism and unbelief," Furfey could offer no solution other than withdrawal:

"It is hard," he says, "for the conformists to realize that Catholics should be pariahs in a worldly society" (p. 64). I find it hard to reconcile this with the repeated papal injunctions to Catholics to take an active part in this worldly society and to reconstruct its institutions.

Among the object of Parsons' final criticisms was Furfey's theological vision which seemed to him "to make the supernatural the antithesis of the natural, instead of its complement."

Furfey sent a letter to the editor of *The American Catholic Sociological Review* to make it clear that he did not view Parsons as a conformist. "He is one of the greatest priests I have ever known. I have admired him now for over thirty years and it is too late to revise my high opinion of him." "What I do feel," he explained, "is that Father Parsons has unwittingly given aid and comfort to the conformists by his interpretation of certain papal documents, an interpretation which seems to me very forced and utterly mistaken." Furfey accepted the editor's judgment not to publish the letter on the grounds that it was personal and theological rather than sociological in content.⁸³

[In 1945 and again in 1952 Furfey received letters from an old opponent of intercreedal cooperation, Msgr. Edward F. Brophy, expressing his pleasure with Furfey's position and suggesting to Furfey:

Why not write a good pamphlet on the errors and dangers of the Inter-faith Movement and the insidiousness of Brotherhood Meetings, so skilfully [sic] and evilly conducted by the National conference of Christians and Jews, under the anti-Christian influence and guidance of B'nai B'rith and the Judao-Masonic [sic] combination. The people are in great confusion, because of the silence, the clouding of the issue, the conduct of the Catholic Pres and the bad example of some priests and even some bishops, who seem willing to put Christ back into the tomb, to please the Jews.

Furfey sent Brophy a copy of his reply to Murray and then assured Brophy that the *Ecclesiastical Review* "is now edited by a group of professional theologians connected with this University and they are very consciously and enthusiastically trying to counteract the tendency which you mention.

⁸² Parsons, Review of *The Mystery of Iniquity*, *The American Catholic Sociological Review*, 6 (March, 1945) 49-51.

⁸³ Furfey to Editor, *American Catholic Sociological Review*, Washington, April 5, 1945 (copy); Ralph A. Gallagher to Furfey, Chicago, April 25, 1945; Furfey to Gallagher, Washington, April 28, 1945 (copy); ACUA, Furfey Papers, Box 4. In the last letter, Furfey remarked that he thought it unfair to have given the review to someone "who was having a public controversy with me on the subject of the book..... It contained misstatements of fact plus his own very personal judgments."

Almost every month some article touches the subject.”⁸⁴ Given his many statements and apparent activities on behalf of Jews, it is surprising that Furfey makes no mention of Brophy’s attitudes toward them.]

Clearly this debate ended with neither side convinced by the other. Each continued to invoke the authority of the papal documents and to accuse the other of misinterpreting them or of falling short of their demands. The significance of the discussion lies chiefly in the counterposing of the two strands in twentieth-century American Catholic social thought, the radical evangelical engagement represented by people like Dorothy Day and here defended by Furfey⁸⁵ and the approach represented on the practical level by Msgr. John A. Ryan and here defended in theory by Murray. For Furfey the approach recommended by Ryan and Murray was a species of "conformism," while for Murray Furfey's position was an unrealistic supernaturalism. Some paradoxes ensued. Murray was as critical of liberalism as was Furfey and found it necessary to depart from Ryan's views on Church and State, while Furfey would later insist that Ryan's views on the question were the only position that could be adopted by anyone who was not "afraid of the Gospel." Forty years later, the issue would return when the U.S. Bishops were debating their pastoral letter on war and peace, which cannot be said to have settled the issue. On the one hand, *The Challenge of Peace* (1983) included an acknowledgment of the legitimacy of Catholic pacifism that might have warmed Furfey's heart; on the other hand, the just war tradition was also legitimated and in fact dominated the second part of the document. It is likely that the whole text would not have pleased either Murray or Furfey.

⁸⁴ Brophy to Furfey, Brooklyn, July 26, 1945; Furfey to Brophy, Washington, July 28, 1945 (copy); ACUA, Furfey Papers, Box 4. In November, 1952, Brophy again wrote Furfey asking for copies of his pamphlets on intercreedal cooperation.

⁸⁵ Furfey himself referred to his position as that of "Catholic Extremists," the title of an article first published in *The Preservation of the Faith* in 1935 and then printed as a pamphlet in 1937 and reprinted in 1941. The preface of the second printing says that it was translated into French, Spanish and Dutch. A French translation, *L'extrémisme catholique*, was published in *La Cité Chrétienne*, February 20, 1938, and again as a pamphlet (Brussels: Editions de la Cité Chrétienne, 1938). In its issue of June 5, 1938, the same journal published a defence of Furfey’s position against criticisms of his “outrances.”