

LATER DEBATES AND DEVELOPMENTS

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The question of intercreedal cooperation continued to arise throughout the 1940s. In March, 1944, Francis Connell, still concerned that the National Conference of Christians and Jews was "a potent force toward indifferentism," urged the National Catholic Welfare Conference to make "a clear and thorough statement of our position on the matter of participation in non-Catholic religious rites, the claim of the Church to propose the only true religion, the obligation of all to join the Catholic Church, etc."¹ Twice in the following years he criticized the "Religious Book Lists" which the NCCJ issued annually.² In February, 1947, he warned against the mistake of speaking of "inter-faith" meetings, since "faith" should be used only of Catholics, and against confusing the civil right to religious freedom with a natural right for false religions to exist or for their members to practice them.³ Later that year, he gave lectures on intercreedal cooperation at the Summer School Course of the Catholic Action Institute.⁴ Other brief references to the problem also appeared in Connell's criticism of comments that had appeared in *Time* and in a severe review of Gerald G. Walsh's essay on Catholicism.⁵

As for Murray, in 1946 he was invited to attend a conference on religious freedom that was being sponsored by the British Council of Christians and Jews and the American NCCJ.⁶ When asking his provincial, F.A. McQuade, for permission to attend, Murray noted "the Archdiocesan attitude in N.Y. toward the NCCJ," which, if he did not think it "highly intelligent," still had to be taken into account.⁷ McQuade's reply, not found, must have been negative, because Murray was soon assuring McQuade that, despite his sympathy for the project and lack of the same for "the unintelligent attitude of the N.Y. Chancery," he was untroubled at giving up the idea of going to the

¹ Connell to Tanner, Washington, March 23, 1944 (copy); RABP.

² See *AER*, 113 (Nov. 1945) 385-87, and 115 (Sept. 1946) 219-21.

³ Francis J. Connell, "'Interfaith' Problems," *AER*, 116 (Feb., 1947) 142-43.

⁴ The text of his lectures can be found in RABP, "Inter-Faith Movement."

⁵ Francis J. Connell, "Does Catholic Doctrine Change?" *AER*, 117 (Nov. 1947) 322 (Joseph Clifford Fenton had already criticized the *Time* comment in "Time and Pope Leo," *AER*, 114 [May 1946] 369-75); "If the Trumpet Give an Uncertain Sound," *AER*, 118 (Jan. 1948) 23-30. The essay criticized is Gerald G. Walsh, "Roman Catholicism," in *The Great Religions of the Modern World*, ed. E.J. Jurji (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1946) 307-36.

⁶ This may have been the first international conference of Christians and Jews held in Oxford in the summer of 1946 at which a text was agreed upon providing "'Fundamental Postulates of Christianity and Judaism in Relation to Human Order'" and it was decided to establish the International Council of Christians and Jews.

⁷ Murray to McQuade, New York, May 4, 1946; ANYP.

conference. Murray had more objections to the denial of permission for him to accompany a group of young Catholics to Europe. At the end, Murray apologized for the troubles he was causing his superior:

My ultimate contrition, of course, is for the fact that I should be a damn nuisance.... I, and my ideas.... Since it is now quarter to one in the morning, I am absolutely determined that in the future I shall concern myself with no question that is more vital than "utrum habitus theologiae sit simplex an compositus."⁸

As for the U.S. bishops, McIntyre continued to criticize the NCCJ. In February, 1944, on the eve of "Brotherhood Week," annually sponsored by the NCCJ, he used an address at a dinner of the Knights of Columbus for an attack on what he called the "Brotherhood movement."⁹ Although it called itself non-religious, in fact, McIntyre said, "it insists upon holding 'round table' talks at which they wish [to] present representatives of the 'three faiths.'"

This "Brotherhood" movement is, therefore, not legitimate, but rather illegitimate, because it advocates a so-called "brotherhood" but neglects a fatherhood. It sponsors a so-called brotherhood of man, but neglects the fatherhood of God. That makes the concept illegitimate.

Noting that the movement had refused to support the idea of "released time" religious education, McIntyre accused it of promoting "a least common denominator in religion and we know that the least common denominator in religion is no religion."¹⁰

When Willard Johnson, assistant to the President of the NCCJ, saw a newspaper account of this speech, he wrote to McIntyre that some references seemed to be to the NCCJ but that others were so completely "at variance with the established policy and program of the National Conference" as to lead him to think that he was referring to something else. To this inquiry McIntyre replied, "I have read the observations in your letter but do not recognize the variances to which you make reference."¹¹

A week later, when the NCCJ distributed a memorandum to all the U.S. bishops detailing the Conference's efforts to address the blatant anti-Catholicism of two Protestant journals, *The Protestant* and *The Converted Catholic*,¹² McIntyre wrote to Archbishop Mooney questioning the motives of the NCCJ and describing his recent effort to counteract it:

The "Brotherhood" movement seems to be assuming the role of a substitute for religion. "Brotherhood", "Fellowship" and "Tolerance" are being substituted for God and the Commandments. A month or six weeks ago the Conference of Christians & Jews attempted to enlist the support of the Knights of Columbus. For that reason I took

⁸ Murray to McQuade, New York, May 8, 1946; ANYP.

⁹ As McIntyre explained in a later letter, the NCCJ had apparently approached the Knights asking their participation in Brotherhood Week. A copy of a letter from John McArdle to "Worthy Grand Knight," January 25, 1944, found in the Connell Papers, RABP, "Inter-Faith Movement, Letters," offers suggestions as to how Knights could respond to this invitation without violating the norms set out by Connell in his *Columbia* article on religious freedom.

¹⁰ Two copies of this address are found in the ASJS.

¹¹ Johnson to McIntyre, New York, March 6, 1944; McIntyre to Johnson, New York, March 7, 1944 (copy); ASJS.

¹² Everett R. Clinchy, "Memorandum," March 14, 1944; ASJS.

occasion when addressing a Fourth Degree gathering to make comments based on the enclosed memorandum of my notes.¹³

In its March 27, 1944, issue *Time* Magazine quoted Robert W. Searle, General Secretary of the Greater New York Federation of Churches, as having written that when he had consulted McIntyre the previous summer about the possibility of cooperative action of religious leaders to address problems of race and juvenile delinquency, McIntyre had replied, "How can we cooperate with you? There is not a single Protestant minister in New York who believes that Christ is God!"¹⁴ McIntyre prepared a letter, apparently not sent, in which he denied that he had made the comment:

When speaking of religious cooperation, I commented that an expected common ground in a meeting such as you proposed would not be present since *many* of the ministers would not believe that Christ is God. I did not say "There is not a single Protestant minister who believes that Christ is God." In fact we debated whether the number would be many or few but not "none."¹⁵

McIntyre's comments received the whole-hearted endorsement of Archbishop McNicholas' diocesan newspaper, a copy of which he sent to McIntyre. "Certainly," it said, "the number of Protestant ministers in our country who reject Christ as God is legion." In addition, there was the problem of Jews, who because they do not accept Christ as God, "show themselves partial to Protestant sects which professedly deny Christ's Divinity. These facts have immediate consequences for the possibility of interreligious cooperation." The editorial went on:

Unbelieving Protestant ministers and unbelieving rabbis are destroyers of faith in their people, who would naturally turn to God were it not for the subversive activity of their leaders.

Bishop McIntyre is certainly right in rejecting the co-operation of priests and the Catholic laity with unbelieving Protestant ministers and unbelieving rabbis. If there is not a personal and omnipotent God, then might is the supreme law of the world. Hitlerism is then right, as are totalitarianism and Communism. If Christ is not God, then Christianity should cease to exist, for it is a sham and a mockery; it is the evil work of an imperial imposter.

Bishop McIntyre is right in refusing to co-operate with unbelieving pseudo-Christians and unbelieving rabbis because he must guard the faith of Catholics. He cannot let them become indifferent; he cannot let Catholics for an instant think that priests and unbelieving ministers and unbelieving rabbis hold the same things, think the same thoughts, and, perhaps, agree in rejecting a personal God and a divine Christ.

There can be and should be no co-operation of Catholics with unbelieving Protestants and unbelieving Jews in promoting truths of secondary importance, when the supremely important fact of the existence of a personal omnipotent God and of the Divinity of Christ is rejected. Intelligent and informed Protestants and Jews ought to see the logical position of Catholics, and they should not be offended when the case is stated with frankness.¹⁶

¹³ McIntyre to Mooney, New York, March 16, 1944 (copy); with the letter McIntyre enclosed a memorandum of the same date on the NCCJ; ASJS.

¹⁴ *Time*, March 27, 1944, p. 58.

¹⁵ Two copies of this letter are found in ASJS, on one of which is written "Not Sent."

¹⁶ "Bishop McIntyre," *The Catholic Telegraph-Register*, April 7, 1944; McNicholas to McIntyre, Cincinnati, April 7, 1944; ASJS. Willard Johnson wrote to McIntyre, expressing his puzzlement about his statements, quoting from several popes and from Wilfred Parsons, and ending with the question: "It seems to me that these are perfectly clear mandates for Catholics to cooperate with non-Catholics, Protestant or Jewish, and with all me of good will." McIntyre wrote on this letter: "Decided not to answer bec. of evident insincerity;" Johnson to McIntyre, New York, April 20, 1944; ASJS.

It was, therefore, a great blow for McIntyre to read that in June, 1944, the bishops of Texas and Oklahoma had issued a statement in which they not only called upon Catholics to engage in cooperation with others "for an effective transformation of human society in the field of political, economic and social well being" but also praised the objectives of the NCCJ.¹⁷ McIntyre criticized this action in several letters written during the summer of 1944. In a letter to an unidentified bishop he wrote:

This is a very unfortunate pronouncement and will undoubtedly embarrass all the Bishops in the United States. There is no doubt about the fact that the obtaining of this statement for the benefit of the National Conference of Jews and Christians is a piece of clever connivance. Evidently the Bishops of Texas and Oklahoma had not in mind the expressed opinion of the Bishops in their meetings of recent years. We have been told by the National Conference of Jews and Christians that the Jesuits approve of clerical cooperation with them and why not the Archdiocese of New York? Now we shall be told that the Bishops of Texas and Oklahoma approve and why not the Archdiocese of New York? I, for one, will prefer to stick with the minds of the Bishops."¹⁸

In February, 1945, McNicholas wrote to McIntyre, informing him that the NCCJ had just opened an office in Cincinnati and that he had replied by issuing new directives. They began very forthrightly:

Catholics should not participate in conferences with those of other faiths under the auspices of religion. Debates and conferences, especially of a public character, with those who are not members of the Catholic faith are forbidden by pontifical law. They should not be held without the permission of the Holy See. Only in case of urgency may the Bishop of a Diocese act. The Catholic Church teaches that only God can impose upon the world an organized religion; that Christ, truly God, gave us this divinely organized religion in the Catholic Church, which is the only custodian of His teachings. Persons of other faiths or of no religious belief who do not accept the divinity of Christ and of His divinely organized religion, should know this position of the Catholic Church; otherwise they will misunderstand and misinterpret the words and actions of Catholics. The Church never wishes to conceal anything of her teachings.

The document invited people who believed in God and the moral law to promote those two basic truths. Catholics could meet with others under civil but not under religious auspices. "The Catholic Church cannot give the impression that one religion is as good as another or that she must strive with those of other faiths for a common denominator in religion. This attempt would give the faithful the impression that basically and essentially different religions are the same."¹⁹

A year later McNicholas' newspaper explained in an editorial why Catholics could not take part in Brotherhood Week. While groups could meet "under the auspices, not of religion but of civil authority" in order to honor God and to defend his law, the National Conference of Christians and Jews was "wrong in principle."

¹⁷ The NCWC News Service notice of this statement is dated June 19, 1944; the text was reproduced in *The Commonweal*, 40 (July 14, 1944) 308-309, and in *The Sword of the Spirit*, Bulletin #73 (November 23, 1944) 3.

¹⁸ McIntyre to "Your Excellency," New York, June 27, 1944 (copy); ASJS. On July 29, 1944, McIntyre proposed that a discussion of "cooperation with and support of non-Catholic groups" be included in the program of that year's Bishops' Meeting: "The utterances attributed to the Bishops of Texas & Oklahoma 'commanding' [*sic*] the support of the Conference of Jews & Christians by Catholic people;" ACUA, NCWC/USCC, Box 70: NCWC Bishops' General Meeting: Program 1940-44.

¹⁹ McNicholas to McIntyre, Cincinnati, February 16, 1945, with accompanying text, dated February 15, 1945; ASJS. See also the brief notice in *The Christian Century* 62 (April 11, 1945) 477.

It is preposterous to ask Christians to meet under the auspices of religion when many groups of misnamed Christians deny the Divinity of Christ.... it is a travesty on religion to call together representatives of all groups of Christians (even so-called Christians) and Jews (even Jews who do not believe in a personal God) and to ask them to speak or act in the name of religion. How are all these disagreeing groups to meet on any common ground, and how can they do anything that will advance the cause of religion or morality or brotherhood--something desperately needed today? The only true brotherhood is in and through and from the Divine Christ.²⁰

In December, 1946, McNicholas wrote to Spellman to criticize a recent pamphlet the latter had sent him, which contained criticisms of Released Time programs. He repeated his conviction that the intercredal movements were "dangerous to the faith of our own people" and regretted "that in our ranks we have a division of opinion on this very serious question."²¹

McNicholas may have had in mind, among other bishops, the Archbishop of St. Paul, John Gregory Murray, who on October 30, 1946, had sent his priests a letter responding to inquiries about clerical and lay participation in cooperative organizations. The Archbishop responded by citing six statements of recent popes that called for "concerted action of Catholics with all men of goodwill who believe in God and base their program on mutual cooperation for the general welfare of mankind within the civic order under God." He then concluded:

To counteract divisions, schisms, prejudices and conflict while seeking to develop good will in the common cause of happiness in the entire family of the human race all our people should not hesitate to unite with groups such as the Conference of Christians and Jews in their individual capacity as citizens for the good of all.²²

Roman Inquiries about Cooperation

In 1946 rumors began to circulate that the Vatican was preparing a statement on ecumenical conversations and cooperation.²³ This is perhaps the context in which to locate a series of exchanges between Vatican officials and American churchmen that took place throughout 1947. In March, the secretary of the Holy Office asked the Apostolic Delegate for information and advice on American practices with regard to priests taking part with Protestants in joint baccalaureate programs and Thanksgiving Day services.²⁴

²⁰ *The Catholic Telegraph-Register*, January 4, 1946. Seven weeks later McNicholas revealed his views of local Protestant ministers. "The ignorance, the audacity, and the bluffing spirit of so many of our ministers are almost incredible," he wrote; one of them, a Methodist, had told him "that he thought seventy-five per cent of his colleagues in the ministry, in his church, were either Communists or near-Communists." He repeated his opposition to joint meetings: "I will not join any of these inter-faith movements. I told the ministers and rabbis that priests could sit down with them at a conference where there would be eight or ten of them. This was tried on five or six occasions, but the ministers were no match for our priests;" McNicholas to Cicognani, Cincinnati, February 27, 1946; AACinc, Box 24, File 27.

²¹ McNicholas to Spellman, Cincinnati, December 8, 1946; ASJS.

²² Archbishop Murray to "Reverend Father," St. Paul, October 30, 1946 (copy); ANCWC/USCC.

²³ For the rumors and reactions of French Catholic ecumenists, see Etienne Fouilloux, *Les catholiques et l'unité chrétienne du xix^e au xx^e siècle: Itinéraires européens d'expression française* (Paris: Centurion, 1982) 898-903.

²⁴ Fogarty reviews the advice that Cicognani received from Stritch, Mooney, and McNicholas in *The Vatican and the American Hierarchy*, 354-56.

It may be that John LaFarge was acquainted with the Vatican inquiries. Whether at an invitation or on his own initiative, in May, 1947, he sent “Notes on Question of Cooperation with Non-Catholics” to the Holy Office.²⁵ He stated the problem at the outset:

The precise question is whether, or according to what norms, it may be permissible to join with persons not of our holy Faith in the defense of natural law and justice, of essential human rights and of basic Christian institutions. The question is not of cooperation in matters of a religious nature, but in those which touch the civil order...

This defense was necessary against Communists, against violations of the rights of “certain racial and national minorities in the United States,” and against attacks “upon Christian institutions, such as the family.”

The problem arises from the fact that it is impossible to construct a defense unless we join with persons not of our Faith in the assertion of certain basic moral principles and unless we mention the part which religion plays in the teaching and promotion of such principles. This implies, therefore, a certain respect which will be paid to the belief of these persons in Almighty God and His moral law, in contrast to the Communists and other irreligious people who deny these basic truths.

After giving some examples of “the types of combined action” he was urging, LaFarge asked how far such cooperation could be practiced “without seeming to favor a spirit of religious indifferentism,” that is, whether paying respect to the moral and religious convictions non-Catholics shared with Catholics is “*per se* an implication of indifferentism, or *per se* apt to create such an impression in the minds of the faithful. And if it is only *per accidens*, not *per se*, apt to create such an impression, what are the limitations and safeguards to be practised?” The urgency of a clarification lay in the fact that non-Catholic ministers were active in this way and producing “a good impression on the public” and that if the Catholic clergy cannot give a similar witness it would be “difficult to persuade non-Catholics that Catholic professions of belief in the natural law and zeal for the protection of basic human rights is genuine and sincere.”

Not content with his questions, LaFarge proposed some “possible norms or conditions under which such participation might take place.” For all Catholics it would have to be in line with papal teachings and their interpretation by the U.S. bishops; there could be “no reasonable suspicion of any snare or trap being laid by non-Catholic elements;” that the methods employed be “in harmony with our Catholic traditions of charity and religious decency;” that local ecclesiastical authority be kept informed; and that it be undertaken only by “thoroughly qualified men, able to sustain their part not only with courage but also with requisite technical or professional knowledge.”

For the Catholic clergy, LaFarge went on, such cooperation would be undertaken by “certain priests specially qualified therefor by their training or by their experience.” Perhaps thinking of his own difficulties, he added that such priests “should be encouraged and not embarrassed in their work by needless suspicions and imputations.” Their participation should respect “their unique priestly

²⁵ A copy of these notes, dated May 30, 1947, can be found in AACinc, McNicholas papers, 17/59. With them were appended descriptions of the NCCJ, from which LaFarge carefully distinguished the kind of cooperation he was discussing, and of the Catholic Interracial Council; it would appear from his text that LaFarge was particularly concerned about the inconsistent attitudes and actions of the US bishops, particularly with regard to cooperation for racial justice. For his roughly contemporaneous analysis of the situation, see John LaFarge, *No Postponement: U.S. Moral Leadership and the Problem of Racial Minorities* (New York: Longmans, Green & Co., 1950).

character” and avoid giving the appearance of favoring indifferentism. To avoid this, it would not be normal for priests to share platforms with non-Catholic clergymen, but this possibility should not be entirely ruled out.

LaFarge ended with comments that probably also reflect his own experience in his activity on behalf of racial justice:

The circumstance which particularly gives rise to these queries is the fact that at present the *modus agendi* is so greatly different in the different dioceses of the United States. Obviously, local, i.e. regional, conditions will determine certain differences of procedure in so delicate a matter. It will not be the same where the Catholic population is greatly in the minority as where it is numerous and relatively powerful. But haphazard and inexplicable differences do harm; conflicting policies in dioceses where conditions are largely the same do likewise. Along with that, comes the difficulty that the Catholic layman, and the Catholic clergyman as well, have so little in the way of known and declared norms by which to guide themselves. Matters are left to their own initiative and responsibility; yet when this same is exercised, they may find they have given offense to the authorities. And sober, temperate and thoroughly obedient men have a justified complaint that corrective action is often arbitrary and violent.²⁶

In January, 1948, Cicognani sent the notes to McNicholas and Spellman for their comments. McNicholas began by commenting on the Catholic Interracial Council, which he said caused “little difficulty,” although he did caution that the term “interracial” might be found objectionable to the people of the southern States” and “offensive to Catholics who take an exaggerated position against the Negro.” The NCCJ, on the other hand, gave McNicholas “great anxiety... I am convinced that there is serious danger of giving our people the impression of indifferentism.” As for LaFarge’s notes on the larger question, while he found them “harmless,” he thought that “any union with non-Catholics, especially under any auspices of the sects, is dangerous.” He proposed instead that any cooperation with non-Catholic groups be “*Ecclesia duce*,” their cooperation with Catholics, something he had not found them eager to do either with regard to decency in the movies or with regard to opposing Communism. The letter contains several paragraphs repeating McNicholas’s low view of the Protestant ministers he had encountered.²⁷

²⁶ See John LaFarge to John W. Markoe, S.J., New York, Feb. 27, 1951 (copy; WCA, LaFarge papers):

“You are going through, after all, just what I went through here for years with regard to the Archdiocese. The work of the Catholic Interracial Council was misunderstood from the beginning. It was not only misunderstood but it was ridiculed and bitterly criticized by the former Chancellor, later Coadjutor Archbishop, and was an object of suspicion to the Cardinal himself. I was on the defense for years. In the Chancery they couldn't see the reason for it, they suspected everything we did, they called me up any time, day or night, on the phone asking explanations of this or that, and so on; and this was coupled with some antagonism on the part of holy and devoted men who were in the mission work in this city and out of it. Yet with God's help every bit of this cleared away. The hostile Archbishop McIntyre finally changed his mind and apologized to me for his language, the attitude of the Cardinal completely changed into one of warm and enthusiastic cooperation, and only a few months ago I sat in the Cathedral at a Solemn High Mass, at which the Cardinal was present, and heard the preacher publicly commend the work of the Council from the pulpit.”

²⁷ Cicognani to McNicholas, Washington, January 14, 1948; McNicholas to Cicognani, Cincinnati, January 18, 1948 (copy); AACinc, McNicholas papers, 17/59.

Spellman replied on Feb. 9th, indicating that he would seek the views of diocesan consultors.²⁸ The first of Spellman's advisers, Edward V. Dargin, said that he had found nothing in LaFarge's notes "that is contrary to the Canon Law governing this matter."²⁹ But the other adviser, John Fearn, submitted a detailed four-page memorandum, in which he first reviewed the pertinent legislation, statements of recent popes, and the goals of such cooperation as defined by theologians, and then criticized LaFarge's proposals.³⁰ Fearn's criticisms were taken up in the response that Spellman's secretary Msgr. Francis J. Murphy sent to Cicognani on June 7, 1948, two days after the Holy Office's *Monitum* on the subject!³¹

The consensus of opinion is that this matter of co-operation with non Catholics has already been properly taken care of by existing legislation and instructions of the Holy See. The very core of this legislation, especially insofar as Father LaFarge's notes would suggest a change, is the wise provision that all activities of this nature should be conducted under the guidance and authority of the Local Ordinary. Those consulted do not feel that Father LaFarge has advanced any arguments that would warrant a reversal of this well-established policy of the Church. Father LaFarge's suggestions would deem it sufficient that all such proceedings "be known" to the Local Ordinary, without requiring his consent. This would seem to leave well-intentioned laymen completely free of guidance and direction, and leave Religious priests subject only to their own Ecclesiastical Superiors for consent. Such Superiors might frequently reside far from the place involved and therefore be uninformed on the local circumstances that would affect the granting of such consent.

Furthermore, the priests consulted on this matter are not aware of any incidents that would prove the unsupported assertion that "corrective action is often arbitrary and violent". They have not heard of any punitive action that could properly be described as "arbitrary and violent" and Father LaFarge has not adduced any example of it.³²

In conclusion, if there is any uncertainty about the norms or any divergence of practice that should be corrected, it might better be adjusted by the Bishops of the country at their meeting in Washington, based upon a careful study prepared under their direction by competent theologians who are alive to the specific practical problems involved in various parts of the country.

Meanwhile, the Holy Office had also become interested in the recently established International Council of Christians and Jews. On July 15, 1947, Cicognani informed the NCWC that the Vatican's Secretariat of State had requested information on the Council, which intended to hold a conference "to combat anti-semitism, and in its propaganda it uses a 'Statement on Cooperation by the Bishops of Texas and Oklahoma' signed by the Bishops of these States, but without date."³³

²⁸ Cicognani to Spellman, Washington, Jan. 21, 1948; Spellman to Cicognani, New York, Feb. 9, 1948 (copy); ASJS.

²⁹ Francis J. Murphy to Dargin, New York, March 3, 1948 (copy); Dargin to Murphy, Croton Falls, March 6, 1948, ASJS.

³⁰ John Fearn, "Memorandum re Notes submitted to Holy Office on Cooperation with Non-Catholics," undated, ASJS.

³¹ Msgr. Francis J. Murphy to Cicognani, New York, June 7, 1948 (copy). Cicognani acknowledged receipt of the report to Murphy, Washington, June 11, 1948; ASJS.

³² Fearn had described some of LaFarge's statements as "exaggerated" and had cited as examples of testimonies from clergymen "Father Monaghan in New York, Father Kelly in Brooklyn, Father Gilligan in St. Paul, Father Boland in Buffalo, Father Hensler in Pittsburgh, the pronouncements of the Most Reverend Bishops in their meetings in Washington."

³³ Cicognani to Carroll, Washington, July 15, 1947; NCWC/USCC. The conference to which Cicognani referred was probably the meeting held in Sellisberg, Switzerland, two weeks later, at which the ten points for combatting anti-Semitism in Christian preaching and teaching were drawn up. For the origin and early years of the International

Two days later, Msgr. Carroll replied, noting only that the international association was being promoted by the NCCJ, about which, however, he went on at greater length:

The latter organization has been in existence for some years. It has consistently sought the interest and support of Catholics for its work to eliminate racial and religious intolerance. On the basis that in many places such an organization would afford an opportunity to explain the tenets of Catholicism to people who would otherwise know little or nothing about them and thereby eliminate anti-Catholicism. In certain areas the program was viewed with favor.

Due to the fact that in some instances, those representing either Protestants or the Jews tended to minimize the importance of religious dogmatism and create a false impression on the question of religious toleration, it found little support among Catholic authorities.

As a national organization it has never received any support from the N.C.W.C. It has, however, enlisted and obtained the support and collaboration of certain priests, notably Fr. Michael Ahern, S.J.C. of Boston and of several prominent Catholic laymen, for example, Mr. Carlton Hayes, former United States ambassador to Spain, Mr. Basil O'Connor president of the American Red Cross and Mr. Thomas Braniff of Oklahoma, a well known business man.

In a "Statement of Cooperation" issued about two years ago the Bishops of Texas and Oklahoma gave public endorsement to the International [sic] Conference of Christians and Jews (see copy attached). Subsequently Archbishop Murray of St. Paul publicly endorsed their work.³⁴

A little later in 1947, Francis Connell received, through his colleague, Joseph Clifford Fenton, an invitation to send his views to Msgr. Tardini at the Vatican Secretariate of State on "the prevalence of the spirit of indifference in the United States." In the letter accompanying his report, Connell urged the Vatican to act:

I hope that some action is taken by the Holy See--perhaps in the form of a letter to the Bishops of this country urging them to oppose this spirit vigorously, and to explain clearly to the people the Catholic attitude toward indifference. I fear that many Catholics, even those who are devout, entertain erroneous views on this matter and believe that everyone has a genuine right to accept any religion he chooses.³⁵

Connell's report was a three-page text written in Latin and entitled "*Commenta de spiritu Indifferentismi in Statibus Unitis praevalente*," in which he summarized many of the fears and concerns he had been articulating for the previous six years.³⁶ Here is a translation of the document:

Today a spirit of indifferentism is spreading rather widely among United States Catholics, despite the genuine fervor and love for the Church which these faithful undoubtedly cultivate. In fact a spirit of excessive liberalism towards false religions is not something new in this country. In 1895, Pope Leo XIII, in the apostolic letter sent to the Most

Conference, see Pitt, *Adventures in Brotherhood*, 220-42.

³⁴ Carroll to Cicognani, Washington, July 17, 1947 (copy); NCWC/USCC. Perhaps because of a *lapsus calami*, Carroll was mistaken in attributing the two statements of support by Murray and the bishops of Texas and Oklahoma to the *International* Conference; their statements referred only to the *national* organization. It would be another three years before Rome gave an official comment on the new International Council.

³⁵ Connell to Tardini, Oct. 24, 1947 (copy); RABP. At this time Tardini was attempting through the U.S. Bishops to have removed from a treaty of friendship, commerce and navigation between the U.S. and Italy a clause guaranteeing religious freedom which he argued would permit Protestants to open throughout Italy centers of worship in any building and to carry on proselytism in all its forms without any limitation or regulations even on the part of the State;" Tardini to Cicognani, Vatican, Oct. 4, 1947, quoted in Gerald P. Fogarty, *The Vatican and the American Hierarchy from 1870 to 1965*, 333.

³⁶ A copy of the report may be found in the RABP.

Excellent Francis Satolli, Apostolic Delegate, criticized certain manifestations of this spirit, especially conversations of Catholics with non-Catholics on religious and moral matters (*Acta Leonis XIII*, vol. XV, 323).

But recently this dangerous spirit has become stronger, and the chief causes of this growth seem to be the following:

1. Since the time the United States entered the War (1941), the so-called "four freedoms," among which was freedom of conscience, expressed as "Freedom to worship God in whatever way one chooses," were often widely proposed as aims to be acquired by the war. Thus, without any distinction between the divine right and the civil right adapted to the particular conditions of a region (e.g., the United States), the right to adopt and exercise any religion was proclaimed as having been given to God to every person. Because of the frequent proclamation of this notion, it is not surprising that some Catholics, even intelligent and good ones, have accepted this way of thinking and speaking and have even praised a diversity of religions as desirable. For example, this comment has come from the pen of a lay Catholic: "We should be alert to maintain a cultural and religious pluralism.... Here in the United States we differ about religion. I thank God we do...." Taken literally, these words express joy that several religions exist rather than one alone. The same writer proposes as a laudable work "to make Jews better Jews and Protestants better Protestants." (Cf. *Theological Studies*, 1942, p. 325).

Sometimes even priests, not correctly distinguishing between dogmatic tolerance and personal tolerance, defend the right to profess any religion and the obligation to respect the diversity of religions. Thus a priest wrote in a secular periodical: "Tolerance is only the recognition that our fellows have claims to the truth and to the truth as they see it.... We must understand our fellows and respect the differences they offer, particularly differences in race, nationality and religion" (*Woman's Home Companion*, March, 1941).³⁷

A book written by a Catholic has recently appeared, entitled "The Keys of the Kingdom," which reeks with indifferentism. Several thousand Americans have read this book and praised it as a "Magna Carta" of a new and liberal Catholicism. What is utterly regrettable is that several Catholics have strongly approved the theme of this book, and few have publicly condemned it. (A presentation and truly Catholic judgement of this book appears in *American Ecclesiastical Review*, Jan., 1942).³⁸

A typical application of this spirit of indifferentism is found, for example, in the case of a certain Catholic, prominent in public life, who exercised the role of a sponsor at a Protestant baptism, a fact announced in the public newspapers (Cf. *Washington Post*, May 20, 1944).³⁹

2. In the course of the War, our chaplains necessarily came into frequent and intimate conversation with non-Catholic chaplains. In addition, several military leaders strenuously tried to persuade all the chaplains to set aside their "religious differences" in order to promote religious unity. Generally speaking, our chaplains strongly rejected these ideas; and wise and explicit admonitions were frequently sent out by the Military Ordinariate. Nonetheless, some priests (undoubtedly because of ignorance rather than a failure of faith) sometimes promoted a false tolerance by their actions and words. For example, in *The New York Times*, 5 May, 1945, a photograph appears showing three chaplains, of whom one is a Catholic priest, the second a Protestant minister, and the third a Jewish doctor (Rabbi). They are all standing on a platform decorated with both a cross and a Jewish symbol beneath which is written: "Have we not all one Father? Hath not one God created us?" (*Mal.*, 2:10). This way of acting certainly promoted, especially among soldiers, the idea that religious differences were of little importance.

³⁷ This refers to an article, "Freedom to be Tolerant," by Rev. James A. Reeves, president of Seton Hall College in Greensburg, PA, *Woman's Home Companion*, March, 1941, pp. 26, 48; a copy of this and of a second article in a series of three, "Freedom to Worship," by Morris S. Lazon, a Mason and a member of the executive committee of the National Conference of Jews and Christians, can be found in the Connell Papers, RABP.

³⁸ The reference is to Edward A. Wuenschel, C.S.S.R., "The Keys of the Kingdom," *AER*, 106 (Jan. 1942), 10-26. Cronin's novel caused a minor flap among Catholics when it first appeared. Wilfred Parsons was enlisted to help write the screenplay for the film version.

³⁹ This refers to Justice Murphy's action, noted above.

Protestants especially were propagating a spirit of indifferentism, publicly stating that chaplains think little of religious differences. No doubt these sayings were seriously exaggerated with regard to Catholic chaplains; nonetheless many lay people began to judge that the Catholic Church has now become liberal. Thus it is reported that a Protestant minister, after visiting military camps, stated: "When a man is enlisted in an effort for the good of his country, for the good of religion, for the good of the souls of men, it makes no difference what a man's religion may be--Protestant, Catholic or Jew--he is one with that man in the efforts that he is making" (Boston Daily Globe, Dec. 7, 1943). Another one asserted: "Out here, ministers, priests and rabbis preach from the same altar. There is great unity of purpose" (Washington Post, May 6, 1943). Again, a certain chaplain (whose religion is not known) is reported to have said: "Catholic, Jew and Protestant alike go to one another's services" (Reader's Digest, Dec. 1943, p. 28). These statements, although made at a time of war, still remain in the minds of many.

3. There is a certain association of Christians and Jews (National Conference of Christians and Jews) which promotes this unfortunate tendency. The explicit goal of this association is not, indeed, the formation of some common religion, but only the promotion of friendship and personal tolerance. But in practice the notion is proposed that everyone has a true right to embrace any religion, that we must respect religious differences, that a diversity of religions is something good. Thus in a booklet describing this association this appears: "When we lose the right to be different, we lose the right to be free.... We can be content with nothing less than appreciation of healthy differences... The American way is that of respect for differences... The cooperation of varying religious groups in America builds a nation in which differences furnish strength rather than weakness." Under the authority of this association three men--a priest, a Protestant minister and a Jewish doctor (rabbi)--hold public conversations before Catholics, Protestants, and Jews. In a published report of one of these conversations, the Jew is said to have stated: "We all have a right to worship, but we do not all have to worship the same way. My worship is different from yours, but my right to worship is the same as yours.... All three of us have an identical right to our rituals, to our house of God and to our types of worship." It seems that the Catholic priest said nothing to denounce these errors (see *American Ecclesiastical Review*, No. 1941, p. 10).⁴⁰

These are only a few examples of this nefarious spirit. I, the undersigned, refer the matter to the Holy See so that apt remedies may be applied as the prudence of the wise and the light of the Holy Spirit dictate.

Tardini's reply to Connell was characteristically terse:

I have received your very kind letter with your observations on religious indifferentism. I have read it with much interest. It is only right to do whatever is possible to react to the danger which it may represent for the Catholic faith no longer to perceive--with the needed clarity--the great differences which separate the truth from errors. The work the Review carries on is also very useful in this field.⁴¹

The Holy Office's Monitum

On June 5, 1948, the long-rumored Vatican document appeared in the form of a *Monitum* which set out rules for inter-faith meetings:

Since it has come to light that in various localities, in violation of the Sacred Canons and without previous permission of the Holy See, joint meetings of non-Catholics with Catholics have taken place wherein discussion has concerned matters of faith, all are reminded that by virtue of Canon 1325, paragraph 3, laity and clergy, both diocesan and religious, are forbidden to take part in such gatherings without the aforementioned permission. It is indeed much less licit for Catholics to sponsor and organize such meetings. Wherefore, let Ordinaries urge that these prescriptions be strictly observed by all.

⁴⁰ This is Connell's article, "Catholics and 'Interfaith' Groups," *AER*, 105 (Nov. 1941) 337-53; the remarks which Connell quotes here are on p. 346, which would be p. 10 of an offprint.

⁴¹ Tardini to Connell, handwritten in Italian, Rome, Nov. 25, 1947; RABP.

With greater reason are these regulations to be observed with regard to conventions known as "ecumenical", which Catholics, either lay or clerical, are by no means to attend without the previous consent of the Holy See.

Moreover, in view of the fact that both apart from and in connection with the abovementioned meetings, acts of mixed cult have not rarely taken place, all are again admonished that any form of "communicatio in sacris" (participation in religious rites of non-Catholic denominations) is strictly forbidden by virtue of Canons 1258 and 731, paragraph 2.⁴²

The U.S. Bishops were uncertain of the importance of the Holy Office's warning. In August, 1948, Cardinal Spellman asked his advisers for comments on the document. A first reply, from Robert E. McCormick, reviewed Vatican attitudes towards interfaith meetings, related the Holy Office document to the first meeting of the World Council of Churches in Amsterdam, and concluded rather weakly that "this decree of the Holy Office of June 5th, 1948, has no special reference to the United States and need not be given publicity."⁴³ Another adviser, John Fearn, discussed the decree in the light of the meetings sponsored by the NCCJ, which he maintained were not simply for civic but also for religious purposes. He repeated his early objections that the Church did not need the NCCJ, which was "an attempt to borrow our strength," that it did not lead to converts, caused scandal, and ran the danger of weakening the faith and favoring indifferentism. But, after noting that participation in NCCJ meetings need not involve a *communicatio in sacris*, Fearn concluded:

The Holy Office has only drawn attention to the existing law. Further clarification seems unnecessary. There are many declarations of the Holy See which sufficiently explain the law. Some might wish to ask the Commission for the Interpretation of the Code for an answer to the doubt regarding the meaning of "disputationes vel collationes" in canon 1325. It is wise however to leave some discretion to the capable Ordinaries.⁴⁴

The new decree was also the object of discussion at the meeting of the Administrative Board of the NCWC on November 16th.⁴⁵ "Some of the bishops," it was explained, "have expressed anxiety about the Catholic participation in the organizations such as the National Conference of Christians and Jews being a species of "participatio in sacris." The Holy Office's decree was read, along with the four principles for cooperation adopted by the Bishops in 1943. The minutes then simply report: "In the discussion which followed, Cardinal Stritch emphasized the distinction between exposition and discussion, saying that we could safely expound Catholic doctrine to a group of non-Catholics,

⁴² I use here the translation sent by Cicognani, accompanying his letter of December 6, 1950; see below. Another translation is provided by Connell, "A Recent Decree of the Holy Office," *AER*, 119 (September, 1948) 215-17. For European interpretations and reactions to this document see Fouilloux, *Les catholiques et l'unité chrétienne*, pp. 903-907; Leonard J. Swidler, *The Ecumenical Vanguard: The History of the Una Sancta Movement* (Pittsburgh: Duquesne University Press, 1966) 204-15, who on p. 207 says that Ottaviani had told the press that the warning was aimed especially at "the common religious services held by non-Catholics and Catholics in Germany, Switzerland and the United States."

⁴³ McCormick, "Memoranda for His Eminence, Cardinal Spellman," August 25, 1948; ASJS.

⁴⁴ John Fearn, "The National Conference of Christians and Jews," undated; ASJS.

⁴⁵ Requests that the matter be discussed at the Bishops' Meeting had been received from Cardinal Spellman, July 24, 1948, and from Bishop W. L. Adrian, August 24, 1948; ACUA, NCWC/USCC, Box 70: NCWC Bishops' General Meeting: Program 1945-49.

but that we could not discuss or debate its truthfulness with them."⁴⁶ It would appear, then, that the U.S. Bishops chose not to make much of the Holy Office's warning.

John LaFarge, of course, could have been expected to take special interest in the Holy Office's decree. He wrote to Parsons:

I suppose you have been following the various developments concerning the Vatican pronouncement on cooperation. The article in the *Herald-Tribune* for March 1st by McGurn was clear and satisfactory, as usual, and if you read it you saw my own comments. These are effective again in the editorial for this week's AMERICA, which I wrote myself.... Of course, the Chancery so far said nothing. But I was very anxious that the emphasis should be placed on what is, in my mind, the big thing, the possibility of joint or concerted action on the level of natural morality and social justice, rather than on the reunion question which, as far as I can see it now, is not very practical at the present time.⁴⁷

Connell and the NCCJ

By the time the Bishops had met, Connell had already published his interpretation of the Holy Office decree, which he took seriously and read as a vindication of his concerns. The United States was one of the places where illicit meetings had taken place, he said, claiming that the warnings *The American Ecclesiastical Review* had been carrying for five years "now have the clear support and approval of the Holy See; and surely no Catholic should be indifferent to this solemn admonition." He went on to apply the warning more explicitly:

The Conference of Christians and Jews is an organization that offers occasions to which the warning of the Holy See is applicable. For example, their "trio teams" and their local "round tables" can with difficulty abstain from the discussion of religious topics even though their avowed purpose is the promotion of civil good will and neighborliness.⁴⁸

In June, 1949, Edward Heffron, former executive secretary of the National Conference of Catholic Men and now media director of the NCCJ, initiated a correspondence with Connell over these comments which, he said, had caused the NCCJ "a good deal of injury throughout the country." Heffron acknowledged the NCCJ's carelessness in letting certain statements Connell had criticized get by, but hoped that a new declaration of policy would clarify things. He also enclosed a copy of the letter he was sending the same day to Fenton, as editor of the *AER*.⁴⁹ This letter commented on Connell's article, acknowledged the validity of certain of his comments, and asked Fenton to consider publishing the NCCJ's new statement of policy and a covering letter, on which Fenton and Connell's comments would be welcome.⁵⁰

Connell's Papers include a copy of the new "Statement of Policy" adopted by the NCCJ's Executive Committee on March 28, 1949. In ten numbered paragraphs the Statement attempted to make it clear that, while based on "a spiritual interpretation of the universe and deriving its

⁴⁶ "Minutes of the Administrative Board, November 16, 1948;" ASJS.

⁴⁷ LaFarge to Parsons, New York, March 6, 1950; WCA, Parsons Papers, Box 6/16.

⁴⁸ Francis Connell, "A Recent Decree of the Holy Office," *AER*, 119 (Sept. 1948) 216.

⁴⁹ Heffron to Connell, New York, June 28, 1949; RABP.

⁵⁰ Heffron to Fenton, New York, June 28, 1949 (copy); RABP. I have not been able to find Fenton's reply to this letter.

inspiration therefrom" and while striving for brotherhood, "not on a secularist basis, but explicitly on the religious basis of the fatherhood of God," the NCCJ did not pursue its goals of "justice, amity, understanding and cooperation" by trying to remove religious differences or by considering them matters of indifference. It acknowledged "the freedom of the Catholic or the Jew or the Protestant to hold that his faith is the one true faith," claims towards which the NCCJ was simply "non-preferential." It restricted its activities to "areas of common civic concern," avoiding "the area of doctrinal differences" and refusing to sponsor "joint worship, exchange of pulpits, or common observance of Christian and Jewish holy days." The final two paragraphs address the heart of the issue:

9. NCCJ is not an "interfaith" organization, in the sense [in] which that word is commonly understood. There is no attempt at mixture of the three faiths--only common action on common problems by adherents of the three faiths.

10. Nevertheless, the problem with which NCCJ, as a civic agency, deals is the reflection in the civic order of religious and racial differences insofar as these tend to create prejudices and tensions that are injurious to the common good. NCCJ deals with this problem only up to the point where theology becomes involved. At that point NCCJ leaves the field to the authorized spokesmen of the several religious groups.⁵¹

In June, 1949, Clinchy sent a memorandum to all NCCJ offices to explain the new Statement of Policy. It included the following paragraph:

The Statement of Policy as a whole obliges NCCJ to avoid any statements or actions which are repugnant to any of its three constituent groups. A fair analogy is that of a tri-partite treaty. If, for example, the majority of nations entering into the Atlantic Pact insisted on making it obligatory, in case any of the signatories were attacked, that all signatories would ipso facto declare war on the aggressor, the United States could not sign for its constitution would not permit. So, if Protestants and Jews hold that one religion was as good as another (vast numbers of them do not), and were to insist that such a principle be affirmed by NCCJ, Catholics could not subscribe to the Conference because it is repugnant to their basic beliefs.

Clinchy suggested that all speakers invited under NCCJ auspices be given a copy of the Statement and of his letter and that, should a speaker "innocently stray from these principles," someone should politely "make a diplomatic statement of NCCJ's policy in the matter, without explicit advertence to what the prior speaker had said. This must be done carefully and without animus or argumentative spirit; but it should be done." Clinchy ended with a forceful statement: "I do not see how NCCJ can continue as a tripartite organization unless these principles are adhered to. That is why the Executive Committee has seen fit to adopt them as official policy and to make them mandatory."⁵²

Sent copies of the new statement and of Clinchy's letter, Connell replied on July 17th. He was grateful for the effort to remove from NCCJ statements "any assertions that would violate the conscience of Catholics," and he stated his view that the aim of the organization was "admirable." But he repeated his conviction that he thought that the meetings the NCCJ sponsored still posed the danger of indifferentism, particularly because of statements by non-Catholic participants, but also because of the implications of the mere presence of a Catholic, especially a priest.

And so, I still believe that there are dangers to the faith of Catholics in participation in the NCCJ. Of course, such dangers are considerably less in the case of Catholics who are well educated in their faith, and can make the proper

⁵¹ NCCJ, "Statement of Policy," March 28, 1949; RABP.

⁵² Clinchy to All NCCJ Offices, Memorandum, June 23, 1949; AWC, Parsons Papers.

distinctions. I certainly do not say that it is per se wrong for Catholics to participate; and when a bishop allows members of his flock to take part, I believe that he has weighed the advantages and disadvantages and considers the former adequate to justify the toleration of the latter. But Catholics who wish to participate should always be warned against the danger of indifferentism, which is present, in a greater or less degree, notwithstanding the commendable measures taken by Dr. Clinchy.⁵³

Heffron's reply asked Connell to consider indicating in the *AER* how matters now stood at the NCCJ in the light of the Statement of Policy and Clinchy's commentary on it. But he also raised a new consideration, reflecting greater contemporary tensions in Catholic-Protestant relations:

Great numbers of Protestants and Jews are being taken in by the Oxnam-Blanshard-POAU line, not all of them prejudiced or ill-disposed by any means.⁵⁴ I don't know how we shall convince such people that we are not as bad as we are painted, unless we associate with them. Such association has its dangers, as you rightly point out. But as you agree in your letter, we have taken great pains to reduce those dangers, in NCCJ, to only the inescapable minimum. And it seems to me that the dangers of such limited and conditioned association are dwarfed by the dangers, in fact the assured detriments, of complete isolation.

Furthermore, if NCCJ, with all its present safeguards, were to vacate the field, I feel confident it would result in a corresponding growth in size and influence of Intercultural Educations Bureaus and other secularist intergroup agencies.⁵⁵

No reply of Connell to this letter is found in his papers, but in the October, 1949, issue of the *AER* he did insert a new question about the NCCJ in which he admitted that the officers of the Conference wished to avoid statements contrary to Catholic religious principles, but added his continuing view that "affiliation and participation on the part of Catholics in this organization are likely to endanger their faith gravely by leading them to think that religious differences are of little account."⁵⁶

The NCCJ and Parsons

Dissatisfied with this end to his correspondence with Connell, Heffron turned to Wilfred Parsons for help. In October, 1949, he wrote the Jesuit, outlining his exchange of letters with Connell and regretting that the *AER* had not given the NCCJ a chance to explain itself. Since he, as a layman,

⁵³ Connell promised that in the future he would no longer quote the offensive statements he had cited in his article; Connell to Heffron, Washington, July 17, 1949 (copy); RABP.

⁵⁴ Paul Blanshard had been severely critical of the NCCJ in his book, *American Freedom and Catholic Power*, for having failed to criticize several Catholic positions. Everett Clinchy responded to Blanshard in *America*, May 7, 1949. Heffron himself had published an article, "Protestant-Catholic Tensions," *The Catholic Digest* (February, 1949) 61-66, in which he had tried to defend Catholics against the attacks of the new organization, Protestants and Other Americans United for Separation of Church and State. In the course of his text, he had referred approvingly to Murray's CTSA talk of the previous summer. A copy of this article is found in Connell's papers (RABP), with a typed note from an unidentified source: "Dear Father Connell: You are the one to answer this half-baked Article on the Faith. You have done it so well before." Connell does not seem to have taken up the suggestion.

⁵⁵ Heffron to Connell, New York, July 20, 1949; RABP.

⁵⁶ Francis J. Connell, "The National Conference of Christians and Jews," *AER*, 121 (Oct., 1949) 341-42.

had been unsuccessful, he asked Parsons to write a letter to the editor. He added a post-script: "I'm writing similarly to Fr. Murray et al."⁵⁷

Parsons replied two days later, expressing "a personal embarrassment" caused by the Statement of Policy and Clinchy's commentary which he felt internally contradictory for having maintained the purely civic character of the cooperation it fostered but having described itself as based on certain common religious convictions. He thought such an argument was unnecessary: "why should we tangle up a perfectly simple and meritorious inter-denominational course of action in civic matters in an inevitably unsuccessful attempt to justify it on some kind of religious grounds?" "Theological wrangling" could be avoided by simply stating that while the groups had "external differences," they were joined by "a common desire to help the common good of our country."⁵⁸

In subsequent letters to Parsons, Heffron revealed the result of his efforts to defend the NCCJ before some U.S. bishops. Archbishop Robert E. Lucey (San Antonio) had recently written to him:

It is true, of course, that at meetings of the NCCJ, an occasional speaker will get off the beam and express the conviction that one religion is as good as another. It seems to me that this sort of thing could be heard at almost any meeting where non-Catholics gather; for example, at a meeting of the Rotary Club. If our Catholic men in the United States must avoid all possibility of contact however slight with indifferentism they had better take up their residence in the Galapagos Islands & leave the United States to Communists and bigots.

On the other hand, Heffron had received quite another response from Bishop Charles E. Helmsing, representing Archbishop Ritter in St. Louis, whom he had asked about the possibility of improving NCCJ's relations with that archdiocese:

The Bishop handed me a copy of Pius XI's encyclical "The Promotion of True Religious Unity" (*Mortalium animos*) and said he thought that disposed of the question. When I argued that NCCJ did not seek religious unity, but only the civic unity of religious people, his answer was that maybe that's what we sought, but what our work added up to, willy-nilly, was something else again. As we went further and further into this, he tended to lay the gravamen of his case on the name, "National Conference of Christians and Jews."⁵⁹

The Holy Office's Interpretation of its Monitum

On March 1, 1950, the *Osservatore Romano* first published an Instruction on the ecumenical movement that was itself dated December 20, 1949.⁶⁰ This text represented an advance on the earlier warning because of the positive way in which it spoke of the ecumenical movement, its relaxation of the rules for ecclesiastical approval of ecumenical meetings, its permission of certain types of

⁵⁷ Heffron to Parsons, New York, October 17, 1949; AWC, Parsons Papers; Box 10, File 48. I have not found any correspondence between Heffron and Murray.

⁵⁸ Parsons to Heffron, Washington, October 19, 1949 (copy); AWC, Parsons Papers, Box 10, File 48.

⁵⁹ Heffron to Parsons, New York, November 4 and December 20, 1949; AWC, Parsons Papers, Box 10, File 48.

⁶⁰ For an English translation, see Bernard Leeming, *The Churches and the Church: A Study of Ecumenism* (Westminster, MD: Newman, 1960) 282-87 (Leeming's commentary on the text is found on pp. 264-72); for various European interpretations and reactions, see Fouilloux, *Les catholiques et l'unité chrétienne*, 916-23, and Swidler, *The Ecumenical Vanguard*, 215-22.

common prayer, and its interpretation of the 1948 *Monitum*. In the fourth section of the Instruction, certain types of meetings were declared *not* to fall under that document's legislation:

Nor does the warning of 1948 apply to those mixed gatherings where Catholics and non-Catholics meet, not to discuss matters of faith and morals, but to take counsel together concerning joint action in the defence of the fundamental principles of Christianity and the natural law; nor does it apply to occasions when they meet to deal with the rebuilding of the social order and similar questions.

Two months after the publication of the Instruction, Connell offered his own commentary.⁶¹ He accurately noted the sentence just quoted and illustrated what was permitted by the example of Catholics joining fellow-citizens in opposing an obscene films, promoting workers' rights, objecting to euthanasia--all questions of the natural law--and even in "upholding fundamental Christian principles," for example, the divinity of Christ in the face of Communist ridicule. He insisted, however, that "the Instruction makes no concession in the matter of doctrinal or moral principles previously held by the Catholic Church" and warned priests "lest, in their zeal to bring the light of the true faith to those who are outside the Church, they compromise in any way the principles of Catholic doctrine."

The Holy Office's Instruction, of course, also attracted the attention of the NCCJ. Within a month of its publication Edward Heffron was already circulating a draft of his own unofficial interpretation of the document, offered, he said, "to assure that none of our Directors go overboard by declaring that the Instruction is an explicit endorsement of NCCJ--or that it is a condemnation of NCCJ, either."⁶² He noted that the Instruction reaffirmed the earlier *Monitum* but that it "goes on to explain it in a sense more liberal than that in which it was previously understood." After illustrating this greater freedom by reference to the text, he expressed his hope that it would be interpreted "as permitting the kind of meetings NCCJ usually holds. We shall have to wait and see what the commentaries say about this..." It was less clear to him whether the Instruction permitted only parallel or also joint actions of Catholics with others. He also suggested that the limited permission of joint prayer could also apply to the types of meetings sponsored by the NCCJ.

Heffron ended his memorandum with several paragraphs that seem to reflect tensions within his organization. He defended the right of the Catholic Church to set out its own conditions, something, he argued, which Protestants and Jews in fact also did. Jews and many Protestants, for instance, would be unlikely to agree to the NCCJ's supporting Released Time programs or opposing the McCollum decision of the Supreme Court. He also warned Protestants and Jews against assuming that they were the only members in the organization: "NCCJ as presently constituted consists of Protestants, Jews and Catholics. I believe there has been some tendency to overlook this in speaking of 'where NCCJ stands,' what 'our principles are,' what 'we believe,' etc." To accept only the conditions set down by Protestants and Jews while neglecting those of Catholics would mean the end of the organization. Catholics were only stating that to take part in the NCCJ's activities, they should not be required to compromise their faith.

⁶¹ Francis Connell, "An Important Roman Instruction," *AER*, 122 May, 1950) 321-30.

⁶² Heffron, Draft Memorandum to all NCCJ Offices, March, 1950; AWC, LaFarge Papers.

By June Heffron had himself left the NCCJ for another job, but before leaving he had elaborated his memorandum into a twenty-page pamphlet.⁶³ In arguing for the possibility and usefulness of such participation, he followed Parsons and Murray in quoting and interpreting papal statements on cooperation, responded directly to Connell's concern that the NCCJ ran the danger of indifference, and quoted Connell's recent remark that the Holy Office's Instruction did not apply to interfaith gatherings for the promotion of good will.

Soon after it appeared, Connell received two copies of Heffron's pamphlet, one from Bishop Vincent S. Waters (Raleigh) and another from the Director of the NCCJ's Commission on Religious Organizations, Allyn P. Robinson.⁶⁴ On July 14th, Connell sent rather similar letters to both men (I will quote from the one to Bishop Waters). Connell thought that Heffron had made "a good case for participation from the theoretical standpoint." But the same, practical problem remained: "veiled indifferentistic ideas may come into these gatherings too often."⁶⁵

Later Events

Over three years after the Vatican had sought information on the International Council of Christians and Jews, Cicognani confidentially informed the U.S. Bishops that the Holy Office had concluded that although the chief purpose of the Council was to combat anti-Semitism and to defend Jews, it had also become "a promoter of religious tolerance and complete equality of the various religious faiths." For that reason to take part in its meetings, Catholics were bound by the norms of the 1948 *monitum*, and, if properly authorized, they could attend them only as observers. Such permission should not be given to prominent Catholics nor should such meetings be held at Catholic institutions.⁶⁶

Cicognani transmitted this decision to the U.S. Bishops, one of whom, Archbishop Cushing (Boston), appears to have taken this notice to imply disapproval also of the NCCJ,⁶⁷ a view suggested also by Connell when he wrote to an old adversary of interfaith meetings:

It will be interesting to you to know that the Holy Office recently forbade participation of any Catholics in the International Congress of Christians and Jews, with the headquarters (I believe) in Switzerland. Of course, this is not the same organization as the Conference of Christians and Jews in our land, but I am inclined to believe that the general purpose is about the same. As I received this information confidentially, I would not wish to be quoted just at present, though I suppose the statement will be brought out in the Acta.⁶⁸

⁶³ Edward J. Heffron, *On the Participation of Catholics in the National Conference of Christians and Jews* (New York: NCCJ, 1950).

⁶⁴ Waters to Connell, Raleigh, June 29, 1950; Robinson to Connell, New York, June 13, 1950; RABP

⁶⁵ Connell to Waters, Washington, July 14, 1950 (copy); Connell to Robinson, Washington, July 14, 1950; RABP.

⁶⁶ Cicognani to "Your Excellency," Washington, December 6, 1950; NCWC/USCC. The point about not having prominent Catholics participate may have been a reaction to the agreement of Jacques Maritain to serve as Catholic co-chairman.

⁶⁷ See Fogarty, *The Vatican and the American Bishops*, 358.

⁶⁸ Connell to Brophy, Washington, January 2, 1951 (copy); RABP. Connell was replying to the complaint Brophy had expressed at Msgr. Maurice Sheehy's accepting the post of Catholic co-chairman of the Commission on Religious

McIntyre, now the Archbishop of Los Angeles, was also pleased by Cicognani's communication. Assuming that the International Conference of Christians and Jews was "the development or outgrowth" of the NCCJ, he replied with a memorandum summarizing his long-standing opposition to the latter whose primary purpose he saw to be "to equalize the Jewish people on the religious, social and economic basis with other Americans." The logical conclusion of having representatives of the three faiths appear together was "that one religion is as good as another", while the Conference's statements and actions promoted "the least common denominator in religion, which really is no religion." He added a further accusation: "...a few years ago at one of the Conferences in Switzerland, shared in by the National Conference of Christians and Jews, a resolution was adopted advocating the expunging of the Crucifixion from the Scriptures."⁶⁹

Four years later, Bishop Edward V. Dargin, auxiliary of New York, was still reading the Holy Office decree as a warning against the NCCJ in the U.S. "It is true," he admitted, "that the directive of the Apostolic Delegate applies directly to the International Organization of this group, but it necessarily reflects the attitude of the Holy See toward the National group."⁷⁰

On a perhaps related matter, note may be taken that in September 1951 the U.S. bishops were informed, under strict confidentiality, that the Holy Office, consulted on the matter, had concluded that no "secular and religious priests, much less Sisters," participate in the meetings of 'Moral Rearmament' in which forms of common life are adopted;" that any such participation must be requested beforehand of the Holy Office and could only involve "learned and experienced priests;" and that the faithful should not "accept posts of responsibility" in the movement.⁷¹

Conclusion/transition: JCM's comment at 1950 ecumenical meeting outside Rome that ecumenical relations do not exist in the U.S. ? YES!

Organizations of the NCCJ. Connell assured Brophy: "Steps are being taken to adjust the matter about which you wrote to me on November 29. Our Archbishop is going to settle the affair prudently. As far as I know, the appointment in question will last only a short time."

⁶⁹ McIntyre to Cicognani, Los Angeles, 14 December 1950; AALA Mc415. The last remark appears to refer to a meeting sponsored by the International Conference of Christians and Jews held in Seelisberg, July 30 - August 5, 1947, at which ten points were agreed upon for the revision of the treatment of Jews in Christian preaching and teaching. McIntyre's interpretation is, to say the least, distorted: no such resolution is found among the ten points of the declaration issued by Christian participants. The nearest possible statement is that Christians should "avoid presenting the Passion in such a way as to bring the odium of the killing of Jesus upon all Jews or upon Jews alone. It was only a section of the Jews in Jerusalem who demanded the death of Jesus, and the Christian message has always been that it was the sins of mankind which were exemplified by those Jews and the sins in which all men share that brought Christ to the Cross." For the text of the ten points see John Cogley, "A Program for Tolerance," *The Commonweal*, 50 (June 10, 1949) 217-19; see *Les Eglises devant le judaïsme*, 20-21; Pitt, *Adventures in Brotherhood*, 228-29, who mistakenly states that Jacques Maritain had spoken at the meeting; Maritain sent a communication read at the meeting by his friend, Charles Journet, but Maritain did agree to become the Catholic co-chairman. See also *The Commonweal* (27 Feb 1948); Charles Molette, "Jacques Maritain et la Conférence de Seelisberg," *Nova et Vetera* (1994) 196-223; *Une mémoire pour l'avenir - Cinquante ans de dialogue entre juifs et chrétiens* (Lausanne: Ed. Du Zèbre, 1997).

⁷⁰ Dargin to Weldon, New York, December 13, 1954 (copy); ASJS.

⁷¹ Cicognani to "Your Excellency," Washington, September 21, 1951; AACinc, Alter papers.

The Ten Points of See;osberg”

1. It must be recalled that one and the same God speaks to us in the Old and New Testament.
2. It must be recalled that Jesus was born of a Jewish mother, belonging to the family of David and the people of Israel, and that his everlasting love and mercy embrace his own people and the entire world.
3. It must be recalled that the first disciples, the apostles, and the earliest martyrs were Jews.
4. It must be recalled that the principal commandment of Christianity, the love of God and neighbour, which was announced in the Old Testament and confirmed by Jesus, is of equal obligation, in all human relations without exception, for Jews and Christians alike.
5. Belittling biblical and post-biblical Judaism as a means of exalting Christianity must be avoided.
6. Using the word 'ews' in the exclusive meaning of 'Jesus' enemies' and the words 'the enemies of Jesus' to designate the Jewish people as a whole must be avoided.
7. Presenting the passion of Jesus as if all Jews, or Jews only, have incurred the odium of the crucifixion must be avoided. Not all Jews demanded the death of Jesus. Not only Jews were responsible for it. The cross, which saves humanity, reveals that Christ has died for the sins of all of us. Christian parents and teachers should be reminded of their great responsibility in telling the story of Jesus' suffering. By doing it in a superficial manner, they run the risk of creating an aversion in the hearts of their children or listeners. In a simple mind, moved by an ardent love and compassion for the crucified Saviour, a natural abhorrence for Jesus' persecutors may easily turn, from psychological reasons, into an indiscriminate hate of the Jews of all times, even of our own day.
8. Care must be taken to avoid treating the condemnations of Scripture and the cry of the enraged crowds, 'His blood be on us and our children', without recalling that this cry does not outweigh the words of our Lord of incomparably greater consequence, 'Father forgive them, for they know not what they do'.
9. Care must be taken to avoid encouraging in any way the opinion that the Jews are a people accursed, reprobated, and set aside for perpetual suffering.
10. It must not be left unmentioned that the first members of the Church were Jews.