

## CURRENT THEOLOGY

### INTERCREDAL CO-OPERATION: ITS THEORY AND ITS ORGANIZATION

The strictly theological aspect of the intercredal co-operation recently urged by the Holy See presents, I think, no particular difficulty. On the other hand, its organization is a real problem. I should like, therefore, to open a discussion of it. But before doing so, I shall take a twofold risk, and go over the theological aspect. The first risk is that of being rather obvious; but it is worth running, if only to prove that no real problem exists. The second risk is that I may possibly cover some of the ground which Father Parsons has undertaken to cover; but, since the question is theological, an independent statement of agreements, or of differences, may be of some value. Besides, I shall have to touch on certain points of theory later on, and it may be as well to attempt a statement of the whole theory. The papal documents, on which it is based, will doubtless have been cited by Father Parsons; hence I may dispense with quotations.

#### THE THEORY OF INTERCREDAL CO-OPERATION

Generally stated, the strictly theological issue would be this: Can Catholics and non-Catholics form a unity by the fact of co-operation without thereby compromising the Catholic Unity of the Church? The answer will depend on the nature of the unity so constituted, and it in turn will depend on the purposes of the co-operation. For instance, formal Catholic participation in an act of interconfessional worship would imply a doctrinal and ecclesiastical unity with the non-Catholic participants that would be contradictory of the Catholic Unity of the Church as a reality with definite frontiers. Again, active Catholic participation in the ecumenical movement, as it actually exists, would imply in the concrete a negation of the Catholic Unity of the Church as a reality already "given." On the other hand, Catholic co-operation with non-Catholics in a Chamber of Commerce or a political party would assert simply a civic unity that bears no relation to Catholic Unity.

At the moment, we are concerned with the particular type of co-operation with non-Catholics recently urged by the Holy See. It is a unique type, not identical with any of those mentioned. Nevertheless, once it is grasped for what it is, it presents no difficulty at all from the standpoint of theological principles. If it did, we must suppose that the Popes would have indicated them. They evidently conceive this co-operation as implying and

asserting a real unity between Catholics and non-Catholics, which in no sense compromises the Catholic Unity of the Church, and consequently raises no theoretical issue.

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. The crisis, as Pius XI often said, is unique in history. 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. There must be, on the one hand, a respiritualization of the whole ethos of society; the temporal order as a unitary whole must receive a new moral direction. And on the other hand, there must be an erection or a restoration of social institutions that will correspond to the new ethos; the human person must be freed from the present intolerable pressure of myriad institutional tyrannies, economic, social, and political. 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.

Confronted with this unique and colossal task, the Church has appealed for allies among all men of good will, who believe in God and reverence His law. The premise of her appeal is both the nature of the task, and her own inadequacy to do it (not a doctrinal or spiritual, but a numerical and strategic inadequacy—the Church is the Body of Christ, but she is a minority group, and an "out-group"). The appeal itself is for unity and co-operation among all the religious forces that exist outside her visible body, but are not uninfluenced by the one Spirit who dwells in her. This unity and co-operation are to be as unique as the task which makes them necessary. This is the important point to have clear.

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. The Holy See has clearly said that today’s task can only be performed by a great unity that is at once inter-confessional and spiritual. It must embrace all religious men, and its bond of unity must be 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.

Consider now the other aspect of the task: it is to be performed in the temporal order. For the spiritual crisis is in the temporal order. Consequently, the Holy See desires a spiritual and interconfessional unity to be organized (I shall suppose for the moment that it is to be organized) for a work, the immediate scope of which is within the confines of the earthly city, but which remains fundamentally a spiritual work. For the earthly city must have its spirit renewed, as well as its institutional pattern changed. From this special finality the interconfessional co-operative action receives its distinctive character, which in turn reflects back, and characterizes the spiritual unity which is its source and inspiration.

Obviously, then, we have here a quite unique unity, not easy to categorize. It does not belong wholly to the spiritual order, nor wholly to the temporal order; by definition it is a border-line thing. Perhaps, for the sake of a name, one might call it “religio-civic.” It partakes of the nature of a civic unity because it is formed for the pursuit of the common good in the socio-economic order. But it transcends a mere civic unity because its bond is religious—faith in God and love of His law. Moreover, though its purposes remain within the temporal order, it concerns itself with the spiritual dynamic of the entire order, as well as with the techniques for its management in particular spheres. Consequently, it partakes also of the nature of a religious unity. For this reason, the qualification “religio-civic” might stand.

At all events, this spiritual and interconfessionally organized unity appears clearly as not ecclesiastical. It does not pretend to be the City of God in its terrestrial form, the economy of eternal salvation, the way to the Father in heaven. It is not divinely willed, except insofar as the will of God is manifested in the exigencies of our particular historical situation, which demands that men create it. In itself, it remains within the natural order of human institutions; of itself, consequently, it does not pretend to

be a means or a milieu of "grace." It puts itself forward simply as the necessary means in a concrete context for the communication to mankind as a unity the benefits of a rightly directed and rightly ordered earthly city—a means which is necessary because it can call on the religious energies without which the city cannot be inspirited, or ordered. It does not put itself forward as the long-awaited "interconfessional Church." Consequently, the Holy See relaxes none of the exigencies of the Catholic Unity of the Church, when at the same time it urges with remarkable boldness the establishment of an organizational unity that will be both spiritual and interconfessional. The point is that the two "unities" exist on two different planes. The unity of the Church is essentially supernatural, having its exemplar in the unity of Father and Son within the one life of God, that admits of no divisions (John 17:11, 21-23). Moreover, even in its visible, historical realization, it is a unity not of this world; for its efficient principle is the positive will of Christ, who determined the structural lines within which the action of His Spirit would organize the spiritual life of humanity in God. On the plane of supernatural, ecclesiastical unity, therefore, any species of interconfessionalism is disruptive of established reality, and contrary to the revealed will of God. But no expressed will of God forbids the human establishment of a spiritual and interconfessional unity on a distinct, non-ecclesiastical plane, and for a distinct non-ecclesiastical purpose.

In concluding this part, let me indicate what I think is the best way to understand the theory of the intercredal co-operation for which this intercredal unity is to be established. I mean, by drawing an analogy of proportionality between it and Catholic Action (in the papal, not the customarily American sense). Between the two, there is, I think, a real *ratio proportionaliter similis*, which exists in each *secundum quid eadem, et totaliter diversa*. The *ratio* (O blessed word!) is in the fact that both are organizational forms whereby the spiritual power may get a grip on the temporal order, and direct and regulate it in its purposes and institutions towards ends that are conformable to the demands of man's spiritual nature. Both, therefore, are uniquely constituted religio-social instrumentalities for bridging the chasm between the spiritual and the temporal that has been created by modern secularism. Moreover, both are the work of laymen and of lay responsibility, both are social apostolates, both are organized, and both are "mandated" by a spiritual authority.

The fact that "Religio-Civic Action" (*sit venia maiusculis!*) is organized and lay in character may be left aside for the moment. The fact that it is a social apostolate should be clear from what has been said. Its basic idea is surely apostolic—the idea that belief in God, by the sheer fact of its

possession, imposes a personal responsibility towards human society, and a consequent duty (that, of course, can be performed only in union with others) to see that this belief is made the fundamental principle of social order. Finally, this social apostolate is mandated by a spiritual authority—in the case, the absolute sovereignty of God, who is ruler of nations as well as of individuals.

In these respects "Religio-Civic Action" bears a proportionate resemblance to Catholic Action. But 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 (advisedly with a small *a*) 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.

I do not think this analogy is factitious. Its only disadvantage lies in the fact that, if "Religio-Civic Action" is a bit difficult to understand, Catholic Action (on the testimony of Pius XI) is extremely difficult to understand. There is reason to suppose, therefore, that those who did not understand the Popes when they spoke of one, will not understand them when they speak of the other.

So much, then for the strictly theological aspect of intercredal co-operation in the papal sense. As I said, all it needs is clarification. What I have written may help in that direction, or—in the phrase that made a military expert famous—it may not.

#### THE PROBLEM OF ORGANIZATION

The real problem is in the practical order, and concerns the organization of this intercredal effort. Perhaps three questions should be distinguished:

(1) Should the co-operation be organized? (2) What should be the organizational form? (3) What should be the co-operating personnel? The last question leads into the question of the Catholic contribution, and how it could most effectively and prudently be made, and also into the question of the non-Catholic view. The initial standpoint of the whole discussion is, of course, the ascertainable wishes of the Holy See. And a full discussion would include regard both for the ideally desirable and the practically possible.

The first question is relatively simple. The fact that the co-operation must be organized results from the whole description given by the Holy See of the work to be done. This work is the creation of a new complex of ethical currents in society, and their incorporation in a new set of social institutions, in order that both together may support, instead of crushing, the moral conscience as well as the temporal happiness of mankind. To do all this, organization is absolutely necessary. The moral life of an isolated individual has a certain inspirational power, but it will not create an ethos in society. One family's heroic devotion to the moral ideals of family life will not shatter the whole existing set of social institutions that now render the achievement of those ideals inhumanly difficult; still less will it create a new set of social institutions that will exert a permanent pressure on the social conscience in the direction of high domestic morality. Again, it is generally recognized today that even a general "will to peace" on the part of individual nations will not insure a stable international order unless it is institutionalized in an international organization, that will function as a sort of collective conscience and be able to enforce its imperatives. The principle is clear: action for social organization must be social and organized in its principle. There is hardly need to belabor the point.

But one might again use the analogy with Catholic Action. Pius XI constantly insisted that Catholic Action, by reason of its purpose, is a firmly structured organization. In its theory, the ultimate agent, as well as the ultimate beneficiary, of all social change is the free human person, with its conscience methodically educated as to its personal responsibility to society, within its own milieu. Moreover, the action of the individual always has to be on other individuals. However, the education of the individual conscience has to take place within an organization, and the action of personal apostolate becomes an agent of social change only when the responsible person has its action supported and strengthened at every step by the powerful social force which only organizational solidarity can create. An allusion to Communism would be apposite here. On their side, the Popes today call for more than personal heroism in making a forlorn defensive stand against the organized forces of evil; they emphatically want the organized

effort that alone will be victorious over these forces. If all this is true in Catholic Action theory, it is true also in the theory of intercredal co-operation.

The more difficult question, therefore, concerns, not the fact, but the mode, of organization. On this point, we have one highly instructive papal document, the *Singulari Quadam* of Pius X. Moreover, since this is the only papal document that treats at length of a problem very similar to, but smaller than, the one that concerns us here, it will be worth while to study its complete doctrine.

### *Singulari Quadam*

The background of the Encyclical is the celebrated *Gewerkschaftsstreit* among Catholics in Germany at the beginning of the century. It is, however, too complicated to give in detail.<sup>1</sup> The central issue, which was both doctrinal and tactical, concerned Catholic co-operation with non-Catholics in the labor union movement. In the customary Catholic way, the doctrinal issue was posited in consequence of a practical initiative taken by Catholics to meet a particular situation. In the '90's, the rise of German heavy industry coincided with an upswing of the social-democratic movement, consequent on the repeal of the *Sozialistengesetz*. There was general unrest among the working class, and the infiltration of Marxist ideas, through labor unions founded on them, assumed serious proportions. Catholic trade unions, only just reborn after the *Kulturkampf*, were numerically weak, and still somewhat confused as to their own purposes. Consequently, in order to combat Marxism, as well as to influence German economic life in a Christian sense, the first *christliche Gewerkschaft* was founded in 1894 among the miners at Essen. It was shortly followed by similar organizations for textile workers, etc.

These Christian Trade Unions professed to "embrace members of both Christian confessions [Catholic and Evangelical], but to take their stand on Christian ground."<sup>2</sup> The ground was, negatively, a common opposition to Marxist principles (materialism, class warfare, etc.), and positively, the recognition that the economic problem involved moral issues which could only be settled on the basis of the Christian *Weltanschauung*. So far as I know, no programmatic statement of this "Christian ground" was ever officially attempted. It seems to have been commonly recognized simply

<sup>1</sup> Cf. a brief history in *Staatslexikon* (Freiburg im Br.: Herder, 1926), I, 282-86, *s.v.* "Arbeitervereine"; or in H. Pesch, *Lehrbuch der Nationalökonomie* (Freiburg im Br.: Herder, 1926), III, 669-83 (bibliography, pp. 669-70).

<sup>2</sup> In the official statement at their first convention in 1899, as cited in H. Pesch, *op. cit.*, p. 672.

as the ground on which the social life of the West actually stood—the principles of justice and charity which centuries of belief in God and in Christ had made part of the texture of a society that called itself Christian.

The initiative in founding these Christian Trade Unions, as well as the bulk of their membership, was Catholic. Behind them stood the *Volksverein für das katholische Deutschland*, founded in 1890 by two great figures, Brandts and Hitze, as a means of uniting all Catholic activity in the social field, of making it an effective force against socialism, and especially of directing it as a whole, not only in the interests of a vigorous Catholic life, but also toward the wider goal of a sound national life. By reason of this latter emphasis, interconfessional co-operation was quite in the logic of its program.

The Rhineland idea was followed in Bavaria, and at first it won approval also in the North and East. But the 1900 Fulda Pastoral of the Prussian episcopate came out against it, and favored the development of strictly Catholic occupational groups (*Fachabteilungen*) within the Catholic *Arbeitervereine*, whose history, filled with many vicissitudes, went back to von Ketteler. No stand was directly taken against interconfessional co-operation as such, but simply against the Rhineland mode of its organization.

The dispute which ensued lasted more than a decade; it was waged, at times with lamentable bitterness, in speeches and in the spate of trade-union periodicals that deluged the country. Two schools of thought were formed—the *Kölner* (or *München-Gladbach*) *Richtung*, standing for the Christian Trade Union idea, and the *Berliner Richtung*, standing for strictly confessional organization. Moreover, in consequence of unstoppable German *Gründlichkeit*, what was at first a practical question of tactics quickly became a profound theoretical dispute between two schools of Catholic *Sozialpolitik*. Mausbach puts the issue thus: "One school of thought demands that the integral Catholic faith and a supernatural dynamism should penetrate all personal, corporative, and public activity, in the sense that 'even profane culture in its special characteristics should grow out of the religious world-view, as from its root, and be saturated with it' [quoting a brochure from the Berlin school, *Cologne, An Inner Danger to Catholicism*]. The other school of thought believes that Catholic faith and morality permit, and at times demand, quite a different relationship to temporal culture. It asserts 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."<sup>3</sup> This latter school, he goes on, completely agrees with the former in opposing all inter-confessionalism in the "liberal" sense, and in asserting the complete domination of faith over the entire personal life. Moreover, "even insofar as public life is concerned, this school limits the controlling influence of faith only in certain spheres, to the degree that such limitation is made necessary by the contemporary social situation, which is no longer unitedly Catholic, and to the degree, too, that the natural law is observed and no personal religious or moral obligations are infringed."<sup>4</sup> 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 de-Christianized. This is certainly a powerful problem.<sup>5</sup> In fact, it has nowhere yet been solved.

At all events, even in the particular problem of labor unions there was room for difference of opinion. And the arguments on both sides, if generalized, are worth our consideration today.<sup>6</sup> For instance, the Berlin school raised doubts about the possibility of the "common Christian basis" on which the Christian Trade Unions professed to be founded; they pointed out the serious religious differences between Catholics and Protestants. Moreover, this common ground appeared to them religiously weak, too vague to afford proper guidance for trade-union activity, too inadequate to furnish a weapon against social democracy. They capitalized on the fact that only the Catholic Church had presented an unbroken front against Marxism (which, in fact, had won allies even among Protestant pastors); and they maintained that the full armory of Catholic doctrine would remain more effective against it than any purely economic measures. Above all,

<sup>3</sup> J. Mausbach, *Die katholische Moral und ihre Gegner* (Köln: Bachem, 1911), pp 355-56. The whole last chapter of this excellent book, "Konfession und bürgerliches Leben" (pp. 354-404), deals largely with the *Gewerkschaftsstreit*, which was still going on at the time. In a later edition, of which there is an English translation, *Catholic Moral Teaching and its Antagonists* (trans. A. M. Buchanan, from the sixth German edition, New York: Wagner, 1914), the whole last chapter is revised to include a discussion of *Singulari Quodam*, and a discussion of the relation of Catholic ethics to secular civilization.

<sup>4</sup> Mausbach, *Die katholische Moral*, p. 356.

<sup>5</sup> In Germany it also motivated a long dispute over the principles and activities of the Center party; cf. J. Laurentius, "Öffentliche Tätigkeit auf Grund katholischer Überzeugung," *Stimmen aus Maria-Laach*, LXXXVI (1914), 255-65.

<sup>6</sup> Cf. H. Pesch, "Kirchliche Autorität und wirtschaftliche Organisation," *Stimmen aus Maria-Laach*, LXXV (1908), 410-24; *idem*, "Bisheriges und künftiges Verhalten der deutschen Katholiken in der Arbeiterfrage," *ibid.*, LXX (1906), 481-93.

they insisted on the basically religious character of the economic crisis, and on the right of the Church to govern the activity of her children where religion and morals are concerned. Hence the bishops of the North and East modestly (for they had other bishops against them) but firmly demanded that the Catholic trade-union movement be kept under their direct pastoral authority. They distrusted (and at times misinterpreted) the independence of ecclesiastical authority that was claimed (at times exaggeratedly) by the Christian Trade Unions. Moreover, in the practical order they felt these latter to be ill adapted to the Protestant North and East, to be a danger to existing Catholic unions, an undermining of the *Zentrum*, etc. The journalists of the Berlin school were, of course, more exuberantly condemnatory. As is not infrequent in a good Catholic fight, they went heresy-hunting with much righteous enthusiasm; they flung *Rerum Novarum* at whatever heads showed along the Rhine, and, of course, found the irremediable virus of religious indifferentism in all this interconfessional friendship.

On its side, the Cologne school (which was on the theoretical defensive at the same time that it was winning great practical success) professed full loyalty to integral Catholic social doctrine. They pointed out that the Christian Trade Unions by no means underestimated the religious factor in the social problem, and proved their sincerity by positively encouraging their members to belong also to confessional unions. They maintained that the co-operative action was sufficiently controlled by common belief in God and in Christ, and by common acceptance of the moral law, since its activity was in the socio-economic field. But, in particular, they maintained the pressing necessity of interconfessional organization in order to create a Christian social movement of sufficient numerical and moral strength to reverse the social currents of the day. And they made a strong appeal to the argument *ex fructibus*: the fact was that the admirably organized Christian Trade Unions were a powerful social influence, while the numerically far inferior Catholic unions were heroically struggling for a few gains. Finally, while admitting the dangers of an "interconfessional Christianity," they maintained that the proper educative measures against them were being taken, and were proving adequate. Since many of the Christian Union leaders and advisers were Catholics of high standing, the case for their mode of organization was undoubtedly strong.

In sum, both schools admitted that there were two problems: first, how to strengthen Catholic thought and life among the working class, and secondly, how to increase the efficiency of the trade union as a means toward social justice and an equitable economic order, as against the disruptive influence of Marxism. But the different religious conditions obtaining in

Prussia and the Rhineland affected their sense of relative values and, consequently, their emphases.

Naturally, the controversy reached Rome. On January 23, 1906, the *Osservatore Romano* published this statement: "We are authorized to declare that His Holiness praises and encourages both schools with equal benevolence." And later, in a private audience authentically reported, Pius X explained himself to mean that "in themselves, Catholic organizations are the ideal, but the particular needs of different parts of Germany could dictate that preference be given to either one of the two forms."<sup>7</sup> This declaration was taken as vindicating the orthodoxy of the Cologne school, but it did not settle the dispute. And finally, on July 12, 1912, Pius issued the Encyclical Letter, *Singulari Quadam*.<sup>8</sup>

The Pope gives three reasons for his action: first, he must give a warning against "a vague and indefinite sort of 'interconfessional' Christianity"; secondly, it is his duty to "remove causes of dissension among Catholics, which, because they disperse the energies of good men, can be of no use to anyone save the enemies of religion"; thirdly, he wishes to urge Catholics "to cultivate that peace with their non-Catholic fellow-citizens without which neither social order nor civil prosperity can be achieved."<sup>9</sup>

The doctrinal part of the Letter recalls, first, the duty of Catholics, in social and public life as well as in private life, to make courageous profession of the Christian truth taught by the Church, and especially of the truths insisted on by Leo XIII in *Rerum Novarum*. Three particular truths are singled out: (1) The Christian man should direct all his activity, even in the temporal order, to his highest good and end, and submit it, insofar as it has moral implications, to the judgment of the Church. (2) It is the duty of Christians, as individuals and in organized groups, "not to foster enmity or mutual animosities among social classes, but rather peace and charity." (3) The social problem is basically a religious and moral problem.<sup>10</sup>

In taking up the trade-union problem, the Pope first states his position in general, without reference to any particular nation: "... the most satisfactory, and the most conducive to the true and lasting advantage of their members," are the strictly Catholic associations; they are, therefore, to be set up and fostered "certainly in Catholic regions, and also in others, wherever they seem adapted to meet the various needs of their members." In these regions, therefore, "if it be question of associations which directly

<sup>7</sup> These two facts are noted by Pesch, *art. cit.*, *Stimmen*, LXX (1906), 492.

<sup>8</sup> *AAS*, IV (1912), 657-62.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 657-58.

<sup>10</sup> Cf. *ibid.*, p. 658.

or obliquely touch on the cause of religion and morals," approval cannot be given to associations of mixed Catholic and Protestant membership; for such associations are, or can be, a danger to faith and full loyalty to the Church. "Nevertheless," the Pope goes on, "in saying this, We do not deny that it is legitimate for Catholics (under proper precautions) to work in union with non-Catholics for the common good, in order to improve the lot of the workingman, or to secure better wages or working conditions, or for the sake of any other honest advantage. But for these common purposes, We prefer that Catholic groups be joined with non-Catholic groups through that handy device known as a cartel."<sup>11</sup>

This general statement also serves to do justice to the Berlin school and its values. The Pope then turns to the concrete problem, the request of the Cologne school that its mode of organization be "tolerated": "Having regard for the peculiar situation of Catholicism in Germany, We judge that the petition should be granted, and We declare that Catholic participation may be tolerated and permitted also in those mixed associations which are found in your dioceses, so long as this does not cease to be advantageous and lawful, and provided that precautions be taken to avoid the dangers that We have said are present in such associations." Two precautions are prescribed: (1) that members of interconfessional unions should be formed for their work in Catholic associations; (2) that the interconfessional unions, in their principles and activities, should not be in conflict with Catholic doctrine; vigilance on this latter point is enjoined on the bishops.<sup>12</sup>

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 659-60.

<sup>12</sup> Cf. *ibid.*, pp. 660-61: "Cui Nos petitioni, respicientes peculiarem rei catholicae rationem in Germania, putamus concedendum, declaramusque tolerari posse, et permitti catholicis, ut eas quoque societates mistas, quae in vestris sunt dioecesibus, participant. . . ." On the form of the answer Mausbach says: "The words *tolerari posse* can be understood in various ways; they suggest that something is not necessarily morally bad, but that it is rather an evil to be endured than justified by circumstances. But the expanded phrase *tolerari et permitti* has a more positive meaning. To say that a thing is "permitted," is not indeed to praise or recommend it, but it undoubtedly implies that the action in question is morally permissible, and this is particularly true when such an expression is used by the head of the Church in a document issued in order to quiet men's consciences and remove grounds of dispute. This is evident from other parts of the document. Thus the Catholic associations are described as those most deserving of approbation, *maxime probandae aptissimaeque omnium*, and with reference to intercourse with Protestants the Pope remarks, "We should prefer (*malumus*) a union in the nature of a cartel." Expressions such as these indicate that there is something better, but not a condemnation of the less good. In the same way the Holy Father takes under his protection, and defends from all charges of unorthodoxy, men who for some good reason, or with a good intention [the phrase is *recto consilio*] have joined or wish to join "mixed" associations; this makes it perfectly clear that both the act itself and the resolution to perform it are morally justifiable" (*Catholic Moral Teaching*, p. 434).

The Encyclical concludes with a command to both parties to discontinue all controversy, and with a particular prohibition against mutual recriminations; no one is to impugn the faith of those who join the mixed syndicates, nor may anyone attack the Catholic syndicates.

The first remarkable thing about the Encyclical (apart from the fact that it was issued at all) is the fact that it came so late—only after a decade of strife. The Holy See was evidently reluctant to intervene officially in a practical matter, wherein it wished Catholics to enjoy liberty to adapt their action to the needs of specific situations, given that no Catholic principle was at stake. For our own times, this means that the practical initiatives in organizing intercredal co-operation must come from below, and be simply controlled from above. As a matter of fact, interconfessional organizations, insofar as they are interconfessional, are not ecclesiastical organizations; and hence ecclesiastical authority has no mandate to erect them, though it has full authority to judge projected or existent structures, and to require that Catholics conform to the judgment.<sup>13</sup> The point is that in expressing so strongly the wish—better perhaps, the command—that intercredal co-operation be organized, the Holy See has expressed the wish, *bezw.*, the command, that experiments be made in its organization. Some experimentation will be necessary. Mistakes, therefore, become possible. Still, in the long effort of the Church to solve the problem of the relation between the spiritual and the temporal, mistakes have been made in the practical order. Intercredal co-operation, in a sense, is part of that effort. Hence it seems to me inevitable that some risk of making mistakes must accompany a serious attempt to organize it. They will hardly be as damaging as no effort at all. And the Holy See, and the bishops, will be ready to correct them.

### *The Common Good*

The second noteworthy thing about *Singulari Quadam* is that it bears the cachet of all Pius X's work—his preoccupation with the unity of the Church, the concentration of all her religious forces, and their animation by the highest affirmations of Catholic faith. The dominant motive of the Letter is his wish that the mystical and juridical unity of the Church be reinforced by a practical unity, to avoid "dispersal of energies," and to insure the "great advances [of the German Church] in religious and civil life" that was the main object of his desires.<sup>14</sup>

<sup>13</sup> Cf. Mausbach, *op. cit.*, pp. 399-426; H. Pesch, *Lehrbuch der Nationalökonomie*, II, Kap. I, §5.

<sup>14</sup> *AAS*, IV (1912), 662.

In his doctrine, Pius X is in the Catholic and Leonine tradition in emphasizing the sovereign contribution that the Catholic social apostolate can make to the solution of the social problem, for the reason that it is guided by the living authority of the Church, which enlightens the Christian conscience and gives it a welcome sureness and sanity of judgment on the complicated moral issues involved in the regulation of the temporal order. On this principle his preferential recommendation of Catholic trade unions is based, rather more than on the practical dangers of interconfessional unions. 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. Pius X's deepest meaning is that the Catholic soul, clarified and energized to full intensity, and united in solidarity with others, is—or should be—the most potent force for social betterment. He did not conceive the Catholic trade unions as asylums for the weak, or organs of partisan interest. If he preferred them, it was not simply because they were Catholic, but because, being Catholic, they were more powerful instruments for the common good. This preoccupation with the common good runs all through the Letter, as a sort of counterpoint to his preoccupation with the unity of the Church.

It explains, for instance, his singularly frank recognition of the limitations, in a particular context, of Catholic associations. His recommendation of them, though universal in the abstract, is limited in the concrete to "Catholic regions, and other regions where they seem to be adequate to the needs of their members." And his permission for their abandonment in favor of interconfessional organizations is motivated by the fact that these latter, in particular circumstances, may be more conducive to the common good. His desire for the common good is behind his command that Catholics be at peace with their non-Catholic fellow-citizens, and partly, too, behind his command that they be at peace with each other. In fact, the balanced demands of the unity of the Church on the one hand, and of the common good on the other, explain the practical wisdom and breadth of view with which he charted a course for German Catholics.

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 (which is her own good, and of which in her own order she is a guardian), 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, with which the "goods" of all religions and of all men were identified. (If that sentence is complicated, so was the problem.) Realizing the problem, Pius X shared the insight that the German bishops (despite their differences, and in varying degrees) had reached. The whole tenor of his Letter recognizes the need for organized co-operation in the economic order between all those who still stood "on Christian ground," against a common enemy and for a common good. This, in a sense, is the primary point, though it is rather supposed than expressed in the Letter, since it was not the central issue of the *Gewerkschaftsstreit*.

In the mode of organizing the co-operation, all depended on a proper balance of the two pertinent principles: concern for Catholic unity dictated an ideal preference for the Berlin idea, but concern for the common good dictated a permission of the Cologne idea. Moreover, in the former case, concern lest Catholics be isolated from common activity for the common good led to permission for co-operation with non-Catholics on the cartel principle. And in the latter case, concern lest the high demands of Catholic unity suffer from relaxing influences led to the injunction that Catholics should strengthen their own solidarity through Catholic associations.

Pius X, of course, did not equate the two principles, Catholic unity and social unity; their hierarchy is evident in his emphases. Neither, however, did he dissociate them; their intimate relation is revealed in the fine balance of his prescriptions and permissions. The unity of the Church is her very essence; but an obligation to the common good flows from her essence. This is the doctrine of Pius X, as it was, but more emphatically, the doctrine of Leo XIII. Naturally, since it is essential Catholicism. But it is evident that this doctrine creates a tension within the Church that is not easily maintained, for divergent emphases are possible, and at times they come in conflict. Fundamentally, this is what happened between Cologne and Berlin. The major point of the *Singulari Quadam* was to recall both to the Catholic center.

My point, therefore, is that the present-day discussion of intercreedal co-operation must be guided by the profoundly Catholic doctrine underlying the *Singulari Quadam*, as well as by its particular phrases. It is again a problem of balance, of finding the center, and of avoiding the temptation to be drawn to one pole of the tension. Rome, of course, is in the center. And, if I mistake not, the significant thing today is that Rome has, so to speak, moved the center to the left. The supreme pastoral care is still the unity of the Church. Nevertheless, the depth and extent of the concern felt by the Supreme Pastor for the unity and the common good of all men is, I think, unique in history. Characteristically, it is expressed by Pius XII

with a human quality of tenderness that gives to his utterances a peculiar power. At any rate, the co-operation that Pius X permitted out of concern for the common good<sup>1</sup> Pius XII has invited, urgently and on a far wider scale, out of what amounts to anguish lest it be almost too late to rescue the common good from destruction. The conclusion is that Catholic concern for the common good must bulk large in any discussion of intercredal co-operation.

#### *A Common Ground*

But to return to the *Singulari Quadam*. It seems to me that in granting the permission asked by the Cologne school, Pius X implicitly admitted the validity of one of their principles—that there is a common ground on which interconfessional co-operation may be based. In certain particular cases, of course, the common ground might be simply a common interest in the purely temporal order, e.g., a wage increase. But, as understood in the Cologne school, the purposes of co-operation were wider than this, and included the defense and prosecution of interests in the economic order that were not purely economic but moral, and desirable in the light of Christian principles. The Christian Trade Unions were expressly based *auf christliche Grundlage*. And since permission was given to co-operate in these unions, it could hardly avoid giving recognition to their basis.

It is true that the Encyclical contains two warnings against “interdenominational Christianity,” than which, it says, “nothing is more contrary to the preaching of Jesus Christ.” This was quite to be expected. As already stated, one aspect of the total problem was certainly the preservation of the unity of the Church. Nor did Pius X minimize the risks of losing one’s own soul in attempting to gain the world. Nevertheless, while warning against any fatal “amalgamation of creeds,” he permitted the union and co-operation of religious forces in the socio-economic order. Within the legitimate meaning of the permission is a recognition of the distinction, clearly drawn by Cologne, between interdenominational Christianity as a religious system, supposedly deriving from Christ and supposedly sufficient for eternal salvation, and interconfessional agreement on certain necessary religious and moral bases of a just social order. Pius X rejects the former; he points out the dangers connected with the latter; but he “tolerates and permits” the latter as concretely valuable in order to confront powerful social movements of an anti-religious character. Properly understood, these agreements leave the integrity of Catholic faith untouched. The Catholic does not place *himself* or his religious life or his social activity on that “common ground”; on it he puts simply his *union with others* for common tasks



in the temporal order. To him, the content of the agreement is the basis of an active social relationship; it is not the substance of the things he hopes for.

Actually, Pius X demanded two things of Catholics: the first is that they should always sail under their own colors, in public as in private life; the second is that they should actively cultivate "that peace with their non-Catholic fellow-citizens without which neither the right order of human society nor the prosperity of the State can stand." 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. In concrete circumstances, the tension can be very real. To resolve it, men like Harnack were making the recommendation that is often made today in America—a hazy interconfessionalism, and its offspring, a sentimental "tolerance." The idea has a specious appeal to the type of mind that will prefer a clear and easy error to a complicated and exigent truth; and the pressure of environment can make the appeal very strong. Pius X, therefore, like every modern pastor of the Church, had to enlighten the Christian conscience to see that either theoretical agreement or practical sympathy with that idea is a betrayal of the unity of the Church, and by that very fact a betrayal of the common good, the peace and prosperity of the earthly city. Interconfessional Christianity as a religious system is not the way to the Kingdom of God, nor is it even the way to ordered tranquillity in human society. It is a spiritual disorder that necessarily must have its reflection in the sphere of the temporal.

On the other hand, Pius X was willing to permit social peace to be sought in another and sounder way, through serious practical agreement on those fundamental religious and ethical principles which are the basic structural elements of right order in human society, and through honest co-operation towards their incorporation in social institutions. This, in substance, was the Cologne theory. It seems to be the Catholic solution to the problem of a religiously pluralist society seeking desperately for social unity in the face of disruptive materialist forces.

The problem is religio-social, and there are only two approaches to its solution. The Catholic takes hold of the social end, and asks for agreement on the natural religious and moral principles of social unity and peace; he, therefore, reduces religious pluralism to unity on the social plane, and thus reaches a practical (though not ideal) solution of the problem. The "liberal" takes hold of the religious end of the problem, and asks for agreement

on certain "fundamentals of Christianity"; he, therefore, reduces religious pluralism to unity on the religious plane, and thus solves—absolutely nothing. For a false solution in the religious order cannot be a true one in the social order. On his basis, the Catholic can appeal to the conscience of mankind for support and co-operation, as Pius XII has done;<sup>15</sup> for his solution respects at once the exigencies of truth and the rights of conscience, both Catholic and non-Catholic. On the contrary, the "liberal" solution completely betrays the truth and violates everybody's conscience. It rests ultimately on a sentimentalism that confuses all the values, both religious and social, that he sincerely wishes to protect; and it leads inevitably to a brutal realism that denies all his values. The Catholic solution, on the other hand, rests ultimately on a hard intellectualist position—the distinction between the natural and the supernatural order, and the enduring validity of nature within the order of grace. Because of this distinction, every affirmation of nature—in the concrete, of the religio-ethical bases of society—so long as it is simply an affirmation, is entirely Catholic. Nor can it cease to be Catholic simply because it is made in common with those who are not Catholics. Nor does the fact that it is not the full Catholic affirmation avail to denature it; it is adequate in the order and in the circumstances and for the purposes for which it is made. To reintroduce a distinction already made, this common affirmation is made the basis of a religio-social unity (which is the desideratum), not of an ecclesiastical unity.

This solution, in its principle and in its practical applications, was the basis on which the Cologne school operated. The *Singulari Quadam* recognized it as Catholic. That the recognition was given in the form of a *tolerari posse et permitti*, need occasion no misgivings about it. No Catholic would maintain that it is the ideal solution to the problem of social unity and peace. That, however, was not the point. 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 and one, and that therefore in the order of grace human

<sup>15</sup> In his Christmas Eve Allocution, 1942; cf. *Catholic Mind*, XLI (1943), 58.

nature exists in its integrity, elevated, 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.

I have written at this length on the doctrine expressed and implied in the *Singulari Quadam* with a view to showing that, while Pius XII has gone way beyond Pius X, and even beyond Pius XI, in his thought on intercredal co-operation, the progress has been Catholic—*eodem scilicet dogmate, eodem sensu, eademque sententia*. The conclusion, therefore, returns: the theory of the matter is clear. And we are thrown back to the plane of the practical.

#### PRINCIPLES OF ORGANIZATION

For the solution of the organization problem two principles are accessible: the *Singulari Quadam* permitted the use of the principle of fusion (mixed associations), but it preferred the principle of federation (confessional associations joined in a cartel). The latter mode of organization was customarily described in von Moltke's celebrated phrase, "Getrennt marschieren, vereint schlagen!" Catholics and non-Catholics would march in separate columns, but strike together. The Prussian bishops favored this strategy; it had been recommended by Heinrich Pesch, S.J., and many others. And at the Dresden Convention of the Christian Trade Unions in 1912, the *Kartellprinzip*, already operative in the inner organization of the movement, was adopted as the means of making contact with confessional unions.<sup>16</sup> Moreover, the principle of federation had worked with brilliant success in Holland, under the leadership of Schaepman (Catholic) and Kuypers (Protestant). On this principle, says Pesch, "Friendly relations between the two confessions in Holland reached a model of perfection. Catholics were rescued from political isolation and profound social division; they achieved the political and social influence over which they may well rejoice today. At the outset, a 'Monster Alliance' between 'Rome and Dordt' seemed an impossible thing. Now it seems obvious to everybody. Co-operation improves continually, and there is increasing trust on both sides. . . . Initially, there was some reaction. But the standpoint, defined on clear principle and firmly maintained, served to attract and make enthusiastic the mass of Catholics, and then also believing Protestants."<sup>17</sup> Finally, it should be noted that co-operation in England is, in general, organized on the principle of federation: the Sword of the Spirit is joined to Religion and Life by a Joint Standing Committee. And there seems to be general satisfaction with

<sup>16</sup> Cf. H. Pesch, *Lehrbuch der Nationalökonomie*, III, 676.

<sup>17</sup> H. Pesch, *art. cit.*, *Stimmen*, LXXV (1908), 423.

the formula evolved: "Parallel action in the religious sphere, joint action in the social and international field." But we shall return later to this most recent experiment.

#### THE MASSES AND THE ELITE

While still speaking somewhat in the abstract, one further point should be brought out. From the utterances of the Holy See it is clear that there are two classes of personnel to be gathered together in the co-operative endeavor. In general, of course, "all men of good will" must be united—all those with fixed religious convictions, and, as Pius XII indicated, even those who have merely good *will*, "those who would be free from doubt and error and who desire light and guidance."<sup>18</sup> More in particular, however, the Holy See envisages two assemblages: there must be, first, a muster of moral sentiment among the masses of men, and secondly, a muster of the technical competence found in a relative few. A muster of the masses is imperative in order to furnish the large-scale spiritual driving force necessary for the renewal of society in spirit; and a muster of specialists is necessary for the work of institutional 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. Pius XI speaks of those who believe in God as comprising "the vast majority of mankind"; his hope was that, if they could somehow be brought to participate as a unit in the present "battle of the powers of darkness against the very idea of divinity," their part would be decisive.<sup>19</sup> 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.

This sense of God present in the inarticulate multitude seems to me to underlie the papal utterances on intercredal co-operation. Pius XII seems

<sup>18</sup> Christmas Eve Allocution, 1942; cf. *Catholic Mind*, XLI (Jan., 1943), 54.

<sup>19</sup> *Divini Redemptoris*; cf. Husslein, *Social Wellsprings*, II (Milwaukee: Bruce, 1942), 371.

particularly to feel it. He would rouse "the people" to a sense of the power that is in them by reason of their belief in God; but he would also rouse them to a sense of guilt for their careless acquiescence in the steps that have led to the present universal disaster. There is, for instance, the strong text in his Christmas Eve Allocution, 1942, which deserves quotation; it follows on his "appeal to the conscience of mankind . . . to ponder and weigh the grandeur of their mission and responsibility by the vastness of this universal disaster": "A great part of mankind, and, let us not shrink from saying it, not a few who call themselves Christians, have to some extent their share in the collective responsibility for the growth of error and for the harm and the lack of moral fibre in the society of today. . . . Who can see the end of this progressive demoralization? Do the people wish to watch impotently this disastrous progress? Should they not rather, over the ruins of a social order which has given such tragic proof of its ineptitude as a factor for the good of the people, gather together the hearts of all those who are magnanimous and upright in a solemn vow not to rest until in all peoples and in all nations of the earth a vast legion shall be formed, bent on bringing back society to its center of gravity, which is the law of God."<sup>20</sup>

This is what I mean in speaking of the Pope's wish for a muster of all men of right moral sentiment, who will throw their unified power against today's hurrying currents, and redirect the flow of human life toward safe harbors. If this vast body, filled with a spirit of victory as well as of penitence, can somehow be brought together, the Pope feels that the world may yet be saved from further "inundation by violence and terror."

But good will alone will not save society. Not even saints are enough. Without them, of course, and without the multiplied prayers of all humanity, for which Pius XII has so often appealed, there will be no salvation. Nevertheless, Pius XII condemned those "currents of thought which hold that, since redemption belongs to the sphere of supernatural grace and is therefore exclusively a work of God, there is no need for us to co-operate on earth."<sup>21</sup> There is, in fact, a work of reconstruction to be done, and the formula for it is not "sola Dei gratia." Pius XI made this clear:

"To achieve this lofty purpose [i.e., a better social order] and to further the common good in true and lasting fashion, We believe that it is necessary, before and above all else, that God should come to our aid, and then that all men of good will should join forces and work to that end. Moreover, We are convinced that the goal will be more certainly achieved the greater the number of those who are prepared to devote their technical and pro-

<sup>20</sup> Christmas Eve Allocution, 1942; cf. *Catholic Mind*, XLI (Jan., 1943), 58.

<sup>21</sup> Discourse on the anniversary of *Rerum Novarum*, AAS, XXXIII (1941), 226.

fessional and social competence to its attainment, and—what is more important—the greater the contribution to the cause made by Catholic principles and their application. We look for this contribution, not to Catholic Action (which deliberately stops short of any strictly syndical or political activity), but to those of Our sons whom Catholic Action has imbued with these principles and trained for an apostolate under the guidance and instruction of the Church.”<sup>22</sup>

This significant text suggests in briefest compass the structural lines of the Church’s own organization of herself for her contemporary social task. Implied is a mobilization of her total resources. The strategically decisive element in the work of social reconstruction is a corps of trained specialists, Catholic laymen, possessing requisite technical competence in all the fields in which today’s problems rise, and willing to use their competence in the Christian cause out of a sense of Christian responsibility. Behind them is an organization, Catholic Action, that educates them to their responsibility, unites them in indispensable bonds of solidarity, and is the source of their spiritual inspiration, their integral Christian life, whose demands they are to realize concretely and in institutional form by the use of their professional abilities in the social field. And behind Catholic Action is the total sacramental reality of the Church, the Body of Christ, which powerfully deploys its sacerdotal action in prayer and sacrifice, to the end that the whole body may be filled to all the fullness of God, and flow over in beneficent action for the common good of all men. To this mobilization of the Church’s own resources join the wider effort implied in intercredal co-operation, embracing “all men of good will,” and you will have a more extensive spiritual force. You will have, too, a larger corps of “those who are prepared to devote their technical and professional and social competence” to the cause of reconstruction, out of a sense that God wills it. These men will draw their spiritual inspiration from their own religious traditions, which preserve the idea of the divine sovereignty and the obligation of universal charity. They will be made conscious of a certain spiritual unity with their Catholic brethren, based on a certain shared spiritual dynamic and a certain community of religio-social purpose. And in their professional work they will establish and maintain solidarity with Catholic specialists, and work with them in friendly and co-operative relationships. Were all this to reach realization, there would indeed be in the world a formidable power for the common good of humanity.

In this scheme of things, the Catholic contribution to the common good would be multiple—spiritual, theological, programmatic. The spiritual contribution would be the holiness of her own members, a leaven operating

<sup>22</sup> *Quadragesimo Anno*, AAS, XXIII (1931), 208–209.

in hidden supernatural ways. It would also be the "sense of the collective responsibility of all for all," which Pius XII has spoken of as part of the very soul of the Church.<sup>23</sup> And it would be the heroic charity that has always been inspired in those who have been brought by able spiritual direction into contact with her soul. The theological contribution would be her total doctrine of man, his personal and social nature, and his transcendent destiny, together with the insight that this doctrine gives into the causes of today's distress and disunity. It would also include, at least for her own children, her spiritual authority and the clarification of conscience that it brings. The programmatic contribution would be the social doctrine elaborated by a series of noble Pontiffs, whose moral stature and deep concern for humanity's problems have been almost universally recognized. Finally, in the order of personnel, the Church's contribution would be a corps of laymen who have been carefully formed for the social apostolate, and who by that very fact have been also formed for co-operation with all men of good will.

I should take it as certain that co-operative action should be predominantly a work of lay responsibility. This is quite in the logic of the Church's contemporary thought on the problem of the relation between the spiritual and the temporal, which co-operation, in its own way, is to help solve. It is also indicated by the analogy with Catholic Action, of which mention has been made. The point hardly needs development. If it be true, then it follows that the possibility of carrying through the papal theory of co-operation will, from the Catholic side, largely depend on a preliminary step—a step so emphasized in Catholic Action—the gathering into one, and the spiritual formation of the laity, especially of the competent specialists who exist in numbers among us, but who have never been mustered. Intercredal co-operation will be useful or disastrous largely depending on the measure of solidarity, the quality of responsibility, and the prudence of initiative which can be developed in these men. Here, of course, is where the priest and theologian enters. His primary function is that exactly defined for him in the theory of Catholic Action; he is to be ecclesiastical assistant, or theological counsellor, whose action is essentially priestly, terminating at the enlightenment and direction of conscience. It is a function of cardinal importance, which makes the priest the soul, in a sense, of the enterprise. Success depends on his confining himself to it.

The priest-theologian has two other functions. The first has reference to the body of the faithful. He will have to enlighten the whole body on the papal concern over the spiritual issues in the present crisis, and lead

<sup>23</sup> Discourse on the Anniversary of *Rerum Novarum*, AAS, XXXIII (1941), 226.

them to share it. Against this background, he will have to inform them about the whole idea of co-operation, create an exact sympathy for it, explain its workings, and educate the faithful in general as to their part—certainly that of prayer, certainly, too, that of aiding in the muster of moral sentiment which enters into the papal plan.

The second function of the priest-theologian has to do with the non-Catholic individuals and groups with whom co-operation is envisaged. (Needless to say, in all this I am theorizing, and supposing that all the proper formalities of ecclesiastical permission, etc. are complied with.) This function will be that of conference and consultation as to the possibilities, the bases, the directions, the organization, etc. of co-operation. This will be a work calling for singular qualities, chief among them a fine theological tact, and a great intellectual charity. Such conferences would be rather unique, unlike the old-time *conférence contradictoire*, or the more recent ecumenical conference. Their finality would be quite distinctive, and in view of it they should have, I suppose, certain distinctive rules. It would not be hard to draw up a set, and have both sides pledged to their observance. Without pursuing the subject further, I might say that, as the Catholic theologian would not walk into the conference like the prodigal son returning to the interconfessional paternal mansion, neither would he walk in as an instructor into a class of prospective converts. His immediate and dominant motive would be God's will, expressed for him through the highest authority in the Church, for that measure of spiritual unity and co-operation among men of good will which is immediately necessary for the common good of humanity. He would be guided by the conviction that God does not will that unity either at the sacrifice of truth or the expense of conscience; but he would bring the sympathy that he would expect to receive, and without which, psychologists tell us, no understanding is possible.

There is one other possible function of the priest-theologian—participation in joint public meetings of men of different creeds, held with a view to the education of the public conscience on the religious and moral implications in the present crisis. This might be part of the co-operative effort, as it has been in England. But there is hardly much use in discussing it at length; it is only a possibility. But it will have to be seriously entertained. In fact, it is not easy to see how a general muster of moral sentiment, the product of a general enlightenment, can be otherwise achieved. And it is still less easy to see how the Catholic view can be otherwise put before a large audience. On the other hand, these joint public meetings are not regarded with favor in certain Catholic circles. It seems to be



largely a problem of leadership and definition of purpose. At any rate, two things would seem to be clear: first, that some method has to be devised whereby Catholics and non-Catholics can *say* things together as well as *do* things together, and secondly, that entirely clear and entirely public formulas have to be reached and agreed on. There is scriptural warrant for the confusing effect of trumpets that give forth uncertain sounds.

#### THE SWORD OF THE SPIRIT AND THE PROBLEM OF ORGANIZATION

Hitherto we have outlined certain principles to be taken into account in discussing the organization of intercredal co-operation. On turning to the practical possibilities in America, it becomes less easy to go on. There is, however, much to be learned from the history and present structure of the co-operative idea as it has been put through in England by the Sword of the Spirit. This paper can terminate with some brief remarks and still briefer reflections on this subject.

I should, perhaps, first confess that my own single feeling for the Sword of the Spirit is one of complete admiration. It is a concrete and model response to the desires of the Holy See. And it is also the one vital and profound spiritual movement that the war, and what underlies the war, have produced. Its "soul" is intimately Catholic, and its significance, therefore, is necessarily universal, with virtualities as yet unrealized. From our present standpoint, the most instructive thing about it is its illustration of the power of a soul, so to speak, to organize its own body. I mean that the organization of the movement has been at every step the outward expression of a living and growing idea, nourished by vital contact with the demands of an environment. To reach immediately for the supreme analogy, one thinks of Pentecost and the Spirit coming to a handful of bewildered men, appalled at a situation they confronted and at a destiny thrust on them—the renewal of the world and the reformation of its society. Yet for this task the Spirit Himself, as the Acts testify and as Möhler magnificently developed, organized them. The point of the analogy is not too defective; actually, the organization of the Sword of the Spirit was the product of a mighty and moving concern, that came over a great leader and a small group as they faced a concrete situation, and that demanded an organ for its expression. And the organization grew organically as its interior principle clarified and became more conscious of itself.

Initially, in August, 1940, the Sword of the Spirit was called into being by the late Cardinal Hinsley to meet the threat of a propaganda wave, about coincident with the collapse of France, which aimed at dividing English Catholics from the rest of the national community. The "line" was

simple—we are still hearing it. To the “liberals” it was said: “Catholics are necessarily Fascist, as witness Rome, Vichy, Madrid”; to Catholics it was said: “The ‘liberals’ are communistic.” Cardinal Hinsley’s expressed concern, therefore, was for Catholic and national unity; at the time he quoted the Pope’s words to him, “Unity, unity, and again unity!” In its first phase, the *Sword of the Spirit* devoted itself to strengthening these two unities by a process of creating clarity on the spiritual issues at stake in the war, and by voicing both Catholic and national opposition to the essential viciousness of totalitarianism. Immediately, in this concern for unity, the movement revealed its Catholic soul.

After two months or so, the initial concern broadened, and the movement went from a defensive to an offensive phase. Central now was the achievement of unity, both Catholic and national, on the essential principles, contained in the Christian heritage and proclaimed by the natural law, which must be the basis of the peace settlement, world reconstruction, and the “new order.” With this objective, co-operation with non-Catholics came into view as one of the main constructive purposes of the movement. Entrance into this phase was resoundingly marked by the famous letter to the *Times* in December, on the “Ten Points.” It set going a surge of genuine interest in co-operation, expressed all over the country in joint meetings on the “Ten Points,” and this activity culminated in the equally famous Stoll meetings of May 10 and 11, in the midst of the spring *Blitz*. In his opening address at the first meeting Cardinal Hinsley made this statement: “This meeting is intended to bear witness to our unity in this vital issue [the defence of the rightful liberties of mankind], notwithstanding the variety of our allegiances to other causes. Here I may say that the Holy Father, Pius XII, in reference to the joint letter in the *Times* of December 21st last, has expressed his lively satisfaction at the acceptance in this country of his statement regarding the foundations of peace. Therefore we are assured of his blessing on our combined efforts. . . .”<sup>24</sup> In the same address he read at length from a letter of Archbishop McNicholas of Detroit, strongly seconding his “providential initiative.” Elsewhere and constantly Cardinal Hinsley insisted that the inauguration of co-operation was in direct response to the mandate of the Holy See. All the leaders of the *Sword* have done the same.

At this juncture, however, it appeared that the spirit of the movement, which all the way preceded theoretical formulations and organizational structure, had gotten a bit too far ahead of its own body and mind. The result was embarrassment. Details are unnecessary, but the essential

<sup>24</sup> *The Sword of the Spirit*, n. 20 (May 15, 1941), p. 1.

point is important. In its initial phase, pending the drafting of a constitution, the Sword had operated with a frankly provisional organization—an executive committee, lay in membership, with several spiritual directors. Non-Catholics were admitted as “associate members,” but with no distinction of rights, following a sort of *Kölner Richtung*. In consequence of the *Times* letter and the Stoll meetings, thousands joined on the assumption that co-operation would be on a footing of full equality, and that non-Roman members would share in the direction of the movement. When, however, the Constitution was promulgated, it appeared that this was not the case. Actually, the Constitution had been ratified by the Bishops before the Stoll meetings, and it prescribed that the movement would be under the direction of each Ordinary in his own diocese, and that associate membership carried no voting power; it made no provision for any but Catholic personnel on the executive staff. These provisions were judged necessary in order to preserve the original character of the movement, which was Catholic in its inspiration and leadership. But they naturally occasioned considerable disappointment among the associate members, who felt that they had been “let down.”

It is no small tribute to the vitality of the movement, the tact of its leaders, and the great charity on all sides that the Sword of the Spirit successfully navigated this patch of rough water. It is mentioned here in order to pay that tribute, but particularly in order to show that, even when zeal is perhaps not according to knowledge, the result need not be disaster, if forbearance and charity are present. The solution of the difficulty was prepared by a series of conferences, extending over several months, between representatives of the Sword of the Spirit and of the (Anglican and Free Church) Commission of the Churches for International Friendship and Social Responsibility. In the end it consisted of the federation of the Sword of the Spirit with Religion and Life (a corresponding organization set up by the Commission), through the agency of a Joint Standing Committee. The formula was this: “Linked by this Committee, the two movements will work through parallel action in the religious, and joint action in the social and international field.”<sup>25</sup> It was understood that the arrangement would be flexible, subject to the test of experience. Thus the solution was based on the cartel principle of Pius X.

Pending this solution, co-operative study and action were encouraged in local communities, and much success was had in the formation of “Christian Councils” and study-groups of mixed membership. In fact, the whole incident may have been providential in that it prevented an over-centralized

<sup>25</sup> Cf. THEOLOGICAL STUDIES, III (1942), 427–30.

organization, with consequent loss of spontaneity and freedom. Bishop Bell of Chichester, in his much-remarked Cambridge University sermon of October 26, 1941, had warned against this danger: "First, the collaboration should be not only an occasional demonstration, but a reality everywhere. It is people who collaborate, and people in a particular place. Therefore, let us begin wherever people of a co-operative spirit are to be found, and not spend our effort on organisation at the centre. Indeed, at the present stage a few like-minded people of the Church of England, of the Roman Catholics and the Nonconformists, keeping in personal touch with one another and with their respective Churches, is probably organization enough. Far more important is the encouragement and extension of local Christian fellowship, local united meetings, local united councils, and united study, and the coming together in faith, hope and charity of Christians of the different Churches in towns and villages, as friends."<sup>26</sup> This was sage advice. In fact, it seems to me imperative that it be taken in any attempt to organize co-operation in the United States, as against our national tendency to organize from the center out, and from the top down. The whole matter is too intensely personal for that. Certainly, no solution would be offered, for instance, by the initial establishment of a sort of "Bureau of Intercredal Co-operation," with a priest executive director, let us say, at the N. C. W. C. in Washington. Initial efforts would probably have to be local, and locally controlled, to be followed by a federating process that would culminate in a general secretariate.

There is no need to detail further difficulties encountered by the Sword of the Spirit, for they are readily imaginable—for instance, the indifference of many, including the portion of the clergy whose interests lay, perhaps necessarily, in sheerly parochial work and the defense of the faith. Let me here indicate four points in which the movement surely follows the papal pattern, as already outlined.

First, the carriers of the movement have been the laity; its success has been due to their ability and apostolic spirit. By a singular providence, the leaders, headed by Mr. Christopher Dawson, have been a group of men and women of high talent, great thoughtfulness and articulateness, selfless devotion, and sword-like spirit—a deeply interior, intensely clarified, quietly victorious spirit. Always one feels that spirit, as (be it said in passing) I felt it and saw it felt by others on hearing the eloquence—one thought of living waters and of prophecy fulfilled—of the youthful, dynamic figure who rather incorporates the ideals of the movement, Miss Barbara Ward.

Secondly, the Sword of the Spirit attacks on both the levels of today's

<sup>26</sup> *The Sword of the Spirit*, n. 34 (November 27, 1941), pp. 5-6.

problem, the popular and the technical. After an initial preoccupation with principles, there came their implementation in suggested practical programs, proposed for discussion. Their working out was committed to an International Research Committee under Mr. Dawson (who, as Vice President, was made Director of Studies), and to a number of expert Sub-Committees on Post-War Problems of Social Services, whose scope is remarkably extensive. This technical work has been rather emphasized. In fact, the criticism was offered that the movement's appeal was too much to the intellectual. However, it has also worked strongly in the horizontal direction, realizing, as the Bishop of Hexham and Newcastle put it in his Advent Pastoral of 1941, that "we must carry the appeal of the Pope to the ordinary plain man, and enrol him, too, in the great crusade for honouring the law of God."<sup>27</sup> Precisely for its effectiveness in this work he brought the Sword of the Spirit to his diocese.

Thirdly, it is characteristic of the movement's structure that it does not consider itself "just another organization," much less the organization to end all organizations. Its function is not to compete or to supplant or to overlap, but to complement and co-ordinate and "work in harmony with other existing Catholic organizations."<sup>28</sup> This harmony, with all the self-sacrifice that it entails, has been insisted on. To insure it, the governing Council includes representatives of eight other groups and societies.

Finally, from the outset the organization has been professedly international in scope, and has gradually gathered French, Belgian, Polish, Czech, Canadian, South African, and Middle East sections, besides its large membership in the R. A. F., the Army, and the Navy. "We have," said Cardinal Hinsley, "a unique opportunity through the Sword of the Spirit to form a solid international force for the restoration and maintenance of world peace. . . ."<sup>29</sup> 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

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid.*, n. 35 (December 11, 1941), p. 3.

<sup>28</sup> Cardinal Hinsley, Presidential Address, 1942, *ibid.*, n. 52 (December 3, 1942), p. 2.

<sup>29</sup> Presidential Address, 1941, *ibid.*, n. 27 (August 21, 1941), p. 2.

the Latin sense) between Catholics and other religious groups in America. As a matter of fact, the movement is known and trusted by a great number of non-Catholics among us.

In conclusion, let me go back to the beginning. I ventured the opinion that the strictly theological aspect of intercredal co-operation, as understood and urged by the Holy See, presents no great difficulty; a formula for it, that should be mutually satisfactory, is available by simple clarification of the papal idea. The problem of organization is real enough in the practical order; but at least principles are available for its solution, an initiative has been taken with which we might ally ourselves, and for the rest, as Mrs. Micawber wisely said, "Experientia does it." 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.

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