

FROM WASHINGTON OFFICE
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Papacy Enters New Role
In World Diplomacy

By W. Barry Garrett

VATICAN CITY (BP)-- Pope Paul VI's speech to the United Nations in New York and other events related to Vatican Council II herald a new era of international diplomacy and participation in world affairs by the papacy and the Roman Catholic Church.

Regardless of one's reaction to these developments, neither the nations of the earth nor the other religious groups of the world can ignore or remain unaffected by this new day in Roman Catholicism. These are facts with which the world must live during the next century.

Look at the picture and see how the pieces fit together. The nations are armed to the teeth with nuclear weapons capable of destroying the human race. The population explosion has increased and will continue to increase the problems of hunger, poverty, suffering and war. Developments in communications, transportation and science pose problems the human race has never before had to face.

New nations with their nationalistic aims, their demands for freedom, justice, relief from hunger and poverty, and for equal opportunity intensify the problem.

The older and more developed nations also fit into the picture. Their powers of production, their nuclear capabilities, and their relationships to the rest of the world pose another set of problems. The rising socialization of all of society and the conflict between communistic ideals and the traditional ways of western nations grow with each passing year.

Add to this the void in sound solutions. The United Nations comes to a stalemate and its very existence is threatened. The world sits on a powder keg and an explosion is imminent.

Then the pope steps in. He dramatically steps across the lines drawn by many of his followers who as super-patriots, as anti-internationalists, or as anti-communists have nurtured suspicion of the United Nations. The hopes of the world rise. Maybe an answer can be found. At least the pope is willing to project himself and the powers of his church into the world picture. And he comes armed with a new set of ideas that did not characterize former popes who sought and wielded tremendous temporal power for the selfish ends of the church.

These new ideas are seen in a new doctrine of religious liberty, a new emphasis on the dignity of every man, a new concern for the suffering and underprivileged peoples of the earth, a new spirit of dialogue and communication with other Christians, and a new willingness to cooperate even with non-Christian religions to promote justice, to end discrimination and to preserve the race.

The pope's emergence in his new role in the affairs of men comes at a time when the Council is debating a message not just to itself but to all of mankind. It is called a "Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World."

While no one knows at this writing what will be the decision of the Council on this document, the very fact of its existence and the release of ideas from bishops from all over the world make it impossible for the Catholic Church ever again to be the same. The mere listing of the subjects treated indicates what is in the wind. They are:

"The condition of man in the modern world, the human person's vocation, the community of men, the paths to be followed, the significance of human activity in the world, the role of the church in the modern world,

"Preserving the dignity of marriage and the family, promoting cultural progress, economico-social life, the political life of the community, and the community of nations and the promotion of peace."

The new role of the papacy and of the Roman Catholic Church is clear from the travels of Pope Paul VI. In breaking out of the confines of the Vatican he has visited in the Holy Land, made a trip to India, and now to the United Nations.

Nor is this all. It is reported that a trip to Poland is in the making. He has expressed a willingness to tour the United States.

When asked in New York if he would be willing to go to Peking in his quest for peace, the pope replied, "Certainly." He then said that he would go to Vietnam if he could help to secure peace there.

As significant as his own desires to be a factor in the life of the world is the reaction of the leaders of the world to the pope's efforts. The President of the United States visited with him 46 minutes. They discussed a wide variety of world problems ranging from the quest for peace to the problems of worldwide poverty, disease and illiteracy, and from race relations to Vietnam.

Among the significant contacts the pope made in New York was with the representatives of Soviet Russia, Foreign Minister Andrei Gromyko and the UN Ambassador Anatoly Dobrynin. Later, Tass, the official Soviet press agency hailed the pope's speech to the UN as a "positive contribution" to the cause of peace.

Cardinal Heenan, archbishop of Westminster, pointed out earlier that no responsible voice in the world had protested the United Nation's invitation to the pope to speak in New York, a situation that would have been impossible 10 years ago.

As we view the new papal role in the life of mankind, we must ask, "What will be the role of the other religious groups of the world?"

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Baptists Study Church,
State, Public Funds

(10-11-65)

WASHINGTON (BP)-- Approximately 250 Baptists from the United States and Canada gathered here for a three-day discussion and study of current church-state issues and problems.

Baptist executives, educators, pastors and laymen met at the ninth annual Religious Liberty Conference sponsored by the Baptist Joint Committee on Public Affairs. The theme for the conference was "Church, State and Public Funds." C. Emanuel Carlson is executive director of the Baptist Joint Committee.

The conference attempted to approach the questions of church-state relations from the viewpoint of the functions or ministries to which the church is called in its witness to Christ. It dealt with four general aspects:

1. Providing for the full personal development of the divine potential in all people.
2. Providing an opportunity for a Christian response to the needs of dependent persons.
3. Explaining and demonstrating the Christian concepts of justice and stewardship.
4. Providing a Christian contribution to the growth of science, culture and environment.

A number of Baptist seminar reports and papers were before the group as their working materials. These dealt with the church, the state, and the production of leadership; the church, the state, and general education; the churches' mission through social service; the churches' mission through cultures; and questions affecting the programming of free stewardship.

No official position was taken on issues discussed by participants in the Religious Liberty Conference. The purpose of such conferences is the sharing and expression of opinions and attitudes among Baptists. The conference received a report of such sharing of opinions from each of the working sections. These reports were referred to the Baptist Joint Committee for further study.

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Coming in to address the group of Baptists were: Francis Keppel, U. S. Commissioner of Education; David J. Bowman, assistant professor of religious education, Catholic University of America; and Richard Hirsch, director of the Religious Action Center, Union of American Hebrew Congregations.

Commissioner Keppel spoke to the group on the current developments in the field of education legislation. Hirsch discussed "The Philosophic Base of Judaic Concern for Freedom."

Bowman credited the Baptists of America for the current discussion of religious freedom in the Roman Catholic Church. He referred to the influence of the American bishops in the approval in principle of the Declaration of Religious Liberty by Vatican Council II. The American bishops were influenced by the American concept of religious freedom, he said, which in turn was influenced by Baptists.

"Baptists have contributed largely to the religious liberty document" in the Roman Catholic Church, Bowman said.

The 1966 conference, set for October 5-7, will discuss "The Christian's Role Through Church and State."

The Baptist Joint Committee on Public Affairs is sponsored by eight Baptist groups: Southern Baptist Convention, American Baptist Convention, Baptist General Conference, North American Baptist General Conference, Baptist Federation of Canada, National Baptist Convention, National Baptist Convention, Inc., and the Seventh Day Baptist General Conference.



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