

REPORT ON REGIONAL MEETINGS 1957 - 58

I

THE FACTS

During the academic year 1957-58, six regional meetings were held as follows:

(1) On November 6, 1957, the Baltimore-Washington region (embracing Maryland and the District of Columbia) held an afternoon meeting at Woodstock College, Woodstock, Maryland. Father Gustave A. Weigel, S.J., of Woodstock, gave a report on the Protestant "North American Faith and Order Conference" held a short time before at Oberlin, Ohio, at which Father Weigel had been one of the Catholic observers. After his report, Father Weigel led a discussion on the implications of the Oberlin meeting. Father Kenneth A. Dougherty, S.A., of the Atonement Seminary, Washington, D. C., conducted an informal seminar on problems connected with the ecumenical movement. Attendance: about 75.

(2) On November 11, 1957, a meeting of the Chicago region (embracing Illinois, Wisconsin, Kentucky, Michigan, Iowa, and Indiana) was held at the Hotel Congress in Chicago from 10:00 a. m. to 3:00 p. m. At the morning session Father Robert Reginald Masterson, O.P., delivered a doctrinal paper, "A Thomistic Study of Sacramental Graces as Modes of Sanctifying Grace." The forty-five-minute paper was followed by an hour of lively, stimulating discussion. After lunch the members reconvened for a paper by John A. Connery, S.J., "Historical Study of the Morality of Incomplete Venereal Pleasure." Father Connery presented in interesting fashion the history of this controversy from the time of St. Thomas to the beginning of the eighteenth century. About an hour was allowed for discussion of this topic and allied questions. Attendance: about 35.

(3) On December 27, 1957, the New York region (embracing New York, New Jersey, and Connecticut) held a meeting at Cathedral College, New York City, from 10:15 a. m. to 12:30 p. m. The topic discussed was "The Specific Morality and Gravity of the Practice of Periodic Continence." The discussion leader was Father John A. Goodwine, of St. Joseph's Seminary, Dunwoodie, Yonkers, N. Y. Attendance: 25.

(4) On December 30, 1957, a full-day meeting of the Boston region (embracing Massachusetts and Rhode Island), was held at St. John's Seminary, Brighton, Massachusetts. Two papers, each followed by dis-

cussion, were read: a paper in dogmatic theology by Father Placidus Riley, O.S.B., of St. Anselm's Abbey, Manchester, New Hampshire, on the subject, "Utrum habuerit primus homo omnium scientiam?"; the other in moral theology by Father Vincent M. Martin, O.P., of St. Stephen's Priory, Dover, Massachusetts, entitled "The Holy See and Situational Ethics." Each paper was followed by spirited discussion. The priests in attendance were guests of the Archdiocese at lunch. Attendance: about 65.

(5) On February 26, 1958, the Baltimore-Washington region held an afternoon meeting at Holy Cross College, Washington, D. C. Father Frank Norris, S.S., of St. Mary's Seminary, Baltimore, presented a paper on "An Attempt at a Biblical Theology Approach to the Treatise on the Eucharist." The paper was followed by discussion. The second half of the meeting comprised informal seminars in dogmatic, moral, and fundamental theology. Attendance: about 60.

(6) On March 25, 1958, the Cleveland region (embracing Ohio, Western New York, and Western Pennsylvania) held an afternoon meeting at St. Joseph's Seminary of the Blessed Sacrament Fathers in Cleveland. In his talk on "Current Trends in Biblical Studies and Their Practical Import," Msgr. William Newton surveyed recent work on the nature of biblical inspiration, the authorship and time of composition of the Old Testament books, the relationship between pagan legend and stories in the Bible, the recent work of certain Protestant scholars like Bultmann, the absence of speculation in the Bible, and the need for drastic revision of many of the so-called arguments from Scripture found in manuals of theology. Msgr. Newton's talk was thoroughly thought out and expertly delivered, but there was little time left for discussion. Attendance: 40.

During the academic year 1957-1958, there was no regional meeting in the Quebec-Montreal area (embracing the Provinces of Quebec and Ontario).

II

A CRITIQUE

In the opinion of the Committee and the Regional Chairmen, the facts outlined above are sufficient reason for uneasy gratification.

(1) Our gratification stems from five factors:

(a) the number of meetings (6) in 1957-58 does not contrast too unfavorably with the number (7) held in 1956-57;

(b) the average attendance (50) was slightly higher than in the preceding year (47);

(c) the major problems discussed are regularly significant, frequently vital, increasingly contemporary;

(d) audience participation becomes more general and more active each year;

(e) self-evaluation, a quasi-divine discontent with our own efforts, is on the upsurge.

(2) Our gratification is uneasy for four reasons:

(a) we have still not succeeded in reorganizing the regions so as to include all states of the Union and all members of the CTSA, and so as to make individual attendance geographically and financially feasible;

(b) no satisfactory method has yet been devised of keeping the total membership of the CTSA posted on what is taking place in the individual regions at the time it is taking place;

(c) we need a practical method of publicizing genuine contributions to theology which emerge from the regional papers and discussions;

(d) we need, within each region, an up-to-date, regularly revised list of the theology professors and the areas of their special competence.

As last year, so, too, this year, there are two brief items I find it imperative to mention. In the first place, the success of the 1957-58 regional meetings would have been impossible without the gracious cooperation of the Regional Chairmen, Msgr. Lawrence J. Riley, and Fathers Myles M. Bourke, Richard P. Brosseau, S.S., Francis D. Costa, S.S.S., Thomas W. Coyle, C.S.S.R., and Edward J. Hogan, S.S., as well as my associates on the Committee, Fathers Edmond D. Benard and John F. Sweeney, S.J. In the second place, in consequence of the charity of individuals and institutions, no expenses had to be borne by the general treasury of the CTSA.

WALTER J. BURGHARDT, S.J., *Chairman.*

Dated June 25, 1958.