

## PRESIDENTIAL ADDRESS

At the beginning of a new decade, it is customary to discuss what the future decade will bring, but decades are not the only milestones in human history. At this meeting we are celebrating the twenty-fifth anniversary of the Catholic Theological Society of America. Thus, now would seem to be an appropriate occasion to speak about the future of the discipline of Roman Catholic theology in this country and about the future of the Catholic Theological Society of America. There is a difficulty involved in any type of prognostication for the future, as has been evidenced by much of the crystal ball gazing for the new decade of the seventies. Anyone familiar with the crystal ball gazing that went on as the sixties came into existence would be greatly chastened in any attempt to prognosticate for the seventies. However, one can try to read the present situation in as accurate a manner as possible so as to look forward to the future.

One must carefully avoid identifying the Catholic Theological Society of America and the total Roman Catholic theological enterprise in this country, but there is a definite overlapping. The newly approved constitution of our Society declares: "Its purpose, within the context of the Roman Catholic tradition, shall be to promote studies and research in theology, to relate theological science to current problems, and to foster a more effective theological education, by providing a forum for an exchange of views among theologians and with scholars in other disciplines." So it is appropriate to begin by discussing the state of the discipline of Roman Catholic theology in the United States.

In general, the American contribution to Roman Catholic theology in the past has been far from outstanding. There have been a few glorious exceptions in the past and in the present; but on the whole, Roman Catholic theology in the United States has lagged behind its development in many European countries. North American scholars have recently made some substantial contributions in the area of biblical studies, although American biblical scholars, in contrast with Protestant scholars in general and European Catholic scholars, tend

to be strictly exegetical and lack a certain theological depth and perspective in their work.

There are factors emerging today that will become more prominent in the seventies and should improve the theological tradition in this country. Two specific factors that could have a great bearing on this future development are: (1) the fact that theology will leave the confines of the seminary and be more frequently located on university campuses or in ecumenical clusters with other theological institutions; (2) the fact that until the present theology has generally been the preserve of the cleric and the religious, but in the future there will be an increasingly greater number of non-clerics and religious who will be involved in the theological enterprise and teaching not only in Catholic colleges and universities but also in non-Catholic institutions of higher learning.

The university setting or the ecumenical theological cluster should help overcome the isolation of the Roman Catholic seminary and of its theological curriculum. In such a university set-up the research into theology should be stimulated by the research carried on in university centers in other disciplines, so that theology can rightly take its place along side the other academic disciplines in the university. Likewise, the fact that Roman Catholic theology will be in constant dialogue with Protestant theology will also be a stimulating factor for the growth of the discipline. It is becoming increasingly evident that one cannot do theology today except in an ecumenical perspective. This perspective not only involves the Christian faith commitment but also a wider ecumenism embracing all mankind.

A number of problems have arisen in the past for Roman Catholic theology precisely because of the seminary confines and clerical domination of the discipline. There has been little or no academic tradition in this country for theological research, precisely because the seminary was not viewed primarily as an academic institution, but rather as a house of formation. Theology tended to be taught more as a task-oriented preparation for ministry, rather than as an academic discipline in its own right. For this reason, many aspects of the theological tradition such as patristic and historical theology tended to be touched only superficially.

The history of the Church reminds us that theology as a matter

of fact has not flourished in the isolation of the seminary. From the period of Trent onward, Roman Catholic theology has not been in contact and dialogue with the contemporary sciences of man and society. A cursory reading of the manuals of Roman Catholic theology in use until the last decade reveals the fact that these textbooks were not in contact with the contemporary thinking of the day. Vital contact with university life helped the German tradition to be more in contact with the academic thought of the day, although the negative Roman reaction in the nineteenth century merely caused the seminary walls in most countries to rise higher and higher until the time of Vatican II. However, I am not proposing the German model as totally acceptable because, even in that situation, academic traditions still separate Roman Catholic theology from Protestant theology.

The lack of a clerical monopoly in the field of theology and theology's increasing participation in the college and university will force the theologian to be primarily an academic person. Too often the theologian teaching in the seminary is saddled with other functions and responsibilities that take up a great quantity of his time, perhaps even the majority of his time. A perennial problem for the seminary professor will always remain the dual role of his academic and pastoral responsibilities. These two roles are not incompatible, but the theological role was too often downplayed in the past. The non-clerical theology professor will tend to be primarily an academic person and thus should help to make all the members of the profession aware of their academic responsibilities.

The dual pastoral and theological role of the cleric or religious theologian also heightens another tension which can be viewed in terms of the difference between scientific theology and popularization. In general in the United States during the last decade the same people have very often fulfilled both the role of the professional theologian and the role of the popularizer. I am sure that many of us in our Society have experienced this tension—and not only the cleric with a pastoral function. In a sense, any Christian who is interested in the mission and function of the Church shares the desire to bring the theological renewal to more people in the Church and especially to priests working in the pastoral ministry in daily contact with the people of God. The professional theologian cannot devote the majority

of his time to this important mission without allowing his theological expertise to suffer.

Another related factor has also contributed to developing the dispersion of activities and energies on the part of the few people on the American scene who have shown any kind of theological expertise. The needs of religious education and theology have been so intertwined that the same people have been involved in both enterprises—a fact that again brings about a weakening of concentration in the theological endeavor as such. Again, this phenomenon is explicable in terms of the few theologians doing research and publication in this country and the great potential and need for bringing the understanding of theology today to the vast numbers of the Christian people. American religious education and catechetics, like theology itself, have really not been able to develop a strong body of experts in the field. As a result, the people who are involved in the theological renewal are also very frequently involved in the renewal on the level of religious education.

The theological enterprise in the Roman Catholic Church in this country has also been hampered by the fact that Vatican II has brought with it an entirely new understanding of the science of theology and its methods. It is an unfortunate fact that in the Roman Catholic Church in the United States there are very few contributing theologians who have been teaching theology for more than ten or fifteen years. As a result, it has been necessary for many younger people in the field to assume leadership positions and deprive themselves of the time and conditions necessary to pursue their theological development at this important stage.

Another related factor that has affected the situation has been the cult of the theologian in this country. The theologian has been esteemed as a hero by many segments of the Catholic community precisely because of different stands that he may have taken in the last few years. The "jet setting celebrity role" does not augur well for the sustained development of the theological enterprise, but there are signs that the theologian in the next decade will be able to eschew such a role so that he can concentrate more on his own theological endeavors.

The fact that Roman Catholic theology will be less seminary-

centered and less clerically-dominated in the future should also free Roman Catholic theology from an undue hierarchical interference and control. There can be no doubt about the fact that such control has added to the plight of Roman Catholic theology in our country at the present time. It is necessary to emphasize that this does not deny the office and function of the hierarchy in the Church, but rather underscores the integrity of the theological discipline. Theology thus best serves the Church when it is allowed to develop as an academic discipline with its own academic integrity and freedom.<sup>1</sup> Although hierarchical interference has stifled the theological enterprise in this country, theologians also share some blame. Unfortunately, in the past, theologians of a particular outlook—be they of a more liberal or of a more conservative variety—have been unwilling to disagree with those among whom they find a generally like-minded approach. There will be a much greater need for theologians in the future to criticize one another's work with the realization that in this way the discipline of theology will grow and develop.

Circumstances surrounding the way in which theology is done and will be done in this country also dovetail with methodological approaches in theology itself. The shift in recent years has been to a more historically minded and consequently inductive methodology.<sup>2</sup> Theology as a more inductive discipline must always be in contact with all the other disciplines studying man and society. Obviously, such contact and dialogue is essential for moral theology or Christian ethics which deals both with methodological and substantive questions about the living of the Christian life, but even the more theoretical questions of systematic theology require a constant dialogue with contemporary philosophy as well as with the other contemporary sciences that treat of man and society. For example, ecclesiology,

1 For a development of this particular understanding of the academic freedom of Roman Catholic theology and for a review of recent literature on the subject, see John F. Hunt, Terrence R. Connelly, et al., *The Responsibility of Dissent: The Church and Academic Freedom* (New York: Sheed and Ward, 1969), pp. 113-128.

2 There exists a growing body of literature on this subject. For an explanation of historical consciousness in general and in the thought of Bernard Lonergan, see David Tracy, *The Achievement of Bernard Lonergan* (New York: Herder & Herder, 1970), pp. 193 ff.

especially as applied to questions of church structure, must consider not only the biblical models and images of the Church but also contemporary sociological models of community and worship which may develop in the experience of groups in our contemporary society. The very fact that Roman Catholic theology in this country is heavily dependent on European theology shows that our own theology has not been in contact with the best of American thought. In a true sense, we have the challenge to develop an American theology which must, therefore, be in closer dialogue with the contemporary American academic scene.<sup>3</sup>

However, one should not conclude that the new environment in which Roman Catholic theology will exist will of necessity bring with it only unmixed blessings. As is true in all human situations this side of the *eschaton*, the potential for growth and development also harbors some negative aspects which could definitely impede theological growth. A sober reflection on the theological scene in contemporary Protestantism in the United States does not augur for any utopia on the way.

There are a number of possible pitfalls for Roman Catholic theology in the seventies. The danger of activism on the part of students studying theology, especially as a preparation for ministry, will continue to threaten the theological enterprise. I do not intend to criticize active involvement in the needs of the contemporary world on the part of the Church or the theologian or candidates for ministry in the Church. Likewise, as pointed out above, a more inductive theology can not merely exist in the context of the library and the research tools of the *Wissenschaft* school, but an unreflective trend to activism coupled with the lack of academic tradition in theology in our own country remains a genuine threat to the development of the discipline.

Theology students, especially those preparing for a pastoral ministry, seek a relevant theology which is in dialogue with modern man and modern science; but such students easily forget the long and difficult process of understanding the science of theology itself and its relationship to other disciplines. The danger of those who want im-

3 For a somewhat similar critique of American Protestant theology, see James Sellers, *Public Ethics: American Morals and Manners* (New York: Harper & Row, 1970), pp. 10-12.

mediate results from their study lies in the fact that these students will often gain a superficial knowledge or smattering of many things but will never really have an adequate theological understanding.

Undoubtedly, a poor understanding of the discipline of theology has contributed to a sterile intellectualism which in turn creates an atmosphere conducive to the reaction of anti-intellectualism. Speculative or scientific theology cannot be divorced from practice. Theological speculation which does not come to grips with the practical reality of man's historical self-understanding cannot be good speculation. "Theory and practice cannot really be separated from each other. The practical application is a structuring element of truth itself (H. G. Gadamer); truth is meant not only to interpret the world but also to change it (K. Marx). Theology does not become more scientific by haughtily avoiding all concrete, practical questions."<sup>4</sup>

Ideally, the shift to a university setting or to a setting in a theologically ecumenical enterprise should provide Roman Catholic theology with a locus in which it can be in dialogue on a scholarly level with other academic disciplines, but reality does not always live up to expectation in this regard. In all disciplines today the research explosion and the extensive publication of articles and books make it almost impossible for any individual to keep up in his own chosen field of research and to continue his teaching in his particular field.<sup>5</sup> The necessary and seemingly interminable meetings and committees which are so absolutely necessary for the restructuring of the contemporary college and university merely heighten the problem of finding the opportunity for dialogue between theology and the other disciplines represented in the university or college. Perhaps a first step can be made in terms of curriculum reform which would bring various disciplines together to study a particular problem from their respective viewpoints. In this way both students and faculty could participate in an interdisciplinary dialogue that would bring together the different

<sup>4</sup> W. Kasper, *The Methods of Dogmatic Theology* (Glen Rock, New Jersey: Paulist Press, 1969), p. 51.

<sup>5</sup> This assertion applies to other academic disciplines the crisis of culture which Bernard Lonergan has described as affecting Catholic philosophy and theology. See *Collection: Papers by Bernard Lonergan*, ed. F. E. Crowe, S.J. (New York: Herder & Herder, 1967), pp. 252-267.

disciplines as they react to specific problems. "Think tanks" or dialogue groups among faculty members with different academic specialties would also greatly contribute to the dialogue that theology needs.

Another factor that will complicate the life of Roman Catholic theology in the future comes from the threat of theological fads. Protestant theology has known a number of theological fads in the past decade. The very fact that there was a somewhat tight hierarchical control and surveillance obviously helped Roman Catholic theology from developing similar fads, but the possibility of such fads will be one of the dangers arising from a greater theological freedom in the future. Such freedom will call upon the theologian to respond in a responsible manner and to object to whatever fads might appear on the theological scene. It will be impossible in the future to avoid all such fads, but this does not call for stricter hierarchical control which would stifle theological investigation and which would no longer be even possible in the contemporary and future settings of Roman Catholic theology.

An understanding of the different setting in which Roman Catholic theology will find itself in the future thus indicates some of the perspectives, prospects, and possible pitfalls for the discipline in the coming decade and the future. What can the Catholic Theological Society of America do for the discipline of Roman Catholic theology in this ensuing future?

We must realistically understand the great limitations and imperfections of the Catholic Theological Society of America. The CTSA has the advantage of providing a forum in which those interested in Roman Catholic theology can come together and strengthen the discipline. In the past, the CTSA has tried to accomplish its purpose through the very minimal means of holding one convention a year and trying to encourage local regions to meet. The obvious limitations of the CTSA come from the fact that our members rightly owe their primary allegiance to their own institutions, be they seminaries, colleges, or universities. This is a proper priority on the part of all concerned. Thus, in renewing the discipline of Roman Catholic theology the primary responsibility does fall upon the individual practitioners of the profession and the institutions in which we carry on our pro-



fession. However, I think in a lesser way, the CTSA can make some contribution to improving the discipline of theology.

First of all, the CTSA can provide a stimulus both to theologians and to the institutions in which we teach to make everyone more conscious of the need to develop the theological enterprise itself. The meetings or annual convention can try to be such a source of stimulation. In addition, the CTSA should sponsor various study projects that would call upon its members to be involved in different aspects of theological research. The following section of this paper will discuss some of these contemporary research projects in greater detail.

Perhaps the best available means for the CTSA to promote the discipline of theology will be through our participation in the Council on the Study of Religion. The Council on the Study of Religion brings together in one broad organization all the learned societies existing in the field of religion and religious studies.

Unfortunately, practitioners in the field of Roman Catholic theology in the past have not been taking advantage of the various possibilities for furthering the discipline that are a part of academic life. Teaching loads in many cases are much heavier than they are in other academic disciplines. Likewise, very few Roman Catholic theologians have had the opportunity of sabbaticals in order to further and develop their own education. Many Roman Catholic theologians are unaware of the possibilities involved for obtaining research grants from governmental and private agencies interested in academic studies and specifically in the studies of religion. It is hoped that through the work of the Council on the Study of Religion the theological and religious disciplines in this country will be strengthened.

In addition, the CTSA can make known throughout the Catholic theological world the needs for the Catholic Church itself to take a greater interest in sponsoring the theological enterprise. In the past, theology has often served merely the very practical function of training people for priesthood. The Roman Catholic Church in the United States has not been as interested as it should be in the discipline of theology but has looked upon it only as a means of training its future ministers. Consequently, the discipline as such has been hampered in its intellectual growth and development, and the Church itself has suffered.

Roman Catholic theology has a contribution to make to the life of the Church, and it seems that in this particular area the Catholic Theological Society of America has a greater role to play than in the first area of developing the discipline as such. The CTSA remains the only organized national group of Roman Catholic theologians. It would be impossible for any individual institution to take on projects and bring together many of the different theological resources existing in the country, but the CTSA is in a position here to provide some leadership and help for the whole Church.

The remarks that were made in the first section in no way mean to imply that theology does not have a relationship of service to the Church. However, problems do seem to arise when the various roles are not properly identified so that the theologian then takes on the role of pastoral trainer, religious educator, and formation guide for future ministers of the Church. In this capacity it is all too easy for the theologian to disperse his efforts among such different functions that his theological office suffers as a result. Theology will best serve the Church if its academic freedom and integrity are recognized by all. At times the magisterial function in the Church may very well have to disagree with a particular theological approach, but this should be done only after careful discussion and with full opportunities for clarification. However, in the academic forum the ultimate decision rests with peers who, in judging competence in Roman Catholic theology, must take into consideration pertinent magisterial teachings.

There are a number of different ways in which the Catholic Theological Society of America can help theology fulfill its function of service to the Church. One very important function that the CTSA can fill is that of dialogue with the American bishops. There is no doubt about the fact that there has been little or no dialogue between American bishops and American theologians in the Church. Events in the last few years have even sharpened the suspicions existing between the two groups, but the needs of the Church require a bridge and constant dialogue between bishops and theologians even though their respective offices and functions in the Church will cause them to look at things from a different perspective which thus may result in different emphases. A start has been

made this year with one meeting between a committee of the CTSA and the Bishops' Committee on Doctrine. This dialogue is only in its beginning stage at the present time, but at least a start has been made. It will be necessary now to structure these dialogues in such a way that they will take place on a regular basis and help the function of opening communication between bishops and theologians. For this reason it may be necessary to take more time and effort in drawing up specific points for discussion at these various meetings.

The Catholic Church in the United States is faced today with many problems and crises. One of the reasons underlying these problems in the Church specifically stems from the fact that in changing historical circumstances the Church itself is faced with new problems. In an older and more static time (if there ever really were such a time), it was easy for the theologian and theological science to provide ready-made answers for all people in the Church. Those who are looking for guidance in the current problems facing the Church frequently have the feeling that the theologian and theological science still represent "the answer man" who can easily provide answers for the problems of the future.

Very frequently theologians are asked to give "a theology of the pastoral ministry of the Church" or "a theology of the diaconate in the Church," or "a theology of education in the Church." However, an honest appraisal of the situation reminds us of the fact that especially in these areas theology must constantly be in dialogue with many other sciences. I do not think one should even speak in terms of "a theology of" in these cases, but rather refer to theological reflections on these various subjects.

In this last year, the Catholic Theological Society of America has tried to serve the Church in a number of such areas by bringing together groups to study specific problems that are facing the Church and its life in the future. In conjunction with the Urban Task Force of the United States Catholic Conference and the Social Theology Division of CARA, the CTSA undertook a project entitled "Metropolis: Christian Presence and Responsibility." This was a symposium of two-and-a-half days conducted by the Catholic Theological Society at Marriottsville, Md. Twenty-five people were

invited to participate in this symposium representing not only the various theological disciplines but also the people actively involved in the pastoral mission of the Church in urban America, as well as a number of resource people representing disciplines that would have something to contribute to the dialogue. Eight papers were commissioned in advance, and these papers were then discussed at this particular meeting. The hope was that through this as a beginning step some effort could be made in trying to develop the pastoral mission and function of the Church in urban America. Obviously, this was only a first step; but nonetheless it seems to have been a step in the right direction. It is necessary now to find ways to continue this work which has already been begun. For the wider dissemination of the fruits of this symposium, the eight papers, as well as a summary of the discussion, will be published by Fides Publishers.

Currently the CTSA is also involved in a project designed to serve the needs of the National Federation of Priests' Councils. The NFPC contacted the CTSA in late March asking for some theological help in developing the understanding of shared responsibility in the Church. After a number of meetings it was agreed to narrow the topic to shared responsibility in the structure and function of the local (diocesan) church. The research project undertaken under the auspices of the CTSA in this case will have the format of seven articles, most of which will be done by CTSA members, on this specific problem. These studies will appear as the October issue of *Chicago Studies* and will then be published in paperback form and sent to the members of the Provincial Councils of the NFPC for further study at their provincial meetings. In this way, it is hoped that the CTSA can be of service not only to the NFPC but also to the whole Church in developing a theology of shared responsibility in the structure and function of the local (diocesan) church.

The Bishops' Committee on the permanent diaconate approached the Society a few months ago in an attempt to have a theological understanding of the nature, purpose, and function of the permanent diaconate today. A small steering committee was formed and has met twice to look into this question and see what further steps can be taken in this particular matter.

In our convention here, mention has been made of the need to set up committees to study the proposed new Canon Law for the Church. The Canon Law Society of America has already set up commissions on these particular topics, but will welcome participation on these committees by members of the CTSA and thus make them joint committees of both societies. In this way it is hoped that we ourselves can contribute something to the life of the Church through the renewal of the canon law of the Church.

Perhaps there is no more important area at the present time for a theological contribution than the question of the revision of the Code of Canon Law which has great implications for the future life of the Church. A draft of the *lex fundamentalis* has already been proposed to the Cardinalate Commission for the revision of the Code itself. It is apparent that the drafts on other sections of the revised Code will also be forthcoming in the near future.

The very recent history of Vatican II reminds us of the absolute necessity for a theological critique of preliminary drafts. Many of the original drafts proposed for the Second Vatican Council could have been accepted only with the most disastrous consequences for the life of the Church. The whole conciliar process with its constant critique of existing drafts and subsequent modifications proposed in succeeding drafts should serve as a model for the critique to be given to the drafts proposed for the new Code. Especially in these matters that touch on an understanding of the basic structure of the Church, the function of law in the Church, and a constitutional law for the Church, American theology and the American Church have a responsibility of great magnitude. One can call to mind the contribution that the American bishops made at Vatican II on the important question of religious liberty and the rights of man. The American bishops were in the vanguard of those who refused to accept the preliminary drafts but constantly demanded a more adequate exposition of the matter of religious liberty.<sup>6</sup>

As American theologians I believe we have a similar responsibility concerning the proposed *lex fundamentalis* or constitutional

<sup>6</sup> For the need and importance of criticizing the preliminary Conciliar drafts, see *Commentary on the Documents of Vatican II*, 5 vols., ed. Herbert Vorgrimler (New York: Herder & Herder, 1969).

law of the Church and the subsequent sections of the revised Code. A theological critique of the proposed drafts is an absolute necessity in attempting to formulate the future law of the Church. At times this theological interpretation and critique must take the form of a strong dissent from the proposed drafts themselves. Without in any way attempting to dictate the response that our Society should make, it seems to me that the proposed *lex fundamentalis* if ever accepted would be disastrous for the life of the Church. It is a typical illustration of the wolf in sheep's clothing. The words and formulae of Vatican II merely cover over a Vatican ecclesiology and an understanding of law that can no longer be acceptable in the contemporary Church. The function of law must always be the minimal function of trying to furnish the necessary structure for the Church as the people of God to carry out responsibly its mission of continuing the work of the risen Lord in time and space. The present draft is totally unacceptable from an ecumenical perspective and could toll the death knell for any future progress in the area of ecumenics. Likewise, the present draft is an insult to the Oriental churches and the Oriental tradition in the Catholic Church. Unfortunately, the *lex fundamentalis*, rather than being a constitutional law for the whole Church, is only another example of Latin or Western cultural imperialism based on an antiquated notion of centralization that fails to take into consideration the principle of subsidiarity and of shared responsibility. The principle of subsidiarity in all its theological ramifications seems to be totally ignored in this draft. The concept of collegiality receives at most a passing nod, but does not permeate the document. This is especially true in the understanding of the role and function of the bishops and their relation of service to the people of God and their relationship with the bishop of Rome. One can only be shocked by the fact that such a document could even be proposed as a possible constitutional law for the Church in the nineteen-seventies.

All these projects which are mentioned above illustrate the way in which the CTSA as an organization can help fulfill its purpose of serving the Church in the United States. By so doing the Society also provides a stimulus for research in particular areas. In the future the Society should involve more of our membership in this

research and stimulate people to do this research who might otherwise not be that interested.

These particular research projects also raise the question about the future of such projects and what the CTSA can do in other areas. It would be helpful in the future if the CTSA could appoint every year a number of *ad hoc* committees to study various problems that are existing in the Church. This might be a worthwhile project for the Current Problems Committee in addition to its function of making suggestions for the convention program. The Society would then commission various groups to develop papers on the subject. Perhaps, too, the society could be instrumental in encouraging various theological journals to publish the fruits and results of such research, as has been the case in our collaboration with *Chicago Studies* on the question of shared responsibility in the structure and function of the local church.

Whereas these projects are of some service to the whole Church and are a definite first-step in the right direction, nonetheless it does not seem that this is the only, or perhaps even the best, way to conduct such research once things do get off the ground. The Church in the United States is still badly in need of a research and development arm in which theology must be a very important, but by no means the only, component factor. As a Society and as individual theologians, we ourselves should work for the establishment of a permanent research and development center. The closest thing existing to it at the present time seems to be CARA (Center for Applied Research in the Apostolate), but for many reasons this does not yet seem to be functioning in a very productive and worthwhile way.

The inductive approach to theological problems and the need for experimentation in all aspects of the life of the Church calls for a continuing research and development center in which people from the various disciplines and those who have practical experience in the field can join together to discuss the particular problems that are facing the Church in the United States. This would be a very profitable investment on the part of the American Church—perhaps even more so than its investment in universities, colleges, and other centers of education today. I realize that this is a controversial

issue, but it seems most imperative for the Church to develop a research and development arm through which it can try to come to grips in a more organized, regular, and methodical manner with the massive problems that are going to face the life of the Church in the future. Obviously, the CTSA could make some contribution in terms of time and personnel to such a group.

Thus, as the nineteen-seventies begin, the CTSA seems to be more aware of its responsibilities, both in improving the academic discipline of theology and in helping theology better serve the Church. However, a development along these lines calls for changes in the Society and its structuring. Obviously one of the problems remains the fact that the Society does not have very great financial resources. It might be necessary either to raise the dues or to ask for institutional memberships in order to provide a greater financial backing for the Society. It is also true, if the CTSA is going to continue to expand in the future, that it might be necessary to pay someone to work part-time as an Executive Secretary of the Society. We are now close to the point at which we can no longer depend upon the many hours of voluntary work which our officers, especially the Secretary and the Treasurer, have provided in the past. An Executive Secretary would be able to devote more time to the projects of the Society and to see to it that the Society fulfills its function, while at the same time providing a continuity which is not at all possible at the present time. If the Society does not eagerly embrace these opportunities of developing the discipline of theology as such and of serving the Church through theological research and discussion of particular points, then one should really question our continued existence. This seems to be the choice which is facing us as a Society now and in the future.

CHARLES E. CURRAN  
*Catholic University of America*  
*Washington, D.C.*