

# REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE ON CURRENT PROBLEMS

## I

### THE ORTHODOX CHURCH OF THE EAST

#### SUGGESTIONS FOR PRINCIPAL PAPER

- [1] *Eastern Orthodox Conception of the Church.* For the Catholic, the Church is, in its essence, simultaneously a mystical union and a truly social organism. For the Protestant, the Church is essentially a mystical union; accidentally, a visible union grows out of this, but its structure is free; the Church is to be distinguished from the congregations. For the Orthodox, the Church is essentially a mystical union; there is an accidental proprium which is visible, but it is structured not by the will of the people but by Christ.
- [2] *The Eastern Orthodox Church in America.* Possible orientations: (1) Influence of (non-Catholic) liberalism on the Orthodox in this country; significance for reunion. (2) Contrast with Orthodox theology outside this country, or with American Orthodoxy 50 years ago. (3) General mentality of Orthodox theology in America. Lack of real bond between various Orthodox Churches in USA.
- [3] *Conciliar Theory.* History and doctrine. Eastern Orthodox attitude towards the councils of the past, towards councils to come. Possible participation of Orthodox in next council, and on what level.

#### SUGGESTIONS FOR SUBSIDIARY PAPERS

- [4] *Eastern Orthodox Conception of Tradition.* Confrontation of the Catholic position with the Orthodox affirmation that all is solved by tradition, especially as found in the holy liturgies. Where do we see eye to eye, where do we differ?
- [5] *Eastern Orthodox Conception of Scripture.* Confrontation of the Catholic position with the Orthodox position that Scripture is part of tradition. Do we really differ on this score? If so, precisely where? Would include norms of interpretation, role of philology, etc.

## SUGGESTIONS FOR SEMINARS

- [6] *Mariology*. General mentality of Eastern Orthodox with reference to our Lady; reaction to definition of Assumption, and basic reasons for adverse reaction; attitude towards Catholic conception of Mary's role in redemption.
- [7] *Lay Apostolate*. Eastern orthodox conception of the role of the layman in the apostolate. Cf. sections in Congar, *Jalons*.
- [8] *Moral Theology*. Eastern Orthodox approach to moral: exposition and confrontation with Catholic moral theology. Or: the moral aspects of sacramental theology.
- [9] *Sacramental Theology*. Either a consideration of general sacramental theology (confrontation of Orthodox positions with our own), or perhaps limited to an individual sacrament, e.g., confirmation (perfection of baptism, prophetic role, etc.).
- [10] *Lex orandi, lex credendi*. Liturgy as source of doctrine among the Orthodox; their understanding of the axiom. Could be regarded as a seminar in either liturgy or fundamental theology.
- [11] *Trinity*. For example, does the procession of the Holy Spirit still divide us? How close are we on the dogma itself of the Trinity in its several aspects? What of speculative theology here?

## II

## INDIVIDUAL RECOMMENDATIONS

- [12] *European Attempts at Ecumenism*. Would analyze the several efforts, so as to uncover the amount of success achieved, the failures, the blind alleys, the lessons, etc. Perhaps a final summing up: where are we?
- [13] *The Theology of Conversion*. A theological evaluation of (1) the role of external grace, (2) the coordination of external grace and natural psychological influences, (3) faith and the preambles, etc. Not techniques, but basic theological aspects.
- [14] *History and Historical Method*. What is history? What certitude can be derived from history? The "relative" aspects of history; e.g., one man gets surety sooner or more easily than another. The place and function of history and historical method in fundamental theology.

- [15] *Sacramental Signification*. Study of the sacraments as signs; the whole problem of symbolism in this regard. Cf. Colman O'Neill, O.P., "The Role of the Recipient and Sacramental Signification," *Thomist* 21 (1958) 257-301, 508-40.
- [16] *The Eucharist and the Parousia*. Is the Eucharist a memorial not only of the passion but of the Second Coming? Cf. early Christianity: Did the early Christians just stop hoping for the Parousia, or is it an idea that should endure? Note, too, the liturgical aspect, the "heavenly banquet." Is the Parousia heaven?
- [17] *Civil Law and Individual Conscience*. Relationship between civil law and the obligation an individual recognizes to follow his conscience, even if erroneous, in order to avoid subjective sin. Is toleration of the propagation of a false religion justified partly because the individual has a moral obligation to follow even an erroneous conscience? Relation between demands of individual conscience and common good. Conscientious objectors. Cf. Pius XII to Italian Jurists, Dec. 6, 1953; to World Historians, Oct., 1955.
- [18] *Resistance to Army of Occupation after Surrender*. When can civilians use force against occupation troops after the government has already surrendered to the enemy? Allied question: What is lawful for an American soldier re resistance after he has been captured by the enemy? Point 3 of Code of Conduct for American prisoners of war now reads: "If I am captured, I will continue to resist by all means available." Fr. F. J. Connell, C.S.S.R., criticized this in Oct., 1955, issue of *Catholic Men*.
- [19] *John of the Cross and Detachment from Creatures*. St. John speaks of ridding oneself of all affections and attachments for creatures; he says that affections for God and affections for creatures are contraries. (Cf. esp. *Ascent of Mount Carmel*, Book 1, chaps. 5-6; also Leonard McCann, C.S.B., *The Doctrine of the Void*.) How show that what St. John means is what we would call "inordinate" attachments and affections for creatures?

## III

## SPECIAL MEMORANDUM

[20] *Concerning:* A preliminary exploration of the problems presented by the Code of Canon Law, canons 1395-1405, to scholars and educated priests, religious, and laymen, with emphasis on conditions in America.

*Aim:* Since John XXIII has made public his desire to revise the Code, it is possible that the Holy See may invite members of the hierarchy, special groups, and even individuals to express their opinions on various aspects of the Code that might call for revision. It seems, then, opportune to initiate discussions calmly and frankly on the question of prohibited books by scholars whose fidelity to the legislation of the Church is well known.

*Procedure:* It is quite possible that the Society of Catholic College Teachers of Sacred Doctrine will devote a special session at its next national meeting (with possibly preliminary discussions at regional meetings) to this problem, under the chairmanship of a competent scholar, who will be asked to collate all the suggestions, questions, viewpoints, etc., and make a report to the National Board.

The SCCTSD will, in all likelihood, send an invitation to the Catholic Theological Society of America, the Canon Law Society of America, and the American Catholic Philosophical Association, suggesting:

- (a) that they also include this question in the agenda of their 1960 meetings;
- (b) that the chairmen who preside at the discussions of the four societies on this matter be empowered to confer as a joint committee of the four societies and to draw up a "master" statement, which will be presented to the four societies;
- (c) that each society, as well as its members, be completely free in regard to this final statement. Nevertheless, it would be made available to members of the hierarchy, to colleges and universities, to members of the four societies in question, in case the Holy See should issue an invitation to any of these persons or groups to send suggestions for the revision of the Code on this point.

*Material for Discussion:*

- (a) the present legislation and possible changes;
- (b) the present practice in regard to the Index; possibility of revision; more helpful methods of communicating the judgment of the Church on prohibited books, etc.;
- (c) the present means for obtaining permission to read prohibited books; other means that might better serve the purpose of the laws.

*Recommendation:* That the CTSA cooperate with this program—perhaps even before a formal invitation is issued by the SCCTSD. This could be done by urging the chairmen of the various regions to devote a session of a regional meeting to this problem and to communicate their findings to a special chairman to be appointed by the Board of Directors for this project. Provision could then be made for a more general consideration of the problem at the 1960 convention.

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Current Problems