10-1962

The Opinion - Vol. 02, No. 01

Fuller Theological Seminary

Willard A. Parker
October 11th in the Basilica of St. Peter in Rome, the 21st Ecumenical Council of the Roman Catholic Church will convene. Preceded by only two other Councils since the Reformation, namely the Council of Trent (1545-47, 1551-52, and 1562-63) and the First Vatican Council (1869-70), this council is regarded as the most significant event in contemporary Catholicism. Called on January 25, 1959, by Pope John XXIII, the Council is expected to bring together 3,000 churchmen from every corner of the globe. With almost 1700 bishoprics plus the College of Cardinals, their apostolic Vicars, Auxiliary Bishops and religious superiors, every facet and school of thought in the Roman Catholic Church will be represented.

PURPOSE

Though this council has been named the Second Vatican Council, it does not mean that this is a formal continuation of the First which was prorogated by the outbreak of the Franco-Prussian war and the siege of Rome by the Piedmontese army. However it can be assumed that some of the issues left unsettled by the First Council, such as the role of bishops in the church, will be discussed. As in previous councils, the issue of faith and the contemporary world will be on the agenda. This means the coming Council will effect a real reform in the Church, an intensified spirit of faith, a renewal of Christian life, an increase in pastoral activity, and legislation to the present situation. Pope John XXIII has also designated as one of the main objects of the Council "the salutary moral renewal of the Christian people." Because of the complexity of our scientific age, the Council will discuss needs and ways for stirring anew a sense of purity and moral uprightness in modern man.

The one issue which will probably be discussed the most, both in Council meetings and in informal groups, is the unity of the Church and the means for Her reunion. It is this issue which interests most non-Catholic observers and the news media. It should be noted, however, that this is not a Council of Unity, as was the Florence Council. No non-Catholic group has petitioned to join the Catholic Church, and none of the non-Catholic observers have been

(continued on p. 2)

RALPH B. WRIGHT, JR. received his B.A. in Political Science from Colgate University in 1960 and is a member of the Middler Class.
EDITORIAL

The question of chapel attendance is a complex one. In trying to answer it, the administration has justly attempted to take into account the feelings and attitudes of the students. Last year, instead of flatly making chapel compulsory, they allowed student sentiment to be aired in a forum on the question and in written evaluations of the chapel program. Finally they asked us to mark our chapel attendance in a book.

The reasons for this bookkeeping request were never very clear to many students. Reactions to it ranged from dutiful compliance to total abstinence. However, none of these reactions ever reached the administration. The attendance book disappeared during exam week and has not been seen since. Whoever took the book apparently felt he was striking a blow for freedom. Unfortunately, it landed on the student body. Because of his misguided zeal, all of us must now endure the inconvenience of another quarter of attendance marking. Let us hope our sportsmanship can at least equal that of the long-suffering administration.

COUNCIL (con't.)

commissioned by their respective groups to even discuss such a possibility. Yet Pope John XXIII has frequently made it clear that the impending Council must be an invitation to separated Christians to seek Church unity. In his letter to the clergy of Venice on April 23, 1959, he emphasized that Catholics and Orthodox (and likewise Protestants) must first meet as brothers and grow closer and more accustomed to one another before there can be any thought of reunion. He felt that humility, patience and charity must be the mark of all discussions between separated brothers about the unity of faith.

RELATIONSHIP TO PROTESTANTS

Is the Council and its agenda an intra-Catholic affair, or is there a greater significance for evangelical Christians? Fifty years ago Protestants would have rejected the thought that such a council could have significance for them. But with the changing world scene and the revitalization of pagan religions and other non-Christian philosophies, such an answer does not appear to be possible today. Concerning the issue of unity amongst Christians, the Central Committee of the Assembly of the World Council of Churches at New Delhi issued the following statement: "...the fear of bigness must not blind us to those signs of the times which indicate that we live in an age of world forces and of decisions to be taken at the international level. At such a time the Christian churches must be present on the world scene and for this they need a common instrument of action, of witness. At such a time the Christian churches must demonstrate clearly that there is in the midst of great confusion a coherent people of God, conscious of its unity and ready to bring the light of the Gospel into the human situation."

Too often, Protestants have treated Roman Catholics as no better than unconverted pagans. Catholics have also been guilty of treat-
ing Protestants as heretics in league with the Devil. Fortunately, the age of violent hatred and distrust appears to be behind us. Through dialogue with one another, the essential doctrines of each tradition are becoming better known to the other. This dialogue is not a controversy, nor a debate, nor a negotiation, nor an attempt at persuasion. It is a prayerful effort to appreciate the truth in other's convictions, together with unequivocal affirmation of one's own faith. It is a frank facing of the differences and a complete reliance upon the Holy Spirit "to lead us unto all truth." Any concept of ambiguity or compromise is ruled out. Working within such a framework, Protestant Churchmen have seen much to approve in modern Catholicism: the biblical and liturgical movements; the increasing role of the laity and a developing "theology of the laity;" the attitude of many (though not all) Catholics toward religious liberty; the new outlook on the Reformation, Protestantism as a whole, and Christian cooperation.

PROBLEMS

Certain objections have appeared in conjunction with this. Namely, the supremacy and infallibility of the Pope, too many elements in Mariology, and the authoritarian and even intolerant nature demonstrated by the Church—shown, for instance, in various forms of censorship. Yet the Protestant tradition likewise has problems. Dr. Hendrik Kraemer, of Leiden University, in A Theology of the Laity states: "We had hoped that the Reformers in getting rid of the hierarchy, had thereby abolished the inferior status of the laity. But it turned out otherwise, and we have only been subjected to another form of clericalism. We have always had and still have, 'pastor-churches,' where everything is regulated by churchmen, and the ordinary members remain passive. We have solved the question of rights in our own way, but we are embarrassed by the actual state of affairs, and, indeed, it is the Catholics who are developing the theology of the laity at present." A practical manifestation of this is the movement of many altars in Europe from the apse to the transept of the churches to allow easier participation in the worship service. Catholics are now encouraged to read their Bibles, and the use of vernacular in the services is increasing.

OUR RESPONSIBILITY

The Catholic Church has recognized the unique faith and traditions of Protestants. Dr. Laurentius Klein, Professor Church History) at St. Matthias Abbey in Trier, Germany, recently wrote in The Catholic World: "Because of the heritage developed during the past four hundred years of separation based on many Christian principles, including faith in Christ as God and Saviour, they have constructed their own liturgy, their own theological methods and their own doctrine. In other words, they have their own religious past, their own Christian tradition. No one can deny that they possess real Christian values as well...All this would be impossible without the grace of our Lord because no one can say, 'Christ is the Lord,' unless the Holy Spirit is in him."

Rapprochement between the various Christian traditions is now gradually developing. We are unable to say whether or not this will ever lead to complete unity. However, as Christians who believe in the working of the Holy Spirit, such a possibility should not be denied. Therefore, let us join our Catholic neighbors in raising up our hearts in prayer for the Holy Spirit to pour out the fullness of His gifts upon the Council and its participants and for the success of the Council.
REFLECTIONS

By John Bray

When one is approached and requested to share his reflections upon seminary life, there is an initial surge of panic as he contemplates what others might discover as the top of his skull is removed and his cerebral lobes are exposed to the quizzical stares of fellow seminarians. Can we really be honest in an enterprise such as this? How much easier it would be to share the reflections which one feels he should have experienced. After all, we are all familiar with the concepts which Christians should be entertaining—so familiar with them that at times they prevent us from being honest with ourselves. To avoid this danger, let us hold our breath and plunge into the maelstrom generated by one drop of honesty.

But is it ethical to force one to age before the appropriate season? Here we are referring to our untainted incoming Juniors whose Christian Idealism has not yet been sullied by the "Seminary Struggle." How can we protect their purity and still be faithful in our endeavor of honesty? This is where eschatology comes to our rescue (thus demonstrating the functional value of a seminary education). With all due respect to those friends for whom "seven" is the key to eschatology, we being the heirs of classical orthodoxy, will fall back upon the medieval tripartite distinction. This article will be divided into three portions which correspond to the writer's concept of seminary growth: Generation, Degeneration, and Regeneration. A suggestion will be made as to when the various sections should be read.

PART I - Generation

(To be read immediately after registration)

Life is wonderful! After many days of dreaming about Fuller Seminary, we are finally here. At last, our dreams are fulfilled.

How distinct is this writer's memory of his sense of awe as he viewed the seminary building for the first time. His heart was thrilled as he passed the office doors of Fuller faculty members whose names he had previously seen affixed to the jackets of learned volumes. The names read like an evangelical Roll of Honor. Surely this was the West Point of the evangelical world.

And everyone is so nice and agreeable. What a fine bunch of folks we have at Fuller. We begin to salivate (spiritually) as we anticipate the quality of Christian fellowship at this institution.

Of course, it is true that college was a little difficult at times, and we may not have done as well as might be expected, but now we have the chance for a new beginning. Oh wonderful Brave New World! How anxious we are to launch into our studies.

PART II - Degeneration

(To be read at the conclusion of the Junior year)

Our spiritual myopia begins to be corrected as we gain a better perspective toward our fellow students. No longer are they non-descript spiritual blobs, but they are really human beings with personalities of their own. One finds these personalities expressing

JOHN BRAY received his B.S. from Wayne State University in 1958 and is a 1962 graduate of F.T.S. He is presently studying at Stanford Univ.
themselves as the students tend to gravitate into different groups. Some of them want to spend all their time evangelizing ("making an impact for Christ"), others devote themselves almost exclusively to the books ("studying as unto the Lord"), and a few individuals spend much time attending concerts and performing plays ("attempting to express Christian values via cultural media").

The disturbing factor is that each group begins to view itself as being the exclusive embodiment of Christian truth. Anyone who is outside the group is regarded as "not understanding the essence of Christianity" and is relegated to an inferior status. Woe to the poor seminarian who finds himself hopelessly frustrated as he attempts to fit his life into a mold fashioned by others. What has happened to the strong spiritual brotherhood which he had experienced at first?

Even the professors seem somewhat less than ideal. In fact, some of them seem to be rather irritable at times. The other day one of them came to class and was furious because the students had not prepared their lessons to his satisfaction. "After all," he informed them, "this course is one of the most important in the curriculum." His words were familiar to the students who had heard them from practically every member of the faculty. It is somewhat of a strain to find oneself being turned into a linguist, theologian, preacher, teacher, evangelist, pastor, and missionary—all at the same time.

Let us not forget our married seminarians who are beginning to look rather haggard and wan. They have discovered that even seminary babies need food. Of course, they know that the Lord will provide, but it has been a long time since the last manna has fallen.

It certainly looks as if seminary isn't all it was cracked up to be. After all, why should a person have to experience all these strains? Is it really worth it? Perhaps it might not be a bad idea to stop in and see our former employer...just in case.

PART III - Regeneration
(To be read during Senior year)

What a wonderful relief it is to rediscover that the source of one's spiritual life is in Jesus Christ and His love for us. It is absolutely overwhelming to realize the way in which God has loved us. This realization came to us with renewed force after we were able to be honest with God about our feelings of resentment and found that His love for us was not diminished.

It has also helped to be honest with others and confess our faults to them. Up until that point we had considered our problems to be unique, but then we realized that others were troubled by the same things and thus we could share each other's burdens and have fellowship. Of course there were some individuals who rejected our honesty because it was too much of a threat to them, but then the responsibility for rejection rests with them.

After one has learned more perfectly what it means for God to love him, then other things begin to fall into place. We understand now that the various "Fuller Factions" had disturbed us because deep down inside we felt that we should be more evangelistic, more studious, and more cultured. Now it's easier for us to allow others their idiosyncrasies because we no longer need their approval. Of course we still desire their approval, but we are no longer dependent upon it. It's enough that God accepts us.
Suddenly the possibility looms before us that some of our faculty members might also have experienced problems. Perhaps that's why they are so irritable at times—we've touched upon one of their sore spots. If that's the case, instead of castigating them, it might be better if we exhibit toward them some of the same understanding which we'd like to receive. After all, they too are human.

Baby has devoured gobs of Gerbers, but there has always been something for him to eat (usually as a result of Daddy working, not just praying for manna). We've had some new insights into the faithfulness of God.

Life is no longer as rosy and pink as it used to be, it now has gray overtones. But after all, has Christ ever promised to release us from the burdens of life? His promise is rather that we might receive help in bearing them. Even Christ was perfected through what he suffered. (Perhaps these experiences were necessary to prepare us to be His ministers.)

At the conclusion of seminary your reflections might differ markedly from mine, but if you have benefitted as much from this experience as I have, then you will agree that seminary has been rewarding. If I had it all to do over again, I would be registering this fall— I think.

*****

Letters to the editors...

COMMENCEMENT

The Seminary graduation exercises last June were conducted, as usual, with the dignity and decorum that befits the Seminary and the occasion. Nevertheless, there was one feature of the ceremony which proved to be embarrassing to me, having invited several friends and relatives to my commencement exercises. I firmly feel that I am not alone in the conviction that a graduation exercise is neither the time nor the place for a fund-raising effort. Not only is it incongruous with the spirit and purpose of commencement exercises, but it tends to cheapen the institution's image in the minds of its constituency.

I strongly urge that the Board of Trustees and the administrative officers of Fuller Theological Seminary reconsider the policy of fund-raising at the sacred occasion of graduation to the end that the graduates, their friends, and their parents will be spared the embarrassment that was obviously experienced at commencement last June.

While the offering taken benefited the seminary's immediate needs, what was gained in dollars was more than lost in public relations.

Jim Lagerstrom, '62
STUDENT COUNCIL CORNER

New Students

The Council expresses its most cordial welcome to the 125 new students and looks forward to serving them during this coming year.

New Student Retreat

Many new students have expressed deep appreciation for the New Student Retreat and for the whole-hearted participation of the faculty. Vice-President Ron Thompson did an excellent job in planning and running the Retreat. Instead of the usual four messages, we had the privilege of hearing six faculty members on the theme of how one's theology determines his Biblical understanding, Christian education, ethics, evangelism, and devotional and spiritual life. Dwight Whipple recorded the messages and the tapes are available in the tape library.

The testimony time and the prayer sessions in the cabins at night revealed that the new class is composed of mature men and women who have been led to Fuller by God and who are anxious to prepare themselves for His service. We trust that their highest expectations will be fulfilled.

Vacant Student Body Offices

Max Grant has resigned as Practical Evangelism Chairman. There are a few matters which necessitate his remaining in Australia this year. An election will be held within the next few weeks to fill this post along with the Chairmanship of FMF. Please submit your nominations for these two positions to the Student Council by October 10th. If there are four or less nominees for each position we can have a ballot vote. Otherwise, we will call a special assembly for the election.

Dean of Students

Dr. Cole, our new Dean of Students, has cordially expressed his desire to become acquainted with all of us and to be of service in any way possible. His warmth and enthusiasm has already endeared him to those of us who met him at the Retreat. We welcome him to the Fuller family and are confident that he will be a great help and blessing to us.
All manuscripts and letters for the November issue must be in Box 77 by Wednesday, October 31, 1962.