

I Reckon

— By Earl Heffner

All too often the more orderly of us like to have a comfortable little slot in which to place all aspects of society as it affects us. With rare exceptions, we design such a filing point to fit our own particular needs.

When something doesn't fit the way we want it to do, it is then that we strike out with words or actions as we deem the circumstances warrant.

Such a situation now exists for a very good friend of mine. But this friend's reaction extends beyond his own personal life and affects the thoughts of others. Because of this, because his reaction is not untypical in our modern society, I feel constrained to answer.

The friend: Pete Ellis, editor of the Mecklenburg Times. His problem: Pope Paul's speech in New York and his thinly veiled advocacy that Red China be admitted to the United Nations. And Pete's larger problem: an expressed, editorially, desire that all pastors—the Holy Father and those of the Protestant National Council of Churches—restrict their utterances to those things spiritual.

Now while I, too, am opposed to admission of Red China to the U.N. I can see some advantages, some logic to such a move. Certainly it is basic that the solution of problems between nations requires some dialogue; equally certain it is that such dialogue cannot begin unless there is some forum for it.

However, it is not the purpose of this particular column to debate the question of admission of Red China to the U. N.

Rather, its purpose is to stress how unreasoning it is to want our religious leaders to restrict their sermons and public statements to the spiritual realm.

First, there is the right of freedom of speech that gives all of us a responsibility to express our considered views on all subjects to which we may contribute some constructive thought.

Even more important, religion is not something that can be consigned to a corner of the week, to an hour in the morning each Sunday.

Religion, and in our case Christianity, is the primary force and factor in our lives. It must be in the marketplace of ideas; it belongs in the middle of the struggle for peace, for social justice, for the welfare of mankind.

Ethics and morals are based on

religious concepts or otherwise have no firm foundation. These religious concepts are shaped and formed and interpreted by our experts. And the only true experts in this field are our theologians, our religious leaders.

For them to withhold their opinions would be wrong.

My friend Pete Ellis, his Mecklenburg Times, and all others who hold the view that pastors must restrict their utterances to things spiritual are dead wrong.

They have the natural right we all possess to express their views on any subject; they have the moral obligation to express themselves on all subjects that affect the welfare of men.

With them we may at times disagree.

With them at times we may agree.

But we cannot, with reason or justice, deny them the right of that expression.

Pope Paul, dear Pete, was not off base to advocate admission of Red China to the United Nations.

Nor were you off base to disagree with this position.

But you were wrong to deny him the right to take such a position. As wrong as he would be, were he to suggest censorship of your newspaper, by so doing urging that your own opinions be restricted to those things political.

ACLU Opposes Obscenity Test

WASHINGTON —(NC)— The American Civil Liberties Union has asked the U.S. Supreme Court to hold that publications may be banned for obscenity only if they pose a "clear and present danger" of causing anti-social conduct.

The ACLU called on the court to drop its current test of obscenity, established in 1958. That test is "whether to the average person, applying contemporary community standards, the dominant theme of the material taken as a whole appeals to prurient interest."

The Civil Liberties Union took its stand in an amicus curiae (friend of the court) brief filed in the case of publisher Ralph Ginzburg. Ginzburg faces five years in jail and heavy fines for his activities in publishing the magazine Eros and other publications found to be obscene.

The ACLU said the current test of obscenity leads to "a vast guessing game" with "freedom of expression ... hanging in the balance." It said the test "inhibits the dissemination of expression which is not obscene."

The organization urged freedom of expression "without social restraint" up to the point where it could be shown that the expression "will necessarily harm another."

The ACLU said its concern was with freedom of expression, "not in the protection of smutty books and magazines."

To Greek Orthodox

Saint's Relics Returned

VENICE, Italy—(NC)—A delegation of Greek Orthodox leaders attended solemn ceremonies in the Venice church containing relics of St. Sabbas, which are being returned to an Orthodox monastery in Jerusalem after centuries in this city.

The ceremonies included the formality of recognizing relics and examining the documents, seals and actual remains to assure authenticity. Then the relics were carried to the basilica of St. Mark where they were to remain for veneration for five days.

On Oct. 24 an Orthodox liturgy (Mass) was celebrated by representatives of Orthodox patriarch Benediktos I of Jerusalem in the Orthodox church in Venice. The Liturgy was attended by Catholic officials. Giovanni Cardinal Urbani of Venice celebrated a Latin-rite Mass in the square in front of St. Mark's.

At the end of the dual ceremonies the relics were consigned to the Orthodox leaders and carried to their church of St. George in solemn procession. The following day (Oct. 25), the relics, accompanied by Orthodox leaders and Auxiliary Bishop Giuseppe Olivotti of Venice, were taken by air for Jerusalem where the relics were placed in the basilica of the Holy Sepulcher until they can be solemnly installed in the church of the monastery St. Sabbas founded in the desert near the Dead Sea.

The Orthodox leaders here include Archbishop Basilius of Jordan; Archimandrite Hermanus,

who is guardian of the Holy Sepulcher basilica; Archimandrite Theodosius, superior of the church of Bethany; and Archimandrite Serafin, superior of the St. Sabbas monastery.

Cardinal Urbani said in a pastoral letter in March that the decision to return the relics to the ancient Orthodox church in which they had originally been preserved was made with the approval of Pope Paul VI.

The cardinal wrote that Patriarch Benediktos had told him that every night Orthodox monks in the monastery founded by St. Sabbas gather around his empty tomb to pray for the return of his relics. St. Sabbas was born in 439 in Cappadocia and fled as a youth to Palestine where he lived as a hermit. He also founded a monastery in the Judean desert, which is the one referred to by the patriarch. He is regarded as a founder of Eastern monasticism.

"It is not without sacrifice," the cardinal wrote, "that we prepare to witness the return to the East of these venerated relics, objects of our devotion for many centuries. But at the same time we are very happy to give by means of our two fold gesture sincere and cordial testimony of fraternity, closeness and the most lively hopes for those who like us glory in the name of Christ."

Only Necessity Permits Communion Outside Mass

VATICAN CITY —(NC)— The practice of distributing Communion apart from Mass, although permissible in some cases, is not in line with the opinion of the ecumenical council.

This unofficial but authoritative interpretation appeared in the current issue of Notitiae, Latin magazine of the commission for implementing the council's liturgical constitution, which was released Oct. 18.

To the question of whether the practice of distributing Communion before Mass was fitting, the answer was no, since "Communion is and must appear as the culmination of participation in the Mass." It is therefore "fitting," the magazine said, that Communion be distributed during Mass, as is evident from the latest liturgical books.

However, Notitiae said, "if there is some necessity for before-Mass distribution, the priest should wear an alb and stole rather than Mass vestments."

This stand was reiterated in response to another question relating to the practice of celebrating requiem anniversary Masses at special altars where the Blessed Sacrament is not reserved. In these cases, according to the questioner, people often are required to leave that altar to receive Communion at an altar where the Blessed Sacrament is kept.

Notitiae said it is "fitting that in each Mass hosts be consecrated for the Communion of the faithful even though their number be small, so that they participate more perfectly in the Mass."

Answering other questions, Notitiae made the following points on varied subjects:

—Special permission from the bishop is not required for priests to concelebrate the evening Mass

of Holy Thursday unless the bishop has ruled otherwise.

—The local Ordinary is competent to approve special versions of the new "Prayer of the Faithful," recited after the Creed, without having to refer it to the liturgical bodies of national bishops' conferences. This interpretation, Notitiae said, stands until definitive laws are issued on the prayer of priests, pilgrimage and the like.

—The formerly common seminary practice to two Masses on Sunday, the first a normal communion Mass at which Communion is received and the second a solemn high Mass, does not fit into the spirit of the liturgy constitution. Communion should be received at the solemn Mass, Notitiae said, and if this "renders participation in another Mass difficult or impossible, it would seem the latter should be suppressed or perhaps made optional, without prejudice to sincere piety."

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