

the *New York Times* to call the Holy See a "degrading influence."

For the first time there will be official observers from outside the Roman Catholic Church (as there were, for the first time, official Catholic observers at the Third Assembly of the World Council of Churches in New Delhi). And not only Christians, but others, believers and non-believers, will watch to see how the Church pronounces on such essential matters as religious liberty, relations of Church and State, or the role of the laity. If the Council proceeds in the spirit of John XXIII it will emphasize things that unite rather than things that divide. If it does, and meets the response it can properly expect, then not only the Catholic Church, but all men who share an ultimate concern for human dignity and international peace, will be able to front the future with greater strength and effectiveness and a realistic hope for a more ordered world. Amid all, in the modern world, that tends to sunder and shatter relations between men, the Council may serve to recall men to their essential unity.

CUBA, PAST AND PRESENT

Cuba has been a burr under the saddle of our foreign policy for some years now. As a result, our attitudes toward the regimes of both Batista and Castro, under the administrations of both Eisenhower and Kennedy have been jumpy and erratic. When pressed to act we have: we finally withdrew support from Batista and he was overthrown; we supported an invasion of Castro's Cuba and he was not overthrown. Between such moments, we have had time to recoup and formulate a sound policy. With the unerring accuracy of hindsight, it is easy to say that we have failed to make the best use of these quiescent periods.

Now, as the Communist buildup increases, as

more men and arms are shipped in from Russia, irritation increases, another crisis seems clearly in the making, and the call for some quick, decisive action grows louder. While many Americans criticize the limited actions our government has taken, precisely because they are limited, America's allies seem to be critical of our government because it has acted at all. What one views as apathy and lethargy the other sees as near-hysteria.

At this point it is unlikely—and it would certainly be foolish—that the administration will follow the course recommended by either of these two significant and vocal groups, one within and the other outside our country. A full-scale blockade or an invasion of the island, which is one recommendation, could succeed in replacing Castro. But the price would be exorbitant—to us, to our allies, and to our negotiations and maneuvers in various other parts of the world, not least of all Berlin. But it would be equally foolish—and, fortunately, it is just as unlikely—to act as if Castro's Cuba does not present a real problem. It may not pose a significant military threat and it is hardly a showcase for Communism, but it is a Communist base in our hemisphere. If our allies do not see it as a problem, we must shoulder the burden alone.

It is frequently pointed out that Cuba is only ninety miles off the coast of the United States. The reverse is also true, and it allows us a freedom of action that no other country has in relation to Cuba. We could readily launch vast military forces if conditions called for it. Our task now is to see that such conditions do not arise, that Cuba does not become the Communist showcase it was intended to be, that an effective campaign of subversion does not fan out from that island to other countries in the hemisphere. What is demanded is neither apathy nor hysteria, but simply the application of knowledge and ability we can be expected to possess.

in the magazines

The Spring 1962 issue of *Cross Currents*, devoted entirely to the Second Vatican Council, constitutes a dialogue between Catholic, Orthodox, Anglican and Protestant Christians, both priests and laymen. They present their expectations for the outcome of the deliberations in Rome and what reforms, re-

newals or innovations they wish to see discussed and acted upon. Articles from France, Germany, Spain, Italy and Poland (results of a symposium begun by the French monthly, *Esprit*) are included in the volume, as well as a number from the U.S. A view of the Council by Asian and African lay-

men and a statement by Cardinal Bea are also presented.

In a final article entitled "Can the Council Fail?" Hans Kung points to "various facts [which] have given . . . cause to doubt whether the Council, despite all the good intentions and all the good will and all the hard work, will attain its major objectives." He cites some of the failings, limitations and successes of other Councils in other eras and concludes that "at all costs, it is imperative that, in all the sectors of our Church, it be well understood that the Council will meet with failure only if it gets lost in details.

But on what conditions, he then asks, will it be able really to produce something significant? All those who, in various ways, work with a genuine success in view are completely certain: success will be achieved neither by opportunistic 'modernizations' nor by traditionalist patchwork. What is needed is a theological and practical reflection on the Gospel of Jesus Christ Our Lord, a reflection that is pursued in contact with current data and in terms of our time, under the influence of the Holy Spirit."

Philip Scharper, who presents a "Roman Catholic View" of the Second Vatican Council in the October 1 issue of *Christianity and Crisis*, suggests that the Council could, by its decisions in Rome, "give notice that she [the Church] is aware that the Constantinian era is ended and that she is prepared, indeed eager, to enter the era that is taking form before our eyes." Scharper would characterize the current era as "pre-Christian in almost the same way that the world that confronted the early church was pre-Christian."

However, despite the undoubted numerical superiority of those of other faiths and of no faith, Scharper is optimistic about the new success of Christianity all over the world due to the Christian community's rediscovery of "the imperiousness and splendor of the Scriptures," and the additional modern advantage of improved communication and exchange. He is led to hope "that the Council will take every opportunity to affirm before the world that the church lives by the Word of God and brings all reality under its judgment." This would "make possible a more simple formulation of Christian doctrine" with the result that communication with non-Christians would be made easier. And furthermore, Scharper writes, if both Roman Catholic and Protestant "believed the other really treasured and tried to live by God's Word, we would be more inclined to 'search the Scriptures' together and would spend less of our ecumenical time quoting sociologists and secretly fingering the scars left by our separate histories."

"A Protestant View" of the Council by George A. Lindbeck, in the same issue of *Christianity and Crisis*, considers the preparatory work that has been done in anticipation of the Council and pronounces the prospect for success of the Council "moderately optimistic." Despite scepticism and gloom on the part of many Protestants, Lindbeck feels that "when the council is viewed in the broad sweep of history, there is every reason to believe that it marks the conclusion of the Counter-Reformation epoch . . . Since Leo XIII a countercurrent has intermittently flowed, leading to greater freedom in the social and political spheres and—especially in recent decades in Europe—to theological, liturgical and biblical revivals. The coming Council, if it follows the lead of the preparatory work, will be basically on the side of this renewal."

The opening of the Second Vatican Council and the 445th anniversary celebration of Luther's initiation of the Reformation, only twenty days apart, were the springboard for the October 12 issue of *Christianity Today*. C. Stanley Lowell, writing on "Protestant-Catholic Tensions" cites marriage rules, public aid for Catholic schools and birth control as three major areas of disagreement and disturbance between Catholic and Protestant. He believes it is indicative of "the impotence of Protestant-Catholic dialogue that up to this point it has not come to grips with these three issues. On many occasions of dialogue they are not even mentioned. The feeling appears to be that the dialogue might be disturbed and even disrupted if real Protestant-Catholic differences were explored. Some feel, however, that dialogue which is merely sentimental will die of desuetude. Here, in these three areas, lies the real need for a Protestant-Catholic *modus vivendi* today. Bibulous ecumenism needs concretion."

Claud D. Nelson, a Methodist minister who will be a by-line correspondent for Religious News Service at the Council, writes in the September issue of *The Catholic World* that among the many barriers to Christian unity, not the least has always been that of Protestant disunion itself. But he is optimistic that "the development of councils of churches and the lasting effects of the movements on which they have been built are now more rapidly removing or overcoming historical and cultural obstacles. More attention can therefore be given to deeper differences in doctrine, order, and worship. The councils have thus become one channel of unity and one symbol of advance toward whatever union is divinely intended."

PAMPHILUS