

ter or worse, we are in a war, and I wonder at what point all this huffing and puffing about public debate will simply be calmed down and we'll say "Now look, you've had your fun. This is war and the government is doing the best it can, and you'll kindly shut up." I am suggesting that this is what has generally happened in the past. The recent outburst of protests is, in comparison, quite extraordinary.

Finally, it seems to me we keep coming back to the problem that our tradition is a positive tradition of building things and improving things. We are confronted in these wars of revolution and these indirect aggressions with traditions which are very interested in breaking things down. I think this fact makes those of us who are on campuses and dealing with a younger generation a little bit nervous.

We, too, have an internal problem because there are many forces in our society today which are negative rather than positive. They talk in terms of alienation, of opting out, of stop-the-world-I-want-to-get-off, of "my conscience says," and various other things which do not contribute to positive improvement of societies here or abroad. I suggest that Sartre and J. D. Salinger are closer to the hearts and minds of a lot of our people than Jefferson and some of the more positive models that we assume to be the standard sources.

I'm suggesting that even our traditions are at the present time up for discussion. At a time when we are trying to explain to other people how they should behave, we are not entirely agreed among ourselves.

ORGANIZED RELIGION AND PEACE

What Does Religion Have to Say, and with What Authority?

Arthur Moore

"Do organized religions have the right to consider problems of war and peace?" The answer, of course, is yes. This may seem to some a mere cliché, but given the extremely wide spectrum of contemporary opinion about what religion should or should not do, it is useful to emphasize this point.

To those of us who get letters from readers or telephone calls from parishioners, it may not seem immediately evident that this point is generally acknowledged. It is nevertheless true. No matter how angry the reaction may be to any given statement, the basic attack, ultimately, is almost always on the content of the statement rather than upon the right of the religious group to make a statement of some kind about war and peace.

Within Protestantism, there are two loose groupings that might seem exceptions to this rule. On the one hand, there are those (usually fundamentalist) whose conception of religion is so personal that the idea of the church in any sense except as a number of individuals is really non-existent. Historically, this seems to be a rather unstable condition, for when

time gathers them into groups they begin to make statements just like the rest of us (although perhaps a bit more cautiously at first).

At the other end of the spectrum is a group of those people whose theological commitment to the vocation of the Christian in the secular world would seem to minimize the usefulness of religious groups as such making pronouncements. This is more of a theoretical than practical problem, however, for in real life these people turn out to be passionately devoted to issuing statements on every conceivable subject.

Generally, then, the question of peace is one that has historically always been within the church's domain and is a subject on which it is not only permitted to speak but is indeed expected to speak.

From this truth we must turn, alas, to another self-evident fact—one that I think few would even trouble to deny—which is that the vast majority of the statements made by religious groups about war and peace have no effect whatsoever except to make the drafters feel good. They do not seriously influence anybody, either within or outside the churches. It is not so much that they are received with scorn as that they make no impression. In a very short time, people tend to forget that they were issued,

Mr. Moore is editor of *World Outlook* and a frequent contributor to other journals. This article is adapted from an address he delivered to the National Inter-Religious Conference on Peace.

let alone remember what their content was. They are, in short, a waste of time. This is overstated (but not much) and there are obvious exceptions. But there is enough truth in this sweeping generalization to make it worthwhile to examine some of the causes of our failure in this field.

There is, first, the fact that we have only one basic thing to say. We are for peace; we are against war. Who is not? In an age when even generals talk like pacifists, there is no one except possibly the late Adolf Hitler who can be expected to come out four-square for war. Thus, to be against war is like being against sin. It is a high-minded way of avoiding the issues, if our statements remain at this general level.

Unfortunately, when we descend from this broad general level to issues, we find that we are much divided among ourselves. To take the most obvious example, pacifists and non-pacifists have very different assumptions about the nature and use of power. Does this mean that a group in which both are involved can put out a statement to which all can subscribe, or must it put out different statements? The usual answer to this question is to put out a statement which papers over the difference—a statement which can in effect be read in different ways by different groups. The problem with this approach is that it sacrifices a point of view for consensus. A statement which can be read in several different ways probably cannot be read with much conviction in any way.

On a lower level, many of the difficulties often come from the abominable practice of having statements written by committees. Anything written by a committee can only be read by a committee.

To speak of consensus is to bring up another difficulty. A consensus of the total membership among a religious group is frequently assumed and very seldom sought. I do not wish to espouse any kind of lowest-common denominator agreement, but how often is there general debate throughout an organization before a position is taken which often claims to speak for that group? Those people in leadership in churches have often left themselves open to the charge of having spoken *for* their membership without having spoken *to* them. There are, of course, reasons for this—timing, problems of communication, etc.—but it does tend to give the average church member a feeling that the position taken is not one in which he is involved and for which he has any responsibility.

All of which brings us to the thorny problem of authority. What kind of authority do pronouncements by religious groups have? I have already sug-

gested that in practical effect, they have next to none. But what kind are they supposed to have? Answers would of course vary from group to group. But I think most of us have a subconscious feeling that they ought to have a great deal of authority and certainly many statements read as if the authors thought they had a great deal of authority. Well, the problem of all religious activity is that we long to hear the voice of God and too often all we hear are the tones of pompous old Joe and stupid old Bill. This discrepancy is particularly important in the area of war and peace. It affects the whole question of tone.

What religion is traditionally supposed to do about wars is to enact a ritualistic role. It says, "War is bad but this war is okay. You have done a wicked thing but you are forgiven." Now, I don't want to make cheap fun of this absolving function but clearly its purpose is to be reassuring and to enact a role that is traditional. The authority of this position is distilled from the experience and needs of the community.

Now, the other religious function—commonly called the prophetic—is to attack the community's position in the name of a superior moral insight. This is the role that we would all lay claim to, but the prophet business is not as easy as it may seem. It requires a constant self-examination as rigorous as the examination that we give to others. This is painful, equally painful to liberals and conservatives.

Too, the successful prophet could work himself out of a job. There is nothing so stale as being prophetic about a situation that has already been taken care of. And yet human nature is such that we tend to refer back to the known and deal with the current crisis in terms of the last crisis.

It is, in short, not always easy to locate and define the exact nature of the moral issue in a conflict. Far too often, we substitute a statement reiterating our previous wisdom rather than going through the agonizing process of debate, discussion and self-searching that is necessary to outline the exact shape of the moral issues. This may be fine as an anxiety-relieving device but it tends to deaden the moral climate.

The role of a prophet is not an easy one and the role of an institutional prophet may be an impossible one. It is usually the institutions, and most notably the churches, against whom the prophets are being prophetic. The idea of our large, cumbersome organized religious groups being prophetic is rather like asking a computer to sing a love song.

What can we do to help increase the chances of this unlikely occurrence? I think, paradoxically

enough, we might begin by abandoning the comfortable notion that religious groups have a right to speak on this subject and say instead that they have an obligation to speak but that they must earn the right. Indeed, if they are to be really listened to, they *must* earn the right.

What does this mean? Well, obviously it means that those of us who are involved must all do our homework and learn how policy decisions are really made by a government. This is elementary, of course, but we all still tend to retreat to moral generalities when the going gets tough. If I were the Secretary of State or the Secretary of Defense and a church group came to tell me that war was bad, I expect that I would also assume the blank, disengaged look that has been observed on the faces of government officials listening to church groups. Alas, statesmen do not assume that look often enough and they are apt to soak up our spongy moralisms and give them right back to us.

On the other hand, we have only one Secretary of State and we should not pretend that we occupy that position. Eugene Carson Blake has observed that much of what the church has had to say about foreign policy has "sounded like analyses of foreign policy by third-echelon State Department people who are not responsible for actual policy." Too, Paul Ramsey has a valid point in questioning the qualifications of many clergymen to speak on specific points of foreign policy (although he tends to make rather too much of this point).

Well, if we are not exhorters or actual makers of policy, what is our function as members of an organized religion? Let me quote again from Dr. Blake. (The quotations are from his article on "The Church in the Next Decade" in the twenty-fifth anniversary issue of *Christianity and Crisis*.) They were not written about war and peace but about the pastorate in general.

Too many pastors have failed to find any real theological connection between what is expected of them as preacher, pastor and leader of a community of worship, on the one hand, and as a leader of relevant ethical and social change on the other side. . . . Those who have lost an appreciation of what a worshiping community may become frustrated social workers or politicians. And those who give up on the radical ethical drive of the Gospel break down under the pressures and irrelevancies of trying to be a professional chaplain to an essentially secular people.

Our job is to find the connection between the great ethical insights that we proclaim and the

events, ominous and confusing, taking place in the world today. To find these connections is hard and frustrating. It was André Gide who warned, "Do not understand me too quickly." And so it is with God's purposes in this world. We must keep seeking and striving for the connections but the connections we find may not be the ones that God intended us to find. A realization of this should lead to humility. We must begin to realize that it is not our role to give the world answers that we already possess but to join with the world in seeking for the answers. For every new problem there is a new answer.

We might well begin at home. I do not think that most churches engage in enough internal dialogue with the rest of the world for it is there that we must, in the words of T. S. Eliot, "work out our salvation with diligence."

CIA: A NON-INSIDE REPORT

Paul W. Blackstock

The U-2 affair which led to the aborted Summit Conference in 1960, the disastrous Bay of Pigs invasion in 1961, and C.I.A. support of the ill-fated Diem regime in Vietnam have all served to focus attention on the problems of management and control of one of the world's largest Intelligence empires. C.I.A. reportedly employs more people than the Department of State (although it denies any foreign policy-making role) and has an annual budget estimated at over \$500,000,000. For the last three years it has been ensconced in a new \$50 million building in Langley, Virginia, which has emblazoned over its glittering entrance, "The Truth Shall Make You Free." Whatever store of that quicksilver-like com-

Paul Blackstock is an intelligence and research specialist. As an intelligence specialist he served in Army G-2, and as a psychological warfare specialist in the office of the Chief of Psychological Warfare. His most recent book is *The Strategy of Subversion*. Mr. Blackstock is a member of the Department of International Studies, University of South Carolina.