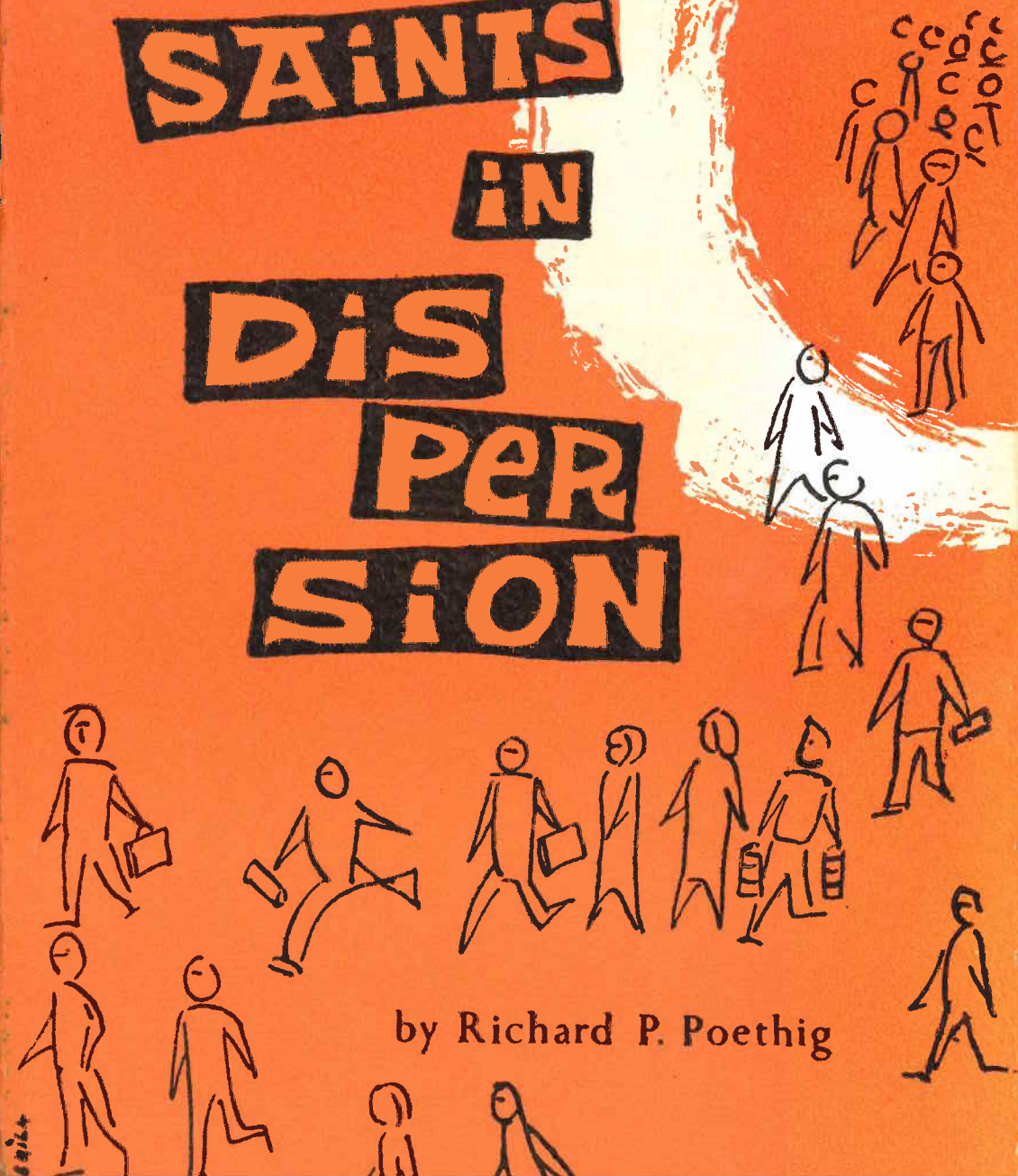


SAINTS IN DIS PER SION



by Richard P. Poethig

SAINTS IN DISPERSION

Three Lectures given by

RICHARD P. POETHIG

at

The Pastor's Convocation — 1963
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TABLE OF CONTENTS

I. THE ASSEMBLY OF SAINTS	1
being the Local Congregation	
with Questions for Discussion	
II. THE MODERN DIASPORA	19
being the Laity	
with Questions for Discussion	
III. CALLED TO EQUIP	36
being the Pastor	
with Questions for Discussion	

SAINTS IN DISPERSION

I. THE ASSEMBLY OF SAINTS

The Founder's Day speakers of last evening have prepared the way for these lectures. The alumni who returned to speak at these festivities are examples of the influence which this University has had upon the life of the Philippines. They are people who have made important contributions to the nation in the fields of medicine, engineering, and law. They have made their contributions out of the understanding of life which they have received from Silliman. What they have received from Silliman they have given to the community. This is a witness which we hope the graduates of this University will continue to make in a changing Philippines. It is for this reason that I have chosen for this series of lectures the topic "Saints in Dispersion."

The World We Face

Today we face a new world, a world different from that which we have ever known. The Second World War was the watershed which divided the old industrial society of the Western world from the modern technological society of which we are all now a part. Before the war, industrialization was thought to have been the special province of the Western nations. But in this new day technology is as much a part of the life of Asia, Africa and Latin America as it is of Europe and the United States.

Recently Cipriano Malonzo, President of the Mindanao Federation of Labor, and I were talking about the town of Bislig in Surigao. Bislig is an out-of-the-way place on the eastern coast of Mindanao. This town can be reached only by interisland ship

or by air at a private landing strip. But in this isolated town a new industrial community is being born. It will have at its center one of the largest paper producing plants in the Philippines. This plant will be the first Philippine paper mill using wood pulp from the forests of Mindanao. As the industry develops the whole community will change. Other industries will be established. New businesses will spring up. Industrialization will change the countryside and reshape the lives of those working in the mill and those living in the environs of the town. We have a church in Bislig and a pastor who is ministering to the community. Will our church keep abreast of the change and be able to maintain a fruitful conversation with those caught in it? Will we be able to help our laymen see their Christian responsibility to be witnesses in the midst of this change? It is to seek answers to these questions that we now turn.

Let me begin with an outline of the material to be presented in the next three lectures. We will deal with the topic in three parts: the local congregation; the laity; and the pastor. These three elements make up the life of the church as it relates itself to our modern world. All three are inter-related. The local congregation, the laity and the pastor are component parts of the mission of the church in the world.

The Assembly of Saints

This afternoon I will deal with the first of these elements—the local congregation. W. A. Visser t'Hooft has said that “the church can only be real if it is local!” The local congregation is the church in a particular place and neighborhood. There would be no church in the world if there were no local congregations. The church may be two or three gathered together in a Mindanao logging camp at Tungao or Anakan or in mill towns like Nasipit or Bislig, or it may be a congregation of 1,000 worshipping in Silliman Church on Sunday morning. A report from the publication “World Congregationalism” sums it up: “The locality of the church is where Christ is carrying out his ministry in the world and for the world’s sake.” Thus the title of the first lecture in this series is “The Assembly of Saints.”

The Laity

The second element which we will deal with this evening is “The Modern Diaspora.” The modern diaspora is the laity at work in the world. It is through the laity, as the people of God, that the church lives in the world. They are the people whom God has dispersed in the world to bear witness to his reconciliation of the world to himself through Jesus Christ. The laity is God’s modern diaspora in the midst of the world.

The Pastor

The third element which we will deal with tomorrow is the pastor. He has the major task of preparing those who are to live their lives in the midst of the world. He has been called to “equip the saints.” This is his task. Without those who are called to the specific tasks of building up the body of Christ, the church becomes anemic. Without a teaching ministry, the church will have no strength to bear a faithful witness in the world. Thus the pastor is called to equip the saints.

New Testament Church

Let us now speak about the local congregation as “the assembly of saints.” From New Testament times until the present day, the basic embodiment of Christianity has been the local congregation. If we read through the New Testament letters of Paul, we see that the Apostle is directing his remarks to a specific group of people. Paul spoke about the church meeting in the house of Prisca and Aquila (Romans 16:5; I Cor. 16:19). In his letters, he addressed a distinct group of people located in a specific place. He spoke of the churches of the Gentiles (Romans 16:1-4); or of the churches of Galatia (I Cor. 16:1; Gal. 1:2). He spoke about the problems of particular churches, not about the church in general. In his letters he dealt with the problems of specific churches—the problems of the Corinthians, the problems of the Thessalonians, the problems of the Philippians. He knew that if the reconciliation of which he spoke in his Corinthian letter was to take place, it would have to happen on the local level—among Christians gathered together in their own places.

Local Church Today

When we speak about the church today we mean the church in Negros, or in Mindanao or in Cebu. We think of the church as the local congregation which we are serving—a congregation meeting together and witnessing through its life, its action and its service to its reconciliation in Jesus Christ. We also know that the congregation can witness in a negative way by its inaction, by its isolation, by its pettiness. What our local congregation does, how it lives, how it serves its community, become the means by which the community judges whether we are true agents of reconciliation in the world.

In our contemporary society we have taken a negative view of the local congregation. On all levels of the church's life the current is running against the local congregation. The tendency is to look down upon the local congregation as a place in which to serve. It becomes a place to leave, to get away from. This is not only true of pastors in Europe and in the United States, but also in the Philippines. But when we read the New Testament we realize that the local congregation is the place where God's mission is to be borne out in the world. It is within the local congregation that the commission is given to all Christians to "Go into all the world." This is not only the mission theme to be preached on Mission Sunday in August, this is the theme of our whole life as Christians.

Last evening I was talking to Dr. Lycan, a Fulbright professor on campus. Dr. Lycan is a Baptist. He was telling me that the call to mission is the burden of every local Southern Baptist congregation in the United States. Every congregation is to be a mission congregation. As soon as a congregation has established itself in its own area, it is to carry out a mission into surrounding areas. It is for this reason that the Southern Baptists are one of the fastest spreading groups in the U.S. Thus the local congregation is the means for reaching out into all areas of the community and nation.

The Assembly

The word church in the New Testament is synonymous with the word assembly. In many places the words church and assembly

are used interchangeably. In ancient times the word assembly was the calling together of the people in the town or village square to hear a proclamation from the Emperor. A herald from the Emperor would enter a village and assemble the people to hear the proclamation of the Emperor. In turn, those who had been assembled were to pass on the proclamation to those who had not heard the herald's words, because they were off in the fields working or they were away on a journey.

The word assembly helps us understand the biblical view of the church. The word assembly was used in the Old Testament to mean the assembling of the people of Israel. They were a people assembled and ready for action in the world. In the New Testament, the Christian community was assembled to hear the apostles' preaching and teaching; it was assembled for prayers and for the receiving of the Lord's Supper. The local congregation was assembled, or called together by the proclamation of God's act in Jesus Christ. Those assembled were to be dispersed in the world to make known this redemptive act to those who had not heard the news. "The assembly of saints" thus became "the saints in dispersion."

TWO PERILS FACING THE LOCAL CONGREGATION

From what we have said thus far, we realize that the local congregation has a great responsibility. It is to carry out God's mission in the world. But today when we look at the local congregation we see it caught between two perils which thwart its mission. We see it caught between the peril of parochialism and the peril of bureaucracy. These two perils negate the mission of the congregation to become "the saints in dispersion."

1. Peril of Parochialism

Let us first look at the **peril of parochialism**. Where do we get the term "parochial"? In the beginning this word had a positive meaning in the parish system. The declaration of Christianity as the state religion of the Roman Empire, by the Edict of Constantine, brought an influx of pagans into the life of the church. This growth of the church continued down through the Middle Ages. During this time, the various regions of the

Holy Roman Empire were considered to be the *Corpus Christianum*—the body of Christian believers. Anyone born into the Empire was considered a baptized Christian, unless declared otherwise. In such a widespread empire the government of the church had to find some effective and efficient way to carry out its spiritual oversight of the people. The Holy Roman Empire had to be divided into dioceses and parishes so that every geographical area could be looked after. In this way, all Christians came under the spiritual care of a priest or a group of priests. So in its early inception the parish system was a means of caring for the people in a particular geographical area.

Today the term "parochial" has acquired a negative meaning. With the rapid changes which have taken place in church and community life, the parish system represents a narrow view of the church. No one church today can claim all of the people in an area as belonging to its communion. In most areas churches carry out their ministry among a limited number of people. Thus we associate parochial with a care for one's own people. It is a concern for only those within one's own congregation. As we look at the life of the world today, we see that the church cannot exist with this limited understanding of the parish system. We have to say with John Wesley that "the world is our parish." Each church is to be involved in the needs of the total community, whether or not the people are on its membership rolls. But even as we say this we realize that the church's response to the events of the modern world has led it into a new captivity.

The Church's Sociological Captivity—Three Examples

Someone has described what has taken place in the life of the contemporary church as a "sociological captivity." This is to say that the church has become captive in its ministry to a particular social class, language or regional group. Let me cite examples of this "sociological captivity" from three different lands:

England

The first example is from England. When we think of religion in England we think immediately of the Church of

England. What is the situation of the Church of England? Last year I visited several industrial areas of England. During a visit to Northern England I stayed with Anglican priests in the Manchester and Sheffield areas. In our conversations they spoke of the "sociological captivity" of the Church of England. They said that the dilemma of the Church of England is that it has not kept pace with the social changes which have taken place within the last 300 years. One of the analysts of the situation is E. R. Wickham, Bishop of Middleton. In his book *Church and People in an Industrial City* Bishop Wickham asserts that the church has been caught in its own parish system. The geographical boundaries of the parish system were drawn up centuries ago. While the church has maintained its ministry to these parishes basically unchanged, history has moved forward and left the church in the past. He cites the example of Sheffield, England. He points out that in the establishment of the Church of England, the English Church took over the parish network of the former Roman Catholic Church. It continued the spiritual care of those persons within the various dioceses who had stayed with the Church of England.

During this period, the Industrial Revolution was making vast changes in the life of the English people. This was especially true at Sheffield, which was the center of the steel industry in England. Thousands of people came into Sheffield to work in the growing steel industry. As the industry expanded so did the social, economic and political life of the city. As these changes were taking place, the Church was still caring for its own flock of people, with little concern for the growing number of industrial workers within its area. New industries were growing up; trade unions were organizing, Chambers of Commerce were developing and the Church still carried out its ministry within its traditional parish system. It was asleep to the new social structures emerging in its midst. The Church was an anachronism for most people in its vicinity.

Today, out of 27 million people who were baptized in the Church of England only 3 million consider their membership important enough to receive Easter communion. In several churches I attended in industrial England, there were empty pews on Sunday morning. The faithful few who attend church

do so because the church has been serving them or because they live in its immediate vicinity. In the Hulme parish of the textile town of Manchester, three out of four Anglican churches have been closed; and three Free churches have met the same fate. One of the churches is being used as the outlet for a Singer Sewing Machine factory, another is being used as a *bodega* for paints and wallpaper and another is being turned into a warehouse.

The church closes its doors in the midst of thousands of people. This is the "sociological captivity" of the church in England.

The United States

Let us turn to America for our second illustration. A "sociological captivity" is happening in the church there. As we see the rapid urbanization taking place in the United States we realize the vast areas covered by our modern cities. The urban sociologist tells us that there will no longer be separate cities as we now have them in New York City, Philadelphia and Washington, but that all these cities will become one big city covering the whole eastern seaboard of the U.S. These cities grow outward as people from the downtown areas disperse to the outer rim of the city. People move to the suburbs to find a stable community in which their children can grow up. As people move to the suburbs, the denominations follow them to build churches in the new areas.

Today the strength of Protestantism is in the suburban areas on the periphery of the cities. At the same time as the Protestant churches have been establishing churches in the suburbs, they have faced a withering away of their churches in the inner city. Gibson Winter has called this movement "the suburban captivity of the church." Our ministry in the suburban areas is basically to a homogeneous group of people from within a particular socio-economic class, that is, the American middle class made up of the white collar and blue collar workers. As new groups of people from the lower economic groups have moved into the inner city, it becomes crowded and rundown. The people of the new middle class, both office and factory workers, move

out of the city into the new subdivisions. Here they develop their own homogeneous middle class culture and close themselves off from the needs of the downtown area. The suburbanite develops insensitivity to the problems of the people who have to live in the inner city. Once the suburbanite escapes the inner city, he wants no part of its problems. He does not want to think about the crime, the vice, and the dope addiction which plague the inner city. He works in the city, but he returns to the suburbs to live in peace. The church in the suburb is also affected by this attitude toward the inner city. Thus suburban migration of the church becomes the American "sociological captivity."

The Philippines

We come to the Philippines for our third example. We see a different kind of "sociological captivity"—a captivity to cultural patterns. In each country the church adopts its own cultural patterns. The Philippine church is just as much captive as is the church in England or America. One often hears the criticism that the "younger church" is captive to Western culture. Since the church in Asia began under the Western thrust of mission, it has adopted Western attitudes toward polity, administration, theology and the various other things brought by the missionaries. Upon a closer look, however, we find that there is also a "captivity" to Philippine culture. This "captivity" may not be as obvious as the external Western elements in the churches, but church life instinctively follows certain traditional Philippine patterns.

Filipinization of Christianity. In his book *Hispanization of the Philippines*, John Phelan points out that after the Spaniards introduced Catholicism to the Philippines in the 16th century, what took place was not so much a Catholicization of the Philippines, as a Filipinization of Catholicism. In this Filipinization the basic streams of Philippine culture amalgamated with Roman Catholicism. At many points the indigenous culture dominated the religious factor.

The Filipino family and its alliances is the basic unit of social order. The family is that which gives strength to the life of

the church, but it also brings weakness. What do I mean by this? Throughout the Philippines our churches are basically family churches. Wherever we go we will find churches which have been built on family alliances. When a person was converted to Protestantism he immediately sought to convert his whole family, or if a family was converted it sought through its marriage alliances to draw people into the church. In this way the church grew and became strong. In many places churches were made up of specific family groups. Within Philippine society family alliances are often in competition with one another for power in a community. In some places the conversion to Protestant Christianity was a realignment of family alliances within a town, with certain families taking leadership in the church.

In a town there are certain families which are part of the Protestant church. These families are known to be the "protestantes" in the community. While they are probably respected in the town, very few other people will join with the "protestantes" because they are a different group. As time has passed, the mold of religious affiliation has hardened. Very little change takes place in the constituency of a church unless someone comes in from outside to break the mold. Since the members are already known by their faith, they can do very little direct evangelism. Therefore, someone is brought in from the outside to do the job of evangelism. A contemporary example is the Fil-Am Teams. Americans can evangelize because they do not have to worry about the broken relationships that come about if people are converted.

Who is the Leader? Another aspect of culture which has played an important role in the development of the church is the leadership concept. Let us look briefly at how the leader is determined in Philippine society and the part he plays in the life of the church. Whether or not pastors are successful is often determined by how well they fill the image of the leader in the Philippines. What are the things which determine leadership in the Philippines?

Recently I asked a group of deaconesses in Manila to list the qualifications that Filipinos value in a leader. They said that one of the first qualifications was educational background.

The group ranked family status as the second. The power and prestige of one's family within the community and the alliances built-up through marriage are important factors. Third, a person has leadership status who is economically secure and does not have to worry about money. Fourth, age and experience is also another qualification for a leader in the Philippine community. Sixth, good personal appearance is important. A leader has to command respect at public functions, therefore, how he looks and dresses affects his status. Seventh, one of the requirements for leadership is to have built up loyalty to yourself and to your family through *utang na loob* (a debt of gratitude).

A young Seminary graduate working in a new community has none, or very few, of the qualifications which would make him a leader in the eyes of his church people. He may have formal education, but as yet he has not built up loyalty to himself. The pastor who is seeking to lead his congregation often confronts a strong layman who has been in the church a long time; and he has many of the necessary qualifications which command loyalty. If the pastor does not get along with this layman or his family (i.e. has poor *pakikisama*) he will be pressed to leave the church; or, of his own volition, he may find some excuse to leave. These culture patterns related to the family and its alliances constitute the "sociological captivity" of the church in the Philippines.

2. The Peril of Bureaucracy

Let us now look at the other side of the problem and see how over-organization or bureaucracy thwarts the mission of the church today. When I mention the word "bureaucracy" people have a negative reaction to it. Some people immediately think of the "Headquarters" on Highway 54. But like the parish system, "bureaucracy" developed from positive motives. Bureaucracy arises from an organization's concern to meet the needs of its people.

The administration of the church is concerned about the church's total welfare. It has to respond to the needs of the various local churches from Luzon to Mindanao. In order to keep the local churches abreast of the changes of the new day,

the administration of the church plans programs aimed at relating the people's faith to the emerging society. Realizing the need of local churches for help in Christian education, evangelism, mission, and public welfare, the administration organizes departments that can supply information, materials and leadership training in these areas. In meeting these new needs the administration seeks people with specialized knowledge, people who will gather and interpret information, develop resources, and equip Christians for their responsibility in the world. But the church's thrust toward meeting these needs creates vast organizational machinery at the top.

Let me use an illustration from the experiences of the Government. This past year the land reform bill was made into law. To carry out the whole process of land reform a vast amount of machinery is necessary. First, there is need to educate the tenants and landlords on land reform and its procedures; there is the need to acquire capital to buy the lands; there is need to reallocate farm lands; there is need for credit resources so that the farmer-owners can develop their new farms—all of these things require separate agencies to assure their implementation. A land reform bill is passed and immediately there is need for four or five government agencies to carry out the land reform.

Growth of Church Organization

To return again to the church, the concern of church administrators is to implement plans and programs at the local level. But in the process of implementation more manpower is needed to plan, to write, to promote, to experiment, and to educate. This means more people will move into the administrative and promotional aspects of the life of the church. As we get more specialized interests more people will be involved in organization. It means more secretaries and more clerks on the administrative level. Here we have the problem of organization. It grows out of necessity to meet complex problems. But it multiplies and becomes a bureaucracy in which the individual becomes lost in the organization and its machinery. In this "bureaucratization" the individual feels his personal needs are not being considered.

The growth of organization in the life of the church moves those in the administration further away from the local congregation. Those in the local congregation look at the "Headquarters" with a certain amount of suspicion. They feel that decisions are being made at the top without consultation or without consideration of their needs. The more organization we have, the further we move away from the local church. There are more people to pass the decision along to before the decision can be implemented at the local level. Even though the decisions in the administration are concerned with the total welfare of the church, these decisions are not effectively communicated to the local church. By communicated, I mean explained, interpreted, and made relevant so that the decisions do not appear arbitrary. The 15% assessment from local giving for General Assembly and Conference Administration in a case in point. The 15% is an attempt to make the national church carry its own administrative expenses. It is to indigenize the administration down to the last centavo. But the need for the 15% is not effectively communicated to the local church. There is a great deal of misunderstanding at the local level over why the 15% is necessary. Many people cannot understand why the National Headquarters needs money, since they receive their budget from the United States. Moreover, the local churches question the number of secretaries and office clerks in the "Headquarters," especially when the secretaries receive higher salaries than many of our pastors. Thus communication of the church's program breaks down and discontent is created on the local level. People refuse to respond to the requests of the National Headquarters.

Three things are happening in the church which affect the effective functioning of the church: (1) at the Headquarters level, there is impatience with the slowness of the local church in changing to meet the demands of a new day; (2) on the local church level there is suspicion of the administration of the church and the decisions it makes. There is discontent especially with the high overhead necessary for running the "Headquarters"; (3) at the seminary level there is a growing dissatisfaction among seminarians with the local church as a vocational task.

THE KEY TO MISSION — THE LOCAL CONGREGATION

But the fact is that nothing ever really happens unless it happens on the local level. The local congregation is the key to the mission of the church. All new life in the church has come through a fresh awakening of the Spirit at the local level. This awakening takes place when the Holy Spirit stirs the local congregation to see its mission in a new way. It takes place when church members see beyond their own "sociological captivity."

God made himself local. This is the meaning of the Incarnation. God's breakthrough takes place in ordinary situations—as "down to earth" as your local congregation. As we look around at the "new experiments" in the world today, it is the local congregation where the greatest changes are taking place. The Holy Spirit has penetrated local situations around the world and is bringing "new life." There are pastors and congregations who are breaking out of their "sociological captivity" and finding new ways of expressing their ministry in their communities. There is the East Harlem Protestant Parish in the congested slum area of the East Side of New York. There are the house churches in Southern England, the Taize community in France, the Iona community in Scotland, and others wherever the Holy Spirit moves.

The Role of the Administration

The administration of the church exists to help this awakening by penetrating the local congregation and stimulating its thinking, its discussion and its action. The administration is only the servant of the local church. It provides the services, the materials, the staff to help the local congregation help itself. Unless the administration does this it might as well not exist. Those in administration and organizational tasks learn from the problems of those who carry out the day to day work on the local level. Then they think and plan and implement what they think are possible solutions to the needs of the local situation.

In the attempt to reach down to the local level, the organizational structure has gone through several stages of development. In the beginning everything was seen to come from the Head-

quarters. Educational and promotional programs were prepared at the National Headquarters to stimulate thinking and action on the local level. Annual Conferences were visited and regional seminars were held to disseminate the information at the local level. Because those at the administrative level had to carry out a national program they spread themselves too thin. There was a glimmering of hope here and there, but basically the promotional programs did not take root. They then said, "Let us try another way." The second step was to try pilot projects. One particular area was chosen and resources concentrated in that area. Here the thought was to develop a practical example of what could take place on the local level. From what was learned from this example it was hoped that particular approaches could be applied in other areas. But this approach was limited since the other areas were neglected for too long. In the Lay Ministries Study Program we have reached a third stage. The Lay Ministries Program is planned inter-departmentally at the national level. All of the church's resources are pooled in the preparation of the teaching material. The next step is to conduct training sessions at the regional level. In the regional seminars, key people are brought together for instruction. These people then return to their churches to carry out a local Lay Ministries Study Program. Whether the lay ministries programs are successful will be determined by how effectively the regional people carry out and communicate the program on the local level.

If change is to occur on the local level three things need to take place: First, there is need for men who will work on the local level to bring about change. This means dedicated men and women who are going to stay for more than one or two years in one place and who will see their work come to fruition. Secondly, we need men who will allow the Holy Spirit to work in them. Paul says in I Thes. 5:18 "Do not quench the Spirit." There is always the danger of the hardening of tradition so that we are unable to see the need for change. We need to be flexible enough to see that God can work in new ways. As Paul suggests, we always need to be ready to let the Holy Spirit work. Thirdly, we need to be open to his working outside the organized church. We should not close ourselves off

to the possibility that God can work through other groups outside the church. We need to be ready at any time to work together to make God's will known.

Areas of Change in the Local Congregation

In closing let me point to the structures of the church today which I think need to be changed if we are to carry out our mission in the present world.

First, there is need to see beyond the church as a set place in which we have to meet if we are to be considered the church. We think that we are not really a church unless we have a church building. In many cases, we put up a church before we are able to pay a pastor a living wage. In one area a pastor went to work in the local iron mines, because the congregation decided to erect its building rather than pay him a salary. But we don't need a set place for the church. The church is anywhere that Christ is carrying out his mission in the world and for the world. This is the meaning of our mission. We have been thrust into the world to be mobile for Christ, to reach people in all corners of life. We are Christ's mobile people.

Second, there is need to see beyond a set time for holding service. We can only hold services if we hold them in the morning, usually at 10:00. But how many of our workers can come at this time? When I first came to the Philippines, one of the encouraging things that I heard about was a pastor in Mindanao who held services at 4:00 a.m. He held it at 4:00 a.m. because he had to catch his people before they went off to work in the logging area. He was breaking the time patterns which had so hardened that they no longer met people's needs.

Third, there is a need to see beyond the set pattern for the pastor's task. Often, the pastor sees his task as only his preaching role. Our congregations have reinforced this pattern. But in order to preach effectively the preacher needs to know what God is saying in the world today. In one case the pastor realized that he could not speak to his people unless he understood about their work life, so he took a manual job in a factory. Through his conversations with working people he came to know their day to day problems. His ministry was changed from a ministry

lived in the study and in the pulpit to a ministry lived in the midst of people with their real problems. We need to see that there is no set pattern for ministering to a congregation.

Fourth, there is need to see beyond our innate "congregation-alism." We usually think of the church as our congregation. We think of one pastor serving one congregation or several congregations in a circuit. Today we need to see several churches in an area linked together to carry out a cooperative ministry to that place. Today we need to link several pastors together in a team ministry. A team ministry can plan together for a whole area in which one man might easily become discouraged and lost. We are now working toward developing a team ministry for the Baguio mining region. We are looking for pastors who will live in the mines and provide a continuous ministry for people who earn their livelihood by going under the earth. Presently our ministry in the Baguio region is limited to Sunday visits with the emphasis upon preaching. We need men who will stay in the mines and participate in the lives of the people. We need pastors who will minister to their total needs: their economic needs, their pastoral needs, their recreational needs. In planning for a team ministry we hope to have three pastors in different mines who will minister to their own mine congregation but will meet regularly to plan for a total ministry to the Baguio area. They will plan for laymen's seminars, for seminars on community development, seminars on cooperatives, seminars on youth work in the mines. What one man would find difficult to do, three or four men working and planning together can do effectively.

Fifth, there is need to see that our ministry goes beyond the set group of people that we serve in our congregation. Unless we do this the church will die. It will die in terms of its mission to the world. We can see this happening in the life of Manila, where rural churches exist in the midst of a busy commercial city. We have some downtown churches in Manila which are composed of a small number of families. They have been members for years, but in those years the churches have not changed noticeably. They do not serve the people of the neighborhood. When the old members die and the young people in the older families move to new areas, the church dwindles and dies. The

church needs to see its boundary line of interest as enfolding the total community.

This is the local congregation in perspective. God has called it to break out of the prison of its "sociological captivity" and to free the saints for their mission in modern society. This is God's challenge to you who are called to serve in local congregations. He has called you to see that the assembly of saints fulfill their mission as the saints in dispersion.

Questions for Discussion

1. What were some of the problems faced by congregations in the New Testament? (II Cor. 12:19-21; Cor. 2:16-23; II Thess. 3:6-12)
2. What kind of problems do we face today in our local congregation? What is the source of these problems?
3. What is the purpose of the local congregation in God's plan? (Col. 1:21-29; II Cor. 5:16-21)
4. How do you think does the "peril of parochialism" apply to our local churches?
5. How does the "peril of bureaucracy" effect our church's program?
6. How can the administration of the church be more effective in carrying out its program on the local level?
7. What practices of the local church need to be changed for a more effective witness in the world?
8. What are the implications for your church if it were to accept "the world as its parish"?
9. Give examples where local congregations have become the "saints in dispersion."

II. THE MODERN DIASPORA

We began this series by emphasizing the centrality of the local congregation in God's mission in the life of the world. Even as the local congregation is the locus of God's mission, laymen are his agents of reconciliation in the world. When we speak of the assembly of saints we mean those who have been assembled by the proclamation of Jesus Christ as Lord. They have been assembled to be dispersed in the world. This is the focus of our lecture this evening. Even as the people of God have been assembled they are to be dispersed into the world to witness through their words and their work to the Lordship of Christ over the life of the world. This ministry is not the special province of any one group of people. It is the responsibility of all members of the body of Christ.

Biblical View of the Laity

When we define the laity in biblical terms, we mean the total community of believers. The word laity comes from *laicus* which means belonging to the people of God. In Exodus 19:4-6 we are told that God chose Israel and said to her, "You shall be to me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation." He laid this ministry upon the whole people of Israel. All the people of Israel are to be a "kingdom of priests and a holy nation." There is no double standard between priests and people. The whole people of God are to be obedient to the Law which he has given to them. Among the people of Israel, each father serves as a priest to the whole family. It is only in the Levitical priesthood that we find a difference in role, which is that the Levites are to administer the sacrifices for the people. Therefore, the injunction to follow the Law is laid upon all Israel.

The same concept of priesthood is carried over into the New Testament. In I Peter 2:9 the writer tells the Christian

community, "you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God's own people." The emphasis is upon "you". In the Old Testament, the Levitical priesthood performed the offering of the sacrifices. This was the height of obedience that God required of Israel. In the New Testament, Christ performed the supreme sacrifice; and through his sacrifice all Christians become "a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God's own people." In the early church all who are called are part of the *laos*—the people of God. While their functions may differ, all Christians are called to belong to the people of God.

The Calling of the Christian

A second point in relation to the laity is the meaning of the call. What do we mean when we say that a person is called by God? The word "call" or "calling" appears in various contexts within the New Testament. When Paul uses the word "calling," he understands it in a religious sense. Paul uses the term calling to mean the call of God to belong to Jesus Christ and to be part of his community. In Romans 1:6 and 7, Paul uses the word "call" to signify the calling of all Christians. Paul's understanding of call is a very comprehensive one. All Christians are called into the assembly of saints.

In Romans 12, Paul uses the word "call" in another way, that is, the calling of each Christian to a specific task in the church. In the New Testament, there are at least four lists of special functions which are to be performed in the body of Christ (Romans 12; I Cor. 12; Eph. 4; I Peter 4). Each Christian is given a special gift or special function to perform within the body of Christ. Paul says of himself in the first chapter of Romans, "Paul, a servant of Jesus Christ called to be an apostle, set apart for the gospel of God." But the New Testament places the emphasis on the sharing of the ministry through the specific function to which we are called. All Christians are called to participate in the work of the ministry for the building up of the body of Christ. Ephesians 4:11-12 suggests that all Christians are to take part in the ministry of building up the body of Christ. All members of the laity are to be equipped to carry out the task of the ministry in the life of the church and in the life of the world.

Christians and the World

In the New Testament, Christians had a difficult time in defining their relationship to the world. They were assembled in the Christian community where they were to grow under the apostle's teaching, in the breaking of the bread and in the continuation of a life of prayer. They knew their responsibilities in relation to the church. But their relationship to the world was not clearly defined. In determining their relationship to the world, the early Christian community had to choose among three possible alternatives:

First, they could follow the road of asceticism. At the same time as Christian communities were forming, there existed in the New Testament world a community of ascetics called the Essenes. You have heard about the Essene Community in relation to the discovery of the Dead Sea Scrolls. The Essenes were a people who had shut themselves off from the world. They had developed a special discipline for living together as a community. The basis of the discipline was that the world was corrupt and in order to keep themselves pure, they had to separate themselves from the world. This was one example that the newly organized Christian community could follow in its relation to the world. Christians could gather together in a community and shut out the world.

Second, the Christians also had the possibility of following the example of the Pharisaic community. When the kingdom of Israel fell the Jews were dispersed throughout the world. In order to be faithful to the Law without interference from the world, the Pharisaic group gathered themselves together in ghettos. The Pharisees did not cut themselves off completely from the world as did the Essenes, but they kept their relationship with the Gentiles at a minimum. They went about their business in the world, but withdrew into their own communities to live their separate lives. In the beginning, the Christians tended to follow this tradition. But as the church grew, Christians were drawn from a wide variety of places and backgrounds. They soon discovered that they had to find a new solution.

Because of the different backgrounds from which they came, Christians stayed in the communities in which they were when

they were called. This third way was the road that the Christians ultimately followed. Coming from such varied social backgrounds, the Christians remained in their neighborhoods and lived and worked beside their pagan neighbors. But they met regularly with their fellow Christians to be instructed in the apostles' teaching and to take part in the breaking of the bread and the prayers. This was the choice that the Christians made. They lived dispersed in the world, but they gathered together for religious instruction and for worship.

Our Modern Diaspora

As we survey our situation today, we realize that even if we desired to live in separate communities it would be impossible for us. Dispersion is a characteristic of our modern world. We live in a world of rapid social change. In every area of the world today, even in the most primitive, cultures and social systems are being upset. In the developing countries, people are on the move from the countryside into the cities. People are moving from one economic group to another; and with this movement, the old social structures are being reshaped.

This flow of people from the countryside to the towns and cities directly affects the life of the church. Our students leave their towns and barrios to come to live in the student sections of Cebu and Manila. Our business and professional people commute as far as 100 miles to work in the business and government institutions in Manila. They keep two homes—their week-end house in the province and their weekday home in the city. As Christians become part of this movement they lose their roots. They become part of an institutional or business community which has no specific Christian orientation. In their towns they were able to associate themselves closely with the church community. In the city, they are not as persistent in keeping up their church affiliation. Their ties to the organized church weaken as they are caught up in the organizational life of the city. This is the life which laymen live as the Philippines moves toward a modern industrial society.

Our laity then, are a part of the modern diaspora. They are dispersed into all corners of modern society. They take part

in all areas of the nation's life. If we have prepared them well, this dispersion can be a blessing to society. They become the Christian presence in the midst of the community's life. I have found this in my own experience. There is hardly an office or a factory, which I visit, or a meeting, which I attend, where I do not find an evangelical working and taking active leadership in his work community. This past week I attended two large meetings in Manila, the Annual Convention of the Philippine Trades Union Council and a consultation of the Council of Social Welfare Agencies. Evangelical laymen and women were giving competent and effective leadership in both meetings. President Cicero Calderon of Silliman University spoke at the Convention of the Philippine Trades Union Council. He gave a very perceptive speech. Because he had been a part of the labor movement, he went to the heart of the problems of labor and provided a perspective by which the trade unionists could gauge their activity. There were others who participated in this convention—Cipriano Malonzo, Ilde Remolona, Israel Bocobo. All of them are taking active part in the life of the trade union movement. I am always impressed with the ability of our laymen to stand on their feet, to speak to the issues and to make themselves understood. Some of these men studied in seminary and many more have been members of our youth and student groups. The ability to speak convincingly is a contribution of our evangelical background, where our laymen have an opportunity to express themselves and take part in the life of the church.

The Laity's Struggle in the World

But many times our laymen stand alone. Often they feel the church does not provide them with guidance in their struggles, because the church does not understand the task they must face in an organized society. The church needs to learn the problems laymen face in their day-to-day existence. One trade union leader told me that every union leader needs a pastor. Every trade union leader needs someone who will listen and understand his real problems. The trade union leader is not only caught in the struggle for worker's rights, but he faces the daily problems of family life. He needs the listening ear of the pastor. But before he will confide in a pastor the trade unionist needs to know that the pastor

is also concerned with the struggle for daily bread. We can confront people with the relevance of the Gospel, if we are interested in people as people, rather than in seeing them as "objects" for conversion.

REASSESSMENT OF THE CHURCH'S APPROACH TO THE LAITY

Let me point out several places where the church needs to reassess its approach to the laity. First, there is need for us to simplify our language. We live in a day when each academic discipline has its own special language. Psychology, sociology, anthropology, all have developed a precise language to define their field of concern. This is also true of theology. As pastors, we have been trained within a special tradition and we use a special language. This is the language we use among ourselves. If you have been initiated into the inner circle, then you understand this language. You can carry on a conversation with other initiates. Our theological language becomes so much a part of us, that it cuts us off from many of the people with whom we are trying to communicate. We build a wall between ourselves and the people who sit in the pews. Let me read you some words from Abbe Michonneau, a French Roman Catholic, who found this is to be true in his own experience.

Our seminary training in the classics, philosophy and theology has put us in a class apart. Properly speaking, we are not like any of our parishioners, but we seem more 'middle-class' or 'bourgeois' than anything else. What is the result? Usually it means that we feel compelled to surround ourselves with those who will understand our thought and our speech, and who have tastes like our own. One of the reasons for the rise of the 'parish atmosphere' we spoke of at the beginning of this book is found in the priests; we tend to move among and work with people who resemble us—it is easy to do so... Our concern is about the consequent inability to meet ordinary people, to talk to them, to make them feel at home in the 'catholic' Church we represent. Even when we do attempt to make contact with them, we use terminology which is completely foreign to the ordinary working-man; more than that, we take for granted the fact that they already accept the basic ideas of Christianity,

even though they do not. What we are trying to say to them goes against every principle of modern pagan life, and yet we blissfully assume the very things we must prove and demonstrate. We are living in another world, a tidy clerical and philosophical world. It is time to come down to earth!¹

This can be said of any parish in the world. The language we have learned, the language which we continue to learn, sets us apart from ordinary people.

Communication Blocked

This leads us to the second problem of pastors in their relation to the laity, which is communication. As preachers we often carry on clerical monologues. Our preaching is a one way street. There is no two way communication between pulpit and pew. We have been called to communicate the Gospel, but have we been faithful in the communication of the Gospel? Very often we preach *at* people rather than from an understanding of their problems. We are not in touch with the problems people face. Therefore, our sermon becomes a monologue which goes in one ear and out the other. If the sermon gets too obscure, then the minds of laymen wander over a million things. They lose contact with the preacher, unless he speak to them. As people sit in the pew year after year, their thoughts wander more and more. After they have heard a preacher several times, they know exactly what he is going to say. They know the development of his thought and they can tell when the sermon is going to end. After they hear the first point they don't have to listen anymore.

The clerical monologue is a danger in our communication of the Gospel. Part of the problem is the irrelevance of much of our preaching. We take the Bible in its first century context and make no transposition to the 20th century, in which our people are living. This is one of the areas for which the seminary must accept criticism. Our seminaries often provide very little relationship between the traditions of Christianity and contemporary life. Much of the content of our

¹ Revolution in a City Parish, Abbe Michonneau, The Newman Press, Westminster, Ind. p 131 f.

seminary courses necessarily deals with Christian tradition and biblical history. Much of the content is taught by the lecture method. Both the content and the method carry over in our ministry. As we enter the pastoral ministry, we carry with us that which we have been given. If pastors are to be relevant in their ministry, the seminary must provide some background for that relevance. Our seminaries must help present and relate material in a way which is relevant to the life people live and the problems they face in the 20th century.

Clericalization of Laymen

This brings us to the third point in our reassessment of pastoral relations with the laity. This is the danger of clericalizing our laymen. Often we are not satisfied with leaving our laymen as a part of the people of God, with a very special function to perform in the life of the world. We want to make them like ourselves. We want them to be our pastoral assistants. In the process some of our laymen become "pious" people, who draw apart from the ordinary life around them. In so doing, they cut themselves off from the people among whom they can make their witness. Let me use in illustration provided by the late Valentin Montes. He was visiting a government office in which there was an active evangelical layman. The layman sat at his desk, reading his Bible in the midst of the activities of the office. He was proud that he was making this witness. He didn't realize, as Valentin pointed out, that reading the Bible in the midst of the day's business could be a negative witness. Jesus had something to say about people who paraded their religion (Matt. 5:5-6). There is a type of piousness, which drives people away from, rather than brings them to Christ. As pastors, we may give our laymen stereotyped ideas about what religion is, because we ourselves so often "practice" our religion in public. We want our laymen to follow us. In so doing, we lead them to the outward manifestation of religion, without the maturing of the inner man. As the French Catholic priest says, we surround ourselves with people like ourselves. We want friends who understand us, rather than persons whom we seek to understand.

As pastors we lead sheltered lives throughout our college and seminary training. We live in a world all our own. Intent upon our theological studies and our pastoral profession, we cut ourselves off from the real life around us. We need to understand what is taking place in people's lives. We need to see the decisions they are called upon to make, so we may be confronted with the real life of the world. We need to be listening Christians, as well as speaking Christians. We need to help people bring their problems to the Christian community so that from within the shared life of the Christian community, they may find guidance on how Christians are to live in the midst of the world.

RADICALNESS OF THE PRESENT WORLD

Modern technological society presents a radically new form of life. As Christians we must ask ourselves, "Is our present understanding sharp enough to penetrate the structures in which men live today?" Let us look at some of the problems of contemporary society.

First, there is massive indifference to religion. We see much outward practice of religion and hear a great deal of lip service paid to religion, but religious faith takes a backseat in what really matters in people's lives. Religious faith is basically ineffective in the face of the radical social changes going on in the world. The empty churches which exist in England, in France, in Germany are evidence to the fact that modern technology and science have swept over the churches and have left them in the back-wash of history. Throughout all of Europe, there is not one major city in which more than 30 per cent of the church membership attends services on Sunday morning. Many Roman Catholic parishes in France can count only 15 per cent of their membership attending mass on Sunday.

Second, modern technological society works on different premises from the church. Technological society operates on the premise that it is the machine which counts, since it is the machine which produces. Technology makes man the means to the end. It is the machine which lives our lives for us. The operetta, *The Telephone*, which we saw last night,

spoke directly to the point. The composer Menotti has a deep understanding of modern society and he expressed it in this production of *The Telephone*. For the girl in the operetta the telephone was all that she needed in life. She lived by the telephone. It was by the telephone that she kept in touch with the world. Even though her lover was in the same room with her, she would not listen to him. She was too involved talking on the telephone. The only way he could tell her of his love was to go outside and call her on the telephone. Only then would she listen. This is what happens in our lives today. Persons do not matter. We live by machines. There is a startling book written by a Romanian entitled *The 25th Hour*. In it, the author Virgil Gheorghiu dramatically pictures the encroachment of machines upon our lives as they take over more and more of our jobs and most of our daily functions. Soon we cannot live unless we have machines. We become the slaves of the machines which we produce. Slowly we lose our humanity. This is a radical analysis, but it has something to say to us who would relate the Christian faith's concern for human dignity and integrity to this day of technological expansion.

Third, in this new world we discover that man lives completely outside the church. He may live with a church in his neighborhood. He may even pay his taxes to the church, as he does in Germany. He may even be baptized in the church. But he knows nothing about the message of the church. The church exists for him as a relic of the past. In 1962, I visited an industrial mission in Mainz-Kastel, Germany. The mission is in the midst of an industrial neighborhood, in which over 15,000 workers live and work. Pastor Horst Symanowski, who serves a mission church at Mainz-Kastel, came from East Germany after the last war. The first Sunday he came to the mission and stood in the pulpit to preach, there were three people before him. He preached a sermon that Sunday, but after he left the pulpit he said, "This is no place for me." He decided that the only way he could reach the people in Mainz Kastel was to go out and work with them. So he left the pulpit behind and he went out to work in the factories in the area. As he worked beside the workers, he listened to them and found out what their lives were like. Even though they

had been baptized as Christians, they knew nothing about the Christian faith. They were modern men living outside the church. They did not know its language or its life. They looked upon the church as something which had no relevance to their work life. As one of them said, "I work in a factory, beside a machine. As far as I can see, it is the machine which produces goods. What has God got to do with what the machine produces?" This was modern man speaking. In the modern world the vertical dimension no longer exists for many people. For them the world can go on without any belief in God.

Fourth, the Church presents an obscurantist view of life to modern men. I have just mentioned the German pastor in his work at Gossner Mission. He finally got a group of men together. They were men whom he had worked beside in the factory. From his interest in them, they discovered that he was a pastor. They wanted to know why a pastor was working in a factory. They wanted to know what the Christian faith had to do with industrial work. They watched him struggle with his Sunday sermon. "Why do you have such trouble with your sermon. After all you have been trained in the seminary." He told them how difficult it was to live in the modern world and to relate himself to the problems that modern men faced. He said, "I'll tell you what we will do. I would like you to criticize the sermon that I am going to preach on Sunday morning. You tell me if you understand what I am saying." So he gathered them together on a Friday evening and gave them Bibles. But they did not know what to do with the Bibles. He had to open the Bible for them to the place where he was reading. When he read the words it had no meaning to them. "What does that mean? We don't understand what you are saying. Speak to us in our own language." As he did, he began to understand how to communicate with people in the language which had meaning to them. This is our problem today. We in the church are too obscure in our language. We are too tied to traditional language and practices which have no meaning for modern man. Our approaches to men are too narrow in the face of the dynamic industrial age in which they live. The

church must penetrate this dynamic industrial society with the Gospel in the language that modern men understand.

REORIENTING OUR MINISTRY

Let us now turn to the question, "How do we reorient our ministry in this new age?" Various attempts have been made at the reorientation of the church to the 20th century world. One approach has been for pastors to put themselves in the place of the modern worker. Pastors have gone job-hunting and have taken work beside men in the industrial work force. One of the better known examples is the worker-priest movement which began in France. After the last war several French cardinals of the Roman Catholic Church were distressed with the estrangement of the French working force from Christianity. The cardinals allowed some priests to become workers on the docks and in the factories. The priests began by working full time in their industrial jobs and carrying out their priestly functions in their off hours. Some joined trade unions and some eventually joined the Communist Party. For this reason, the experiment finally had to be curtailed. This example points to the tremendous gap which exists between the life the priest (or the pastor) lives within the Church and the life which exists among workers in the working community. Some priests became so involved in the life of the working people that they felt that they could only help them as they fully joined in their activities. Some of these activities were overtly antagonistic to the Church.

A second way in which this orientation to a modern life is being carried out is in the Lay Academy Movement. The academies had their beginnings in Germany after the last war. The movement spread throughout Europe and Scandinavia, and has come to Asia where an academy has been started in Japan. In the German experience the academies were the basis for bringing people together from various occupational groups and across religious lines to discuss specific questions they face within their job situations. In another type of program, the academies bring together people from different walks of life to discuss specific issues which face the entire country. Out of

these discussions the church has deepened its understanding of people's thinking. By its own concern for these problems, the church has opened a continuing conversation with those outside the organized church. As people from various occupational groups discuss the biblical view in relationship to their job problems they begin to see the relevance of the Bible to the life they are living within the 20th century. In this dialogue between those who are in the church and those outside the church, both are being confronted by the Gospel in a new way. The Gospel is no longer confined to the church, but it is the Gospel for all men.

A third way of orientation is for the pastor to become more deeply involved in the life of his laymen. This means a willingness to listen to them, to ask questions of them, to learn more about the way they deal with problems. In the first lecture, I referred to the work of the Church of England in Sheffield. I would like to refer again to Bishop Wickham's analysis. Bishop Wickham suggests that the church never lost the industrial worker, because the church never had the industrial worker. The industrial worker was not in the church because the church never went out to meet him. In Sheffield, Bishop Wickham asked the question, "How will we reach the industrial worker?" The industrial chaplaincy program of the Sheffield Industrial Mission was developed to penetrate the steel industry. Bishop Wickham sought the backing of both management and labor in setting up an industrial chaplaincy program within the steel mills. Both management and labor agreed to have chaplains enter the steel mills, eat lunch with the workers and hold discussions at lunch and tea time. The discussions dealt with the contemporary issues which faced the nation and the steel industry. The discussions were on a "give and take" basis between the workers, with the industrial chaplain acting as a discussion leader. At various times, when his opinion was called for, the chaplain would interject his Christian understanding of the problem. In this way both the chaplain and the workers began to understand one another. The issues were of deep concern to these men (e.g. automation, nuclear warfare). Even though the topics were secular in content, the worker's basic understanding of the problems was often religious. As men became

more deeply involved in these discussions, some of them began to see Christianity in a new light. They saw that the Christian faith had something to say to them. Some of them organized into smaller groups to discuss the Christian faith. This was an "embryonic" church within the factory. In a day when the organized church is foreign ground to many working men, this development was a new expression of the Christian community.

The Laity and Theological Questions

Many of the questions our laymen ask are deeply theological questions, even though they are asked from within a secular framework. It is our task to relate our theology to the questions laymen ask. What are some of the questions asked by laymen? One question they face in their everyday lives is "How do I live as a Christian in the world?" Many laymen seek a meaningful purpose in the midst of their daily life. The issues in a complex business society are not neatly divided into right and wrong. Many times the decision to be made is between two wrongs. Laymen see the church as dividing the world into black and white. They hear the church saying: "We stand on the right side and those not with us are wrong." But this dichotomy does not help our laymen in making their decisions. Let me cite an illustration of a laymen's consultation which was held in Manila. One of our first consultations was with laymen from the business and management group. Quintin Doromal, chairman of our Industrial Life and Vocations Committee, adapted three case studies from the experience of a large manufacturing company. The first case was one of pilfering. Immediately, one layman said he had just faced a similar case in his plant. Another said, "How do you deal with stealing in a plant?" The laymen jumped into the discussion. There were two opposite points of view. One man said, "Throw him out of the plant, don't let him stay a minute. He will demoralize the others. If you are lenient, everybody will begin to steal." Another man said, "I would first ask him why he stole. I would make him a loan since he needed the money." Here were two different points of view and both men claimed to be Christians. In between these two extremes, there was a wide variety of answers. As pastors we are called

upon to understand the problems which laymen face and to provide a Christian dimension to their search for answers.

Another question which our laymen ask is, "How does God act in this world? Does he work only inside the church? We often give laymen the impression that the church is good and the world is evil. When our laymen go to work in the world, they believe that God has nothing to do with the world. God only works in the church and it is the responsibility of the church to withhold itself from the world. Mr. Raju, a recent visitor to the Philippines from India, told of his dilemma in the Indian Church. He said that he has three jobs. He is a lay evangelist; he is the treasurer of his diocese; and he works as an engineer to earn his living. What does the church tell him about his various jobs? The church tells him that as an evangelist he can depend on the Holy Spirit working through him. What does the church say about his job as diocesan treasurer? The church tells him that this is a secular job for a religious organization, therefore he can count on the help of God but not on the Holy Spirit. What does the church say about his job as an engineer? The church says that this is secular job and therefore it is outside the operation of the Holy Spirit. Can we divide a man into three parts? Can we say that a man who is a lay evangelist on Sunday has the Holy Spirit, but once he steps outside the church door and goes to work on Monday as an engineer he no longer can count on the Holy Spirit working through him? We must ask ourselves the question, "What is the meaning of the Holy Spirit within the life of the world?"

Another question which concerns laymen is the search to find meaningful community. Is the Christian community only to be found within the four walls of the church or can the Christian community be found outside the organized church? Some men will never enter the door of a church. Some men will never have the benefit of belonging to an organized church because they feel the church is not for them. We may say that they have a very narrow understanding of the church. But we are called to bear the Christian Gospel to these men. We are called to open to them the possibility of belonging to the body of Christ. In the case of Sheffield Industrial Mission in

England, a priest finally brought a group of working men to see that the Christian faith was relevant to their lives. When he asked them to come to church, the men refused. They felt that they did not belong in the church. He finally got them together in a pub (in a drinking place). They came together and they discussed religious questions. They discussed the meaning of redemption. The priest finally got the men to agree to come to a side chapel attached to a Cathedral. Here the men took communion for the first time in their lives.

I have mentioned the German pastor Horst Symanowski. He was able to get his fellow workers to criticize his sermon at a Friday night session. But when he preached his sermon on Sunday morning not one of the men were in church to hear him. Finally he got them together with their families on Sunday afternoon. They had their own service. Their service consisted of a discussion of a topic pertinent to the issues they lived in an industrial society.

Throughout the world today, men are coming to understand the meaning of Christ through the ministries of industrial chaplains and pastors working in factories, but very few of these men will join the organized church. We have to ask ourselves what is the meaning of the Christian community in an industrial society where men are hungry for the words of life, and where they cannot accept the ecclesiastical structures which we have inherited from the past. Perhaps it is we who have to change our concept of the church if we are to bring men into the body of Christ. We need to understand the deep desires of men for meaningful community. We have to ask ourselves whether our churches provide this community in this new day.

Questions for Discussion

1. What is the Biblical basis for the term laity? What implications does the Biblical understanding of laity have for the church today?
2. It has been suggested that Paul uses the term "call" or "calling" in a religious sense. What then do we mean when we say all Christians are "called" or have a calling?

3. In what way has social change affected the lives of our laity? How has change provided the laity with new opportunities for witness in the community?
4. What are the basic problems of the pastor which limits his effectiveness in equipping the laity? How do we "clericalize" our laity?
5. How do the premises of the emerging technological society effect our traditional religious approaches?
6. What changes are evident in the Philippines which require a reorientation of our ministry? How can we orient our ministry for a more effective witness in the world?
7. How would you answer the Indian layman who asks whether the Holy Spirit works through him as an engineer?
8. What are the basic essentials of the Church? Can the church exist outside the institutional church?

III. CALLED TO EQUIP

In our first presentation we laid stress upon the importance of the local congregation in penetrating the world and engaging it in dialogue. We spoke of the local congregation, not only in its organized stationary form, but in its mobile form. In our second presentation we laid stress upon the role of the laity in the world. The laity are God's seed dispersed upon the earth. With careful watering the laity can become the first fruits of a new engagement of the church with the world. If the laity are to become the first fruits of this engagement with the world they will need to be prepared for their task in the world.

This brings us to the third element in our triad—the pastor. The pastor is a key to the effectivity of the laity in their witness in the world. How the pastor sees his role in the life of the local congregation and what he considers his task in relation to his laymen will determine the depth of their Christian involvement in the world.

Witness of the Laity in the World

For the past half century the church has struggled with the meaning of its existence in the world. Beginning with the Ecumenical conference which met at Edinburgh in 1910 and down through the formation of the World Council of Churches in 1948, the non-Roman Catholic Christian groups have sought to relate the Christian faith to the twentieth century.

As the churches surveyed the ashes of World War II, they came to the realization that they had lost touch with both their laity and the nations of which they were a part. Out of the stream of events since World War II the churches have made a determined effort to understand their laity and to discover ways in which they can help strengthen the laity in their life within the world.

Those who gathered in both the World Council of Churches meetings at Amsterdam in 1948 and at Evanston in 1954 sought to regain the lost ground of the past 100 years by bringing into focus the importance of the laity in the life of the church and the world. In acting upon this concern the World Council of Churches established The Department of the Laity to stimulate among its member churches, programs of study and action on the role of the laity. To further reinforce this emphasis, the World Council of Churches established the Ecumenical Institute at Bossey in Switzerland. The Institute carries out pioneer programs in the development of laity programs on an international scale. Recently a Filipino layman, who is expert in Philippine economic affairs, was invited to Geneva to take part in one of these pioneer programs. The Department of Church and Society of the World Council brought together Christian laymen, who are active in the economic development of their nations, to discuss the church's role in the rapid industrialization of developing areas of the world. From meetings of this kind it is hoped that our churches will deepen their understanding of the problems facing newly developing nations in their struggle toward economic growth.

Lay Academy Movement

As this concern for the laity was being stimulated through the ecumenical movement, there was also growing throughout Europe, and especially in Germany, the Lay Academy Movement.

In the aftermath of World War II several deeply committed German Christians, realizing how far the church had separated itself from the life of the nation, began the academy movement as a bridge between the church and the nation's life. The academies bring together various groups from all areas of the nation's life. They invite scientists, public officials, government workers, those in the professions, shop workers, trade union officials to discuss their attitudes toward Christianity and what they feel about this new world of which they are a part. The influence of the Lay Academy Movement has reached beyond Europe and is now being felt in the countries of Asia.

Japan is developing its own type of Lay Academy program through the establishment of Oiso Academy House outside of Tokyo.

As these laity programs have developed it has become evident that the laity need a basic knowledge of the faith to which they will witness. This lack of understanding of the faith has come as a startling discovery to the churches throughout the world. The teaching of the faith has been a neglected area of the life of the churches. This is true even in churches which have catechized their numbers. Even the teaching of these churches has not been related to the milieu in which the modern layman finds himself.

Renewal of Christian Education

With recognition of this vacuum, within recent years there has developed in our major denominations a concern for the curriculum of Christian Education. In the postwar period the major U.S. denominations began to question whether they were adequately preparing their people in the Christian faith. Out of this self-analysis came new curricula. The Presbyterian Church, U.S.A. was one of the first to take action in curriculum development. It spent two million dollars to prepare a Christian Education curriculum related to the present needs of the church. This curriculum was called *The Faith and Life* series. The materials began with the lower grades, and went through youth, and high school students. After using the materials for a number of years they discovered that the great need for Christian Education was at the adult level. Even as they had been training the children, Christian educators came to realize that there was need for an adult program to help parents understand what their children were learning. The biblical and religious illiteracy of Christian adults pressed the churches into developing materials for the adult population.

As this revolution in church school curricula has taken place over the past 20 years, there has been a growing demand for people trained in Christian Education. This is evident in the number training for Christian Education in seminaries throughout the United States. It is true here at Silliman where the

Christian Education program has been revamped to better prepare people to serve in local congregations. When I was in seminary 12 years ago, one of the weakest areas of the Seminary curriculum was in the Department of Christian Education. At that time the Christian Education faculties in most American seminaries were either non-existent or defunct. Out of this dormant situation has grown new life in the Christian Education field. Today we find the faculty of Christian Education Departments closely related to fields of psychology, theology, and the social sciences. Men and women trained today in Christian Education are called upon to keep in touch with the various disciplines which make up university education. As the demand for a more extensive Christian Education program in the local church has increased, so also has the demand for specialized ministries in the field of Christian Education. Even now our larger churches in the Philippines are calling for people with special training in the Christian Education field.

The revival of Christian Education has grown out of the realization that the laity have not been provided with an adequate training in the Christian faith. We may send our laymen out into the world of public life or politics or their occupations to bear a Christian witness in the world, but if they have not experienced, or been taught, or participated in the body of Christ, how then can they be the church in the world? In view of this religious vacuum the Church has set itself to the task of developing a Christian Education program for the total life of the church. But the emphasis on Christian Education points to a more fundamental problem—the need to regain the pastor's role in the teaching ministry of the church.

New Testament Emphasis on Teaching

The need for training the laity in the Christian faith should awaken pastors to their teaching ministry. The teaching role of the "set-apart" ministry is deeply rooted in the New Testament. As we read the letters of Paul, we are aware of the Apostle's emphasis upon teaching. In the lists of the functions which he includes in his Romans, Corinthians and Ephesians letters, Paul consistently includes the teaching ministry. Paul

recognizes that all who are called to be Christians are to devote themselves to the apostles' teaching. Teaching is a function of our life as Christians; we are to instruct others in the Christian faith. Teaching is a function of the whole laity. Speaking to the whole Christian community, the author of Hebrews writes, "For though by this time you ought to be teachers, you need someone to teach you again the first principles of God's word." (Hebrews 5:12) But among those who are "set apart"—who are called to special functions—each one is especially called to equip the saints for the work of the ministry. (Eph. 4:11, 12) In his letter to the Colossians Paul unites the preaching and teaching functions when he says, "Him we proclaim, warning every man and teaching every man in all wisdom, that we may present every man mature in Christ." (Col. 1:25)

Teaching in the Reformed Tradition

The teaching ministry was at the center of the Reformed tradition. The teaching function of the pastor was at the heart of John Calvin's division of labor within the church at Geneva. Within Calvin's development of Reformed polity, the pastor was to be distinguished from the other elders in the church by his teaching function. The pastor was a teaching elder while others were ruling elders who were elected to govern the life of the congregation. If there is one thing we need to regain from the Presbyterian tradition it is the teaching function of the pastor. But even within Presbyterianism today the teaching function has been overshadowed by the many other jobs the pastor is called upon to perform. A study of the functions performed by Protestant pastors in America showed pastors spending the greatest amount of their time performing administrative functions, a task for which they received little training in seminary.

As we look at the life of our local congregations in the Philippines, we realize that the teaching function of the pastor is his most neglected task. The preaching function of the ministry has received the most emphasis. The pastor's teaching function becomes focussed in his preaching role. The main task of the pastor is his preaching at Sunday Services. Even this would be helpful in upbuilding the church if the preaching task

were used to teach, but this is not the case. It is part of the preaching task that the sermon is to edify. But instead the sermon becomes a moralistic exhortation, or it becomes an admonition not to do certain things, or it is an evangelistic oration. When we have performed these tasks we feel that we have done our job. But have we deepened the faith to which we continually urge our people to witness? Have we helped our people relate this faith to the world in which they must live?

An honest answer to these questions from our laity would reveal that the teaching function is the weakest link in our ministerial tasks. It is this area of our ministry where the least imagination is shown. As pastors we normally associate teaching with a classroom situation. We think of teaching in terms of the lecture method. We see it as an oral presentation made by a teacher from notes. Since most of our experience of teaching the Christian faith has come from our seminary life, the seminary must accept criticism for the pastor's stereotyped understanding of the teaching process. Then too, many pastors associate teaching with an intellectual, scholarly approach to the Christian faith. When they weigh their own qualifications against the background of their professors, many of them feel ill-equipped to teach. If they do attempt to teach, it is at a level and in a language which is beyond the experience of their ordinary parishioners. In the face of these problems, they abdicate their teaching responsibility and concentrate on preaching.

Seminary Education and Contemporary Society

If pastors are to be effective in their communication of the Gospel in a changing society, they will need to see their teaching ministry in a new light. Much of our seminary education has been of a conceptual nature. That is to say, as seminarians we have been dealing in ideas. These ideas have been developed out of 3000 years of religious history. These religious ideas have been taught in the realm of concepts with little or no relation to the facts of contemporary society. In the Philippines any religious idea must be related both to the relationships within traditional Philippine culture and to the assumptions which undergird modern technological society. Christian doctrine can-

not be taught apart from an understanding of the close interpersonal relationships which are the building blocks of Philippine society. Nor can biblical material be taught without entering into the contemporary events which are bringing about change in the life of the Philippines. For this reason the seminary in its teaching function must enter into the **experience** of contemporary society.

Need for Experience

The seminary's task is to provide the seminarian with an understanding of life as it is caught between the values of traditional culture and the demands of modern society. The seminary needs to provide the seminarian with an experience of the modern world and help him interpret this experience from within a Christian context. The seminary should help uncover the basic problems of modern society, before it provides what it believes are the answers to these problems. The seminary should be a problem-finding community, before it becomes a problem-solving community. Its task is to sensitize the Christian pastor to the essential nature of the modern world from within the context of a Christ-centered, world-directed approach.

From within this Christ-centered, world-directed approach, the teaching situation becomes a "give and take" experience between the seminary and the world; between the church and the seminary; between the teacher and the seminarian. Within the seminary, learning becomes a dialogue. In this dialogue the seminary will need to provide learning experiences which will broaden the seminarian's life and deepen his understanding of the issues he will confront in his ministry.

Let me outline some of the ways I believe this can be done:

- 1) The seminary will need to be in touch with those community agencies and resources which can supplement the seminary's teaching program. Field trips, wider use of audio-visual material, lectures by outside resource people, and work with community development projects all need to be considered in the teaching of particular courses and in the curriculum in general.

- 2) The seminary will need to lay greater stress on its field work program. The field work program, which should include both weekend and summer work assignments, is the basis for providing seminarians experience in various practical situations. The program need not only be church-oriented but should seek to develop possibilities for work in community agencies, in institutions and in industry. The field work program both in church and in community situations will need careful planning and continued supervision to assure the effective participation of seminarians.
- 3) In the case of a seminary which is on or near a university campus, there is need to develop an inter-disciplinary approach between the university and the seminary. Both university and seminary education can be enriched by this cross conversation between the different disciplines in both institutions. For example, on the Silliman campus seminarians have the opportunity of working with those in the community development field. Seminarians working with a community development project of the University will receive training in research techniques. This training in turn will help them relate their ministries more effectively to the communities they will serve.
- 4) Within the total life of the seminary there is need to make wider use of the forum or debate to help sharpen the issues which seminarians will face in their ministry. There is also the possibility of using religious drama as a means of setting forth the theological issues which confront man in a secular world.
- 5) The seminary should also be concerned with the in-service training of pastors already serving churches. A program of seminars could be developed related to the problems which confront pastors in their local situations. The Urban Pastor's Monday Morning Seminar program sponsored in Manila by the Committee on Industrial Life and Vocations is a case in point. The Urban Pastor's program is meant to provide a forum for the discussion of the issues of urban life. The seminars invite people from various areas of the city's life to help interpret their work in relation to urbanization. People involved in housing development, in city politics, in welfare services, in business life, in university life, in trade unions

provide pieces to the puzzle which is urban life. Pastors provide their own experience in the city to make the seminars 'give-and-take' situations. The Monday Morning seminar program has been geared into a course on Urban Sociology at the Union Theological Seminary. The participation of the seminar program provides them with the practical background necessary for their own preparation as town and city pastors.

All of these approaches need to be considered by the seminary as it equips pastors for their ministry in the community.

Need for Interpretation

Even as the seminary is to be concerned with broadening the seminarian's experience in the life of the world, it is also concerned with the **interpretation** of this experience. It is here that the seminary is Christ-centered in its ministry. The seminary brings this experience under the light of our life in Jesus Christ. It provides the seminarian with the ground of interpretation of his experience in the world. The seminary helps the seminarian reflect upon his own experiences in the light of the biblical revelation, so that his experience and his biblical faith taken together will give him a basis for understanding life. The seminarian in turn translates his experience into words the laity can understand and which have relationship to their own life. Our teaching ministry then becomes teaching from life in which we help the laity see more clearly the relationship of the Christian faith to their own experience.

Need for Imagination

As we have wider experience and as we interpret the experience in the light of the Christian faith, we then begin to see new openings for the mission of the church in the life of the world. This is the third level of our training in the Christian faith—the **imagination** to see God's ministry at work in new ways in the world. The first lecture stressed the need to see beyond the set patterns of our ministry and to find new ways of expressing our ministry in the light of changing needs. A paper of the Department of Laity of the World Council of

Churches on "Imagination and the Ministry of the Laity" tells us:

Developing the mere functioning of imagination is already a Christian task. No human life is possible without imagination — and God wants us to live. Some maintain that no biblical instruction can be given without first having developed the poetic use of language. Similarly no Christian life can be lived without having developed a functioning imagination. The development of imagination is therefore essential in "the equipment of the saints for their ministry," in the preparation of the laity for their task in the world.

Moreover, the specific Christian contribution in the development of imagination is the endeavor to liberate imagination from the bondage of egocentric life, to bring it under the discipline and direction of God's will in order to make it an instrument of our love of God and our neighbors.

If we are to help our people understand their Christian task in the life of the world then we must see our equipping of the saints in an imaginative way. In the local pastorate we have many opportunities for carrying out an imaginative teaching ministry.

Imagination in the Local Church Program

First, Sunday School can be carried out in an imaginative way. Sunday school need not be only a classroom situation. Drama is an effective way of teaching young people the history and the truths of the biblical faith. To this day I can remember very vividly the biblical dramas which I participated in my early Sunday schools days. Dramatic presentations remain a long time in the memory of people. In the same way the events of the Bible can be made a part of the present experience of children and young people.

Second, the communicant's class preparing young people for church membership can be a lively experience. This is a crucial time in the life of the young person. He is preparing to make his public confession of Jesus Christ before the congregation. His confession of faith should be a significant act in his life. The communicant's class needs to be more than a catechizing

of the young person in the doctrine of the Christian faith. The young person needs to understand the questions he is being asked. This can only be done as the teacher has entered into a "give-and-take" situation with the young person and brought out his or her own questions. The communicant's class needs to become a conversation in faith so that the young person's commitment is a real one.

Third, the sacraments of the church also provide an opportunity for teaching the faith. Pastors are asked to perform many baptisms during the year. Baptism provides the opportunity for teaching the parents the meaning of the sacrament in the life of the individual and the church. Paul Lauby suggested that baptism can be made significant by being performed outside of the church door before the child or adult is brought into the congregation. Thus the incorporation of the baptized person into the community of believers is presented in a dramatic way. Pastors conduct the Lord's Supper on many occasions throughout the year. On each occasion he has opportunity to give a communion meditation. These meditations provide opportunity for instruction in the meaning of the Lord's Supper in the life of the church. The service of Holy Communion provides endless possibilities for exploring different aspects of the Christian faith.

Fourth, preparation for the marriage ceremony provides another opportunity for teaching young couples the basis of Christian marriage and the family. Pastors can require a number of pre-counselling sessions with couples intending to be married. During the sessions the pastor can cover various aspects of the Christian faith and its relationship to marriage, the family and community life. Over the years the pastor can develop his own teaching outline for the aspects which he considers pertinent to Christian faith and married life.

Fifth, the time previous to the election of elders and deacons provides an opportunity for giving the biblical background and traditional development of the various offices in the Church. Pastors should help their congregations see the offices within the church as places of responsibility and service, rather than honor and prestige.

Sixth, the regular meetings of the church officers can also be times of instruction. Along with the business of the church, time should be set aside in council meetings for periods of instruction for both elders and deacons in some particular phase of their responsibility within the life of the church and the world. The Church Officer's Training Manual can be used over a series of council meetings as a set part of the agenda.

Specialized Laity Programs

These are all possibilities "for equipping the saints for the work of the ministry" within the life of the local church. There is also opportunity for teaching through laity programs organized on the basis of age, occupation or special concern.

During the past four years our Committee on Industrial Life and Vocations has carried out varied programs aimed at discovering the church's responsibility to the laity and the laity's responsibility in the world.

Young-Workers-in-Industry. One of the programs which we found most fruitful was a series of conferences for young workers in factory situations. The first Young Workers In Industry Conference brought together a group of young evangelical workers from the desiccated coconut industry of the Southern Tagalog region. The first conference was problem-centered. We began by asking them what were the problems they faced on the job. They were eager to tell us their problems. Someone suggested it was a "new twist" that the church was willing to listen instead of telling them what their responsibility was. Role playing of actual situations was used as a means of stimulating discussion.

The proceedings of the first conference with the young workers was used to develop Bible studies related to the work situation of the young people. A second conference was called and the Bible studies used with the young workers. Out of this meeting there arose questions of faith which were central to the young workers' lives. From this second conference five questions were chosen to be used as studies with other young people. The five questions were: "What kind of work should I do? Is there a Christian type of work? How far should a

Christian compromise? What does the Christian do in the face of injustice? How do I witness on my job?"

Laity Consultations. Another way that we have carried out our quest for understanding our laymen's life has been through our laity consultations. We gathered a list from our Manila churches of laymen working in ten different occupational classifications. On two occasions we have called together laymen working in business and management positions. In both these consultations we have used case studies. We adapted actual case studies and asked the laymen for their opinions. The discussion showed a wide variety of opinions on how these men would deal with the problem. The laymen began to ask themselves is there more than one way for a Christian to deal with a problem. Pastors who participated in these consultations have become aware that there is no one particular approach to a problem. They came to see the complexity of the issues which laymen face in their work. This in turn helped them to see their own role as pastors, preachers, teachers, counsellors in a new light. In a complex society, the pastor needs to gather the facts and needs to know the inner tension of his laymen's lives so he can be of more strength to them in their jobs.

Lunch Hour Dialogue. Another way in which we have tried to develop our pastor's understanding of contemporary society, is through a series of luncheon meetings in one particular area of concern. For one series we gathered together a group of Manila pastors to discuss the responsibility of the Church to the trade union movement with different trade union leaders. In the beginning many of the questions of the pastors were informational. But by the end of the series there was a give-and-take between the pastors and the trade union leaders. The pastors had grown in their perception of the role which the Church has in relating itself to the trade union movement.

Informal Situations. Another area in which we have an excellent opportunity to carry out our teaching ministry is in the informal situations in which we find ourselves. One of the places in which most of our evangelism is carried out is in travelling situations. Travelling about the Philippines there are always occasions when we enter into conversations with

other people. Evangelicals are always telling me about conversations they have had on a bus or on an interisland boat. When people discover that a person is a Protestant they have many questions to ask about the evangelical faith. I remember Valentin Montes telling me about conversations he had while travelling between the southern islands of the Philippines. On several occasions he gave his Bible to people who had become interested in the Christian faith through the conversations which they had during the journey. We must always be prepared to help people understand the Christian faith through the informal relationships in which we find ourselves.

We need to see possibilities apart from the organized activities of the life of the church. Many of our laymen are so busy in secular society that they have little time to participate in the organized programs of the church. These are the men we will never see at our Lay Ministries training programs, but they are the men who are on the firing lines in daily life. In order to help these men see their ministry where they are, we need to penetrate organized society in a new way. We need to help our laity reflect upon the meaning of the Christian faith in the midst of the nation's life. To equip the saints for the work of the ministry means working with the laity in the new structures which are taking shape. The Sheffield Industrial Mission has tried one way by sending its industrial chaplains onto the factory floors and into the business offices to relate the faith to the immediate problems of man-in-industry. The ministry within the organizational structure of secular society is being worked out by the Detroit Industrial Mission in the American automotive industry. All of these are teaching situations from which we can gain experience and from which we can sharpen our own understanding of the life in the world. In turn these experiences can provide us with a more relevant teaching ministry as we equip our laity for their witness in the world.

SUMMARY

Let me summarize what has been said in these lectures:

The church exists in the world not for itself, but to bear witness to the love which God has shown in Christ. The mission

of the church, therefore, is to give itself for the world. God was in Christ reconciling the world to himself and the laity are God's agents of reconciliation in the world. The local church is the place where the laity are to be equipped for this mission of reconciliation. The laity are assembled to be equipped and they are dispersed to be agents of reconciliation on all frontiers of modern society. The laity are the front line of offense—strengthening places where God is already at work and opening new beachheads for the fulfilment of his mission. The pastor's task is to sharpen the focus of the faith so that the laity are continually aware of the relation of the Christian faith to the issues of life. Thus the local congregation, the laity and the pastor become the means for revealing God's reconciliation of the world to himself through Christ.

Questions for Discussion

1. What does the layman expect from the pastor in his ministry?
2. What role does the pastor expect the layman to play in the life of the church?
3. What is the pastor's present role in the teaching ministry of the church?
4. What difficulties does the pastor face in the performance of the teaching ministry?
5. How is the teaching ministry carried out in your local church? What changes would need to be made to make it more effective?
6. What is the role of imagination in carrying out the church's teaching ministry?
7. In what ways can the teaching ministry be performed outside the church's regular program?