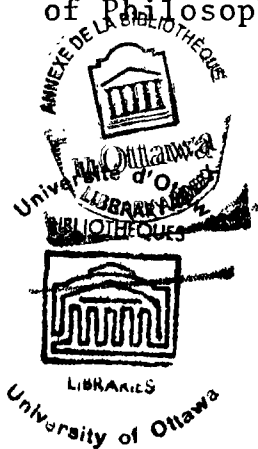


THE AMERICAN CATHOLIC REACTION
TO THE CONCEPT "SOCIAL ACTION" IN VATICAN II

by Joseph A. Torma

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CURRICULUM STUDIORUM

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ABBREVIATIONS

<u>Church</u>	<u>Dogmatic Constitution on the Church, Vatican II</u>
<u>CMW</u>	<u>Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World, Vatican II</u>
<u>Commentary, III (or V)</u>	<u>Commentary on the Documents of Vatican II, Volumes III and V, Vorgrimmler, Editor</u>
<u>Documents</u>	<u>The Documents of Vatican II, Abbott, Editor</u>
<u>Laity</u>	<u>Decree on the Apostolate of the Laity, Vatican II</u>
<u>Missions</u>	<u>Decree on the Church's Missionary Activity, Vatican II</u>
NCCB	U.S. National Conference of Catholic Bishops
NCCM	The National Council of Catholic Men
<u>Priests</u>	<u>Decree on the Ministry and Life of Priests, Vatican II</u>

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INTRODUCTION

Religious beliefs have always had some kind of impact on the way societies have organized themselves and distributed their resources. Some religious beliefs have prompted their adherents to try to directly influence societal structures, while others have encouraged them to concentrate on their own personal attitudes. Church structures tend to promote one or the other type of behavior. This thesis is concerned with the social attitudes that are characteristic of American Catholics and their relationship to official Church positions. Insofar as the Second Vatican Council (1962-1965) served as the most recent forum for definitive statements by the Roman Catholic Church as a whole, the Council is the point of reference for this thesis concerning official views on the Church's relationship to society and social situations.

The particular problem at hand revolves around the term "social action" since this term is widely used in American Catholic Church circles to refer to activities of social concern. The exact point of the research is the reaction of American Catholics to what the Council meant by social action, understood both from its use of the term itself and from its positions on Church matters related to social action.

This topic was chosen for research because it provides the necessary framework for the development of social

action programs in the context of American Catholicism. Before effective programs can be developed, the rationale for Church social action must be clarified and articulated, and the present state of the thinking of the American Catholic Church must be known and understood.

The importance of the subject matter, therefore, lies both in the area of theory and in the area of practice. There has been a shift in Church thinking concerning the theory of Church social involvement. Whereas in the past (pre-Vatican II) social involvement had been understood to be on the periphery of Church interest, mainly for the purposes of attracting or retaining Church members, it is now understood to be a constitutive element of the Church's overall task or mission. Since social action is one aspect of social involvement, it is important to clarify its place in the mission of the Church. On a practical level, the determination of the American Catholic reaction to this theoretical shift can provide the insights into the American context that are necessary before there can be any effective development and implementation of practical social action programs.

The subject is especially timely in view of the post-Vatican II establishment of the Vatican Secretariate for Justice and Peace and the development of parallel structures at the national and diocesan levels in the United

States. These structures represent the first institutionalization in the Catholic Church of a concern for peace and justice. This concern has again been expressed recently through the publication of the statement of the Third Synod of Bishops on the question of the Church and social justice, "Justice in the World". These developments are hastening deeper social involvement of the American Catholic Church, making it even more essential that there be systematic research in the area of social involvement.

No comprehensive work has been done in the area of Vatican II and the social mission of the Church, but significant commentaries have been made by writers such as Auer, Ratzinger, Semmelroth, Klostermann, and Riga. There has also been no previous research on the specific topic of Vatican II's concept of social action and, consequently, no research on the American Catholic reaction to this concept. This thesis, then, must rely on the documents and working papers (schemata) of the Council as well as the above-mentioned commentaries for its concept of social action. The writings of American Catholics will provide the basis for assessing their reaction.

The method used is the historical method--an objective study of the concept "social action" in Vatican II and a critical analysis of the reaction to it in a sampling of representative post-Vatican II American Catholic literature

(1966-1971). There will first be a clarification of the exact meaning of the term as used by Vatican II and then an examination of post-Vatican II American literature for material which utilizes the term "social action" and has an explicit relationship to the documents of Vatican II, not necessarily word-by-word commentary, but material which includes clear reference to Vatican II.

Since there has been no official translation (from the Latin) of the Council's working papers (schemata and modi), the translations used for this paper are the writer's. The schemata are the rough drafts of the Council documents, and the modi are the suggestions for change in a document. Although all of the Council documents served as reference, the main documents involved are The Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World (1965), The Decree on the Apostolate of the Laity (1965), and their respective schemata.

It is appropriate to note at this point that in this thesis the term "Church" is understood in the context of Vatican II which was immediately concerned with the Roman Catholic community without excluding a wider connotation.

The sources from which the American Catholic reaction is determined fall into two categories. The first is made up of predetermined sources (approximately three thousand issues of forty-two periodicals) and includes the following:

1) academic and pastoral journals of religion published in the United States and regularly featuring American Catholic writers (thirty periodicals),

2) selected popular American Catholic periodicals (nine periodicals),

3) representative national Catholic newspapers--one liberal, one moderate, and one conservative.

(See Appendix for complete listing of these sources.) The second category includes numerous books and other periodicals and official statements from American bishops and national offices.

The first chapter attempts to discern Vatican II's concept of social action. The analysis begins with a general examination of the Council's attitude toward the temporal order in general, narrows to its concept of the Church's mission in the temporal order, and then specifies the Council's concept of the term "social action". Specific problems concerning variations in the Council's concepts of the Church and roles of Church members are also discussed since these conceptualizations are related to the concept of social action.

The American Catholic reaction to Vatican II's concept is derived from chapters two through four. The second chapter endeavors to ascertain the American Catholic concept of social action itself, the third to determine the American

Catholic awareness of Vatican II's concept of social action, and the fourth to clarify their attitude toward what they perceive this concept to be. In each of these chapters the term "social action" is dealt with first, then the Church's mission in the temporal order, and lastly, the roles of the Church members in the social mission.

CHAPTER I

VATICAN II'S CONCEPT OF SOCIAL ACTION

Although the concept of social action involves much more than just the term "social action", the term provides the focus for the treatment of the concept. The term "social action" is used only once in the documents of Vatican II, in article 7 of the "Decree on the Apostolate of the Laity" (Apostolicam Actuositatem). Christian social action is cited as being "outstanding among the works of [the] apostolate [of] the renewal of the temporal order" and is described as being the "special obligation" of "the laity" who, "as citizens [...] must seek the justice characteristic of God's kingdom".¹ This clarification prepares the way for examination

¹ The Second Vatican Council, "Decree on the Apostolate of the Laity", art. 7, in The Documents of Vatican II, edited by Walter M. Abbott, New York, Guild, 1966, p. 498. The complete text is as follows: "7. [...] The laity must take on the renewal of the temporal order as their own special obligation. Led by the light of the gospel and the mind of the Church, and motivated by Christian love, let them act directly and definitively in the temporal sphere. As citizens they must cooperate with other citizens, using their own particular skills and acting on their own responsibility. Everywhere and in all things they must seek the justice characteristic of God's kingdom. The temporal order must be renewed in such a way that, without the slightest detriment to its own proper laws, it can be brought into conformity with the higher principles of the Christian life and adapted to the shifting circumstances of time, place, and person. Outstanding among the works of this type of apostolate is that of Christian social

of the concept "social action". This will proceed in the following manner: first, there will be discussion of Vatican II's position on the Church's relationship to the temporal order and the precise relation to this of "Christian social action"; and second, there will be a delineation and exposition of the main problems encountered in the above context concerning the Church's social mission and the roles related to it.

1. Vatican II's Position on the Church and the Temporal Order

To understand Vatican II's position, specifically in relation to "social action", three areas must be examined: the Council's general attitude toward the temporal order, its belief concerning the Church's mission in the temporal order, and its use of the term "social action".

action. This sacred Synod desires to see it extended now to the whole temporal sphere, including culture."

The Latin text is from Schema Decreti de Apostolatu Laicorum, Textus Recognitus et Modi, Vatican City, Vatican Press, 1965, p. 44-45: "Laicos autem oportet ordinis temporalis instaurationem tamquam proprium munus assumere et in eo, lumine Evangelii ac mente Ecclesiae ductos et caritate christiana actos, directo et modo definito agere; qua cives cum civibus, specifica peritia et propria 'responsabilitate' cooperari; ubique et in omnibus iustitiam regni Dei quaerere. Ita instaurandus est ordo temporalis ut, propriis eiusdem legibus integre servatis, ulterioribus vitae christianae principiis conformis reddatur, variisque locorum, temporum et populorum, conditionibus aptatus. Inter opera huiusmodi apostolatus eminet actio socialis christianorum, quam hodie ad totam provinciam temporalem, praesertim ad ingenii cultum, sese extendere cupit S. Synodus."

A. Vatican II's Attitude Toward the Temporal Order
in General

The relationship of man to the temporal order is described in article 57 of the "Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World", (Gaudium et Spes):

Manifested at the beginning of time, the divine plan is that man should subdue the earth [cf. Gen. 1:28], bring creation to perfection, and develop himself. When a man so acts he simultaneously obeys the great Christian commandment that he place himself at the service of his brother men.²

These words unequivocally set the development of man in the context of the development of creation and commit the authors to a position diametrically opposed to that which would see man's development as essentially other-worldly. They also commit them to a view of the world and man which sets them at odds with competition-type worldviews. As Otto Semmelroth states in his commentary, "the very service which a person performs for society in fact promotes his own development".³ The world is not to be understood in isolation from man; but, in fact, as Alfons Auer comments, it "is ultimately an extension of [man's] own corporeality" and "man can only develop and fulfill himself if at the same time he develops and

2 Vatican II, "Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World", art. 57, in Documents, p. 262.

3 Otto Semmelroth, "The Community of Mankind", in Commentary on the Documents of Vatican II, Vol. V, edited by Herbert Vorgrimmler, Freiburg, Herder, 1969, p. 171.

brings to fulfillment the world which in him is comprised in unity".⁴

Article 57 clarifies, then, what had preceded it in article 39:

[...] the [eschatological] expectation of a new earth must [...] stimulate our concern for cultivating this one. For here grows the body of a new human family, a body which even now is able to give some kind of foreshadowing of the new age.⁵

The basic attitude of Vatican II toward the temporal order, as reflected in the Pastoral Constitution, is, therefore, that the Christian who believes in the resurrection of the body and the transfiguration of the world may also believe, in the words of Auer, "in the consummation of technical achievement in the transformed world and in the fulfillment, in the communion of saints, of the socialization brought about by technology".⁶

In summary, the divine plan is that men should cooperate with each other (i.e. serve each other's needs and potentials) in order to subdue and develop those created realities which are not yet under their control. The criterion by which this process is to be judged is the development of man himself.

4 Alfons Auer, "Man's Activity Throughout the World", in Commentary, V, p. 201.

5 Vatican II, The Pastoral Constitution, art. 57, in Documents, p. 237.

6 Auer, Op. Cit., p. 197.

The above-mentioned plan must necessarily have ramifications for the social order; and, consequently, the Pastoral Constitution states, in article 26:

[...] there must be made available to all men everything necessary for leading a life truly human, such as food, clothing, and shelter; the right to choose a state of life freely and to found a family, the right to education, to employment, to a good reputation, to respect, to appropriate information, to activity in accord with the upright norm of one's own conscience, to protection of privacy and to rightful freedom in matters religious too.⁷

This makes it clear that "a life truly human" requires not only material resources necessary for sustaining and developing physical life, but also social conditions necessary for sustaining and developing rational and personal life. It is also made clear that "all men" without exception have a right to the above-mentioned resources and conditions which must be "made available" to them. The social order is to be judged then on the basis of its functional value for the development of the human person, as article 26 states, in continuation of the above:

Hence the social order and its development must unceasingly work to the benefit of the human person if the disposition of affairs is to be subordinate to the personal realm and not contrariwise, as the Lord indicated when He said that the Sabbath was made for man, and not man for the Sabbath (Mk. 2:27).⁸

⁷ Vatican II, The Pastoral Constitution, art. 26, in Documents, p. 225.

⁸ Idem, ibid.

Semmelroth comments that article 26 is especially significant because through it society is reminded that it is "its duty to see that everything which is necessary for a truly human life should be made available",⁹ that the "most important feature of the world is human social order",¹⁰ and that this social order will involve the setting-up of institutions which are not primarily concerned with self-perpetuation, but "are concerned with order among persons and their planned activity".¹¹

It is significant to note, at this point, a comment by the late John Courtney Murray, which points out an important practical implication of article 26:

The Council [...] makes a political commitment, however discreet, to constitutional government--or, if you will, to the juridical state--whose basic inspiration is a consciousness of the dignity of the person and a recognition of human rights.¹²

This kind of commitment has important ramifications for the construction of political and economic systems, as was stated by Dr. John Joseph Murphy when, in noting also that the Council Fathers had committed themselves, he said:

9 Semmelroth, Op. Cit., p. 171.

10 Idem, ibid.

11 Idem, ibid.

12 John Courtney Murray, "The Issue of Church and State at Vatican II", in The Church in the World, edited by Charles P. O'Donnell, Milwaukee, Bruce, 1967, p. 58.

In definite terms, they judge: 'excessive economic and social differences between members of the one human family or population groups cause scandal, and militate against social justice, equity, and the dignity of the human person...' (CMW, 29). In the light of such a statement, no Catholic will be able to argue against the principle of "wars on poverty" at home or abroad.¹³

To summarize, we can say that the Council set itself against any cult of nationalism or similar phenomenon which would subordinate the good of the individual to the concerns of impersonal political and economic systems. The Council believes that the purpose of the social order (including social institutions themselves) is to bring to flower the individuality of each person instead of pre-judging him by preparing a standard mold into which he must fit.

It must be remembered, however, that institutions are themselves comprised of individuals. Somehow, then, if the institutions (and thus the whole social order) are to observe the Council's injunction that they serve the interests of individuals, individuals must, in turn, have some kind of responsibility of service to the construction and maintenance of institutions which are to serve them. The Council addressed itself to this issue, in article 30 of the Pastoral Constitution, in the following words:

¹³ Dr. John Joseph Murphy, "The Council and Economic Life", in The Church in the World, p. 104.

[It is] particularly urgent^{that} no one content himself with a merely individualistic morality [...] the obligations of justice and love are fulfilled only if each person, contributing to the common good, according to his own abilities and the needs of others, also promotes and assists the public and private institutions dedicated to bettering the conditions of human life.¹⁴

The "common good"--the criterion for each man's contribution to social institutions (themselves necessary because of the finitude of individual men), is defined previously in article 26 as "the sum of those conditions of social life which allow social groups and their individual members relatively thorough and ready access to their own fulfillment".¹⁵ The "common good", then, provides the criterion for both the individual's contribution and whatever social order may be necessary in order that, according to article 9 of this Constitution, humanity "increasingly consolidate its control over creation [...] and] establish a political, social, and economic order which will to an ever better extent serve man [...]"¹⁶

14 Vatican II, The Pastoral Constitution, art. 30, in Documents, p. 228.

15 Idem, ibid., art. 26, p. 225. The Latin text is from Schema Constitutionis Pastoralis, de Ecclesia in Mundo Huius Temporis, Textus et Correctiones Admissae necnon Expensio Modorum, Part I, Vatican City, Vatican Press, 1965, p. 23: "[...] Bonum commune--seu summam earum vitae socialis condicionum quae tum coetibus, tum singulis membris permittunt ut propriam perfectionem plenius atque expeditius consequantur [...]"

16 Idem, The Pastoral Constitution, art. 9, in Documents, p. 206.

Semmelroth provides a fitting conclusion to the above with the comment that "in our organized world, social commitment cannot be effective unless it takes concrete institutional form".¹⁷ This same emphasis on the social was pointed out in the Constitution when, in describing the correctly-ordered world, the Fathers substituted the phrase "a dwelling worthy of the whole human family" ("dignum universae familiae humanae habitaculum")¹⁸ in place of the phrase "a dwelling worthy of man" ("dignum hominis habitaculum").¹⁹ Personal service to society is, accordingly, in the Council's view, a necessary prerequisite for personal development.

Before this section on the Church's attitude regarding the temporal order in general is completed, two distinctions, drawn from the document itself, would be in order--the distinction between "growth of Christ's Kingdom" ("Regni Christi augmento") and "earthly progress" ("progressus terrenus"), and that between "earthly progress" and "better ordering of

17 Semmelroth, "The Community of Mankind", in Commentary, V, p. 177.

18 The Second Vatican Council, Schema Constitutionis Pastoralis de Ecclesia in Mundo Huius Temporis, Textus Recognitus et Relationes, Part II, Vatican City, Vatican Press, 1965, p. 24.

19 The Second Vatican Council, Constitutio Pastoralis de Ecclesia in Mundo Huius Temporis, Vatican City, Vatican Press, 1965, p. 53.

human society" ("societatem humanam melius ordinandam").²⁰

Article 39 of the Pastoral Constitution states that "Earthly progress must be carefully distinguished from the growth of Christ's kingdom. Nevertheless, to the extent that the former can contribute to the better ordering of human society, it is of vital concern to the Kingdom of God".²¹ What is especially significant here is that the seemingly general term "earthly progress" is considered in a narrow sense, as something distinct from "the better ordering of human society". What it seems to mean, then, is technological progress, control of physical resources, as distinct from human organization. Auer's commentary on this article points up the distinction by using the phrase "a better order of human society and material things"²² and by stating that the "transformed world" would involve both "the consummation of technical achievement" and "the fulfillment of socialization".²³ Joseph Ratzinger, in his book Theological Highlights of Vatican II, makes much the same point when,

20 Vatican II, The Pastoral Constitution, art. 39, in Documents, p. 237. The Latin text is from Schema Constitutionis Pastoralis, de Ecclesia in Mundo Huius Temporis, Textus et Correctiones Admissae necnon Expensio Modorum, Part I, p. 32.

21 Idem, ibid.

22 Auer, "Man's Activity Throughout the World", in Commentary, V, p. 198.

23 Idem, ibid., p. 197.

in commenting on the Pastoral Constitution, he says that "we must [...] honestly measure the distance between technological and human progress".²⁴

It is important to note that "earthly" (or technological) progress is not automatically linked with "growth of Christ's kingdom", whereas human progress is so linked. Human progress ("better ordering of human society") is of direct concern to the Kingdom, whereas "earthly" (or technological) progress becomes "of vital concern" only when it can be demonstrated that this kind of progress does indeed contribute to true human development as outlined by the Council.²⁵

One difficulty with the use of the word "earthly" to mean technological is that common usage usually gives the word "earthly" a broader meaning that includes both physical and social (or human) connotations. This is probably because we do not normally conceive of the earth in a context which excludes individual men and groups of men. This usage of the term by the Council is consistent, however, with the

²⁴ Joseph Ratzinger, Theological Highlights of Vatican II, New York, Deus, 1966, p. 158.

²⁵ Ratzinger reflects this insight and point of view when he states that "Technological service becomes Christian when it is motivated by a service which seeks to humanize man--that is, when it serves love. Then and only then does technological progress serve Christianity and only then is it really progress". (Ibid., p. 159-160).

reference, in article 57 of the Pastoral Constitution, to the divine command that men should "subdue the earth", which obviously separates the reality of earth from the reality of man. Use of the term "earthly", therefore, to refer to a reality separate from man is consistent, providing that you remain in context.

The distinction is, nevertheless, difficult to keep in mind, as evidenced by Auer, who, although he realized that article 39 distinguished technological progress from social progress, did not remember that "earthly" progress referred only to technological progress. As a result he equates the phrase "earthly progress" with "human activity", implies a definition of "earthly progress" that would include a better order of both human society and material things, and then draws conclusions that are not warranted by the text:

[...] a better order of human society and of material things has a real significance for the Kingdom of God. It removes obstacles, brings about a pattern of the world which creates better conditions for the coming of the kingdom [...] Of course the Pastoral Constitution rightly rejects any identification of earthly progress with the growth of the kingdom of God. Human activity in the world cannot directly achieve salvation or even transmit it. But it brings about the conditions which make it possible [...].²⁶

Auer reflects correctly that the Constitution "rejects any identification of earthly progress with the growth of the

²⁶ Auer, "Man's Activity Throughout the World", in Commentary, V, p. 198.

kingdom of God"; but he is incorrect when he equates "earthly progress" with "a better order of human society". The result is that he reduces human progress to the same importance as technological progress and, consequently, misses the Council's direct link of human social progress to the growth of the kingdom. The Constitution indicated that there was a necessary connection between "a better order of human society" (presuming the order is of the type they advocated in article 26) and "the growth of Christ's kingdom", whereas they do not believe that such a necessary connection exists between "earthly progress" and "the growth of Christ's kingdom".

B. Vatican II's Concept of the Church's Mission
in the Temporal Order

The concern expressed by the Council for "a better order of human society" prepares the way for an examination of its concept of the mission of the Church itself in the temporal order.

A very clear statement in this regard is found in the Decree on the Laity, where, in article 5, it speaks of one Church mission with two aspects:

Christ's redemptive work, while of itself directed toward the salvation of men, involves also the renewal of the whole temporal order. Hence the mission of the Church is not only to bring to men the message and grace of Christ, but also to penetrate and perfect the temporal sphere with the spirit of the gospel.²⁷

It is very clear at this point that, based upon "Christ's redemptive work", the Church has one mission which involves both evangelization and temporal renewal. Therefore it would be better, in this context, to speak of the two works, or tasks, of mission, rather than of two missions. The temporal aspect of the mission is also mentioned in the "Decree on the Church's Missionary Activity" (Ad Gentes), article 12, in the following words: "Christ [cured] every kind of disease and infirmity as a sign that the kingdom of God had come. So also the Church, through her children [...] gladly spends herself."²⁸ This aspect is also mentioned in article 3 of the "Declaration on Christian Education" (Gravissimum Educationis), this time specifically in the context of the before-mentioned purpose of the temporal order: "The Church

²⁷ Vatican II, Decree on the Laity, art. 5, in Documents, p. 495. The Latin text is from Schema Decreti de Apostolatu Laicorum, Textus Recognitus et Modi, p. 43: "Opus redemptionis Christi, dum homines salvandos de se spectat, totius quoque ordinis temporalis instaurationem complectitur. Unde Ecclesiae missio non solum est nuntium Christi et gratiam eius hominibus afferre, sed et spiritu evangelico rerum temporalium ordinem perfundere et perficere."

²⁸ Vatican II, "Decree on the Church's Missionary Activity", art. 12, in Documents, p. 598.

[...] offers her services to all peoples by way of promoting the full development of the human person, for the welfare of earthly society and the building of a world fashioned more humanly."²⁹

It has been shown, to this point, that the Council believes that the Church does indeed have an obligation to "penetrate and perfect the temporal sphere". The next question relates to how this is to be carried out. Article 42 of the Pastoral Constitution appears to qualify the seemingly clear mandate to "perfect the temporal sphere" by stating that, in fact, the Church has "no proper mission in the political, economic, or social order [... but] can and indeed should initiate activities on behalf of all men [...]"³⁰ This indication that there are different aspects to the work of temporal renewal is reinforced by the distinction, in article 19 of the Decree on the Laity, between efforts "to infuse a Christian spirit into the temporal order" and "works of mercy and charity".³¹ Ferdinand Klostermann emphasizes this distinction when, in his commentary on this decree, he

²⁹ Vatican II, "Declaration on Christian Education", art. 3, in Documents, p. 642.

³⁰ Idem, The Pastoral Constitution, art. 42, in Documents, p. 341.

³¹ Idem, Decree on the Laity, art. 19, in Documents, p. 509.

contrasts "temporal activities" and "social and charitable works"³² and states that charitable works are among those "which do not follow purely temporal aims".³³ These two references seem to clarify his use, in the introduction, of the phrase "social or temporal activities".³⁴

It would seem important now to look into the background of this distinction so that a precise understanding of the nature of the Church's action and, specifically, social action can ultimately be obtained.

The 1963 schema of the Decree on the Laity clearly distinguished "charitable action" and "temporal action", as is evident in the headings "Concerning the Apostolate of the Laity in Charitable Action" (De Apostolatu Laicorum in Actione Caritativa)³⁵ and "Concerning the Apostolate of the Laity in Temporal Action" (De Apostolatu Laicorum in Actione Temporalis).³⁶ It is significant to note that the sole reference to social action in this document occurs within the

32 Ferdinand Klostermann, "Decree on the Apostolate of the Laity", in Commentary on the Documents of Vatican II, Vol. III, edited by Herbert Vorgrimmler, Freiburg, Herder, 1969, p. 390.

33 Idem, ibid., p. 378.

34 Idem, ibid., p. 305.

35 The Second Vatican Council, Schema Decreti de Apostolatu Laicorum, Vatican City, Vatican Press, 1963, p. 37.

36 Idem, ibid., p. 43.

section on "temporal action".³⁷

As regards "charitable action", the meaning of the term is illumined considerably by a lengthy statement in the section on "the Apostolate of the Laity in Charitable Action" entitled, "The Dignity and Necessity of Charity and Justice":

Since both those who, in the presumption that the legal system is perfect, consider that charity is superfluous and those who extol charitable action while neglecting justice are equally distant from christian doctrine, the most holy Council advises all christians to recognize and foster the dignity and necessity of each virtue and the unbreakable bond between them in the human ordering of affairs. Therefore, lest charity neglect justice, the Council, promoting ceaselessly the purity, integrity, and perfection of justice and perceiving, according to the precept of the Lord, that in another person there is another self and even Christ himself, emphasizes that which pertains to justice in the charitable action itself.³⁸

The point here seems to be that there is an "unbreakable bond" between charity and justice, and that what can be separated

37 The Second Vatican Council, Schema Decreti de Apostolatu Laicorum, p. 43.

38 Idem, ibid., p. 34-35: Cum a christiana doctrina non minus alieni sint qui, perfectione ordinis juris supposita, caritatem superfluam reddere autumant, quam alii, qui actionem caritativam, neglecta iustitia, extollunt, Sacrosanctum Concilium omnes christifideles admonet, ut utriusque virtutis et dignitatem et necessitatem et earum in rebus humanis ordinandis indissociabilem conjunctionem agnoscant et foveant. Ideo ne caritas iustitiam negligat, in ipsa actione caritativa quidquid iustitiae est, e contrario urget, indesinenter puritatem, integritatem, perfectionem iustitiae promovens, in altero homine alterum ego secundum praeceptum Domini et etiam ipsum Christum respiciens.

theoretically cannot be separated in practice--at least not from the viewpoint of justice. What is owed in justice is owed in charity also. However charity is more than justice, as is evidenced in the phrase "that which pertains to justice in the charitable action itself". It seems that in this case "charitable action" or "charity" refers to action motivated by basic Christian charity, which action can either be required by justice also or not.

The 1964 schema was pared down to one-third the size of the previous one, and in the process the authors omitted the reference to social action mentioned above and shortened considerably their treatment of the relationship between justice and charity. What remained was: "In order that the works of charity receive a genuine apostolic force, let the laity [...] emphasize there whatever pertains to justice, thus ceaselessly promoting the integrity of justice."³⁹ This document also replaced the two headings, distinguishing "temporal" and "charitable" action, with the general "Goals to be Achieved" (De Finibus Assequendis).⁴⁰ The result was a de-emphasis of the distinction between "temporal action"

39 The Second Vatican Council, Schema Decreti de Apostolatu Laicorum, Vatican City, Vatican Press, 1964, p. 12-13: "Ut opera caritatis germanam vim apostolicam accipiant, laici [...] quidquid justitiae est, urgeant, indesinenter integritatem ejusdem promoventes; [...]"

40 Idem, ibid.

(and thus also "social action") and "charitable action" and an added emphasis, therefore, on the inclusive nature of "charity".

Up to this point the distinction between "temporal" and "charitable" action is not clear because justice and charity are not distinguished in the concrete. Consequently, the meaning of "social action" (which is part of "temporal action") is also unclear.

The first schema of 1965 contained a significant development in the treatment of justice and charity. For the first time justice was distinguished from charity in the practical order: "Let the needs of justice be satisfied first, lest what is owed in justice be offered as gifts of charity; let the causes of evil, not only its effects, be removed."⁴¹ It is significant that an evolution in terminology has occurred regarding that manifestation of basic Christian charity which is not also required by justice. In the 1963 schema, it was simply included, along with works of justice, in the general "charity" or "charitable action"; in 1964 it was included in the general "works of charity"; but in 1965 it was called specifically "gifts of charity" and

41 The Second Vatican Council, Schema Decreti De Apostolatu Laicorum, Vatican City, Vatican Press, 1965, p. 25: "Exigentiis justitiae praeprimis satisfiat, ne tamquam caritatis dona offerantur quae justitiae titulo jam debentur; causae malorum, non solum effectus, tollantur;".

was clearly distinguished from justice which was that which "is owed". We have now a clear distinction between justice and charity in the practical order. Actions which are not required by justice are no longer simply included in the general term "charity" or "charitable action" or "works of charity", but are distinguished from these and set outside the bounds of justice by being expressed as "gifts of charity". The single word "charity" is then to be used to express that basic Christian charity which underlies all Christian actions, whether or not they are also required by justice. This was made explicit in the second of the two 1965 schemata, which contained a record of the suggestions (modi) made concerning the text. The pertinent modus concerned the words, "Let the needs of justice first be satisfied, lest what is owed in justice be offered as gifts of charity". One Father wished to replace "gifts of charity" with "gifts of mercy" (alms), and twenty-four others simply wanted to delete the word "charity". The answer was simply: "The text remains; charity is distinguished from 'charitable gifts'."⁴²

42 Vatican II, Schema Decreti De Apostolatu Laicorum, Textus Recognitus et Modi, p. 58: "93--Pag. 25, lin. 36: Loco 'tamquam caritatis' dicatur: 'tamquam elemosynae dona.' (1 Pater). Verbum 'caritatis' deleatur. (24 Patres)
"R.--Textus maneat: caritas a donis caritativis distinguitur."

Although the term "temporal action" does not reappear in the documents, the term "social action" does, and it is placed in the context of justice.⁴³ This is made clear when, after one Father asked in a modus that the text containing "social action" be taken from article 7 and placed in article 8, he was refused with the words: "Number eight speaks of Charitable Action."⁴⁴

It is also notable that the term "charitable action" underwent a change in meaning. In 1963 it meant both basic Christian charity and "charitable gifts", while in 1965 basic Christian charity is "charity", and "charitable action" (as noted above) refers to "charitable gifts".

A similar change occurred in the case of the term "works of charity". In 1964 this meant works of basic Christian charity--whether required by law or not. In 1965, though, it meant only "charitable gifts". In the final documents, then, "charitable action", "works of charity", and "charitable gifts" are synonymous.

A final comment would be appropriate. For the first time, descriptions of "justice" and "charitable gifts" were

⁴³ Vatican II, Decree on the Laity, art. 7, in Documents, p. 498.

⁴⁴ Idem, Schema Decreti de Apostolatu Laicorum, Textus Recognitus et Modi, 1965, p. 57: "66--Pag. 24, linn. 1-4: [...] (a) Textus in initio n. 8 ponatur (1 Pater). [...]
R.--[...] (a) N. 8 loquitur de Actione Caritativa."

provided in the context of cause and effect. "What is owed in justice" is related to the removal of "the causes of evil" and "gifts of charity" are related to the removal of "its effects".

It is now possible to explain the distinctions concerning the apostolate of renewal of the temporal order which were mentioned above--namely the contrast between such terms as "efforts to infuse a Christian spirit into the temporal order", "temporal activities", and "works which follow purely temporal aims", and terms like "works of mercy and charity", "social and charitable works", and "charitable works". Because of its contrast to "charitable works" and its previous relationship to "social action", it can be reasoned that "temporal activities" refers specifically to justice and the attempt to remove the causes of evils. This is the case, however, only when there is specific mention of justice or contrast with "charitable works". In contrast with the religious order, however, temporal renewal maintains both justice and "charitable works" aspects.

In summary it can be concluded that there is one mission with two aspects, one a religious aspect pertaining to evangelization and another a temporal aspect pertaining to the renewal of the temporal order. The renewal of the temporal order, furthermore, includes two distinctive activities--"works of charity" which are not required by law and

deal with the effects of evils, and "temporal activities" (including "social action") which pertain to justice and deal with the causes of evils.

Although the above conclusions can be reached by the systematic analysis of the Council documents, they are only implicit in these documents and hence were not always grasped, as the following two examples will indicate.

Claude Leetham, a member of the Commission on the Lay Apostolate during Vatican II, made the following comment concerning article 8 of the Decree on the Laity:

Charitable activity in performing works of mercy has a special place (8). The logical French pointed out that all Christian activity was based on charity, that the apostolate was only two-fold and that our statement about works of mercy confused the issue.⁴⁵

This indicates that the distinction between basic Christian charity ("charity") and "works of charity" ("works of mercy") was not sufficiently explicit.

Ferdinand Klostermann, in his commentary on the Decree on the Laity, considers the separate treatment of "the renewal of the temporal order" and "works of charity":

⁴⁵ Claude Leetham, "Decree on the Apostolate of the Laity", in Homiletic and Pastoral Review, Vol. 66, No. 5, February 1966, p. 392.

Article 8. This article is really an appendix and all that is left of what was once part 3 "On the Apostolate of the Laity in Charitable Works" [...] several fathers attempted to have the chapter divided into two sections to correspond to the two goals of the apostolate described in Articles 6 and 7. This had already been attempted in vain in the Commission itself. The Commission wished to retain the three-fold division, as the relatio remarked, "on purely practical and conventional grounds".⁴⁶

The fact that the separation of "temporal activities" and "works of charity" was made "on purely practical and conventional grounds" shows that the theoretical distinctions were not explicit.

In the light of these distinctions, it is important to examine that which is explicitly called "Church" action in the renewal of the temporal order in order to determine just what is involved and how it relates to the distinction between works of justice and "works of charity".

The text which explicitly deals with the activity of the "Church" in the temporal order is found, as mentioned above, in article 42 of the "Pastoral Constitution On the Church in the Modern World" (Gaudium et Spes). The complete text is as follows:

⁴⁶ Klostermann, "Decree on the Apostolate of the Laity", in Commentary, III, p. 332.

Christ, to be sure, gave this Church no proper mission in the political, economic, or social order. The purpose which he set before her is a religious one. But out of this religious mission itself come a function, a light, and an energy which can serve to structure and consolidate the human community according to the divine law. As a matter of fact, when circumstances of time and place create the need, she can and indeed should initiate activities on behalf of all men. This is particularly true of activities designed for the needy, such as the works of mercy and similar undertakings.⁴⁷

The Council's position seems to be that the "Church" does not have a "proper" mission in the temporal order, but that it does have the ability and obligation (described in terms of "function", "light", and "energy") to "structure and consolidate the human community according to the divine law". This ability and obligation is explained in the context of the initiation and not the maintenance of activities (and, therefore, institutions).

These activities are described as "particularly [...] activities designed for the needy, such as the works of mercy and similar undertakings", and thus seem to be in

47 Vatican II, The Pastoral Constitution, art, 42, in Documents, p. 241. The Latin text is from Schema Constitutionis Pastoralis, de Ecclesia in Mundo Huius Temporis, Textus Correctiones Admissae necnon Expensio Modorum, Part I, p. 36: "Missio quidem propiora, quam Christus Ecclesiae suae concredidit, non est ordinis politici, oeconomici vel socialis: finis enim quem ei praefixit ordinis religiosi est. At sane ex hac ipsa missione religiosa minus, lux et vires fluunt quae communitati hominum secundum Legem divinam constituendae et firmandae inservire possunt. Item, ubi opus fuerit, secundum tempora et locorum circumstantias, et ipsa suscitare potest, immo et debet opera in servitium omnium, praesertim vero gentium destinata, uti opera misericordiae vel alia huiusmodi."

the category of "works of charity", as opposed to works of justice. This indication is reinforced by article 8 of the "Decree on the Apostolate of the Laity" (Apostolicam Actuositatem):

[...] while she rejoices in the undertakings of others, she [the Church] claims works of charity as her own inalienable duty and right. For this reason, pity for the needy and the sick, and works of charity and mutual aid intended to relieve human needs of every kind are held in special honor by the Church.⁴⁸

The article continues, describing the extensive nature of these "works of mercy" "intended to relieve human needs of every kind":

At the present time [...] these actions have grown much more urgent and extensive. These charitable enterprises can and should reach out to absolutely every person and every need. Wherever there are people in need of food and drink, clothing, housing, medicine, employment, education; wherever men lack the facilities necessary for living a truly human life or are tormented by hardships or poor health, or suffer exile or imprisonment, there Christian charity would seek them out and find them, console them with eager care and relieve them with the gift of help.⁴⁹

The fact that when "Church" renewal activities are actually described, they are restricted to "works of charity" which only "relieve" the effects of evil, seems to stand in contradistinction to the more general statements the Council made about the Church's task of renewal. For example the

⁴⁸ Vatican II, Decree on the Laity, art. 8, in Documents, p. 499.

⁴⁹ Idem, ibid.

Council began the Pastoral Constitution with this pledge of complete solidarity:

1. The joys and the hopes, the griefs and the anxieties of the men of this age, especially those who are poor or in any way afflicted, these too are the joys and hopes, the griefs and anxieties of the followers of Christ. [...] That is why this community realizes that it is truly and intimately linked with mankind and its history.⁵⁰

The Council followed this with the statement, in article 42 (as mentioned above), that the Church has the ability and obligation to help actually "structure and consolidate the human community". This and the statement in article 5 of the Decree on the Laity (also mentioned) that the Church has the task to "penetrate and perfect the temporal sphere" seem to oblige the Church to do more than simply "relieve" effects of evils.

Nevertheless, the explicit description of "Church" action as "works of charity" which are "initiatory" (suscitare) seems to indicate that the Church's task is at least this: her task of proclaiming the Gospel is a religious task (insofar as it transcends the limitations of time, place, and national allegiance in presenting the saving message of Jesus); but because of the message's practical implications for the temporal order, the proclamation will involve practical demonstrations of these implications. Since the commission to

⁵⁰ Vatican II, The Pastoral Constitution, art. 1, in Documents, p. 199-200.

proclaim the Gospel presumes that those to whom it is to be proclaimed have not yet accepted it, the practical corollary to verbal proclamation will involve types of service which are not yet part of the established temporal order. This seems to be what the Council had in mind when they stated that "when circumstances of time and place create the need, she can and indeed should initiate activities on behalf of all men".

C. Vatican II's Concept of the Term "Social Action"

It would be appropriate now to examine the precise meaning of the term "social action", which belongs, as was noted, among the "temporal activities" that promote what is owed in justice. As has also been noted, "social action" is only mentioned in article 7 of the Decree on the Laity.

A brief background to this section is provided by Ferdinand Klostermann in⁵¹ his commentary on the Decree on the Laity:

Christian social action is especially singled out for mention in "this type of apostolate", an action which it is hoped will be extended to the whole cultural sphere. This passage is almost all that remains of what was once the fourth part of the Decree on the Apostolate of the Laity in Social Action, which, in the edition of 1962, filled as many as 48 pages. The rest of it is now to be found in the Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World.⁵¹

⁵¹ Klostermann, "The Decree on the Apostolate of the Laity", in Commentary, III, p. 331.

Since there was such a drastic reduction of material dealing explicitly with "social action", it is necessary to examine the schemata for more precise information.

In the 1963 schema social action is mentioned in the following manner: "In our age there is a particular importance and necessity for social action, proper to which is the correct administration of legitimate temporal goods according to higher spiritual goods."⁵² Along with the fact that social action appeared, as was mentioned, in the section on temporal action, the fact that it was placed in the context of "the correct administration of legitimate temporal goods" puts it here in the area of justice and thus distinguishes it from "works of charity". It was not yet explicitly related to justice, however.

There was no mention of social action in the 1964 schema, since the section on temporal action was eliminated and justice was still treated under "works of charity".

In 1965 the term "social action" reappeared, in the context of the obligation to "seek the justice characteristic of God's kingdom" (as was mentioned), in the following words, without any accompanying description or definition:

⁵² Vatican II, Schema Decreti de Apostolatu Laicorum, 1963, p. 43: "Nostris temporibus peculiare momentum et necessitatem obtinet actio socialis, cui proprium est legitima bona temporalia curare in ordine ad superiora bona spiritualia."

"Among the works of this kind of apostolate there stands out the social action of christians, which we desire to extend^d daily to the whole temporal order, especially culture."⁵³ The final text (as mentioned on p. 1) was substantially the same.

What is especially significant is that the Modi contained what can serve as a very specific indication of the Council's meaning of the term "social action". One of the Fathers wished to have the term clarified by adding, in the text, the words, "by which is intended the renewal of the social and economic order, founded on those principles which the great encyclicals clearly expounded". The response was to the effect that this accompanying definition was unnecessary because "The whole schema supposes this".⁵⁴ This definition clearly places social action in the category of those actions concerned with the causes of evils. Its situation in article 7, distinct from article 8 which treats of "works of charity", reinforces the conclusion that by the term "social

53 Vatican II, Schema Decreti de Apostolatu Laicorum, 1965, p. 24: "Inter opera huiusmodi apostolatus eminet actio socialis christianorum, quam hodie ad totam provinciam temporalem, praesertim ad ingenii cultum, extendere cupimus."

54 Idem, ibid., p. 57: "67--Pag. 24, lin. 2: Post actio socialis addatur: 'qua intenditur instauratio ordinis socialis et oeconomici, in illis principiis fundati quae lucuenter magnae encyclicae exposuerunt.' (1 Pater)
"R.--Totum schema hoc supponit."

action", the Council meant action related to law, justice, and the causes of evils.

It has been established, to this point, that the Council believed that there is a relationship between "a better order of human society" and "the growth of Christ's Kingdom", that the Church itself has an obligation to help "structure and consolidate the human community", that this help will surely take the form of initiatory "charitable action" and somehow involve "social action". The apparent ambiguity concerning the place of social action in the Church's mission leads now to further discussion of the several problem areas related to the Church's mission in the temporal order.

2. Problems Concerning Vatican II's Position on the Church's Mission in the Temporal Order

The problems involved concern the Council's varied use of the term "Church" and the ramifications this has for the roles of Church members. A precise understanding of the Council's concept of "social action" depends on resolution of these problems.

A. Variations in the Concept of the Church

Article 42 of the Pastoral Constitution introduces the idea that the Church's mission can be distinguished as to its "proper mission" and its consequent "works of charity".

Article 76 indicates that, since these "works of charity" are not part of the "proper sphere" of the Church, they belong properly to the "political community": "In their proper spheres, the political community and the Church are mutually independent and autonomous."⁵⁵ Article 76 also observes that "The role and competence of the Church being what it is, it must in no way be confused with the political community or bound to any political system".⁵⁶ This would seem to raise a difficulty concerning the Church's "works of charity" being "her own inalienable duty and right" (Laity, art. 8). This difficulty is resolved, however, when it is pointed out that these "works of charity" are to be initiatory works undertaken on behalf of the "proper" task of evangelization when "the political community" has not sufficiently carried out its "proper" task--i.e. "when circumstances of time and place create the need" (CMW, art. 42). A much greater difficulty arises, however, when it is remembered that the Church also has the mandate to "penetrate and perfect the temporal sphere" (Laity, art. 5) and "structure and consolidate the human community" (CMW, art. 42). This seems to give to the Church a responsibility in the proper sphere of the political community

⁵⁵ Vatican II, The Pastoral Constitution, art. 76, in Documents, p. 288.

⁵⁶ Idem, ibid., p. 287.

in such a way that, unlike the undertaking of "works of charity", the "role and competence of the Church" could actually be "confused with the political community".

Treatment of this problem will begin with the distinction between Church service and Church "witness" to Christ. This distinction is clearly made in the text of modus 165 to the Decree on the Laity:

[...] that love [...] 'which comes from God' [...] must first be shown in one's own circle, in the brotherly community around Jesus [...] Such Christian brotherhood [...] which is active in positive assistance 'in every need' [...] is a preliminary condition for trustworthy witness; only in this way can men lead others to Christ.⁵⁷

"Works of charity" serve, then, the goal of evangelization. Article 15 of the "Decree on the Church's Missionary Activity" (Ad Gentes) makes a similar distinction between evangelization and the "apostolate of good example":

It is not enough for the Christian people to be present and organized in a given nation. Nor is it enough for them to carry out an apostolate of good example. They are organized and present for the purpose of announcing Christ to their non-Christian fellow-citizens by word and deed, and of aiding them toward the full reception of Christ.⁵⁸

The above statements merely reinforce what was presented in article 42 of the Pastoral Constitution concerning the "proper"

⁵⁷ Vatican II, Schema Decreti de Apostolatu Laicorum, Textus Recognitus et Modi, 1965, p. 38.

⁵⁸ Idem, Decree on the Missions, art. 15, in Documents, p. 603.

religious task and the task of "charitable action" that came out of this. There is no mention, however, of the works of justice (the "temporal activities" dealing with the causes of evil) that are also part of the task of renewal of the temporal order.

Although these activities are not mentioned in the context of the Church in general, they are mentioned in the context of "the laity":

(1) "Now the laity are called in a special way to make the Church present and operative [...] where only through them can she become the salt of the earth" (Church, art. 33).⁵⁹

(2) "In fulfilling this mission of the Church, the laity, therefore, exercise their apostolate both in the Church and in the world, in both the spiritual and the temporal orders" (Laity, art. 5).⁶⁰

(3) "The laity must take on the renewal of the temporal order as their own special obligation" (Laity, art. 7).⁶¹

(4) "[...] the effort to infuse a Christian spirit into the [...] structures of the community is so much the duty and responsibility of the laity that it can never be properly

59 The Second Vatican Council, "Dogmatic Constitution on the Church", art. 33, in Documents, p. 59.

60 Vatican II, Decree on the Laity, art. 5, in Documents, p. 495.

61 Idem, ibid., art. 7, p. 498.

performed by others" (Laity, art. 13).⁶²

(5) "Let associations and groups be organized through which the lay apostolate will be able to permeate the whole of society with the spirit of the gospel" (Missions, art. 15).⁶³

(6) "There is a great variety of associations in the [lay] apostolate. [...] Some propose to infuse a Christian spirit into the temporal order" (Laity, art. 19).⁶⁴

(7) "[...] it is up to them [laymen], imbued with the spirit of Christ, to be a leaven animating temporal affairs from within, disposing them always to become as Christ would wish them" (Missions, art. 15).⁶⁵

(8) "The laity must strive by their civic and apostolic activity to set up a public order based on love and justice" (Missions, art. 19).⁶⁶

(9) "The laity [...] exercise a genuine apostolate by their activity on behalf of [...] penetrating and perfecting the temporal sphere of things through the spirit of the

⁶² Vatican II, Decree on the Laity, art. 13, in Documents, p. 504.

⁶³ Idem, Decree on the Missions, art. 15, in Documents, p. 602.

⁶⁴ Idem, Decree on the Laity, art. 19, in Documents, p. 509.

⁶⁵ Idem, Decree on the Missions, art. 15, in Documents, p. 603.

⁶⁶ Idem, ibid., art. 19, p. 608.

gospel". (Laity, art. 2).⁶⁷

(10) "Let them [laity] work to see that created goods are more fittingly distributed among men, and that such goods in their own way lead to general progress in human and Christian liberty. [...]

"Moreover, let the laity also by their combined efforts remedy any institutions and conditions of the world which are customarily an inducement to sin, so that all such things may be conformed to the norms of justice and may favor the practice of virtue rather than hinder it" (Church, art. 36).⁶⁸

A comment on this topic by a different author might help to emphasize the point. John Courtney Murray, for example, reinforced what is shown above when he spoke of "the doctrine" of the Decree on the Laity that considers the laity as "the proper agent for the accomplishment of the mission of the Church in the temporal order".⁶⁹

It may now be asked whether the Council wished to indicate, by its contrast of "Church" and "laity", that "temporal activities" are, in fact, not activities of the "Church".

⁶⁷ Vatican II, Decree on the Laity, art. 2, in Documents, p. 491.

⁶⁸ Idem, Dogmatic Constitution, art. 36, in Documents, p. 63.

⁶⁹ Murray, Op. Cit., p. 50.

The fact that the Council did include "the renewal of the temporal order" as part of the mission of the "Church" is an indication that what is involved is not exclusion of "temporal activities" from the "Church", but the introduction of a sort of juridical/non-juridical (official/unofficial) distinction into the concept of "Church".

Klostermann seems to indicate that this is in fact the case when he states that the laity carry out their temporal activity as "Church" but "not in the name of the Church",⁷⁰ and assigns "purely temporal aims" to "inofficial ecclesiastical organizations".⁷¹ In doing this he maintains the integrity of the Church's mission while making the distinction that there is an aspect of the Church's activity which is juridically (properly) distinct from that of "the political community". It is clear, at this point, that the attempt to order the political, economic, or social systems correctly is a task given to the Church in common with all other institutions; and, therefore, although it is not the distinctive (proper, juridical) part of its mission, it is an essential part.

Klostermann bases his use of the term "inofficial ecclesiastical organizations" on the thinking of the Council. He

⁷⁰ Klostermann, "Decree on the Apostolate of the Laity", in Commentary, III, p. 365.

⁷¹ Idem, ibid., p. 378.

first notes that the Council documents give "this type of organization the expression societates laicae [lay societies] which is immediately defined further as id est non ecclesiasticae [which are not ecclesiastical]".⁷² He goes on to comment that this "nomenclature gives rise to certain difficulties"⁷³ because, he adds farther on, "this name no longer corresponds to Vatican II's concept of the Church".⁷⁴ He develops this theme at greater length:

In view of the broad concept of the apostolate used by Vatican II, according to which the Christian influence upon the temporal order is considered to be an apostolate and part of the mission of the Church in the world (cf. Arts. 2,5,7,19), one must be able to designate such groups and works as being in a certain sense "ecclesiastical," though in an unofficial manner.⁷⁵

He then completes his treatment by referring to the discussion that went on about it among the Council Fathers:

The words "in ecclesia" at the beginning of this section [art. 24] indicate the "ecclesi^{ast}astical" character of such works; indeed, when one modus wished to have the phrase "in the Church" eliminated because "it had no juridical status in the Church," the commission answered that they can be "in the Church without special juridical status" (Textus recogn. et modi, 118, modus 22).⁷⁶

72 Klostermann, Op. Cit., p. 374.

73 Idem, ibid.

74 Idem, ibid.

75 Idem, ibid.

76 Idem, ibid.

The phrase "in the Church without special juridical status" does, indeed seem to indicate the reality of a non-juridical aspect of the Church and its mission. Article 24 seems to make explicit the place of "temporal activities". These activities are placed "in the Church" (as noted by Klostermann): "For in the Church there are many apostolic undertakings which are established by the free choice of the laity [...]"⁷⁷ The fact that certain activities can be considered "in the Church" but "without special juridical status" is mentioned in the following way in the same article: "Depending on its various forms and goals, the lay apostolate admits of different types of relationships with the hierarchy."⁷⁸ Although these activities are considered "in the Church", it is made clear that they are distinct from juridical or official activities: "No project, however may claim the name "Catholic" unless it has obtained the consent of the lawful Church authority."⁷⁹

Additional evidence for placing the "lay apostolate" activities (concerning the temporal order) "in the Church" is found in article 18 of the Decree on the Laity: "The group apostolate of Christian believers [...] signifies the communion

⁷⁷ Vatican II, Decree on the Laity, art. 24, in Documents, p. 513.

⁷⁸ Idem, ibid.

⁷⁹ Idem, ibid.

and unity of the Church in Christ, who said, 'Where two or three are gathered together for my sake, there am I in the midst of them' (Mt. 18:20)."⁸⁰ Klostermann refers to this article when he stresses the importance of the lay apostolate "practiced in community [...] because the Church is a community Church, especially as is revealed in such expressions for the Church as People of God (Church, chapter II) and Body of Christ".⁸¹ He then concludes his comments with the words:

[...] after the Council one should perhaps distinguish between different activities of the members of the Church: the official Church activity which the faithful "perform in the name of the Church in co-operation with their pastor" [and] the unofficial Church activity which the faithful perform as members of the Church and at the same time as "citizens of the world who are nevertheless guided by their Christian consciences" (Church Today, n. 76).⁸²

It is appropriate at this time to extend the examination of the juridical and non-juridical aspects of the Church's mission in the temporal order.

First, consideration will be given to the juridical task of "works of charity". The task of initiating "works of mercy and similar undertakings" is^s outlined only in article 42 of the Pastoral Constitution. It seems significant that there was no gradual evolution of thought regarding this passage.

⁸⁰ Vatican II, Decree on the Laity, art. 18, in Documents, p. 508.

⁸¹ Klostermann, Op. Cit., p. 349.

⁸² Idem, ibid., p. 313.

The concept of a juridical initiatory function was simply missing from all except the last of the schemata of the Pastoral Constitution. It is also significant that there were no objections of any kind when the idea was included at the request of twenty-six Council Fathers who felt that it was essential to the mission of the Church ("agitur de ipsa missione Ecclesia") and necessary to explain the Church's works of mercy ("Opera misericordiae non omittenda sunt").⁸³

It is also important to mention that although the Decree on the Laity devoted an entire article (article 8) to "the works of mercy and charity" after having dealt with the "renewal of the temporal order" in article 7, the Council Fathers did not wish to state, or even imply, that there was an apostolate of "charitable action" distinct from the apostolate of the Christian renewal of the temporal order. This is clear from a particular change that was made in the wording of article 8 and the modus that brought about the change. The original text included the following statement: "We make special mention of these works not because they are different from the above-mentioned two types of the apostolate, but because they give to each type the singular mark of

⁸³ Vatican II, Schema Constitutionis Pastoralis de Ecclesia in Mundo Huius Temporis, Textus et Correctiones Admissae necnon Expensio Modorum, Part I, p. 238.

Christ."⁸⁴ The modus by ^fgive Fathers made this request:

Let [these lines] be deleted because the impression is given from these words that "charitable action" surpasses or perfects the apostolate of the Christian renewal of the temporal order [...]⁸⁵

The lines were consequently deleted, making it clear that juridical "charitable action" is part of the Church's mission in the temporal order, and not a separate reality.

Another aspect of the Church's mission in the temporal order is the non-juridical task called "temporal action". Some commentators make significant contributions toward the understanding of the Council's attitude in this regard. Hebblethwaite, for example, asserts that the reason why the Council states that "Christians have to try to ensure that the structures of society themselves reflect justice and charity" is that it believed that "for the Christian, neglect of his temporal duties is neglect of his duties toward God himself".⁸⁶ He adds that this is true because "The history

84 Vatican II, Schema Decreti de Apostolatu Laicorum, 1965, p. 24: "De his specialem facimus mentionem, non quia sunt diversum quiddam a praedictis duabus speciebus apostolatus, sed quia utrique singulare Christi sigillum adjiciunt."

85 Idem, Schema Decreti de Apostolatu Laicorum, Textus Recognitus et Modi, p. 58: "Deleantur, quia ex his verbis datur impressio quod 'actio caritativa' superat vel perficit apostolatum in ordine rerum temporalium Christianae instaurando [...]"

86 Peter Hebblethwaite, "The Relevance of Schema 13", in The Month, Vol. 34, No. 11, November 1965, p. 278.

of mankind is closely linked with the history of salvation; and in the present and final economy, the order of redemption includes the order of creation".⁸⁷ Congar notes "the extreme care with which any separation of religious life from earthly duties is avoided";⁸⁸ and Tucci makes this comment:

[The] aim which inspires the whole Pastoral Constitution [is] the desire to show that man's heavenly vocation does not turn him from his duty of sharing in the construction of a more human world, but adds new and deeper force to that compelling motive by incorporating it in a wider view of the destinies of mankind.⁸⁹

Semmelroth draws out the practical consequences of this attitude in his statement:

[...] taxes and similar contributions without which society cannot fulfill its purpose, regulations for safeguarding health and the life of all, among which even the Highway Code may be included, are expressly raised from a purely secular perspective into a religious moral obligation.⁹⁰

To summarize this section, the Church, according to the Council, has a mission as the People of God in both the religious and temporal spheres, but as a juridical institution primarily in the religious sphere, although this also involves

87 Hebblethwaite, Op. Cit.

88 Yves Congar, "The Role of the Church in the Modern World", in Commentary, V, p. 218.

89 Roberto Tucci, "The Proper Development of Culture", in Commentary, V, p. 262.

90 Semmelroth, "The Community of Mankind", in Commentary, V, p. 178.

demonstrative (initiatory) "charitable works" as part of evangelization. The mission of the Church is coextensive with a Christian's whole life, but the juridical aspect is limited to those activities which are distinctive of the Christian Church--proclaiming the message of Christ and demonstrating its practical ramifications. Attempts to have these practical ramifications accepted as part of "the political community" is a task which the Church shares with all men and, therefore, is not its distinctive (proper, juridical) task. The juridical aspect of the Church includes, then, involvement in the renewal of the temporal order in the form of works (charitable works) which are demonstrative and initiatory and do not directly contribute to the process of perfecting and permeating the temporal order. Because of this, the Church's juridical activities can be said to be her own where she is autonomous. The direct involvement in the political process which necessarily follows upon acceptance of the practical ramifications of the message is also included in the mission of the Christian community (Church), but in this they are under the jurisdiction of the "political community" and hence this is non-juridical activity of the Church. "Social action" falls into this category of activity, according to Vatican II.

B. Variations in the Concept of Roles

Distinctions regarding the types of Church activities lead necessarily to distinctions regarding the roles of Church members in these activities. The Council made a number of statements that relate to the roles of Church members in the temporal aspect of the Church's mission, and it is these statements which must now be examined.

First, let it be noted that it seems obvious at this time that everything which is to be said about Christian roles must be qualified by the following statements from the "Dogmatic Constitution on the Church" (Lumen Gentium) concerning the dignity of Christian vocations:

(1) Article ⁴⁰~~11~~--"All the faithful, whatever their condition or state, are called by the Lord, each in his own way, to that perfect holiness whereby the Father himself is perfect."⁹¹

(2) Article 32--"[All] in the Church [...] share a true equality with regard to the dignity and the activity common to all the faithful for the building up of the Body of Christ."⁹²

⁹¹ Vatican II, The Dogmatic Constitution, art. ⁴⁰~~11~~, in Documents, p. ²⁹~~29~~.
₆₇

⁹² Idem, ibid., art. 32, p. 58.

Also, article 21 of the "Decree on the Church's Missionary Activity" (Ad Gentes) seems to state very clearly that the mission of the Church requires non-hierarchical activity:

The Church has not yet been truly established, and is not yet truly alive, nor is it a perfect sign of Christ among men, unless there exists a laity worthy of the name working along with the hierarchy. For the gospel cannot be deeply imprinted on the talents, life, and work of any people without the active presence of laymen.⁹³

It must be noted that in these statements what is called lay activity is never contrasted with Church activity but is contrasted only with hierarchical activity. This has not always been the case, as is graphically pointed out by Joseph Powers in his commentary on Vatican II's concept of the laity.⁹⁴ Klostermann points up the Council's attitude by recounting the following concerning the work on the Decree on the Laity:

⁹³ Vatican II, Decree on the Missions, art. 21, in Documents, p. 610-611.

⁹⁴ Joseph M. Powers, "The Layman in the Church", in Current Trends in Theology, edited by Donald Wolf and James Schall, Garden City, New York, Doubleday, 1966, p. 120: "The traditional sources for a theology of the Church, therefore--the monastic and the canonical traditions--came to define [...] the lay condition [as] first [...] a state which is granted by God to those who are incapable or unwilling to embrace the full consequences of Christian vocation [...] and] second [...] that state in which the Christian is ruled, taught, and sanctified by the holder of hierarchical power. Thus, far more than a distinction, there is a cleavage introduced into the Christian vocation itself.

On 22 October 1963, a suggestion was made within the Commission itself by Bishop Guano that the following title be adopted: "De Participazione Laicorum in Ecclesiae Apostolatu" ["Concerning the Participation of the Laity in the Apostolate of the Church"], but it did not meet with approval.⁹⁵

He then adds: "One could indeed speak of a participation of Christians--laity as well as hierarchy--in the mission of Christ [...] but not properly of participation in the mission of the Church [...] they simply are the Church."⁹⁶

It is now appropriate to examine specific roles: first, roles in the juridical aspect of the mission (formerly the "hierarchical apostolate") and, then, roles in the non-juridical aspect (formerly the "lay apostolate").

The Council speaks of the function of clerics only in the context of the juridical task and refers to it as basically

⁹⁵ Klostermann, "Decree on the Apostolate of the Laity", in Commentary, III, p. 303.

⁹⁶ Idem, ibid., p. 304. In order to illustrate the above points, Klostermann continues in a lengthy but important statement: "The first hints of this extended concept of the apostolate are to be found in the New Testament, and even more clearly in the use of the title apostle in the early Church. Similarly, all Christians have been filled with charisms by the pouring out of the Spirit (Acts 2:17 f.; 1 Cor. 2:18, 15) and have grown together with Christ the original apostle (Heb. 3:1; Rom. 6:5) and they have thereby already been empowered and commissioned as a "royal priesthood" which is to "declare his wonderful deeds" (1 Pet. 2:9; Acts 4:31) and to form a "council by divine calling," namely the ekkleisia. Such a conception was indeed not always obvious. Almost a century earlier Vincent Pallotti, since canonized, was engaged in what was then a fruitless struggle in Rome to have the Christian apostolate extended to the lay world.

Likewise, the attempt to exclude the social or temporal activities of the laity from the apostolate, and therefore to change the title accordingly, was rejected already in 1964 [Schema decreti (1964), n. 30]." (p. 304-305).

one of "shepherding":

(1) Article 30 of the Dogmatic Constitution:

Pastors also know that they themselves were not meant by Christ to shoulder alone the entire saving mission of the Church toward the world. On the contrary, they understand that it is their noble duty to shepherd the faithful and recognize their services and charismatic gifts that all according to their proper roles may cooperate in this common undertaking with one heart.⁹⁷

(2) Article 7 of the Decree on the Laity:

Her pastors must clearly state the principles concerning the purpose of creation and the use of temporal things, and must make available the moral and spiritual aids by which the temporal order can be restored in Christ.⁹⁸

(3) Article 43 of the Pastoral Constitution:

From priests they [laity] may look for spiritual light and nourishment.⁹⁹

The above statements refer primarily to priests, but the Council also specifically deals with deacons who are also members of the hierarchy but "at a lower level of the hierarchy" and "upon whom hands are imposed 'not unto the priesthood, but unto a ministry of service'" (Church, art. 29).¹⁰⁰ This article also speaks of the deacons as being "dedicated to

⁹⁷ Vatican II, The Dogmatic Constitution, art. 30, in Documents, p. 57.

⁹⁸ Idem, Decree on the Laity, art. in Documents, p. 497-498.

⁹⁹ Idem, The Pastoral Constitution, art. 43, in Documents, p. 244.

¹⁰⁰ Idem, The Dogmatic Constitution, art. 29, in Documents, p. 55.

duties of charity and administration.¹⁰¹ These duties are dealt with in a slightly more extensive manner in article 16 of the Decree on the Missions which suggests a return to the permanent diaconate:

For there are men who are actually carrying out the functions of the deacon's office either by preaching the Word of God as catechists, or by presiding over scattered Christian communities in the name of the pastor and the bishop, or by practicing charity in social or relief work.¹⁰²

It is significant that although "charity" work is not mentioned in the case of priests, it is kept within the realm of the juridical aspect of the mission by being assigned to "a lower level of the hierarchy". It is not mentioned, but it can be assumed because the hierarchy is the juridical leadership, that the deacon's "charity" work is to be of a hierarchical (leadership) type. At any rate there is no mention of hierarchical involvement, other than in a teaching capacity concerning moral principles, in the "temporal activities" of the Church. It can be concluded, then, that the hierarchical role does not include involvement in social action.

As we have seen, the laity have a proper role in the juridical aspect of the mission as members who are "shepherded"

¹⁰¹ Vatican II, The Dogmatic Constitution, art. 29, in Documents, p. 55-56.

¹⁰² Idem, Decree on the Missions, art. 16, in Documents, p. 605.

(led) by leaders known as "clerics". This interpretation is confirmed by the report of Edward Schillebeeckx concerning the Dogmatic Constitution:

The pre-conciliar commission makes the following comment on its own draft: "the layman is therefore not characterized by [...] secular activity but by [...] active membership [in] the Church [Pre-conciliar schema, see under ftn. 1, 1962, p. 44]. The conciliar commission, however, makes the following comment in the same context (second schema): "The layman is mainly characterized by his active participation in the Church's activity, and not by his secular activity." [second schema, 1963, Pars II, p. 15].¹⁰³

It can also be concluded that insofar as the laity are "mainly characterized" by juridical activity and are "laity" only in contra-distinction to "hierarchy" whose "hierarchical" roles involve only the juridical aspect, the term "laity" has significance only in a juridical context. It is not correct to talk of lay and hierarchical apostolates, then, but it is correct to speak of lay and hierarchical roles in the juridical aspect of the apostolate. In the non-juridical aspect there is still necessarily a leader/member distinction to be made, but it would not be correct to assign to this distinction the terms that are proper only to the juridical aspect, namely, cleric/layman.

The above can lead to the conclusion that the Christian's role in the political community cannot be described in

¹⁰³ Edward Schillebeeckx, The Definition of the Christian Layman, Chicago, Franciscan Herald, 1970, p. 28.

"lay" or "clerical" terms and therefore must be described as that of a "citizen".

The Council speaks of the "citizen" obligations of Christians in the following ways in the Pastoral Constitution:

(1) Article 75: "Juridical-political structures should [...] afford all their citizens the chance to participate freely and actively [...] Hence let all citizens be mindful of their simultaneous right and duty to vote freely in the interest of advancing the common good. [...]"

"Let all Christians appreciate their special and personal vocation in the political community."¹⁰⁴

(2) Article 31: "[...] every citizen is to feel inclined to take part in the activities of the various groups which make up the social body [...]"¹⁰⁵

(3) Article 65: "Citizens [...] have the right and duty [...] to contribute according to their ability to the true progress of their own community."¹⁰⁶

It is important to note that the Council never denies that clerics have citizenship rights and duties. In fact, in addition to the above indication, the Council does mention the possibility of clerical "secular" activity. It is explicit in article 31 of the Dogmatic Constitution: "It is true that those in holy orders can at times engage in secular activities, and even have a secular profession."¹⁰⁷ It is implicit in

¹⁰⁴ Vatican II, The Pastoral Constitution, art. 75, in Documents, p. 285-286.

¹⁰⁵ Idem, ibid., art. 31, p. 230.

¹⁰⁶ Idem, ibid., art. 65, p. 274.

¹⁰⁷ Idem, The Dogmatic Constitution, art. 31, in Documents, p. 57.

other instances:

(1) "Secular duties and activities belong properly, although not exclusively, to laymen" (CMW, art. 43).¹⁰⁸

(2) "Besides this apostolate [the lay apostolate] which pertains to absolutely every Christian, the laity can also be called in various ways to a more direct form of co-operation in the apostolate of the hierarchy" (Church, art. 33).¹⁰⁹

(3) "In this way the world is permeated by the spirit of Christ and more effectively achieves its purpose in justice, charity, and peace. The laity have the principal role in the universal fulfillment of this purpose" (Church, art. 36).¹¹⁰

Schillebeeckx characterizes the Council's attitude in the following way:

The Council [...] clearly rejects the view that the Church is the domain of the clergy and the world that of the laity.¹¹¹

Both these aspects of the one mission of the Church (evangelization and the Christian fermentation of the secular society) must, therefore, be present in all active members of the Church, whether lay or clerical [...]¹¹²

¹⁰⁸ Vatican II, The Pastoral Constitution, art. 43, in Documents, p. 243.

¹⁰⁹ Idem, The Dogmatic Constitution, art. 33, in Documents, p. 60.

¹¹⁰ Idem, ibid., art. 36, p. 63.

¹¹¹ Schillebeeckx, Op. Cit., p. 26.

¹¹² Idem, ibid., p. 39.

Klostermann expands on this same idea in his commentary on article 2 of the Decree on the Laity:

[...] the concept of the universal apostolate is preserved in complete agreement with Articles 31 and 33 of the Constitution on the Church; this apostolate embraces clerics and laity and the operation of both in the Church and in the world, as well as their activity as citizens of this world. Accordingly the whole life of a Christian, his worldly life included, also has part in the mission of the Church as the life of one who is baptized, and in that it is taken up in faith it always has at the same time an ecclesial and therefore apostolic character.¹¹³

Christians who function as clerics are also citizens and therefore they may engage in social action as such.

It would be opportune at this time to stress the fact that although the "citizen" task is a task of the "Church", it is not the task of the juridical aspect of the Church and, hence, it is independent of this aspect. Article 76 of the Pastoral Constitution uses the general term "the faithful" when it discusses this topic: "The faithful will be able to make a clear distinction between what a Christian conscience leads them to do in their own name [...] whether as individuals or in association, and what they do in the name of the Church."¹¹⁴ Article 36 of the Dogmatic Constitution also uses the general "the faithful", although it

¹¹³ Klostermann, Op. Cit., p. 309.

¹¹⁴ Vatican II, The Pastoral Constitution, art. 76, in Documents, p. 287.

is set in the context of a discussion on the laity: "The faithful should distinguish carefully between those rights and duties which they have as members of the Church and those which they have as members of human society."¹¹⁵ Although the Decree on the Laity talks of "the laity" acting on their own responsibility in the renewal of the temporal order, there is no reason to exclude clerics from being involved here, independent of their juridical role.

3. Conclusion

The above discussion of various aspects of the Council's position on the Church and the temporal order indicates that the Second Vatican Council did, indeed, have a particular concept of social action in mind when it used the term. The concept was not very clear, however, for various reasons. First, the definition of the term "social action" was not included anywhere in the documents themselves, but was presumed to be (as specified in a modus to the Decree on the Laity) action "by which is intended the renewal of the social and economic order", action related to justice, law, and the causes of evils. Secondly, there was no concise treatment of the specific role of the Church in the temporal order, nor

¹¹⁵ Vatican II, The Dogmatic Constitution, art. 36, in Documents, p. 63.

were there clear distinctions made either between the two different aspects (charity and justice) of the Church's mission in the temporal order or between the different meanings of Church employed in the documents. Analysis showed, however, that the Council did have definite positions, and these can now be summarized.

The Council believed that the renewal of the temporal order is essential to man's salvation and that Christians as the Church have an obligation to contribute to this renewal. There are two aspects to the Church's involvement in this renewal, the juridical and the non-juridical. The juridical aspect refers to that which distinguishes the Church from other institutions--the task of proclamation of the gospel and consequent initiatory charitable works. The non-juridical aspect refers to that obligation to directly influence the political community, an obligation which Christians share with all other men. Social action is part of this non-juridical aspect and refers to the direct attempt to restructure society. All Christians have obligations in both of these aspects. The terms "clergyman" and "layman" refer to roles in the juridical aspect alone. All Christians have an obligation as citizens to be involved in the non-juridical aspect, and, therefore, Christians who have a clerical function in the juridical aspect may engage, as citizens, in social action since it is part of the non-juridical aspect.

It is this writer's opinion that the Council's contribution in this area is especially significant because it provides motivation and justification for Church involvement in the temporal order, especially as regards involvement pertaining to justice, law, and the causes of evils. The Council documents also contained, although implicitly, the important distinction between the juridical and non-juridical aspects of the Church. This distinction provides, on one hand, the rationale for limiting official Church involvement to initiatory "charitable action" and, on the other, the rationale for extending Church involvement to areas pertaining to justice. This distinction also clears the way for an expanded understanding of the social involvement of clerics. While the Council's positions are very significant, the implicit nature of many of them would seem to weaken their immediate impact on the Church at large. Examination of the American Catholic reaction should provide some evidence as to whether or not this is, in fact, the case.

CHAPTER II

THE AMERICAN CATHOLIC CONCEPT OF SOCIAL ACTION AFTER VATICAN II

The American Catholic concept of social action was derived from material published in the post-conciliar years 1966-1971 and containing both the term "social action" and some reference to Vatican II. There were a total of 132 such texts in over three thousand books, documents, and issues of periodicals.

Examination of these materials will begin with consideration of references to the term "social action", proceed to those dealing with the Church's mission in the temporal order, and end with those pertaining to the roles involved in this mission. In this way, there can be discerned an implied reaction to Vatican II's concept, while leaving to later chapters the discernment of an explicit reaction.

1. The Concept of the Term "Social Action"

In the period covered by this survey, references to the term "social action" seem to fit into three somewhat distinct categories. In some cases the meaning given to the term is unclear, in others the meaning seems to be implied, and in still others it is quite obvious.

A. References with Unclear Meaning

The term "social action" was often used by various writers without a supporting context and in such a way that the precise meaning of the term could not be discerned: e.g., "social action", "productive social action", "social action priest", "lay social action", and "social action subjects".¹

¹ "Where Do We Go From Here?", in Ave Maria, Vol. 1031, No. 2, January 8, 1966, p. 17; Tom Blackburn, "Archbishop John F. Dearden", in The National Catholic Reporter, Vol. 3, No. 7, December 7, 1966, p. 2; Lambert Trutter, reviewing Alfons Auer, Open to the World: An Analysis of Lay Spirituality, in Cross and Crown, Vol. 19, No. 2, June 1967, p. 230; Daniel Berrigan, "The Tension Between Art and Faith", in The Critic, Vol. 26, No. 1, August-September 1967, p. 33; Charles Dollen, "'Populorum' and the Pastor", in Pastoral Life, Vol. 15, No. 10, October 1967, p. 541; William R. McKaye, "'The People' -- Who Inspired Cardinal O'Boyle's Letter", in Catholic Mind, Vol. 65, No. 1217, November 1967, p. 9; Joseph H. O'Neill, "A Challenge to Initiative", in The Homiletic and Pastoral Review, Vol. 68, No. 2, November 1967, p. 174; William J. O'Shea, "The Three R's: Rock, Roll, and Religion", in Living Light, Vol. 5, No. 1, Spring 1968, p. 44; (Sr.) Mary Catherine, "I Am a Nun At a Baptist Seminary", in Sisters Today, Vol. 39, No. 8, April 1968, p. 395-396; Lawrence A. Castagnola, "Preaching and Personal Faith", in Pastoral Life, Vol. 116, No. 8, September 1968, p. 501; Donald J. Thorman, "Requiem for the Parish?", in U.S. Catholic, Vol. 34, No. 5, September 1968, p. 14; Andrew Greeley, "The Church as 'New Community'", in The Sign, Vol. 48, No. 4, November 1968, p. 28; Doris Grumbach, "Layman's Association Coming into Maturity", in Commonweal, Vol. 90, No. 16, July 11, 1969, p. 429; Mary Reed Newland, "Youth: What Happened", in Ave Maria, Vol. 111, No. 6, February 7, 1970, p. 28; Dave M. Lelys, "Programming Adult Education in the Church", in Pastoral Life, Vol. 19, No. 10, November 1970, p. 23; Gary Wills, "Farewell (Quite Fond) to the Catholic Liberal", in Critic, Vol. 22, No. 3, January-February 1971, p. 15; John T. Ryan, "Pursuit of Souls: Betrayal of Soul", in Catholic World, Vol. 212, No. 1271, February 1971, p. 248; William J. Whalen, "Catholics on the Right", in U.S. Catholic and Jubilee, Vol. 36, No. 11, November 1971, p. 36.

Similarly, another group provided a context which was too broad to justify a conclusion as to their precise meaning: e.g., they speak of "social action leadership", or contrast "social action" with "liturgy", or include "social action" as one item in a series of Church-related activities, or speak of "exploring the Gospels in terms of social action".²

2 Cf. "Martin Work Predicts Lay Administrators", in U.S. Catholic, Vol. 32, No. 1, May 1966, p. 51; "America's Survey of Post-Conciliar Programs", in America, Vol. 115, No. 2, July 9, 1966, p. 29; Daniel L. Flaherty, "Chicago Priests Organize", in America, Vol. 115, No. 19, November 5, 1966, p. 542; Patricia Barrett, reviewing Peter J. Riga, The Church Made Relevant, in America, Vol. 117, No. 5, July 29, 1967, p. 118; James Degan, "Robert McAfee Brown", in The Sign, Vol. 47, No. 1, August 1967, p. 7; Augustine P. Hennessey, "Renewal and a Priestly People", in The Sign, Vol. 47, No. 3, October 1967, p. 12; Joseph Green, "A Defense of True Liturgy", in Pastoral Life, Vol. 16, No. 1, January 1968, p. 11; M. K. Clarke, "Wherever Life is Found", in Ave Maria, Vol. 107, No. 15, April 13, 1968, p. 3; A. E. P. Wall, "Aggiornamento in the Chancery", in America, Vol. 118, No. 19, May 11, 1968, p. 637; John C. Haughey, "The Underground Church", in America, Vol. 118, No. 20, May 18, 1968, p. 664; Mary Lou Burger, "Art Pisula: Bridging the Sacral and Secular", in Ave Maria, Vol. 108, No. 21, December 7, 1968, p. 27; Edward A. Marciniak, Tomorrow's Christian, Dayton, Pflaum, 1969, p. 128; Paul J. Cahill, "Structuring Today's Parish", in Dimension, Vol. 1, No. 2, Summer 1969, p. 70; Dan Patrinos, "Conservative Priests Organize", in The National Catholic Reporter, Vol. 5, No. 47, September 24, 1969, p. 1; Colin A. MacDonald, "Documentation: The Priesthood Today", in The Priest, Vol. 25, No. 10, October 1969, p. 560; C. J. McNaspy, "Liturgical Movements In Tension", in America, Vol. 121, No. 12, October 18, 1969, p. 321; Dolores LaChapelle, "Community Begins in a Paint Pot", in The Catechist, Vol. 3, No. 7, April 1970, p. 28; George Matthews, "Some Implications of Androgogy, the Science of Adult Learning", in Living Light, Vol. 7, No. 2, Summer 1970, p. 40; Elaine Marie Prevallet, "Catholic College Theology: A Liberal Education?", in Living Light, Vol. 7, No. 2, Summer 1970, p. 85-86; Kilian McDonnell, "A Catholic Looks At Evangelical Protestantism", in Commonweal, Vol. 92, No. 17, August 21, 1970, p. 409; Thomas Peyton,

It might be significant to note that for the field covered by this survey each of the post-conciliar years had six or seven of these above-mentioned indeterminant references, with the exception of 1968 which had ten.

B. References with Implied Meaning

There is another series of writers who did not provide a precise meaning themselves for the term "social action", but they did place the term in a context which is clear enough to justify a conclusion as to their meaning. These references can be separated into three categories: those in which social action is used to mean "charitable action", those in which it is used to mean activities related to justice, and those in which it is used in such a way that it includes both charity and justice.

The first to be considered are those writers who used the term in contexts which give it the meaning of "charitable action". The National Council of Catholic Men (NCCM), in their book The Spirit of Renewal; A Short Course in Vatican II for Lay People, referred to social action most specifically in the following way: "The layman is confirmed and acclaimed

"Community Experiment Renewed", in Today's Parish, Vol. 2, No. 6, November-December 1970, p. 24; "School and Parish", in Commonweal, Vol. 93, No. 17, January 29, 1971, p. 411; "Renewing the Ministry", in Commonweal, Vol. 94, No. 6, April 16, 1971, p. 125; William L. Doty, "Hopeful Signs in the American Church", in Pastoral Life, Vol. 20, No. 11, December 1971, p. 12..

by his involvement--in the political life of the community, in social action and economic movement [...].³ "Social action", here, is clearly distinguished from political and economic movements and, thus, is apparently reduced to "charitable action". Something similar seems to have occurred in the case of John Deedy who appeared to have reduced social action to charity in these words: "On the level of social action, only 29 percent took part in charitable or educational community activities [...]."⁴ Thomas Murphy gives the same impression, in an article on the urban involvement of the Church, when he refers to all facets of that involvement as "social action", but restricts this involvement to the kinds of activity that are compatible with Government sponsorship: e.g. "Religious groups [...] are being designated to carry out Federal housing, poverty, and social action programs in urban areas."⁵ Richard McKeon also indicated the same type of meaning in one instance,⁶

3 The National Council of Catholic Men, The Spirit of Renewal; A Short Course in Vatican II for Lay People, Washington, D.C., National Council of Catholic Men, 1967, p. 60.

4 John Deedy, "News and Views", in Commonweal, Vol. 90, No. 4, April 11, 1969, p. 92.

5 Thomas P. Murphy, "Organization for Urban Impact: A Challenge for the Churches", in Catholic World, Vol. 206, No. 1236, March 1968, p. 247-249.

6 Richard M. McKeon, "Preaching and Social Action", in Pastoral Life, Vol. 14, No. 5, May 1966, p. 288.

although he utilized different meanings at other times.

Another clear indication that social action is probably to be construed as "charitable action" is given by those authors who distinguish "social action" from "political action". F. X. Murphy,⁷ William McKeon,⁸ and Franz Mueller⁹ use the phrase "social or political action"; John Sheerin uses "social and political action";¹⁰ Richard M. McKeon uses "political and social action"¹¹ and Francis Wendell uses "in social action, in political action".¹² John Cronin's use of "social and civic action" could probably be equated with the above.¹³

7 F. X. Murphy, "The Christian Commitment in the Modern World", in The Church in the Modern World, edited by Charles P. O'Donnell, Milwaukee, Bruce, 1967, p. 30.

8 William McKeon, "A Reply to Monsignor Illich", in American Ecclesiastical Review, Vol. 156, No. 3, March 1967, p. 148.

9 Franz H. Mueller, "Social Ethics or 'Political Theology'?", in Thought, Vol. 46, No. 180, Spring 1971, p. 4.

10 John B. Sheerin, "Tensions in a Church Alive", in Catholic World, Vol. 212, No. 1269, December 1970, p. 116.

11 Richard M. McKeon, "Priests and the Social Order", in Pastoral Life, Vol. 14, No. 4, April 1966, p. 211.

12 Francis N. Wendell, "Cardijn: An Appreciation", in Ave Maria, Vol. 106, No. 12, September 16, 1967, p. 19.

13 John F. Cronin, "Catholics and Modern Civic Action", in Pastoral Life, Vol. 14, No. 3, March 1966, p. 143.

As may be obvious, there are relatively few instances of the term "social action" being used to mean "charitable action". Significantly, four of these instances occurred in 1967, while there were no more than two for each of the other years.

In the second category are those contexts in which the term is related to justice without justice being specifically mentioned. In several instances reference was made to Church social action departments which are distinct from, or part of, Church Charity offices: Mathew Ahmann¹⁴ and Russell Shaw¹⁵ referred to social action in the context of the Social Action Department of the United States Catholic Conference; and Daniel Flaherty referred to it in the context of "the social action department of Catholic Charities in the Brooklyn diocese".¹⁶ When social action offices are part of Catholic Charities, Catholic Charities, in those instances, inevitably refers to all activities inspired by apostolic

14 Mathew Ahmann, "Strategies For the Future", in The Church and the Urban Racial Crisis, edited by Mathew Ahmann and Margaret Roach, Techny, Ill., Divine Word, 1967, p. 235. This text can also be found in this author's article: "The Church and the Urban Negro", in America, Vol. 118, No. 6, February 10, 1968, p. 183-184.

15 Russell Shaw, "John F. Cronin: Activator", in National Catholic Reporter, Vol. 3, No. 26, April 26, 1967, p. 2.

16 Daniel Flaherty, "Council of Priests: A Historic First", in America, Vol. 118, No. 9, March 2, 1968, p. 291.

charity and undertaken by the Church and not just "charitable action". Reference to the National Catholic Social Action Conference, as made by James Andrews, can also be taken to indicate a linking of "social action" to justice, since social justice is the purpose of this Conference.¹⁷

A similar case for linking social action to justice can be made when it is used in the context of race and peace. Dennis Geaney used it in the context of "issues" that "deal with race and peace";¹⁸ the April 1966 issue of The Sign dealt with it in regard to "such matters as race, poverty, and peace" and also "power" and "agitation";¹⁹ and James Shaughnessy referred to the Bishops' "Social Action Report on Race".²⁰

A similar inference is probably justified when Robert Burns refers to the "unorthodox techniques of social action"

17 James F. Andrews, "The Georgetown Meeting", in Ave Maria, Vol. 104, No. 11, September 10, 1966, p. 4-5.

18 Dennis J. Geaney, "Necessity of Dialogue Between Superior and Subjects", in Ave Maria, Vol. 103, No. 2, January 8, 1966, p. 13.

19 "Involvement of the Clergy", in The Sign, Vol. 45, No. 9, April 1966, p. 33.

20 James D. Shaughnessy, "Spotlight on Liturgy, Where the Action Isn't", in The Homiletic and Pastoral Review, Vol. 68, No. 10, July 1968, p. 861.

of Daniel Berrigan, a well-known advocate of social justice;²¹ when Vincent Yzermans mentions the "persecution" of Bishop Radini-Tadeschi "for his involvement in Christian social action";²² and when William Dodd alludes to the social action involvement of "the large majority of the Roman Catholic left".²³

Casual mention of politics and/or the duties and rights of citizenship also gives social action a probable meaning related to justice, as when Barbara Nauer refers to "political connections" and "effective social action",²⁴ John Courtney Murray to "the order of politics",²⁵ John S. Kennedy to "civil rights and the civic community",²⁶ and

21 Robert E. Burns, "The Examined Life--One Way of Looking at Everyday Manners and Morals", in U.S. Catholic and Jubilee, Vol. 34, No. 6, October 1968, p. 2.

22 Vincent Yzermans, "The Legacy of Pope John", in Schema 13, Vol. 1, No. 5, May-June 1970, p. 18.

23 William H. Dodd, "A Theological Weather Report From the Mediating Left", in America, Vol. 124, No. 15, April 17, 1971, p. 403-404.

24 Barbara J. Nauer, "The Day After Aggiornamento", in America, Vol. 124, No. 2, Jan. 16, 1971, p. 39.

25 John Courtney Murray, "The Issue of Church and State at Vatican Council II", in The Church in the Modern World, p. 63.

26 John S. Kennedy, "What's Ahead For Us?", in Our Sunday Visitor, Vol. 57, No. 35, December 29, 1968, p. 12.

William Allen²⁷ and Robert Reicher²⁸ to "the rights and duties of citizenship". A similar meaning is given when John J. Lally refers to "the social action of such men as Martin Luther King and Saul Alinsky, as well as other sources of knowledge concerning conflict";²⁹ and Patrick McNamara mentions certain "social action priests" who "have demonstrated on some occasion" in efforts "aimed at improving the socio-economic status of Mexican Americans".³⁰

This section on the use of the term "social action" in contexts implying a meaning pertaining to justice can be concluded with the comment that there were from one to three such instances in each of the post-conciliar years, with the exception of 1968 which had six.

The third group of texts containing an implied meaning for the term "social action" is that in which the term is meant to cover all activities of social concern, whether pertaining to charity or to justice. This meaning can be

27 William F. Allen, "Quid in Casu?", in Pastoral Life, Vol. 16, No. 1, January 1968, p. 43.

28 Robert Reicher, "Tomorrow's Christian, a Review Article", in Chicago Studies, Vol. 8, No. 3, Fall 1969, p. 230.

29 John J. Lally, "A Theology of Conflict", in Commonweal, Vol. 87, No. 11, December 15, 1967, p. 357.

30 Patrick H. McNamara, "Social Action Priests in the Mexican-American Community", in Sociological Analysis, Vol. 29, No. 4, Winter 1968, p. 179.

inferred from the statement of the Bishop's Committee on the Permanent Diaconate that "their [the deacons'] special service of charity carries them, in solidarity with lay men and women, into work of social action".³¹ The same is true of Roland Fahey's article, "End Time and Christian Social Action", which says that "eschatology will in no wise relax the Church's social efforts on behalf of mankind".³²

A brief check of this final group and the preceding groups of texts shows that there was a preponderance of instances of implied meaning in the first three years following Vatican II (1966-1968). Further examination will show whether or not this is also the case regarding the use of "social action" with a clear meaning.

C. References with Clear Meaning

First of all, it is significant to note that there are no instances in this survey where social action clearly means "charitable action". There are instances, however, where it obviously includes both charity and justice or where it definitely refers only to justice. This section

³¹ U.S. National Conference of Catholic Bishops, Bishops' Committee on the Permanent Diaconate, Permanent Deacons in the United States; Guidelines on Their Formation and Ministry, Washington, D.C., U.S. Catholic Conference, 1971, p. 47.

³² Roland J. Fahey, "End Time and Christian Social Action", in Thought, Vol. 45, No. 178, Autumn 1970, p. 406.

will begin with an examination of a small group of texts which clearly indicate that social action includes both charity and justice.

To begin with, there are two instances where social action is contrasted with individual action: Richard McKeon, who in 1966 used the term in a way implying "charitable action", in 1967 used it differently--"there is rejection of the individual ethic and accent on social action";³³ and Michael Mincieli stated that a Christian's love should "be at the heart of all his social actions".³⁴

Then there are two instances where social action is contrasted with spirituality. John Sheerin implied in 1970 that it meant "charitable action", but earlier, in 1968, he talked about infusing "spirituality into our social action".³⁵ Leo Farragher had the same meaning when he said, "This complete blueprint for both social and spiritual action proclaimed by the Council Fathers is not for the timid".³⁶

33 Richard M. McKeon, "The Second Vatican Council and the Common Good", in American Ecclesiastical Review, Vol. 157, No. 1, July 1967, p. 37.

34 Michael V. Mincieli, "Catholic Social Service: A Philosophy", in Catholic Charities Review, Vol. 50, No. 9, November 1966, p. 11.

35 John B. Sheerin, "The Holy Spirit and Social Action", in Spiritual Life, Vol. 14, No. 4, Winter 1968, p. 230. A similar meaning was found in Sheerin's "Has the Ecumenical Movement Stalled?", in Catholic World, Vol. 207, No. 1237, April 1968, p. 2.

36 Leo Farragher, "To Live is to Change", in The

There are also several instances where the descriptions are so inclusive that there can be no doubt about the intended meaning. Eugene Bianchi spoke of social action as involving "reconciliation of alienated humanity in the social structures of life".³⁷ James Gallagher said that social action meant efforts "to relieve the afflictions of our times, such as famine and natural disasters, illiteracy and poverty, lack of housing and the unequal distribution of wealth".³⁸ Social action was also said to be comprised of such diverse elements as "the Peace Corps" and "radical politics",³⁹ "work with mental patients" and a "protest march",⁴⁰ "Catholic Charities" and "labor and race",⁴¹ and "race relations, the peace movement, and social services".⁴² There can be added to this John Cronin's 1968 reference to social action

37 Eugene C. Bianchi, "Secular Ecumenism", in Thought, Vol. 44, No. 172, Spring 1969, p. 94.

38 James J. Gallagher, "Of Many Things...", in America, Vol. 114, No. 20, May 14, 1966, p. 679.

39 Don Jardin, "Whatever Happened to the IHM's?", in The National Catholic Reporter, Vol. 7, No. 23, April 9, 1971, p. 8.

40 Chris Tree, "Revolution on the Secular Campus", in Jubilee, Vol. 14, No. 12, April 1967, p. 18.

41 Robert G. Howes, "Priests and Civic Problems", in Pastoral Life, Vol. 14, No. 9, September 1966, p. 495-496.

42 Dennis Clark, "Parochial Roles", in The Parish in Crisis, edited by John McCudden, Techny, Ill., Divine Word, 1967, p. 63.

as involving "remedying the causes of poverty, and not merely treating symptoms or effects",⁴³ in contrast^s to his 1966 implied meaning of "charitable action". Richard Robbins obviously had a broad meaning in mind when he spoke of "the broader debate on social action, especially political action",⁴⁴ as did William McCormack when he described social action as "the diakonia that may sometimes supercede the kerygma, the proclamation of the Gospel".⁴⁵ And, finally, there is the clear indication of this same kind of broad meaning in an article by Joseph Moody⁴⁶ and in one in the April 9, 1966 issue of America where social action is explicitly related to both charity and justice.⁴⁷

There were no significant groupings of any kind of the references in which social action is clearly intended to cover both charity and justice. Each post-Conciliar year

43 John F. Cronin, "Social Action Today", in The Homiletic and Pastoral Review, Vol. 68, No. 4, January 1968, p. 295.

44 Richard H. Robbins, "The Night the Peace Bus Left New Harley", in Catholic World, Vol. 210, No. 1260, March 1970, p. 260.

45 William J. McCormack, "Is Ministry the Message?", in Worldmission, Vol. 19, No. 3, Fall 1968, p. 40.

46 Joseph N. Moody, "The Death and Resurrection of the Priest-Workers", in American Ecclesiastical Review, Vol. 15, No. 2, August 1966, p. 88.

47 "Notre Dame Challenges Wealth", in America, Vol. 114, No. 16, April 9, 1966, p. 476.

had at least one such occurrence, but no year had more than three.

The second and much larger group of texts is that in which social^{action} is referred to in terms that link it solely with justice.

First of all, there is a group of texts in which there is simply mention of "justice" or "social justice".⁴⁸ Then, there are also texts which do not mention the word "justice" but clearly indicate this meaning by their descriptions. Reginald Masterson mentioned the "task of building human society through social action";⁴⁹ Ernest Bartell referred to social action as "responsible participation in the decision process of economic and political activity";⁵⁰

48 Richard Cardinal Cushing, "A Man Ahead of His Time", in The Wanderer, Vol. 36, No. 26, June 30, 1966, p. 5; Marie Jacques Odilia, "Feudalism in the Great Society", in Jubilee, Vol. 14, No. 5, September 1966, p. 17; Peter J. Riga, The Church Made Relevant; A Commentary on the Church in the Modern World, Notre Dame, Ind., Fides, 1967, p. 159; Richard M. McKeon, "Economic Development; the New Name for Peace", in Pastoral Life, Vol. 15, No. 10, October 1967, p. 546; Thomas H. Gibbons, Jr., "Roman Catholics and Social Development--the Forgotten (Catholic) Americans", in Ave Maria, Vol. 110, No. 9, September 13, 1969, p. 7; Lawrence Cardinal Shehan, "Working Document on Jewish-Christian Relations", in Catholic Mind, Vol. 68, No. 1240, February 1970, p. 62; Gerard S. Sloyan, "Is There Any Hope For Liturgy?", in Commonweal, Vol. 92, No. 3, March 27, 1970, p. 59; "Calls For Radical Change in Justice", in The National Catholic Reporter, Vol. 7, No. 27, May 7, 1971, p. 1.

49 Reginald Masterson, "The Role of the Priest", in Cross and Crown, Vol. 23, No. 2, June 1971, p. 186.

50 Ernest Bartell, "Social Responsibility and the New Theology: Comment", in Review of Social Economy, Vol. 27, No. 1, March 1969, p. 61.

Desmond O'Grady described it, in part, as "inventing the forms of democracy";⁵¹ Vincent J. Giese⁵² and Bonaventure O'Brien⁵³ talked of organizing communities for action; Kenneth Woodward contrasted "social action groups" with the "charitable action" group The St. Vincent de Paul Society,⁵⁴ and John Dearden described it rather elaborately in the following way:

This interdependence of persons from different areas of the community must be brought into the area of social action. Coalitions need to be established between inner city groups and groups in the suburbs so that broad support can be mobilized to work on problems such as education in the inner city, code enforcement, highway relocation, urban renewal.⁵⁵

Three writers chose to describe social action in terms of "change" or "social change"--words which clearly distinguish social action from "charitable action". In addition to his above-mentioned use of the term to include

⁵¹ Desmond O'Grady, "Paul VI Asks New Democratic Forms", in The National Catholic Reporter, Vol. 7, No. 29, May 21, 1971, p. 9.

⁵² Vincent J. Giese, "The Role of the Priest Among God's People", in Our Sunday Visitor, Vol. 54, No. 47, March 20, 1966, p. 9.

⁵³ Bonaventure O'Brien, quoted in "An Interview With Bonaventure O'Brien, OFM", in Ave Maria, Vol. 103, No. 2, January 8, 1966, p. 7.

⁵⁴ Kenneth Woodward, "Spotlight On the Parish", in Ave Maria, Vol. 103, No. 14, April 2, 1966, p. 22.

⁵⁵ John F. Dearden, "Challenge to Change in the Urban Church", in The Church and the Urban Racial Crisis, p. 48; also in Catholic Mind, Vol. 65, No. 1217, November 1967, p. 11-18.

both charity and justice, Robert Howes referred to social action as action by which "we are intelligently to change 'the modern world'".⁵⁶ Mark Hurley mentioned it in this way: "the Catholic School properly run is Social Action par excellence. There can be no better social change than that which starts with the changing of attitudes of people".⁵⁷ Thomas O'Meara described it as "the Christian presence at the crisis centers of human and social change".⁵⁸

Some of the clearest indications of the justice-related meaning of social action are given by those writers who explicitly contrast it with "social service" or the like. One of these is (Sr.) Mary Vincentia, who speaks of "Community outreach programs with a social action and/or social service orientation".⁵⁹ Lawrence Corcoran specifies more exactly the areas of social concern in the context of the work of the permanent deacon:

56 Robert G. Howes, "The Church University in Megalopolis", in American Ecclesiastical Review, Vol. 155, No. 2, August 1966, p. 106.

57 Mark J. Hurley, "Teacher Power in American Society", in The Priest, Vol. 24, No. 4, April 1968, p. 297.

58 Thomas F. O'Meara, "Apostolate and Community: Secularization and Revolution", in Sisters Today, Vol. 40, No. 6, February 1969, p. 345.

59 (Sr.) Mary Vincentia, "Tri-Parish Model For a Technical Assistance Program", in Catholic Charities Review, Vol. 55, No. 6, June 1971, p. 5.

At least some of this work will certainly be in the field of social service, community service, social action, personalized help to individuals, and many other types of assistance to people in need.⁶⁰

Such fine distinctions in the area of social involvement did not appear often in this research.

Another writer who contrasted social action with social service is John Cronin. Although in another place he seemed to give social action the meaning of "charitable action", in his article in the Catholic Mind, "Social Action: Myth or Reality", he gives it quite a different meaning, as can be determined from his words, "My first suggestion is that we should professionalize social action as we have already professionalized our activities in the areas of education and social work".⁶¹ Finally, Edward Marciniak makes his meaning clear when he speaks of "Catholic-sponsored social action" as involving "human rights, rural life, Spanish speaking, urban affairs, migrant labor, poverty (excluding the traditional Catholic Charities services)".⁶²

⁶⁰ Lawrence J. Corcoran, "The Permanent Diaconate in Relation to Catholic Charities", in Permanent Deacons in the United States, by Bishops' Committee on the Permanent Diaconate, p. 59.

⁶¹ John F. Cronin, "Social Action: Myth or Reality", in Catholic Mind, Vol. 65, No. 1218, December 1967, p. 43.

⁶² Edward A. Marciniak, "Catholic Social Action: Where Do We Go From Here?", in America, Vol. 123, No. 19, December 12, 1970, p. 513.

Some writers prefer to refer to social action as an element in eliminating the causes of social problems. Joseph Novak used the phrase "intelligent social action aimed at eradicating the many causes of human failure";⁶³ John Hill mentioned "social action priests" who "went beyond the works of charity and sought the causes of social disorders";⁶⁴ and (Rev.) Robert Kennedy used the story of the Good Samaritan as the background for his explanation:

Such attitudes also reflect the false notion that the Church's concern is only charity. The story of the Good Samaritan is a perfect example. If the Samaritan, after taking care of the first man who was beaten by robbers, went out the next day on the way to Jericho and found another victim and again on the third and fourth days, he would immediately get into social action. [...] if he wanted to solve the problem.⁶⁵

Another description of social action similar to the above would be that which referred to it in terms of "social" or "structural reform", as was the case in four instances.⁶⁶

63 Joseph Novak, Editor, Christianity Today; A Book of Readings, New York, Holt, 1966, p. 339.

64 John J. Hill, "People of God", in Parish In Crisis, p. 30.

65 (Rev.) Robert Kennedy, quoted by Ed Wakin, in "A Priest Struggles for Power", in The Sign, Vol. 48, No. 12, July 1969, p. 16.

66 Desmond Fisher, "Cardinal Cardijn Comes Full Circle", in The Sign, Vol. 46, No. 4, November 1966, p. 49; Joseph Gremillion, "The Parish and the World We Live In", in The Parish in a Time of Change, edited by Marvin Bordelon, Notre Dame, Ind., Fides, 1967, p. 201; "Gap Between Religion and Life", in America, Vol. 115, No. 11, September 10, 1966, p. 243; "Priests Opt For Relevancy", in America, Vol. 116, No. 21, May 27, 1967, p. 769.

Although the above-mentioned references are clear, there are texts which offer more explicit and precise definitions or descriptions of social action. It is significant to note, before examination of these texts, that four of the five appeared in The Catholic Charities Review, the only American Catholic periodical devoted solely to the area of social concern, and the fifth originated from the National Conference of Catholic Charities.

In probably the most detailed article on social action included in this research, Ronald Hayes offered these comments:

Actually the term social action can be used in a broader sense of simply the process of changing society but I have chosen to relate this process of change more directly to changes in practices which might affect people in need of help.

The purpose of social action is the prevention, alleviation, or elimination of social problems in order that justice and human dignity are realized in meeting the needs of individuals and families.⁶⁷

John Steffey also offered a very explicit description:

The presentation on social action could be related to "the salt of the earth" idea. [...] Social action is leadership and responsibility. [...] If Catholic social services are to fulfill their commitment as community (or humanity) agencies, their ideas, values, and modes of action must be translated into those social vehicles and institutions which shape our lives.⁶⁸

⁶⁷ Ronald C. Hayes, "Social Action in Catholic Charities", in Catholic Charities Review, Vol. 51, No. 7, September 1967, p. 10.

⁶⁸ John M. Steffey, reviewing Peter McCabe and Francis J. Turner, Editors, Catholic Social Work: A Contemporary Overview, in Catholic Charities Review, Vol. 51, No. 1, January

Still another precise description is to be found in a report prepared by the National Conference of Catholic Charities and summarized in the October 31, 1971 issue of Our Sunday Visitor:

Social action, as it has been viewed traditionally in social welfare, concerns itself with moving communities, as well as the state and federal governments, to develop resources to meet social need. In contemporary professional circles, it has taken on a new connotation: assisting the poor and needy to become the chief agents in bringing about these social changes.⁶⁹

Two articles addressed to the St. Vincent de Paul Society are especially significant because they suggest in detail what kinds of activities dealing with justice should be undertaken now in the name of social action by this group which has heretofore concentrated on charitable action. In his article, "The Society and Social Action", George Guilfoyle says:

I believe that yours should be a stronger and more forceful role in the formulation of public policies affecting basic human needs. [...] We should exercise leadership [...] Such leadership is proper to our lives as citizens. Moreover, it provides an important opportunity to put into effective action the urgings of justice.⁷⁰

In the same vein, Lawrence Corcoran adds a statement which, although lengthy, is very important because of its precision:

⁶⁹ "Servicing the Aged on the Parish Level", in Our Sunday Visitor, Vol. 60, No. 27, October 31, 1971, p. 20.

⁷⁰ George Guilfoyle, "The Society and Social Action", in Catholic Charities Review, Vol. 52, No. 3, March 1968, p. 27-28.

This same type of effort can be carried further into the fields of social action. You can address yourselves to broad social problems, such as inadequate housing, juvenile delinquency, alcoholism, and the many others so prevalent in our day; and you can seek to improve the institutions of society, such as the public assistance programs, the educational system, the state mental institutions, and so on. Indirectly, you are helping the persons who become enmeshed in these problems, or who must rely upon these social institutions. You have a motto which says that "no good work is foreign to the Society." Social action is indeed a good work and should not be foreign to the St. Vincent De Paul Society.⁷¹

The clarity of the above statements is especially significant because the context provides for a very precise distinction between charitable action and social action.

It is noteworthy that there was a preponderance of clear references during the first three post-conciliar years, especially during 1966 and 1967, corresponding to a similar distribution of references with an implied meaning. Although after 1968 there was a steady decrease in references clearly meaning both charity and justice, there was actually an increase, right through 1971, in references clearly relating social action to justice. This seems to indicate that there has been a gradual clarification of the term in line with the meaning utilized by Vatican II, namely, activity related to justice.

⁷¹ Lawrence J. Corcoran, "The Society and the War on Poverty", in Catholic Charities Review, Vol. 51, No. 4, April 1967, p. 30.

Some additional comments can serve to conclude this treatment of the American Catholic use of the term "social action". First of all, as may be obvious at this point, the American Catholic writers employ various meanings for the term, although the meaning related to justice, either directly or implicitly, does predominate. This predominance is not sufficient, however, to warrant the conclusion that the term has one definite meaning for American Catholic writers. Another notable fact is that although instances of an implied meaning predominate in the popular periodicals (as would be expected, given the larger number of issues involved), clear references are predominant in the professional academic and pastoral journals, as a group. However, in the academic journals alone, any reference to social action is rare. A final significant fact is that those authors who are professionals in the area of social concern are the most consistent in their choice of meaning, that usually being the meaning related solely to justice.

2. The Concept of the Church's Mission in the Temporal Order

Approximately one-fifth of the material pertaining to social action included texts dealing particularly with the mission of the Church in the temporal order, thus helping to clarify what the American Catholic writers included in this survey considered to be the place of social action in the

life of the Church. Some of these texts seem to indicate that the Church's mission in the temporal order is to be limited in scope, while others extend the field of this mission to make it broader.

A. References Indicating a Limited Scope
for the Church's Mission

It is significant that in only two instances is the work of the Church in the temporal order described as completely distinct from evangelization and as a preparation for rather than a part of, this process. In both cases, however, the Church is definitely to be involved, even though this would not be necessary if people were not deterred from conversion due to social evils. John Sheerin makes this opinion clear:

One must be a man before he can be a Christian, but it is difficult to attempt to preach the Gospel to a man who lives a subhuman existence, just as it is difficult to preach the Gospel to a man who is starving. [...] Before we can offer to God a world consistent with his will, we must try to rid that world of all injustice, exploitation and antagonism that bar the way to evangelization.⁷²

Roland Fahey reiterates this in the following manner:

⁷² John B. Sheerin, Decree on the Apostolate of the Laity of Vatican II, Glen Rock, N.J., Paulist, 1966, p. 17-18.

The activity of the Church in human society, if it is to be truly Christian, must proceed from motives of conversion. It can make human concerns its own and assist society, not because it shares its goals, but because it realizes that the fertile soil of saving grace is a mankind which is both human and good.⁷³

Neither author made any kind of juridical/non-juridical or official/unofficial distinction as regards the concept of "Church".

Another minority opinion concurs that the Church's job is really evangelization, but it excludes any real social involvement at all from hierarchical Church, on the grounds that Christ did not advocate particular reform. William Allen states that "Christ, to my knowledge, never descended to any particular reform in civil society as He did in each individual's life", and implies that it could be the "new sin" to think that Christ intended the Church to "espouse this or that man-conceived and man-engineered panacea for the cure of particular social ills".⁷⁴ It is also noteworthy that the area of involvement for Allen, as for Sheerin and Fahey, seems to include both charity and justice. This is again indicated when he says of the Church:

⁷³ Fahey, "End Time and Christian Social Action", in Thought, Vol. 45, No. 178, p. 404.

⁷⁴ Allen, "Quid In Casu?", in Pastoral Life, Vol. 16, No. 1, p. 41-42.

[...] involvement in particular, political, social problems are not of her competency. [...] The Church's transcendency, her motherhood to all mankind, forbid this kind of involvement in the temporal.

[...] what is being challenged against the new trend is the tendency to expect the Church to patronize precise, practical, social, economic solutions to these problems, and this everywhere!⁷⁵

Allen does, however, seem to imply that there is another reality involved here which can be deduced to be "Church". This is so because he mentions the above social activities as being "forbidden to the hierarchical Church, [...] but] they certainly can be and should be the activity of Catholics as Christian citizens".⁷⁶ This last reference indicates that the above condemnation of "Church" involvement in social activities is actually concerned only with what could be called the "juridical" or "official" Church; and this indication is confirmed by the fact that this "activity of Catholics as Christian citizens" was given the title "Unofficial Action".⁷⁷ This "unofficial action" of "Christian citizens" seemed to involve activities pertaining to both charity and justice, although the use of the term "citizens" would seem to restrict it to justice as would its description as "Catholic social action on the part of our

75 Allen, Op. Cit., p. 43.

76 Idem, ibid.

77 Idem, ibid.

influential Catholic laymen [who] wish to march into the fray".⁷⁸ The solution to this ambiguity might simply be that the author considers any social activity to have political ramifications, however indirect, and therefore, although he does not mention "charitable action" at all, it also is to be avoided so as not "to involve the official Church in concrete, practical solution of problems, social and economic, to which, really, her competency and mission do not extend [... and] which threaten to nullify her mission of the salvation of souls".⁷⁹ The phrase "her mission of the salvation of souls" implies also a particular view of official Church mission which might explain why the concept of "charitable action" simply is not considered in the context of the mission of the hierarchical or "official" Church. This omission is significant, as is the indication of a distinction between an "official" and "unofficial" Church.

Franz Mueller seems to share Allen's opinion insofar as he states that the Church has "neither the mission nor the tools to engage directly in social or political action".⁸⁰ But he also indicates that in this case a "clarification" is

78 Allen, Op. Cit., p. 43.

79 Idem, ibid., p. 43-44.

80 Mueller, "Social Ethics or 'Political Theology'?", in Thought, Vol. 46, No. 180, p. 19.

needed as to whether what is being dealt with is "the government of the Church (especially the magisterial and pastoral office) or the people of God as a whole".⁸¹ Mueller, then, seems to be utilizing an official/unofficial distinction in his notion of the Church by ascribing a limited scope to the Church as "the government of the Church" while leaving open the possibility that the Church as "people of God" could have a broader scope for their activity.

B. References Indicating a Broad Scope
for the Church's Mission

The first writer to be considered in this category had a unique approach to Church involvement in the temporal order. Thomas Murphy stated that helping the sick, the poor, and the troubled was the "traditional role" of the Church and that "if the religious groups do not respond with significantly innovative programs and forms of organization [...] they will find that government has pre-empted their position".⁸² This is the only instance where a writer has indicated that areas of social concern belonged more properly to the Church than to civil government.

⁸¹ Mueller, Op. Cit., p. 18.

⁸² T. Murphy, "Organization for Urban Impact: A Challenge for the Churches", in Catholic World, Vol. 206, No. 1236, p. 246.

Eugene Bianchi believes that social service is part of the Church's mission "to preach and live the gospel".⁸³ He does not speak of charity or justice, but rather of "the calling to reconciliation of alienated humanity in the social structures of life".⁸⁴ He seems to refer to whatever will achieve this as "effective social action"⁸⁵ and states that this is basic to the Church because the Church is a "missionary community" whose "main task" is "not to comfort religious individuals, but to establish the peace, the Shalom, among men".⁸⁶ The last two writers do not seem at all concerned with a possible official/unofficial distinction as regards the Church.

Two individuals who do seem concerned with this distinction are Robert Reicher and Edward Marciniak. Reicher endeavored to ensure that his use of the word "Church" was recognized as meaning "official Church" by referring to it with such phrases as "the Church (meaning priests)" and "the Church (meaning the institutional Church)".⁸⁷ He seemed to

⁸³ Bianchi, "Secular Ecumenism", in Thought, Vol. 44, No. 172, p. 94.

⁸⁴ Idem, ibid., p. 95.

⁸⁵ Idem, ibid., p. 93.

⁸⁶ Idem, ibid., p. 95.

⁸⁷ Reicher, "Tomorrow's Christian, A Review Article", in Chicago Studies, Vol. 8, No. 3, p. 232.

assign an initiatory "charitable action" role to the institutional Church by stating that "some members of the Church stand at its cutting edge, breaking new ground and moving on".⁸⁸ Marciniak is much more detailed. First of all, he rejects the claim by "clerical enthusiasts" that "the Church is now moving into human society and is finally committed to the world":⁸⁹

If the secular Christian, too, is the church and if he is already at home in the world by his calling, has not the church been in the world all along? [...] it is the "civil servants" of the church, priests, bishops, religious, and lay employees, who are now rising [...] to become once more a church in the world. [...] by identifying the Church with its "civil servants," the enthusiasts expose their particular caricature. [...]

Nor is the confusion resolved by saying that the secular Christian is the "bridge" between the church and the world, a bridge over which the priests and religious walk to reach the world. The Christian is not the bridge. He is the world. And because he is the world, the church is already in the world!⁹⁰

Immediately after his insistence on the fact that "secular Christians" are in reality also "the church", Marciniak begins to speak of "the church" in an altogether different context: "The Christian community, which is the church, [...] seeks to serve the wider community, the world, in which

88 Reicher, Op. Cit.

89 Marciniak, Tomorrow's Christian, p. 19.

90 Idem, ibid., p. 19-20.

secular Christians are eternally involved".⁹¹ "The great strength and influence of a Christian congregation is directly linked to its free renunciation of the ordinary uses of secular power. 'Power structure' and Church are mutually incompatible."⁹² Although he had said that the "secular Christian" is the "Church in the world", Marciniak seems to be making a juridical/non-juridical distinction in his notion of the Church. This is emphasized by his assignment of an initiatory role in charitable action to "the Christian congregation":

Priority should be given to special projects which will be epiphanies of Christian service--revealing ways in which God is present among men.⁹³

A project will generate teamwork between priests and secular Christians if they devote themselves to meeting human needs and if their relations are kept informal and personal so that there will be no breakdown of communications. Such projects are not statement but action-oriented, and their initiation lies chiefly but not exclusively, with the civil servants.⁹⁴

Marciniak reinforces this indication that there is a distinct juridical aspect to "the church" by stating in another place that "most social action efforts would not be undertaken by

91 Marciniak, Op. Cit., p. 63.

92 Idem, ibid.

93 Idem, ibid., p. 128.

94 Idem, ibid., p. 135.

Christians qua church".⁹⁵

The largest group of texts seem to assign to the Church both charity and justice functions without indicating any distinction of a juridical/non-juridical nature as regards these functions, although at times this distinction in itself is stated or implied.

One text, that by Joseph Gremillion, seems to indicate a bit of ambivalence when it decries the fact that most Church social efforts were "only palliative, dealing with the effects and not with the causes of poverty and alienation",⁹⁶ and then questions, "Does not the determining role belong to the laity on their own in keeping with their own competences in the world, and quite independent of directives from clergy and the visible Church?"⁹⁷ This ambivalence is probably resolved by reflecting that social efforts are not excluded from "the clergy and the visible Church", but that "the determining role" is assigned to the laity on the basis of competence.

The rest of the texts provide clearer statements. Michael Mincieli speaks of the "teaching role of the Church"

⁹⁵ Marciniak, "Catholic Social Action: Where Do We Go From Here?", in America, Vol. 123, No. 19, p. 514.

⁹⁶ Gremillion, "The Parish and the World We Live In", in The Parish in a Time of Change, p. 201.

⁹⁷ Idem, ibid., p. 205.

in a way that involves both clerics and laity, instruction and action, charity and justice:

Ultimately, we must ask ourselves how we Catholics, as individuals and in groups, can translate our doctrine into action. The emphasis on the teaching role of the Church has all too often led to an over-emphasis on the teaching role of the priest to the exclusion of the teaching role of the layman. (Notice that I used the word teach, not preach. To preach implies the use of words alone. But, to teach implies the use of words and action. By the same analogy, we might say that Christ did not preach, but taught.) [...] Instruction in the obligations of Christian life is no longer sufficient to meet the challenges of civil rights, welfare, or birth control. The means that will enable Christians properly to fulfill these duties are necessary.⁹⁸

The institutionalized Church [...] must become a living organism of controversy and action.⁹⁹

Since "the institutionalized Church" is to "become a living organism of controversy and action", Mincieli has no need to utilize a juridical/non-juridical distinction. For him the Church is a teacher who teaches both by words and by actions of all kinds. William McCormack seems to make a similar point when he describes the Church as "a sign, but not just a sign; she is an effective sign that causes or brings about what it signifies, i.e., the salvation of all men in Christ".¹⁰⁰

⁹⁸ Mincieli, "Catholic Social Service: A Philosophy", in Catholic Charities Review, Vol. 50, No. 9, p. 7.

⁹⁹ Idem, ibid., p. 9.

¹⁰⁰ McCormack, "Is Ministry the Message", in World-mission, Vol. 19, No. 3, p. 39.

He describes some of the ways in which the Church as sign can be effective:

Less reliance on words (while not underestimating their legitimate power), more emphasis on witnessing in terms of service, diakonia, more optimism about the inherent qualities of the non-Christian world, a humble awareness that we do not have all God's blueprints in the palm of our hand--all such developments move in the right direction.¹⁰¹

He bases his belief on the totality of the Church's task on the example of Christ, insofar as "Christ presented a totality of evangelization and service".¹⁰²

This same kind of general statement, making no real distinction as to charity or justice, is found in the work of The National Council of Catholic Men which refers to the Church not so much as "teacher" or "sign" but as "exorcist", and in a way that makes the concept of "Church" very broad:

The Church, like Jesus, is an exorcist driving from institutions and ideologies of all kinds whatever degrades man. She does this by living the Gospel of Jesus. (This is why the civil rights movement is in a very real sense a work of the Church of Jesus, whether it recognizes this or not.)¹⁰³

The notion of Church mission is likewise broad, and is expressed in a way that does away with any concern for a juridical/non-juridical distinction:

101 McCormack, Op. Cit., p. 42.

102 Idem, ibid., p. 43.

103 NCCM, The Spirit of Renewal, p. 33.

There is one mission. It is not a specifically "lay" mission or a "hierarchic" mission or a "missionary" mission [...] it is the Christian mission. And the objective of this mission is not specifically to convert non-Catholics or non-Christians. It has to do with a more basic conversion [...] the conversion of non-human persons to the full realization of their free humanity. The Christian mission [...] is to be Christ. Any kind of activity may be in furtherance of the mission.¹⁰⁴

This idea seems to be shared by John Hill, who feels that whether it is through clerics or laity, it is still the Church that is involved:

The Church can no longer enjoy the luxury of restricting herself to ecclesiastical activities. She must occupy herself with the world and its concerns, including politics, economics, housing, race relations, community organization, leisure and international relations. Though many feel that this participation is best entered into by laymen rather than by priests, it is widely held that, one way or the other, the Church must put her hands into the stuff of life and get to work. She should not yield to the scruple that her involvement, in the minds of many, will be interpreted as meddling.¹⁰⁵

Dennis Clark agrees that the Church's social involvement should be broad, but he thinks that the specific focus of the Church (particularly the parish) should be "the defense of the person":

¹⁰⁴ NCCM, Op. Cit., p. 43.

¹⁰⁵ Hill, "People of God", in Parish in Crisis, p. 31-32.

The defense of the person is a task that could be the special contribution and social function of the parish in our time. [...] If the parish were dedicated to a humane regard for persons as persons, not as computer digits or census figures, there would be a unique role for the parish in a society of techniques, material competition, and cynicism. [...]

Many necessary services would follow in the adoption of this purpose, but they would not be make-work shams or pallid substitutes for things the larger society does better. They would be informed by a social ideal that would animate them and give them coherence.¹⁰⁶

The emphasis on works that would complement society's activities seems to indicate that what is being referred to is of the initiatory charitable-action type. Works pertaining to justice (here called "social action") are explicitly mentioned as desirable for the parish:

The involvement of the parishes in social-action drives will be the day of maturity for the American Catholic Church. Then there will be the possibility that on special issues of social policy Catholics will be able to enter into the decision-making circuit for the moral benefit of American life. We have, as yet, hardly begun to think of the potential role for such action. Until we are clear about our role with regard to the social decisions in urban life, we will not be clear about the place or function of the energies for goodness generated by the spiritual life of our parishes.¹⁰⁷

The above-mentioned broad statements are specified a bit by Mathew Ahmann, who encourages Church use of "power" on behalf of the poor, even to the point of providing "trained

¹⁰⁶ Clark, "Parochial Roles", in Parish in Crisis, p. 50-51

¹⁰⁷ Idem, ibid., p. 63-64.

community organizers", on the grounds that "Christ risked his life for the redemption of mankind. Can Christ's Church do less? The only opportunity is the opportunity to serve".¹⁰⁸ His exact words explain this attitude more clearly:

No task is more important, if the Church is to serve, than for the Church to stand with the poor and disadvantaged for a large slice of the country's economic and social pie. The identification with the poor which is growing among the grass-roots ministry in some of our cities must be encouraged, and the official Church must become a strong voice which dis-sents from the status quo in the city and fight for the rights of the poor.

Catholic Charities too [...] should turn a good portion of its attention back to the broader problems of poverty in our cities. Perhaps an effort by Catholic Charities to provide trained community organizers to work at the command of neighborhood organizations in the ghettos--no strings attached--would be a step in the right direction. [...]

It is important for us to recognize that the poor need a voice and that they need power. If the Church does not aid the poor of today because they are not Catholic, what can the meaning of the Gospel be to the Church.¹⁰⁹

Ahmann emphasizes that these efforts should be based in official "social action" offices, at both the national and diocesan levels.¹¹⁰ For Ahmann, then, it is important that the Church officially commit itself to that type of social action

¹⁰⁸ Ahmann, "Strategies for the Future", in The Church and the Urban Racial Crisis, p. 242.

¹⁰⁹ Idem, ibid., p. 240-241. This text also is found in Ahmann's article "The Church and the Urban Negro", in America, Vol. 118, No. 6, p. 185.

¹¹⁰ Idem, "The Church and the Urban Negro", in America, p. 183.

related to justice.

John Dearden is also specific about the Church's involvement, but he includes specifics concerning both what could be referred to as "charitable action" and what he calls "social action" (justice). His statement deserves probably the closest scrutiny since it is the most extensive one dealing with both aspects.

First of all, he deals in general with the Church's role in areas of social concern:

There must be a clear definition of the role of the Church in the community. And when I speak of definition, I am not speaking of a static and fixed definition. The role of the Church must be subject to constant reappraisal. When we identify in the community an area of need, our first question should be "is this a need that the Church should try to meet?" Or would we serve the community better by bringing the need to the attention of some other agency or institution in the community better equipped than the Church to meet it?¹¹¹

It is significant that Dearden does not have a definite idea of what the Church's role should be, but considers the Church to be involved on much the same basis as "some other agency or institution in the community". Whether or not the Church maintains a particular social project or simply initiates it depends not so much on the nature of the Church's mission as it does on the ability of the Church to carry out the project.

¹¹¹ Dearden, "Challenge to Change in the Urban Church", in The Church and the Urban Racial Crisis, p. 44-45.

He makes this very clear when he gives specific examples:

In the field of inner-city education, for example, the Church clearly does not have the resources to meet the need to any substantial degree. Then we must reappraise our role. Should we become involved to a limited extent with the thought of providing a stimulus to the efforts of public education programs? This we might do by establishing one or several experimental schools with unusually well-qualified personnel. Our goal then would be precise and hopefully attainable: to initiate and follow up programs which, if successful, could stimulate the public school system to imitate them.

Or to take another area of service, we may weigh the wisdom of establishing public health clinics. Clearly we cannot of ourselves solve the health problems of the inner city. However, if we can utilize some of the resources, particularly of trained personnel, from our Catholic suburban hospitals and involve them in clinical service in the inner city, we may take a long step toward elevating the caliber of health service available to the people in that area. Again our action is of the nature of a stimulus rather than a substantial answer to a pressing need. But perhaps the Church in our time can make its presence felt in these and other areas by taking advantage of its greater flexibility in initiating challenging programs of action.¹¹²

Dearden is very strong, then, on the idea of "initiation", but this emphasis, it is to be noted, is due to financial limitations and not to a notion of official Church involvement that would limit it to this.

As regards matters pertaining to justice ("the area of social action"), Dearden describes, in part, what he believes the Church should do:

¹¹² Dearden, Op. Cit., p. 45.

Coalitions need to be established between inner city groups and groups in the suburbs so that broad support can be mobilized to work on problems such as education in the inner city, code enforcement, highway relocation, urban renewal. Suburban groups by their contact with inner-city people become aware of the real problems.¹¹³

Since Dearden makes no mention of a distinction in the notion of Church, and since he speaks of the Church's broad involvement as being "demanded by her role as 'the sign of salvation'",¹¹⁴ social action is included among the responsibilities of the official (institutional) Church. This is made explicit in the following statement:

A change in our attitude toward institutional action is called for. [...] institutional power is not neutral. Its silence often places it on the side of the status quo. It seems clear that as an institution the Church should be active on the social scene.¹¹⁵

The Church has a place there, because through her Christ is there. His concerns for the needy and the downtrodden and for the abused must be reflected in the living Church of today.¹¹⁶

John Steffey, director of Catholic Social Services of Kalamazoo, seems to have the same general ideas concerning the Church and its institutional involvement, and, although he is not as detailed, he seems to be just as definite:

¹¹³ Dearden, Op. Cit., p. 48.

¹¹⁴ Idem, ibid., p. 44.

¹¹⁵ Idem, ibid., p. 49.

¹¹⁶ Idem, ibid., p. 50.

Catholic social services is a restricted term for the designation of the structured agency or institutional provision for determining need, finding the means to fill that need and implementing the findings on a voluntary, sectarian basis.¹¹⁷

Social action is leadership and responsibility. [...] If Catholic social services are to fulfill their commitment as community (or humanity) agencies, their ideas, values, and modes of action must be translated into those social vehicles and institutions which shape our lives.¹¹⁸

Ronald Hayes, Director of the Social Services Department of the Michigan Catholic Conference, speaks of the Church's involvement in "prevention services, direct family services, and social action",¹¹⁹ but he concentrates on social action, which he describes as "the process of changing society" (as mentioned above). He begins by relating social action to Catholic Charities:

First, what has social action to do with Catholic Charities? Here I am using the term Catholic Charities to refer to all social service programs under the auspices of the Catholic Church, whether they are now called that or not. [...]

Social action is directly related to all of the goals of Catholic Charities and without it these goals will not be met.¹²⁰

He then explains why the Church must be so involved:

¹¹⁷ Steffey, Catholic Charities Review, Vol. 51, No. 1, p. 23.

¹¹⁸ Idem, ibid., p. 24.

¹¹⁹ Hayes, "Social Action in Catholic Charities", in Catholic Charities Review, Vol. 51, No. 7, p. 10.

¹²⁰ Idem, ibid.

Social action is related to the very purpose of the Church, to be in the service of the needs of man, [...] it is inconsistent with Christianity not to be involved in social action when such action is the most effective method for preventing and/or removing many of the problems of man.¹²¹

He seems, however, to see at least much of the Church's involvement in social action as one of initiation until "the appropriate organization" takes over:

All agencies have a responsibility of initiating social action on any problem that concerns its clients. This may take the form of referral of the problem to an appropriate organization. It will require follow-up until the responsibility for dealing with the problem is accepted by someone. The agency would at least continue in a supporting role.¹²²

Hayes seems to be indicating, by implication, that the Church is not really an appropriate agency for social action, although it has no choice, given its mission of service, than to be thus involved when circumstances warrant.

John Cronin, former assistant director of the Social Action Department of the United States Catholic Conference, feels that although "Catholics do not have the resources to fight poverty and alienation single-handed",¹²³ nevertheless "the institutional Church can be a factor in influencing needed civic action".¹²⁴ He feels that this kind of influence,

¹²¹ Hayes, Op. Cit., p. 13.

¹²² Idem, ibid., p. 14.

¹²³ Cronin, "Social Action Today", in Homiletic and Pastoral Review, Vol. 68, No. 4, p. 295.

¹²⁴ Idem, ibid.

which he calls "social action", is especially important because "in most cases, the Church is the only powerful agency that can cross political boundaries and unite the city and suburbs in a community of service and concern".¹²⁵ Cronin then makes an effort to make it clear that when he refers to "the institutional Church", he means "the entire People of God, and not exclusively the clergy and bishops".¹²⁶ Here, again, there is no official/unofficial distinction in the concept of the Church, and, like Dearden, Cronin seems to say that the reason the Church can only "influence" is that it has only limited resources.

This opinion also seems to be shared by (Rev.) Robert Kennedy, director of the Social Action Department of Catholic Charities of Brooklyn. He says that since "we can't solve the problems of race and poverty by ourselves, [...] we have to use our money as a lever, as a way of creating a ripple effect".¹²⁷ As an example of what he means, he talks about the money the diocese put into organizing welfare recipients:

¹²⁵ Cronin, "Social Action: Myth or Reality", in Catholic Mind, Vol. 65, No. 1218, p. 44.

¹²⁶ Idem, ibid.

¹²⁷ R. Kennedy, quoted by Ed Wakin, The Sign, Vol. 48, No. 12, p. 16.

For about every dollar it put in, it got two thousand dollars worth of benefits back for the recipients. Beautiful leverage--we'll go into a ball game like that any time. But we can't supply income maintenance to people on welfare.¹²⁸

Kennedy also mentions charity but he concentrates on the above kind of activity which he refers to as "social action" and which he feels is necessary in every situation if you want "to solve the problem".¹²⁹ And as regards the Church, "the Church is committed to social action because people are social and the Church is committed to serving people".¹³⁰

It may be significant to conclude this section with the comment that this largest group of texts, which assigns both charity and justice functions to the official Church, is dominated by professionals involved in social-concern activities sponsored by the official Church. There is enough divergence of opinion on the whole, however, that it cannot be concluded that in general the American Catholic authors share a common view of the mission of the Church in the temporal order. One significant fact was discernible, however: two-thirds of the material in this section was written during 1967-1968 and only one item was written in 1971. One last fact which may be significant is that only ten periodicals carried any of this above-mentioned material

128 Kennedy, Op. Cit.

129 Idem, ibid.

130 Idem, ibid.

and of these only two, Thought and Catholic Charities Review, carried as many as three articles.

3. The Concept of Roles Involved in the Church's
Mission in the Temporal Order

Approximately one-fifth of the material pertaining to social action included texts dealing particularly with the roles of members in relation to the Church's mission in the temporal order. Examination of these particular texts will help to clarify the thinking of the American Catholic writers included in this survey in regard to the place of social action in the life of the members of the Church.

In only one instance was it implied that as regards leadership positions in official Church social-concern projects, there was to be no distinction between clergy and laity. John Steffey stated his case in this way:

If the competent layman is to remain with the Catholic social agency, he should have the possibility of rising to the top administrative posts. In some instances, the priest or religious more suitably holds these positions. However, when this is not necessarily true, the layman should be given to understand that these positions are open to him.¹³¹

In one other instance, clergy and laity were distinguished, not on ministerial/non-ministerial grounds, but on the basis of full or part-time service of the other members. The National Council of Catholic Men expressed their opinion

¹³¹ Steffey, Catholic Charities Review, Vol. 51, No. 1, p. 24.

in this statement:

[...] the relationship [...] between clergy and laity is not that of master to servant or of one learned in divine things to one acknowledging his own lack of information. It is a relationship of cooperation, of understanding that the ministry of the Church is shared by all. Those who have been ordained are in most cases to be fully given to the service of the other members who carry the ministry of the Church to those areas of society that are "non-Church." The Church needs authority [...] because she has a calling to live out, a service to perform, and any real authority is derived from the humbling and painful realization of what that service is and the decision to minister to those who directly perform it. Authority and authenticity are the same in the Church: the one who has genuine understanding of the Gospel is the one who can speak most clearly of the needs and demands of the given situation.¹³²

Therefore, although anyone "who can speak most clearly" in a "given situation" has true "authority" (the power and obligation to serve those who directly serve the world), those who are ordained are to perform this "service" full-time and, therefore, by implication, are not to directly serve the world.

Franz Mueller seems to concur in the opinion that clerics are not to become directly involved in affairs of social concern. Speaking of the clergy in the context of "the pastoral and magisterial office of the Church", he says:

132 NCCM, The Spirit of Renewal, p. 36.

It is not a function of the pastoral and magisterial office of the Church to offer practical solutions to concrete problems, to propose programs of social action and reform, to intervene in matters of prudential decision-making in purely analytical and technical matters.¹³³

And as regards these matters, "it remains for the laity actually to assume that responsibility for which they have clamored so long".¹³⁴

This same delineation of roles seems to be favored by Richard McKeon who says, "The priest should realize that the greatest social action today is in the hands of government. [...] The Church simply does not have the funds and the personnel to cover adequately all the needs of its members and of others who frequently come for aid".¹³⁵ "The priest, therefore, has the solemn duty to urge the laity to apostolic action in the social order."¹³⁶ "Priests are ordained to preach."¹³⁷ It is not clear here whether or not the priest should do something else beside preach if the Church did have sufficient funds and personnel.

¹³³ Mueller, "Social Ethics or 'Political Theology'", in Thought, Vol. 46, No. 180, p. 23.

¹³⁴ Idem, ibid., p. 22.

¹³⁵ R. McKeon, "Preaching and Social Action", in Pastoral Life, Vol. 14, No. 5, p. 288.

¹³⁶ Idem, ibid., p. 290.

¹³⁷ Idem, ibid., p. 286.

Michael Mincieli seems, also, to restrict "action" to the laity by implying that the priest's part in the teaching role of the Church is restricted to "preaching" ("the use of words alone"):

The emphasis on the teaching role of the Church has all too often led to an over-emphasis on the teaching role of the priest to the exclusion of the teaching role of the layman. (Notice that I used the word teach, not preach. To preach implies the use of words alone. But, to teach implies the use of words and action. By the same analogy, we might say that Christ did not preach, but taught).¹³⁸

Mincieli's implications as to the different roles do not, however, seem to be very clear. What does seem to be clear about the statements of the last three writers is that they do not state or imply a citizenship role for the clergy.

Joseph Gremillion and Donald Thorman, however, do seem to imply that the clergy have such a role, at least at some time or to some extent. Gremillion does this by stating that the laity's role in the social order is not an exclusive one, but a "determining" one.¹³⁹ Thorman gives a similar impression when he refers to the "popular" present social involvement of clerics while still holding that "the parish priests of the future [...] will come to find that they will

¹³⁸ Mincieli, "Catholic Social Service: A Philosophy", in Catholic Charities Review, Vol. 50, No. 9, p. 7.

¹³⁹ Gremillion, "The Parish and the World We Live In", in The Parish in a Time of Change, p. 205.

be serving their parishes best as preachers of the Gospel".¹⁴⁰

A significant group of writers explain explicitly that clerics have the rights of citizenship, but they also qualify these rights because they see them as something separate from, and sometimes even opposed to, clerical tasks. Laymen are, however, obliged to be involved.

Reginald Masterson deals with this in the context of "priestly identity":

Other priests attempt to solve the problem of priestly identity by forsaking the proper role of the priest as builder of the Christian community and take up the layman's task of building human society through social action. There may be a time and place when Christian prudence requires the direct intervention by the priest in social action, but this must never be mistaken as the answer to priestly identity.¹⁴¹

Masterson specifically makes, then, the "task of building human society" the responsibility not of all citizens, but that of the laity. He does not explain the grounds, therefore, on which the priest may at times make "direct intervention in social action". He seems to make "priestly identity" such an all-inclusive reality that it even encompasses functions of citizenship.

¹⁴⁰ Thorman, "Requiem for the Parish?", in U.S. Catholic, Vol. 34, No. 5, p. 14.

¹⁴¹ Masterson, "The Role of the Priest", in Cross and Crown, Vol. 23, No. 2, p. 186.

William Allen concentrates on the practical problem of getting "the faithful" to realize the distinction between an individual's different roles:

And we must always make the distinction, well-publicized among the faithful--if a cleric, a nun, etc., chooses to promote a practical solution, this is done as a public-spirited responsible citizen and not as representative of the official Church. Yet how difficult it is for the faithful to make that distinction and to understand it. How arduous to keep such intrusion into the social and political domain from doing harm to the Church's primary mission.¹⁴²

If we would only restrict concrete programs to our enlightened and zealous Catholics under the direction of the Church as to doctrine and principles!¹⁴³

On the one hand, Allen implies that citizenship is proper to clerics, but on the other he calls this "intrusion" and desires that it be restricted to the laity who would be directed by the clerics (whom he refers to as "the Church").

Vincent Giese seems, in making a distinction between citizenship activities and clerical duties, to allow both for an individual cleric:

At times a priest may be called upon to give a personal witness in all this, to protest against injustice, and to be deeply involved in the aspirations and work of these movements. But never can one or the other of these become co-extensive with his priesthood.¹⁴⁴

¹⁴² Allen, "Quid in Casu?", in Pastoral Life, Vol. 16, No. 1, p. 44.

¹⁴³ Idem, ibid.

¹⁴⁴ Giese, "The Role of the Priest Among God's People", in Our Sunday Visitor, Vol. 54, No. 47, p. 9.

But, in a personal reference, he seems to contradict this:

My life as a layman is behind me. No more direct organization of communities [...], campaigning for certain political offices, editing union newspapers, or other similar activities I may have engaged in as a layman.¹⁴⁵

Involvement in social-concern activities is, then, in this statement, not so much the responsibility of all citizens as the responsibility of "lay" citizens. Giese does not resolve this seeming ambivalence.

Edward Marciniak also divides up responsibilities according to different groups, but he does not do it along clergy/laity lines. Although he admits the possibility that all Christians do have the responsibilities of citizenship, he maintains that these mainly belong to what he calls "secular Christians"--laity employed "in the world"--and that, as far as the Church's "civil servants"--"priest, bishops, religious and lay employees"--are concerned, "it is by serving the secular Christian in his vocation that 'civil servants' best relate to the world".¹⁴⁶

Marciniak clarifies his idea of the obligations of the "civil servants" in a rather detailed treatment of the role of the priest, specifically. First of all, he refers to the social involvement of priests as "returning to his

¹⁴⁵ Giese, Op. Cit.

¹⁴⁶ Marciniak, Tomorrow's Christian, p. 19.

first calling as a Christian or to his human responsibility as a citizen".¹⁴⁷ He then implies that by doing this the priest is compromising his priestly vocation, which Marciniak obviously sees as an all-inclusive one:

In doing so [...] he will not clarify his vocation as a priest. [...] the new temptation is for him to model his role on that of the secular Christian, thus turning him into a counterfeit layman and a mediocre priest. Priests do need to re-examine their relationship to the world, but they do not need to copy the secular Christian's vocation.¹⁴⁸

Later on he explains just what the priest's relationship to the world consists of:

As an outsider the priest finds his strength in writing, teaching, preaching, counselling, listening and setting example; in providing a sense of direction, but not a particular path; and in generating around himself an urgency about a neglected problem, but not in advocating a specific solution. He has a real contribution to make but rarely the solution.¹⁴⁹

In different places Marciniak suggests that his exclusion of priests (and likewise all "civil servants") from "secular" affairs is basically a practical conclusion. He implies that "rarely" is a priest justified in being involved because he fears that the priest's efforts will be "mediocre" or distract him from his clerical tasks--"he increasingly directs his attention to human society without relating to his lay

147 Marciniak, Op. Cit., p. 59.

148 Idem, ibid.

149 Idem, ibid., p. 88.

congregation".¹⁵⁰ He also fears that priests will engage in power politics "in the name of the church"¹⁵¹ and states that "even more serious is the probability that he will turn out to be a mercenary, hired to do those things in the world which secular Christians themselves should be performing".¹⁵² He also makes the judgment that when the priest's "wielding of power goes beyond [...] the persuasion of reason and love" to "the use of political threats, economic penalties and social sanction", these are simply "shortcuts by which a priest rationalizes his failure to develop responsible Christians".¹⁵³

Robert Reicher, in his review of Marciniak's book, Tomorrow's Christian, states that he would have to agree with the author's position.¹⁵⁴ He then outlines his own position:

The cleric admittedly has rights and duties of citizenship, but his responsibility as a cleric implies something different from citizenship. His responsibility precisely is the stimulation of the Christian conscience. [...] The style of solution, the manner of solving social issues, the posture of evincing change is not the streamlined shortcut of the cleric.¹⁵⁵

150 Marciniak, Op. Cit., p. 59.

151 Idem, ibid., p. 62.

152 Idem, ibid., p. 60.

153 Idem, ibid., p. 62.

154 Reicher, "Tomorrow's Christian, A Review Article", in Chicago Studies, Vol. 8, No. 3, p. 229.

155 Idem, ibid., p. 230.

A similar note of reservation concerning the priest's involvement in social issues is sounded by Richard McKeon in a previously-mentioned article (cf. footnote 135 above), but in another he gives quite the opposite impression. He openly advocates involvement on the grounds that "we are priests, but we are also citizens and should not separate ourselves from the world around us".¹⁵⁶ He seems to base this on the following:

Priests should remember that Christ was the greatest revolutionary of all time. His first priests were zealous in their efforts to change the old order in which slavery was rampant, women degraded, the state despotic and exploitation of the people widespread.¹⁵⁷

John Hill also supports the position that priests should "increasingly assert their rights as Americans",¹⁵⁸ and he says that "priests [...] should not be ill at ease when they find themselves involved in a great deal of secular activity".¹⁵⁹ He explains himself this way:

They may find themselves doing the kind of work done by case workers, counsellors, community organizers, precinct captains, educators. They may be doing the work far less perfectly than professionally trained personnel would do it. But the question they should be asking themselves is, "What does this community need?"¹⁶⁰

¹⁵⁶ R. McKeon, "Priests and the Social Order", in Pastoral Life, Vol. 14, No. 4, p. 210.

¹⁵⁷ Idem, ibid.

¹⁵⁸ Hill, "People of God", in Parish in Crisis, p. 42.

¹⁵⁹ Idem, ibid., p. 32.

¹⁶⁰ Idem, ibid.

The largest group of writers goes beyond saying that clerics have the rights and obligations of citizens to the position that they have a special function as clerics in the temporal order. This function is expressed differently by various writers, but for all of them it includes both social service (charity) and social action (justice).

In the last of his three articles, McKeon extends priestly social involvement from involvement as an individual citizen to involvement as a priestly function:

Priests must manifest a sincere empathy with their people, that is, they must place themselves in their people's circumstances and act accordingly. This implies that a genuine liturgical leader must also be a leader in socio-political problems; to know one's people and their real problems, which frequently are socio-political ones, the priest must identify with them; he must be with the people as they work for solutions to these secular problems.¹⁶¹

In addition to operating as a political leader, the priest must also lead in terms of initiating social service projects such as credit unions and cooperatives.¹⁶²

Bonaventure O'Brien states that the priest can and should engage in social action and social service. He gives various reasons why this is the case. For instance he says that "the distinction is often made that the field of the priest is the sacred, while the field of the layman is

¹⁶¹ R. McKeon, "Economic Development: the New Name for Peace", in Pastoral Life, Vol. 15, No. 10, p. 546.

¹⁶² Idem, ibid., p. 549.

profane", but "I do not think that this distinction remains true to the Incarnation".¹⁶³ Also, he says, "I do not believe that social action is separable from the sacrament of Holy Orders".¹⁶⁴ He explains this inseparability in this way:

First of all, a person receives the sacrament and his personhood cannot be existentially separated from the sacrament. Therefore, when his concrete situation allows, I believe that there is an imperative that he be involved in social action. The imperative is derived from the nature of personhood.

Secondly, according to canon law, the recipient of Holy Orders must be baptized and confirmed. Baptism and Confirmation are the basic signs of the new Covenant--the entrance rite. Thus, the priest has the obligation to give witness to the basic command of the new covenant--love. Since social action is simply a form of love--organized and contemporary--it would follow that he, when he is able, should be involved in it. [...]

[...] it would follow that [...] since the priest has, through the sacrament of Holy Orders, the role of leadership in the Eucharistic Liturgy as redemption continued through creation, his leadership is incomplete unless it is extended to the practical. If the priest's role of leadership is to continue, this means that he can be practically involved in the issue of war [...], in organizing a boycott, leading picket lines, attacking do-nothing civil governments, involving himself in community-development programs, etc.¹⁶⁵

O'Brien's statement is probably the strongest theological argument in favor of priestly involvement that has been encountered in this research.

¹⁶³ Bonaventure O'Brien, quoted in "An Interview With Bonaventure O'Brien, OFM", in Ave Maria, Vol. 103, No. 2, p. 7.

¹⁶⁴ Idem, ibid.

¹⁶⁵ Idem, ibid., p. 7-8.

John Cronin also believes that the priest should be involved in social-concern projects, and he uses the term "social action" to refer to both "ways to help immediate needs and [...] long-term programs aimed at the causes of destitution and alienation".¹⁶⁶ He states that "social action is a specialized form of priestly apostolate"¹⁶⁷ and makes these comments about it:

As presiding officers of the Eucharistic community, ours is a special mission to represent and embody the love of Christ, and we have the guidance of Spirit that goes with the office. While the layman too is called to the apostolate of mercy, our office is an efficacious symbol of this incarnate love.

Because the priest in social action often uses methods and techniques common to believers and unbelievers alike, it does not follow that his contribution is merely one of personality and technique. [...] The unique dedication of a celibate, selfless love is a gift which the poor and the powerless receive gratefully.¹⁶⁸

Cronin's main points, then, seem to be that clerics are to be involved in both charity and justice activities and are to function distinctively as "symbols".

These ideas are also found in the statement of the Bishops' Committee on the Permanent Diaconate. Insofar as deacons are also clerics, it is significant to note that

¹⁶⁶ Cronin, "Social Action Today", in Homiletic and Pastoral Review, Vol. 68, No. 4, p. 296.

¹⁶⁷ Idem, ibid., p. 297.

¹⁶⁸ Idem, ibid., p. 295-296.

the Committee refers to the diaconate as "an office of certain Christians to be living symbols of [...] service",¹⁶⁹ although "all Christians" share "the Church's common responsibility to service and charity".¹⁷⁰ The Committee also, significantly, declares that "the lay Christian's more proper apostolate, that to the secular community" is an appropriate sphere of activity for the deacon.¹⁷¹ This apostolate is described in terms of both justice ("social action") and charity,¹⁷² as being carried out "in solidarity with lay men and women", and as something additional to the "'sacred' function in liturgy" that "deacons share with priests and the bishop".¹⁷³ What is not explained is why priests and the bishop do not share this "secular" apostolate also, since they were also ordained deacons and retain the other diaconal functions. One other statement that confirms the Committee's statement that the deacon's distinctive function is that of "symbol" is this:

169 NCCB, Bishops' Committee on the Permanent Diaconate, The Permanent Deacons in the United States, p. 5.

170 Idem, ibid.

171 Idem, ibid., p. 10.

172 Idem, ibid.

173 Idem, ibid., p. 47.

Deacons can very appropriately contribute their ministry in teams that are under the leadership of lay people. Serving does not have to mean leading. By personal witness to the Risen Lord even in the humblest service, deacons will be strengthening the faith and enthusiasm of a church made up predominantly of lay people. Thus deacons enhance the lay apostolate both by participating in it and by intensifying the faith of all members of the Church.¹⁷⁴

In an appendix to the Committee's statement, Lawrence Corcoran reiterates that the deacon is to be involved in both "social service" and "social action" just like the laity except for the "distinctiveness of ordination".¹⁷⁵

And, finally, an editorial in Commonweal described a desirable training program for "pastoral formation" of seminarians as including "social action programs, such as work in disadvantaged areas and with community organizations; and special ministries to the sick, aged, migrants, urban poor, to business, industry and campus".¹⁷⁶

Some summary statements can now be made regarding the perception of roles involved in the Church's mission in the temporal order. First, the largest single group of American Catholic writers spoke of the clerical role as involving

¹⁷⁴ NCCB, Bishops' Committee on the Permanent Diaconate, Op. Cit., p. 48.

¹⁷⁵ Lawrence J. Corcoran, "The Permanent Diaconate in Relation to Catholic Charities", in Permanent Deacons in the U.S., p. 58.

¹⁷⁶ "Renewing the Ministry", in Commonweal, Vol. 94, No. 6, p. 125.

citizenship activities, although there were various descriptions of what that entailed. In contrast to this group, another, nearly as large, disassociated social concerns from the clerical role. None of the writers in either group seemed to distinguish between charity and justice activities in referring to social involvement in the context of Church roles. But since the majority of writers did agree that individuals who are clerics are also citizens and have at least some responsibilities of citizenship, it can be concluded that as citizens they are entitled to engage in at least some justice-related social action, whether or not it is connected with their clerical role. In regard to the laity, all writers seemed to agree explicitly that this kind of social action is one of their obligations. There was some description of social action as a "lay" activity, but it was also described as a citizenship activity when clerics were involved.

In addition, there also seemed to be some indication that an official/unofficial (juridical/non-juridical) distinction could be made regarding roles in the overall mission of the Church. Related to this, it can not be said that these writers confined the cleric/lay distinction to the juridical aspect of the Church.

It became apparent in this research that American Catholic writers did not have much difficulty with the role of the layman in social action, but that they did have

considerable difficulty in assessing the extent and type of involvement proper to the individual who is a cleric. This difficulty could have significant consequences for the institutional structuring of the American Church.

4. Conclusion

The material that could be used to discern a possible American Catholic concept of social action (after Vatican II) had to be gathered from a variety of sources, since there has been no systematic treatment of this concept to date. Since all of this material contained at least one reference to Vatican II, the American Catholic positions regarding social action should, in themselves, imply a reaction to the Council's position, which reaction is to be considered more explicitly in later chapters.

The investigation of a possible concept of social action revolved around three factors: the concept of the term "social action", the concept of the mission of the Church in the temporal order and the concept of roles of Church members in this mission.

For the American Catholic writers included in this research, the term "social action" is used to indicate various activities. For some, the term refers to action pertaining to charity; for others, it means efforts in promotion of justice; and for still others it refers to all

activities of social concern, whether related to justice or charity. The meaning used more often than any other, however, is that indicating action for justice. The fact that a variety of meaning exists was probably to be expected since Vatican II was not precise about its meaning of the term, and since it used the term only once. The predominance of the meaning related to justice should not have been surprising, however, since closer examination of the term in Vatican II shows that it was used only in the context of justice. Because of the overall variations in use by the American Catholic writers, however, the term most probably does not mean any one thing to the American Catholics at large. Consequently, programs bearing the title "social action" probably vary greatly in content and understanding.

The writers in this survey also held various positions concerning the Church's mission in the temporal order. Some advocated no official social involvement at all, while others favored official involvement in "charitable action" but only unofficial involvement in justice-related activities. A plurality of writers, however, promoted the involvement of the official Church in all activities of social concern. Again, this wide variation could have been expected since the Council seemed both to promote and restrict Church social involvement. The decisive factor, the juridical/non-juridical distinction, was not sufficiently clear to offset the

understandable confusion. Since those favoring each position can marshal evidence in their favor, it is imperative that the juridical/non-juridical distinction be made soon, with resulting delineation of functions, so that some kind of coherent policy can be developed.

There was not as much variation in the positions taken concerning the roles of Church members as there was concerning the Church's social mission itself. There was rather general agreement that the laity could and should participate in all types of social concern activities. Variations abounded, however, when it came to the place of clerics. As noted above, clerical social involvement was sometimes promoted and sometimes restricted. The variations seem to parallel the variations concerning the mission of the Church in the temporal order. This is understandable since clerics are identified with the official Church and there was confusion concerning official Church social involvement. A juridical/non-juridical distinction in the understanding of the Church would probably go a long way toward clearing up the writers' difficulties regarding the roles of clerics.

Another problem seemed to result from the fact that the Council may not have stressed sufficiently the organizational leadership role of the cleric and, as a result, the clerics were not specifically included in official Church

"charitable action" by those who restricted them to an official Church role. A clarification of the cleric's distinctive function as well as more emphasis on his responsibilities as a citizen are probably also needed in order to develop a commonly accepted description of his overall role in social action.

The wide divergence of positions uncovered in this research seems to indicate that at present there is not a unified American Catholic concept of social action. Whether this is a result of a lack of awareness of Vatican II's positions, misunderstanding of them, or reaction against them is yet to be determined.

CHAPTER III

AMERICAN CATHOLIC AWARENESS OF VATICAN II'S CONCEPT OF SOCIAL ACTION

There are two key elements in the American Catholic reaction to Vatican II's concept of social action. One is the degree of awareness of the Council's concept. The other is the attitude toward what this concept is perceived to be. The element of awareness, to be discussed in this chapter, is important because it has a serious impact on Church policy and ultimately on the type of action that is taken.

The sources to be dealt with in this chapter are those portions of the total material which both discuss the issue at hand and refer directly to the Council or one of its documents. Approximately one-fourth of the material included in this research contained such texts. Again, the examination procedure will be to begin with the term "social action", proceed to the mission of the Church in the temporal order, and conclude with the members' roles in this mission.

1. The Term "Social Action"

In this research only two writers have been found who refer to the specific text (Laity, art. 7) which contains the term "social action", and each of them implies a different understanding of the term.

John Sheerin uses only the word "action", but he uses it in the context of "rectifying public disorders", so it can be presumed that he has the same meaning as that intended by Vatican II, namely actions pertaining to justice. His exact words bear this out:

Chapter II of the Decree considers the objectives of the lay apostolate. The laity are to bring Christ and his message to the world by helping the clergy, if necessary, in their apostolate of Word and Sacrament, but their own special obligation is the renewal of the temporal order. By word and by action, they should strive to rectify the public disorders tending to undermine the foundations of religion, the moral order and human society itself (n. 7).¹

Ernest Falardeau, however, seems to presume that the term has a general meaning pertaining to any social involvement. He begins his treatment by quoting from article 7:

The goal of the layman's apostolate is spelled out:

'The laity must take on the renewal of the temporal order as their own special obligation. [...] Outstanding among the works of this type of apostolate is that of Christian social action. This sacred Synod desires to see it extended not to the whole temporal sphere, including culture.'²

He then explains what he understands to be the meaning of this text:

¹ John B. Sheerin, Decree on the Apostolate of the Laity of Vatican II, Glen Rock, N.J., Paulist, 1966, p. 17.

² Ernest R. Falardeau, "The Layman and Holiness", in Cross and Crown, Vol. 21, No. 3, September 1969, p. 287.

We may summarize the orientation given by Vatican II as follows: The task of the Church in the world is to bring all men to Christ. [...] This task of illuminating the world can be carried on in two ways: by spreading the Gospel message (this is the essential task of the whole Church, but more especially so of the hierarchy) and by bringing the Christian witness into the world directly (this, too, is the task of the whole Church, but especially the layman).³

The implication concerning social action seems to be that it simply refers to "bringing the Christian witness into the world directly" without any charity/justice distinction, although he does not mention the term explicitly.

It is obvious at this time that any awareness on the part of American Catholic writers concerning Vatican II's concept of social action will have to be inferred since there is a minimum of reference to the most pertinent text. There were, however, other explicit references to social action in the context of Vatican II.

Richard McKeon refers to social action in the context of article 30 of the "Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World": "In the section The Church in the Modern World under Number 30 there is rejection of the individual ethic and accent on social action".⁴ The actual text reads as follows:

3 Falardeau, Op. Cit., p. 287-288.

4 Richard M. McKeon, "The Second Vatican Council and the Common Good", in American Ecclesiastical Review, Vol. 157, No. 1, July 1967, p. 37.

It grows increasingly true that the obligations of justice and love are fulfilled only if each person, contributing to the common good, according to his own abilities and the needs of others, also promotes and assists the public and private institutions dedicated to bettering the conditions of human life.⁵

McKeon does not seem aware, at least in this instance, of Vatican II's meaning, since he uses the term in a general way in order to explain a text in which the term does not appear.

John F. Cronin referred to social action in the context of three of the Council documents. He used the phrase "social and civic action", which seems to give social action the meaning of charity, in the following statement:

When Vatican Council II gave its directives for renewing the Church, it frequently referred to the need for lay social and civic action. This is the main theme of its Constitution on the Church in the Modern World. It runs as a refrain throughout the Decree on the Apostolate of the Laity. And it is strongly urged in the Decree on Ecumenism as one of the major avenues of inter-religious contacts.⁶

His use of the phrase "social and civic action" seems to contrast social action and civic action, and as such seems to equate social action more particularly with works of charity. This would indicate that he had not grasped Vatican II's

⁵ The Second Vatican Council, "Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World", in The Documents of Vatican II, edited by Walter M. Abbott, New York, Guild, 1966, p. 228.

⁶ John F. Cronin, "Catholics and Modern Civic Action", in Pastoral Life, Vol. 14, No. 3, March 1966, p. 143.

meaning.

There were four other instances of explicit reference to social action in the context of Vatican II, and while none of them referred to the Decree on the Laity, they all referred to social action as involving justice.

William Allen may have had the Decree on the Laity in mind when he wrote: "The bishops of Vatican II encouraged just this thing: social action by Catholics as dedicated and responsible citizens imbued with a thorough knowledge of Christian principles and the necessary practical science of obtaining concrete effects."⁷ Allen is certainly correct concerning what Vatican II meant by the term.

Joseph Novak also uses the term correctly when, in the context of "the Christian renewal being worked out in Vatican Council II", he says: "holy Church views poverty as a challenge not merely to our compassion and charity, but also to intelligent social action aimed at eradicating the many causes of human failure".⁸

An editorial in the April 1966 issue of The Sign first stated that "the Council itself called for strong involvement of the Church in such matters as race, poverty,

⁷ William F. Allen, "Quid in Casu?", in Pastoral Life, Vol. 16, No. 1, January 1968, p. 43.

⁸ Joseph Novak, Editor, Christianity Today; A Book of Readings, New York, Holt, 1966, p. 339.

and peace",⁹ and then linked these justice matters to the term "social action" in these words: "the Church has the duty to be a vital witness in the area of social action".¹⁰ The editorial's meaning coincides clearly with that of Vatican II.

And finally, Edward Marciniak links social justice, Vatican II, and social action in this way:

In the act of awakening bishops to new responsibilities, in stirring up reforms within religious orders, in calling upon all Church structures for a Christian review of their operations, Vatican II granted higher priority to social justice and freedom.

And so Vatican II helped take social action off the sandlot into the big leagues. Organized concern for social justice, once lodged outside of diocesan institutions or assigned second-class status within them, successfully began to infiltrate established budgets and offices.¹¹

This text by Marciniak is the last that can be said to explicitly link Vatican II and social action. Of the eight texts that did, five used the meaning related to justice, one the meaning related to charity, and two the meaning including both charity and justice activities. Although the largest group utilized the same meaning as Vatican II's,

⁹ "Involvement of the Clergy", in The Sign, Vol. 45, No. 9, April 1966, p. 33.

¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹ Edward A. Marciniak, "Catholic Social Action: Where Do We Go From Here?", in America, Vol. 123, No. 19, December 12, 1970, p. 512.

the total number of explicit references was so small that it can not be concluded that the American Catholic writers as a whole were aware of Vatican II's meaning of the term "social action". The fact may be, however, that a great number of writers presumed that the Council's meaning was the same as their own, and so didn't feel that it was worth mentioning. If such was the case, the fact of a larger proportion of correct interpretations of the Council's meaning of the term could be significant. This is a guess, however, and although it should not be discounted, it cannot presume to serve as fact. Examination of other aspects of the concept "social action" might yield more definitive results.

2. The Church's Mission in the Temporal Order

The Council made it clear in the schemata, but only implicit in the final documents, that the social involvement of the Church varied between "temporal action" (including "social action") and "charitable action". It also made clear, this time in the documents themselves, although only in a few places, that Church social involvement is part of the very mission of the Church and not just ancillary to it. These elements are very important for the total understanding of the Council's concept of social action, but it is now to be determined whether or not their implicit and/or quantitatively minor nature led to confusion or inaccuracy on the

part of the Americans.

Only one text in the survey material made it a point to explain Vatican II's emphasis on the social apostolate on the basis that "one must be a man before he can be a Christian". Sheerin indicates, in the following words, that the social apostolate is promoted by article 7 of the Decree on the Laity only so that men will be disposed to listen to the Christian message:

The text speaks of 'rectifying the distortion of the temporal order and directing it to God through Christ' (n. 7). I think the implication here is that the temporal order can at times be so corrupt and subhuman as to lead men away from Christ. One must be a man before he can be a Christian, but it is difficult to attempt to preach the Gospel to a man who lives a subhuman existence, just as it is difficult to preach the Gospel to a man who is starving.¹²

This dualistic interpretation of the Church's mission seems to indicate a lack of awareness of Vatican II's position that social involvement is an integral part of the Church's mission. Sheerin also refers to the "charitable works" mentioned in article 8 of the Decree on the Laity as "secular tasks that are claimed by the Church".¹³ This description of "charitable works" as "secular tasks" seems to reflect a lack of awareness of the fact that the Council considered

¹² Sheerin, Decree on the Apostolate of the Laity of Vatican II, p. 17.

¹³ Idem, ibid., p. 18.

initiatory charitable works to be an integral part of the Church's juridical mission. The use of "secular" also seems to reflect a lack of awareness of the fact that the Council showed an inclination to extend the concept of "Church" so that it includes a non-juridical aspect. The non-juridical aspect, then, would include the "secular" rather than be separate from it.

None of the other writers indicate the dualistic attitude of Sheerin, although they do vary in their descriptions of what they consider to be Vatican II's concept of the mission of the Church in the temporal order.

A significant number of writers described the concept in quite general terms, so that it was not clear exactly what they had in mind as their basis or their program.

Michael Mincieli, for one, said that "in the era of the Second Vatican Council [...] the institutionalized Church [...] must become a living organism".¹⁴ Mathew Ahmann said that the Second Vatican Council "energized" the change in the Church from preoccupation with "a narrow theology of sin and personal salvation" to "concern for love, community, and witness".¹⁵ He also said that as a result of the Council, "no

14 Michael V. Mincieli, "Catholic Social Service: A Philosophy", in Catholic Charities Review, Vol. 50, No. 9, November 1966, p. 9.

15 Mathew Ahmann, "Strategies for the Future", in The Church and the Urban Racial Crisis, edited by Mathew Ahmann and Margaret Roach, Techny, Ill., Divine Word, 1967, p. 232.

longer is race relations seen only as a 'lay responsibility'; it is the responsibility of the whole Church".¹⁶ Lambert Trutter mentioned that "due to the impetus of Vatican II, new understanding of what the Church is and what the Church should do in secular society are quickly unfolding".¹⁷ His interpretation of what is involved is quite vague:

Into this created world, God sent his Word to live, to penetrate, and to love. The Church, especially the laity, has the task of realizing Christ's presence in the world and of furthering Christ's activity among men and human society.¹⁸

Cronin is no more precise in saying "Vatican Council II was [...] emphatic in promoting the social concerns of the Church".¹⁹ Neither was Marciniak in his statement that the Second Vatican Council called for "involvement of the church in the modern world",²⁰ and stressed that religious institutions "be the sign of Christ to the world".²¹ And, finally, Roland Faley makes the general statement that "in its

16 Ahmann, Op. Cit., p. 233.

17 Lambert-Trutter, reviewing Alfons Auer, Open to the World: An Analysis of Lay Spirituality, in Cross and Crown, Vol. 19, No. 2, June 1967, p. 230.

18 Idem, ibid.

19 John F. Cronin, "Social Action: Myth or Reality", in Catholic Mind, Vol. 65, No. 1218, December 1967, p. 41.

20 Edward A. Marciniak, Tomorrow's Christian, Dayton, Pflaum, 1969, p. 18.

21 Idem, ibid., p. 115.

Constitution on the Church", the Second Vatican Council says that the "final renovation of all things decreed by God is already anticipated in the Church, which still dwells in this world which is passing away".²²

Four other writers are also quite general, but they do introduce the motif of service. (Rev.) Robert Kennedy says that "the whole rationale of the Church of the poor and the Church of service came out strongly in the discussions of Vatican II, though it showed up rather slightly in the documents".²³ (Sr.) Mary Vincentia expressed the opinion that "as a result of Vatican II [...] the diocesan Catholic Charities--traditionally the official channel and local witness of the Church's concern for those in need--is adapting [...] to express more fully the servant role".²⁴ Kenneth Woodward felt that "the various Council documents look toward the parish as a community [...] of service to the world".²⁵ And John Dearden made the same point, but in

22 Roland J. Fahey, "End Time and Christian Social Action", in Thought, Vol. 45, No. 178, Autumn 1970, p. 392.

23 (Rev.) Robert Kennedy, quoted by Ed Wakin, in "A Priest Struggles for Power", in The Sign, Vol. 48, No. 12, July 1969, p. 15.

24 (Sr.) Mary Vincentia, "Tri-Parish Model for a Technical Assistance Program", in Catholic Charities Review, Vol. 55, No. 6, June 1971, p. 4.

25 Kenneth Woodward, "Spotlight on the Parish", in Ave Maria, Vol. 103, No. 14, April 2, 1966, p. 25.

a slightly more expansive fashion:

Time and again during the course of Vatican II, reference was made to Christ's words, "the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve" (Matt. 20:28); and in every instance it was a call to the Church to recognize her ministry of service. [...] Those who cannot fulfill themselves in our society have a special claim upon the Church.²⁶

Of the four, only Dearden uses a specific quotation to establish his point:

That we have title and obligation in the Church to be involved in this work is beyond question. Let me close by a quotation, again from the Constitution on the Church in the Modern World: "... the triumphs of the human race are a sign of God's greatness and the flowering of His own mysterious design. For the greater man's power becomes, the farther his individual and community responsibility extends. Hence it is clear that men are not deterred from building up the world, or impelled to neglect the welfare of their fellows. They are, rather, more stringently bound to do these very things" (Art. 34).²⁷

It is significant that Dearden uses as proof of "Church" obligation a text which mentions only that "men" are "bound to do these very things".

A more precise description, although brief, is found in an editorial in the April 1966 issue of The Sign. The editorial is referring specifically to social justice when it says: "the Council itself called for strong involvement

²⁶ John F. Dearden, "Challenge to Change in the Urban Church", in The Church and the Urban Racial Crisis, p. 43.

²⁷ Idem, ibid., p. 50-51.

of the Church in such matters as race, poverty, and peace".²⁸ Later on the article refers to this kind of involvement as "social action".²⁹ This understanding of the Council's views is substantially correct, but it does not take into account the fact that the Council also said that the Church has "no proper mission in the social, economic, or political order" (CMW, art. 42).

This fact also seems to have gone unnoticed by the author of an article on the aged in the October 31, 1971 issue of Our Sunday Visitor. In this article the author promotes social involvement of all types as being "incumbent on the Church as a whole, as well as on each of her members" for the following reason:

As the Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World states: "The joys and the hopes, the griefs and the anxieties of the men of this age, especially those who are poor or in any way afflicted, these too are the joys and hopes, the griefs and anxieties of the followers of Christ."³⁰

Here, too, "Church" is not explicitly mentioned, only "followers of Christ", although in other places in the documents there was specific mention of "Church". The author seems aware that the Council calls for the involvement of "the

²⁸ "Involvement of the Clergy", in The Sign, Vol. 45, No. 9, p. 33.

²⁹ Ibid.

³⁰ "Servicing the Aged on the Parish Level", in Our Sunday Visitor, Vol. 60, No. 27, October 31, 1971, p. 1.

Church as a whole", but he does not refer to the most relevant texts.

In a similar fashion, Joseph Gremillion uses the exact same lines from the Pastoral Constitution (Art. 1: "The joys and the hopes, [...]") and says that "very definitely this brings the social apostolate into the mainstream of the visible Church, integrated with the institutions and personnel, parishes and clergy".³¹ Gremillion also seems to be unaware of the fact that this text does not specifically refer to "the visible Church" and that the Pastoral Constitution's statement concerning "no proper mission" must also be dealt with. He is, nevertheless, correct in his opinion that the Council did promote the social involvement of the Church, although the Council made distinctions, unnoticed by Gremillion, concerning different types of involvement.

Ronald Hayes seems to reflect different degrees of awareness in his statements concerning Vatican II's notions of Church social responsibility. He begins with the rather general but correct statement that "in the Vatican II documents, one can easily see repetition and emphasis on the Church's responsibility to be in the service of the needs of

³¹ Joseph Gremillion, "The Parish and the World We Live In", in The Parish in a Time of Change, edited by Marvin Bordelon, Notre Dame, Ind., Fides, 1967, p. 202-203.

man; to seek out and help those in need".³² Then, staying in the same context of "Church's responsibility", but not mentioning the "no proper mission" statement, he says that the Church must, according to Vatican II, "deal with the causes and not just the symptoms of distress".³³ He does not mention that this reference to "causes" and "symptoms" appeared only in the Decree on the Laity and in a text (article 8) which did not mention this as a "Church" obligation, but as a general one. He goes on even further to say that the Council wishes the Church "to meet the needs even of the general welfare of the entire human family".³⁴ Hayes does not seem to have the same appreciation of the role of the political community as does the Council. Hayes' notion of the organizational Church's responsibility for charity does, however, seem to be an accurate grasp of the Council's position, except that the critical element of "initiation" is missing:

We seem to be charged with a responsibility, individually and as the organizational Church, to be the heart of the Church. We are asked to imitate Christ through charity, to help those who are oppressed by poverty, infirmity, sickness, or various other hardships.³⁵

32 Ronald C. Hayes, "Social Action in Catholic Charities", in Catholic Charities Review, Vol. 51, No. 7, September 1967, p. 11.

33 Idem, ibid.

34 Idem, ibid.

35 Idem, ibid.

Hayes also does not seem to be quite accurate when, forgetting that the above statements of article 8 of the Decree on the Laity pertained to charity, he says: "What better arguments do we need to demonstrate that the priority demands of our time require social action to [...] improve the social conditions which lead to human problems".³⁶ He does not seem to be able to reconcile the Council's statements concerning the Church's overall social responsibility but institutional limitation to "charitable action". This may simply indicate lack of awareness of the problem.

A significant number of writers seemed either hesitant or disinclined to interpret the Council as giving the Church any social responsibilities. One of these is Peter Riga, who, in his commentary on article 42 of the Pastoral Constitution, says:

The Church has been called to save the world but not to direct or control it in any way (42b). Hers is a moral witness to the goodness and solicitude of God for men and the terrestrial city. This does not mean that, in necessity, she cannot be actively engaged in the works of mercy. It simply means that this will not be her normal function in the world.³⁷

This does not seem to take into account the statement in article 8 of the Decree on the Laity that the Church

³⁶ Hayes, Op. Cit.

³⁷ Peter J. Riga, The Church Made Relevant; A Commentary on the Church in the Modern World, Notre Dame, Ind., Fides, 1967, p. 142.

considered "charitable action" to be her own "inalienable" duty and right which enhanced her witness to Christ. The Council's statement seemed to indicate that "charitable action" was, in fact, a normal function of the Church along with its preaching duties. Riga confirms his lack of awareness by saying that although "formerly--for want of anyone else--the Church was forced to do all these things, thus building a whole complex of organization and structures", now this type of activity is "both unnecessary and harmful to her mission to the world".³⁸

Franz Mueller quotes article 42 of the Pastoral Constitution ("Christ to be sure gave His Church no proper mission in the political, economic, and social order") as proof that the Council believed that "it cannot be the job of the ecclesiastical authorities to decide about the choice of practical means or to identify themselves with any particular [...] solutions".³⁹

This statement seems to differ with another section of this same article which states that at times the Church can and should initiate social programs. Although he seems to have made a general statement covering both works of

38 Riga, Op. Cit.

39 Franz H. Mueller, "Social Ethics or 'Political Theology'?", in Thought, Vol. 46, No. 180, Spring 1971, p. 21.

charity and of justice, he probably did not mean to include works of charity, since in the same context he refers to "social reform" and "political programs". Apparently he wants to exclude these particular activities from the institutional Church, as he seems to have equated "the Church" with the "ecclesiastical authorities" mentioned above. He puts his position this way:

Knowing that grace builds on nature, she cannot but be deeply concerned about the natural welfare not only of her members but of all mankind. Yet this genuine and earnest concern does not turn the Church into a competent agency of social reform. She could not, even if she wanted to, derive concrete political programs and action directives from the Christian Revelation.⁴⁰

This is indeed the correct interpretation of the Council's view of the official Church's position in relation to the political community; however Mueller does not make an official/unofficial distinction and contrary to the Council, denies that the Church has the obligation to "perfect the temporal order". He seems to indicate that for him the term "Church" is co-extensive with the term "ecclesiastical authorities", and therefore the Church is only official and can engage only in official tasks.

The National Council of Catholic Men implies the same thing. After saying ~~the~~ "the Modern World Constitution

40 Mueller, Op. Cit., p. 26.

preaches concern and involvement",⁴¹ it states that the role of the Church is one of motivation: "The Church prods citizens toward involvement by seeking to infuse motivations of love, justice, and charity for all".⁴² This statement seems to contradict an earlier statement, not explicitly related to Vatican II, that called the civil rights movement "in a very real sense a work of the Church of Jesus, whether it recognizes this or not". The solution might be that the NCCM is groping for a juridical/non-juridical distinction but has not been able to make it explicit.

In his commentary on the Pastoral Constitution, John Courtney Murray makes some interesting observations. Because he seems to blend the "temporal" and "religious" orders together as regards the mission of the Church, it is difficult to ascertain just what he considers to be the Council's position. It seems appropriate to reproduce his relatively detailed remarks:

From now on, the Church defines her mission in the temporal order in terms of the realization of human dignity, the promotion of the rights of man, the growth of the human family toward unity, and the sanctification of the secular activities of this world.

41 The National Council of Catholic Men, The Spirit of Renewal; A Short Course in Vatican II For Lay People, Washington, D.C., NCCM, 1967, p. 59.

42 Idem, ibid., p. 68.

This mission in the temporal order, however, still remains a mission of the religious order--a spiritual mission. It is limited in its scope as it is limited in the means of its accomplishment. These are entirely of the spiritual order: "The power which the Church is able to impart to human society today consists in faith and love made operative in life. It does not consist in any sort of external control exercised by merely human means" (n. 42). Here, of course, would be the place to outline the doctrine of the Decree on the Apostolate of the Laity, Apostolicam Actuositatem, on the laity as the proper agent for the accomplishment of the mission of the Church in the temporal order. However, a mere reference to this doctrine must here suffice.⁴³

What seems particularly confusing is the statement that the Pastoral Constitution considers the "mission in the temporal order" to be a "spiritual mission [...] limited in its scope as it is limited in the means of its accomplishment" followed by the statement that the Decree on the Laity considers "the laity as the proper agent for the accomplishment of the mission of the Church in the temporal order". Either Murray is unaware that the Decree on the Laity does not restrict the laity to "spiritual" means or he is making a juridical/non-juridical distinction in his notion of the Church without saying so explicitly. The latter would seem to be more probable, with the result that his notion of the Church is not, in fact, a univocal one but is actually closer to that of the

⁴³ John Courtney Murray, "The Issue of Church and State at Vatican Council II", in The Church in the Modern World, edited by Charles P. O'Donnell, Milwaukee, Bruce, 1967, p. 60.

Council. Murray is correct in saying that the Church (meaning the juridical aspect of the Church) does not wish to exert "control" (justice) but he makes no mention of the juridical Church's role in "charitable action". One other notion of his that seems to go contrary to what the Council intended is his description of "The Church" (juridical Church) as "the People of God" and "citizens" as "the People Temporal".⁴⁴ This might just be another indication, however, of his implicit attempt to make the juridical/non-juridical distinction.

In conclusion it can be said that the opinions of the American Catholic writers as a whole reflect the Council's seemingly conflicting statements concerning the advisability of "Church" social involvement. Individually, they emphasize either one position or the other, without explicitly reconciling the two. Also, they all seem relatively unaware of the difference in the Council's approaches to "charitable action" and "social action", and, as a result, they group the two together while either supporting or opposing "Church" involvement.

The outcome of all this is that the American Catholic writers in this survey seem to be divided into two irreconcilable camps: the majority stressing Church involvement and the

44 Murray, Op. Cit., p. 62.

minority stressing non-involvement. This is regrettable but understandable, given the Council's apparent vagueness and ambivalence. There is also no indication that a significant change in awareness is occurring or is about to occur. It is possible, however, that there could be change in the American Church, if those with more accurate perceptions eventually have greater influence on Church structures. This will, however, still leave another whole group adhering to opposite convictions. The impasse might be broken if more emphasis is laid on the Council sources for a juridical/non-juridical distinction in the concept of the Church. In this way the majority could retain their belief in Church social responsibility and the minority their belief in the need for institutional limitation. Another aid to the process would be more emphasis on the important distinction between charitable and social action and more emphasis on the integral place of initiatory charitable action (rather than social maintenance) in the official Church's program of evangelization. This research does not offer any real indications as to whether or not these changes will become reality in the near future.

3. Roles Involved in the Church's Mission in the Temporal Order

Because Church roles are intimately connected with Church mission, it might be expected that the same difficultie

affecting the American Catholic awareness concerning the Council's positions on the Church's social mission would also affect their awareness of the Council's positions on the roles of Church members. If this be the case, a certain amount of confusion and perhaps totally disparate perceptions will be evident. More definite conclusions can be made after examination of the relevant texts.

Since this examination of Church roles will involve both the laity and the clergy, it might well begin with those references that emphasize just the laity's involvement, move on to those that emphasize not only the laity's involvement but the clergy's as well, and finish with those references that emphasize only clerical involvement. Each of these categories is represented by approximately the same number of writers.

A. References Emphasizing Lay Involvement

In a certain amount of material Vatican II's statement that the renewal of the temporal order is the special obligation of the laity was emphasized in such a way that the impression was given that temporal renewal activities are not really to be a regular part of the life of those who are clerics.

John Courtney Murray states that it is a "doctrine" of the Decree on the Laity that "the laity" is "the proper

agent for the accomplishment of the mission of the Church in the temporal order".⁴⁵ He does not point out that this statement in the decree concerning the laity's special obligation in this area is contained in article 7, the article emphasizing justice activities, whereas the very next article emphasizes the official Church's role in charitable action. The reason may be that he is concentrating at the moment on "the execution of these moral judgements in terms of law, public policy, social action, etc."⁴⁶--areas in which the official Church is not to be involved. Nevertheless the impression is given that clerics are restricted to the official Church and that it is only the laity to whom article 76 of the Pastoral Constitution is referring when it "recalled a necessary distinction, 'between those affairs which Christians, alone or in association, undertake as citizens, under the guidance of their Christian conscience, and those affairs which Christians undertake in the name of the Church and in union with their pastors'".⁴⁷ It would seem more correct to assume that the Council was referring to all Christians as citizens; and it would have been beneficial to realize that the official Church, and therefore the clerical office, has

45 Murray, Op. Cit., p. 60.

46 Idem, ibid., p. 63.

47 Idem, ibid.

a place in that aspect of the renewal of the temporal order which is referred to as "charitable action". Also, it seems that the Council was referring to the greater opportunities that accrue to the laity as a group to influence the temporal order and that no judgment was made concerning the rights or obligations of individual Christians.

Similar comments could be made concerning the opinions of Franz Mueller who, after quoting article 3 of the Pastoral Constitution ("human society deserves to be renewed"), states that "this renewal is in the first place the job of the lay members of the People of God".⁴⁸ He shows later that he does not understand the cleric's part as understood by the Council when he makes a special point of quoting article 13 of the Decree on the Laity:

The Decree on The Apostolate of the Laity emphasizes that the "apostolate of the social milieu ... is the duty and responsibility of the laity," so much so, "that it can never be properly performed by others" (No. 13).⁴⁹

He does not mention that "the apostolate of the social milieu" is not to be equated with "the renewal of the temporal order", but refers to the kind of responsibility people have to their own particular social environment (the responsibility of "like

48 Mueller, "Social Ethics or 'Political Theology'?", in Thought, Vol. 46, No. 180, p. 6.

49 Idem, ibid.

toward like")), which responsibility can, of course, "never be properly performed by others".

Sheerin is another who seems to restrict the cleric's sphere of activity. He refers to "their apostolate of Word and Sacrament", in the context of chapter two of the Decree on the Laity, in contrast to the laity whose "own special obligation is the renewal of the temporal order".⁵⁰ He does not seem to realize that the Decree on the Laity is addressed, not to all laity, but only to those who live "in the midst of the world" (whom Marciniak refers to as "secular Christians"). The emphasis is on opportunity for involvement and the consequent obligation and not on restriction to those who do not hold clerical office. Sheerin also seems unaware of the Pastoral Constitution's mandate to the official Church (and therefore clerics) to engage in initiatory "charitable action" when, in referring to the fact that the Decree on the Laity (article 8) states that "the corporal works of mercy are to be held in highest honor by the Church at all times", he apparently restricts this activity to the laity:

⁵⁰ Sheerin, Decree on the Apostolate of the Laity of Vatican II, p. 17.

The corporal works of mercy are to be held in highest honor by the Church at all times, but the development of more rapid means of communication and transportation today makes the whole world one great family and charitable works more imperative. The laity (n. 8) should, therefore, aid works of charity and projects for social assistance, whether public or private, and this includes international programs.⁵¹

Cronin also seems to interpret the renewal apostolate as a lay rather than a citizen apostolate and to restrict "charitable" action to the laity:

When Vatican Council II gave its directives for renewing the Church, it frequently referred to the need for lay social and civic action. This is the main theme of its Constitution on the Church in the Modern World. It runs as a refrain throughout the Decree on the Apostolate of the Laity. And it is strongly urged in the Decree on Ecumenism as one of the major avenues of inter-religious contacts.⁵²

Although it may be argued that this statement does not restrict clerics but merely omits mention of them, another statement by Cronin clarifies his meaning:

One further comment. In the working out of practical solutions for civic, temporal order, the layman and the laywoman are in their element. It is their task to practice political prudence. Our work as priests is to inspire them, to teach the moral principles of our faith, and to assist only if called upon.⁵³

Cronin is certainly aware of the Council's viewpoint when he

51 Sheerin, Op. Cit., p. 18.

52 Cronin, "Catholics and Modern Civic Action", in Pastoral Life, Vol. 14, No. 3, p. 143.

53 Idem, ibid., p. 145-146.

says that "as priests" clerics are to inspire and teach as regards "civic" order, but then he differs from the Council when he adds, still in the context of "as priests", that they can get involved "if called upon". In fact, the Council specifically excludes civic action from the range of clerical tasks.

An editorial in the April 1966 issue of The Sign also seemed to interpret the Council as desiring less "clerical participation in secular problems" when it implied surprise at the fact that many of the laity "urge greater clerical participation":

One of the most important fruits of Vatican Council II was the enhancement of the status of the laity in the Church. Yet many of the more articulate laity seem to be using their new-found freedom to urge greater clerical participation in secular problems.⁵⁴

Again the idea reappears that citizenship activity by one who also functions as a "cleric" in the official Church is "clerical" participation, as if the individual has made this part of his "clerical" task. The editorial is correct, of course, in interpreting the Council as excluding justice issues from the clerical office, but it is not as correct in including all "secular problems" (including those related to "charitable action") in this exclusion. Also, as was the

⁵⁴ "Involvement of the Clergy", in The Sign, Vol. 45, No. 9, p. 33.

case with Cronin, the editorial does, after its disclaimer, allow for "clerical" participation. This participation is allowed, seemingly, only if the individuals "have expert knowledge in sociology and economics".⁵⁵ However, even such "expert" knowledge does not, in the Council's view, make the citizenship task a clerical one, although this could be the case as regards "charitable action". Besides, the Council never mentions that this kind of expertise is required by anyone before any kind of social involvement is allowed.

Falardeau was another writer who interpreted Vatican II as restricting "the Church's mission to the world" to the laity:

In at least three documents the Vatican Council declared that it is the layman's task to carry the Church's mission to the world and to people, and that precisely in performing this task he would sanctify himself.⁵⁶

This does not seem to take into account the fact that the Council mentioned that citizenship duties are the responsibility of every Christian and that temporal renewal is not exclusively the obligation of the laity. Falardeau may have been reacting, however, to previous clericalism, as in the following statement:

55 "Involvement of the Clergy", Op. Cit., p. 33.

56 Falardeau, "The Layman and Holiness", in Cross and Crown, Vol. 21, No. 3, p. 280.

Vatican II has come and gone. One of the things that has remained is the realization that holiness is not the special preserve of the cloister or the rectory. While this is not news to anyone, what perhaps is news is the Council's declaration that to become holy the layman does not have to leave the world or even change his work or his way of life.⁵⁷

While this certainly corresponds to Vatican II's ideas, it does not follow that because temporal duties are a possible source of holiness for laymen, they are not the same source for those who are also clerics. Clerics are no less citizens than the laity, just as laymen are no less members of the official Church, even though their functions in either area may differ. What is especially puzzling about Falardeau's article is that he seems to realize this while at the same time calling the renewal of the temporal order an area that belongs "entirely" to the laity. Reproduction of the seemingly contradictory statements might be appropriate at this time. First, the statement emphasizing the universality of the apostolate:

We may summarize the orientation given by Vatican II as follows: [...] The light of Christ brings a fullness of life to all men. This task of illuminating the world can be carried on in two ways: by spreading the Gospel message (this is the essential task of the whole Church, but more especially so of the hierarchy) and by bringing the Christian witness into the world directly (this, too, is the task of the whole Church, but especially the layman).⁵⁸

57 Falardeau, Op. Cit., p. 280.

58 Idem, ibid., p. 287-288.

This seems substantially accurate as regards Vatican II's position, but it was preceded by the following:

The document on the lay apostolate states that the layman [...] may exercise his apostolate in an area entirely his own, that is, "penetrating and perfecting the temporal sphere of things".⁵⁹

The only solution to this apparent conflict that seems feasible at this time is that the author's thought is probably more accurately represented in the first statement, but that in the second he was reacting, as above, to previous clericalism and did not sufficiently qualify his remarks.

In the most complete American Catholic commentary on the Pastoral Constitution available to this research, Peter Riga explains the Council's position on roles in the social mission in such a way that he seems to present the same kind of apparent contradiction as did Falardeau. He begins by explaining the Council's position on the role of the laity in this way:

[...] the apostolate of the layman to the world becomes [...] a vital function of the Church in and for the world; after all, it is they, the laymen, who are the Church in the world. It is only with this dynamic concept of her mission to the world that the Church can become meaningful to and for the world.⁶⁰

59 Falardeau, Op. Cit., p. 287.

60 Riga, The Church Made Relevant; A Commentary on The Church in the Modern World, p. 8.

After what seems to be a rather precise statement--"the laymen [...] are the Church in the world"--implying that non-laity are not part of the "Church in the world", he qualifies this with "The laity will be directed more to the temporal while clergy [...] are directed more to the sacred".⁶¹ This latter statement seems to be saying that the laity as a group will accomplish more, most probably, as a result of greater opportunity, rather than because they are the "Church in the world". This seems to be confirmed by the following statement

In Gaudium et Spes the Council [...] emphasizes that this sphere belongs, principally but not exclusively, to the layman. The distinction between priests and laity is always something relative to time and place. This does not mean that their roles are the same or interchangeable. [...] Yet necessities and needs vary widely at different places and times; and, therefore, no absolutism is possible.⁶²

Riga seems to be implying that, contrary to the Council, when the Christian who is a cleric engages in some renewal activity this activity becomes part of the clerical task. He does not see, as the Council seems to believe, that clerical tasks and civil responsibilities are separate functions.

B. References Emphasizing Lay and Clerical Involvement

Although all of the above material emphasized a special obligation of the laity in the social mission of the Church,

61 Riga, Op. Cit., p. 136.

62 Idem, ibid., p. 153.

there is also material that considers this obligation to social involvement to be shared more equally by both laity and clergy.

Of all the material emphasizing both lay and clerical involvement, there is only one item that seems ambiguous, so it would be expedient to deal with it first. In suggesting that "precise, practical, social, economic solutions to these problems" should be the task of "unofficial action", William Allen seems to interpret the Council correctly:

[...] while engagements of this sort seem to be forbidden to the hierarchical Church, they certainly can be and should be the activity of Catholics as Christian citizens. The bishops of Vatican II encouraged just this thing: social action by Catholics as dedicated and responsible citizens imbued with a thorough knowledge of Christian principles and the necessary practical science of obtaining concrete effects.⁶³

What is not clear is whether or not, by "hierarchical Church",,, Allen is referring to the juridical aspect of the Church or just the members of the juridical hierarchy and whether or not he means to restrict members of the hierarchy to hierarchical tasks. As it stands, however--if it does include all Christians in the term "citizens", and since it does seem to be referring to justice activities by the use of the term "social action"--it does seem to be stressing the involvement of all Christians and is thus accurately reflecting the

⁶³ Allen, "Quid in Casu?", in Pastoral Life, Vol. 16, No. 1, p. 43.

Council's view.

The National Council of Catholic Men also seems to have accurately reflected the Council's view insofar as it does not restrict any Christian to either "Church" or "World" activity. It begins with consideration of the Decree on the Laity's position regarding the "apostolate":

For Catholics especially, "apostolate" was something engaged in by an elite corps of dedicated priests with a very special vocation to do convert work.

The Decree on the Lay Apostolate would have it otherwise: the mission of Christ's Church is the mission of everybody in that Church; the call to bear witness to Christ's truth is a universal call. Whatever is specialized about the way one responds to this mission--by becoming a priest or a missionary, for example--applies to the "apostle," not the apostolate. To the degree that a man's apostolic work is specialized, to that degree it is not "more" apostolic work but a kind of apostolic work. The "lay apostolate" is not a kind of apostolate; it is the apostolate as carried out by a kind of a person--a lay person. There is one mission. It is not a specifically "lay" mission or a "hierarchic" mission [...] it is the Christian mission.⁶⁴

In this way the NCCM avoids mistakenly interpreting Vatican II as restricting clerics to the "Church" and laity to the "World". It is, nevertheless, aware that the Council did state that renewal activities are the special obligation of the laity, but, contrary to what some other authors have done, it did not take this to mean that renewal is thereby only a lay responsibility. It explains, in this way, that

64 NCCM, The Spirit of Renewal, p. 59.

what is involved is largely a "question of opportunity and influence:

Both the Decree on the Lay Apostolate and the Constitution on the Church mention the "secular order" as the proper purview of lay activity. [...] Once again, however, the notion of a "lay" apostolate, as distinct from a clerical or hierarchical apostolate, is misleading. Lay people must be most concerned with the world of family, community and nation because that is the world they live in. It is, of course, also the world in which priests and nuns and bishops live. Religious and clerics are no more precluded from acting in and upon the "secular order" than lay people are debarred from acting upon Church policy and structure. It is a question of opportunity and influence.⁶⁵

This statement seems to reflect rather clearly the attitude of Vatican II that all Christians have obligations both as regards official Church activities and as regards citizenship activities, and that an official Church function may reduce opportunity, but it does not reduce basic social obligation.

Reference to the relatively brief comments of two more writers can serve to complete this section. Lambert Trutter points out that the Church's social mission involves "especially the laity" but his statement seems, nevertheless, to intend the involvement of all Christians:

Due to the impetus of Vatican II, new understanding of what the Church is and what the Church should do in secular society are quickly unfolding. [...]

65 NCCM, Op. Cit., p. 46.

Into this created world, God sent his Word to live, to penetrate, and to love. The Church, especially the laity, has the task of realizing Christ's presence in the world and of furthering Christ's activity among men and human society.⁶⁶

Eugene Bianchi, in speaking of "the servant aspect of churches" makes a point of "the excellent theory about laity, presented in the documents of Vatican II [...] in which clergy-laity distinctions are far less important than the basic similarities of being brothers and sisters of the same laos".⁶⁷

Neither of these writers seems to be eager to restrict any Christian's activities--an attitude which is basically that of the Council--but neither do they promote the involvement of clerics. Possibly, for these and the other writers in this section, clerical involvement was simply taken for granted

C. References Emphasizing Clerical Involvement

There is another group of texts which, while not excluding lay social involvement, simply concentrate on the relation of the clerics to social involvement. The writers evidently felt the need to point out that, as they saw it, Vatican II not only allowed clerical involvement in social affairs but even expressed a desire for it.

⁶⁶ Trutter, reviewing Alfons Auer, Open to the World: An Analysis of Lay Spirituality, in Cross and Crown, Vol. 19, No. 2, p. 230.

⁶⁷ Eugene Bianchi, "Secular Ecumenism", in Thought, Vol. 44, No. 172, Spring 1969, p. 93.

Richard Cardinal Cushing expressed himself in this way:

The priest in our day is being reminded again and again of the importance of his social concern. The decrees of Vatican Council II have emphasized the importance of making our own the problems of the People of God, of involving ourselves as Christian witnesses in the events which are often called secular, of bringing the City of God into active confrontation with the City of Man.⁶⁸

Cushing is certainly correct in interpreting the Council as favoring the involvement of clerics as citizens, but he is not correct if he views it as including this involvement among the clerical tasks, which he seems to do.

Cronin described as the priest's "mandate" and "inspiration for action" the rather general text which begins the Pastoral Constitution ("the griefs and the anxieties of the men of this age [...] are [...] the griefs and the anxieties of the followers of Christ").⁶⁹ It is not clear whether or not he understands social involvement to be part of the clerical task. The Vatican II statement quoted above can certainly be used to indicate the social obligation of every Christian, but it just as certainly is not a promotion of the idea that social involvement, at least that related to justice, is part of the clerical task.

⁶⁸ Richard Cardinal Cushing, "A Man Ahead of His Time", in The Wanderer, Vol. 36, No. 26, June 29, 1966, p. 5.

⁶⁹ John F. Cronin, "Social Action Today", in The Homiletic and Pastoral Review, Vol. 68, No. 4, January 1968, p. 298.

Lawrence Corcoran is accurate in his brief statement that "the Second Vatican Council points out that deacons are ordained 'unto a ministry of service' and that 'they serve the People of God in the ministry of the liturgy, of the word, and of charity'".⁷⁰ He has noticed the one place in the documents where the Council explicitly links clerical tasks to that aspect of social involvement referred to as "charity" or "charitable action". This awareness is especially significant since today all clerics are ordained to the diaconate and, thus, have the right and obligation to be involved officially in this type of social enterprise.

Richard McKeon spends considerable time on the social role of the cleric. In one place he speaks of this in the context of "sanctity" and "Christ's work of redemption":

Will sanctity be fostered by works of the social order? First, let us quote the Vatican Council: "Christ's work of redemption is directed both towards the salvation of men as individuals and at the renewal of the whole secular order." We maintain that there can be a joyful wedding of the priest's interior life and his social apostolate.⁷¹

There is no indication here of whether or not McKeon believes

⁷⁰ Lawrence J. Corcoran, "The Permanent Diaconate in Relation to Catholic Charities", in Permanent Deacons in the United States; Guidelines on Their Formation and Ministry, by U.S. National Conference of Catholic Bishops, Bishops' Committee on the Permanent Diaconate, Washington, D.C., USCC, 1971, p. 58.

⁷¹ Richard M. McKeon, "Priests and the Social Order", in Pastoral Life, Vol. 14, No. 4, April 1966, p. 212.

that Vatican II intends that this particular type of cooperation in "Christ's work of redemption" be considered a clerical task as such. However, in another article he clarifies this by saying that this involvement is necessary because "we are also citizens, and we cannot--we dare no longer--separate ourselves from the world about us, the world we are supposed to serve".⁷² He had also just previously stated that "as priests we are concerned primarily with religious duties".⁷³ He set these thoughts in the context of the Council with this statement:

In the light of the Council's decrees it is not rash to hold that a greater and more zealous spirituality will be developed within the priest not by withdrawing from secular things but by participating in them. [...] The entire spirit and letter of the Council call for his active engagement in worthwhile works which affect and aid as many people as possible.⁷⁴

McKeon seems to have interpreted the Council correctly insofar as he emphasizes the obligation for priests to be socially involved and describes it as an obligation of citizenship rather than a clerical task. There can still be question, however, of whether or not he understands that Vatican II does include "charitable action" among the tasks of clerics.

72 Richard M. McKeon, "Economic Development: the New Name For Peace", in Pastoral Life, Vol. 15, No. 10, October 1967, p. 547.

73 Idem, ibid.

74 Idem, ibid.

Leo Farragher also strongly favors clerical involvement and he quotes the Council to make his point, but he also says that this involvement is "as citizens and as persons", and, therefore, he does not relate it to the clerical task. It would probably be useful to quote him exactly so as to clarify his viewpoint. First, his reference to the exact words of the Council:

We read in the Constitution on the Church in the Modern World: "All pastors should remember too that by their conduct and concern they are revealing the face of the Church to the world. Men will judge the power and the truth of the Christian message thereby. By their lives and their speech, in union with religious and their faithful, may pastors demonstrate that even now the Church, by her presence alone and by all the gifts which she possesses, is an unspent fountain of those virtues which the modern world most needs (art. 43; italics mine)."⁷⁵

Although it is not immediately clear that the Council is promoting clerical involvement by this statement, it does seem that Farragher has interpreted it that way, by his use of italics. This is, in fact, confirmed by another of his statements:

All of us priests are challenged to be prophets of the enlightened social doctrine of Vatican II, proclaiming by our actions that we have a total moral commitment to our [...] brothers, as citizens and as persons. There is no other way to meet the Vatican II demand for a new earth and a new heaven for all people.⁷⁶

⁷⁵ Leo Farragher, "To Live is to Change", in The Priest, Vol. 25, No. 11, November 1969, p. 609.

⁷⁶ Idem, ibid., p. 607.

Farragher does seem to be substantially correct in his view that the Council promotes the social involvement of all Christians, and therefore of clerics as well, "as citizens and as persons".

On the whole the American Catholic writers seemed to agree on the role of the laity insofar as Vatican II was concerned. Indeed, the fact that they seemed almost to take the Council's position for granted indicates that the Council was very clear on this point. Many of the writers seemed to diverge from the Council's position, however, when they dealt with the cleric's role. At that time they seemed to interpret the "special obligation" of the laity, based on opportunity, as somehow restricting or excluding clerics. Some others took the opposite position and included all social involvement among the clerical tasks. It can be said, however, that almost all of the writers interpreted the Council as allowing at least some degree of involvement. The main point of difficulty seemed to be a lack of awareness on the part of many, both those promoting and those restricting clerical involvement, that for the Council civil duties are not to be included among clerical tasks. This difficulty may indicate that the Council was not sufficiently explicit in regard to the roles of those who are clerics.

4. Conclusion

Judging from the relatively small number of sources including explicit reference to Vatican II's position on social action, Church social involvement, and roles in this involvement, it could be concluded that there is not, in actuality, a great deal of awareness among American Catholic writers concerning this position. The diversity of opinion among those who did make explicit reference would seem to confirm this. There is, however, one substantial difficulty with this conclusion. That difficulty is the fact that the selection of material for this research depended on the writers' use of the term "social action". It is possible that the Council's omission of a clear definition of the term as indicating justice or citizenship activities might have prompted many writers to deal with these activities under another title. Such, in fact, is this writer's opinion. Although the American Catholic awareness of the Council's position concerning Church social involvement and consequent roles cannot be accurately gauged here, a judgment concerning their awareness of the meaning of the term "social action" itself is justified, as is a qualified opinion on the other elements.

First, although the majority of writers explicitly linking "social action" and Vatican II interpreted the term

correctly, the total number of explicit references was so small in proportion to the total amount of material surveyed (eight references in over three thousand books, issues of periodicals, and issues of newspapers) that it might be concluded that the American Catholic writers as a whole were unaware of the Council's meaning or they simply presumed that their meaning corresponded with the Council's meaning. It does seem significant that there was so little mention (especially during 1968) of something that the Council considered "an outstanding work of this type of apostolate", and that when mention was made, there was generally no explicit reference to the Council's use of the term. Nevertheless, a sufficient number of implicit references were made, as recorded in Chapter II, to warrant the conclusion that a significant group of American Catholic writers were not unaware of the term; and also, since a sizeable majority of those making either implicit or explicit reference to the Council and "social action" utilized the same meaning for the term as did the Council, it can be concluded that they were aware of the Council's meaning, at least to the extent that they did not perceive opposition to their meaning. This conclusion, while warranted, must be considered highly tentative, nevertheless, because the total number of references is only barely sufficient to be considered representative of the authors as a whole.

Now, any opinions concerning the American Catholic awareness of the Council's position regarding the relation of social action to the social mission of the Church and consequent ramifications for roles must be qualified by the understanding that these same realities might have been dealt with in other places under other titles and that these opinions result only from those instances where the term "social action" is actually used in the context of Vatican II.... With these qualifications in mind, then, some concluding opinions on these areas would be appropriate.

The writers simply do not agree, to start with, on the degree of involvement that the Council recommends for the Church. They seem to link "social action" (justice) and "charitable action" together and then either include them with, or exclude them from, the Church's mission. Some did attempt to make a juridical/non-juridical distinction as regards the Church and its mission, but they were not many and the majority just seemed to take sides. Similar difficulty was experienced in relation to the roles of Church members in the social mission. Just as the writers seemed unable to grasp the Council's rather implicit distinction between the Church's necessarily limited official functions and its broader unofficial ones, they also had difficulty grasping the Council's position, also implicit, that each Christian is involved in both official Church functions

("in the Church") and unofficial Church functions ("in the world"). Their solution seemed to be either the exclusion of the Church, and with it the clerics, from the social order, or the inclusion of the official Church in the area of citizenship with a consequent blend of clerical and citizenship tasks. The fault may lie with the writers but a great part of the difficulty probably stems from the Council's lack of clarity in the reconciliation of apparently contradictory statements. It is probably for good reason that the writers do not seem able to solve their problems with clear distinctions between "social action" and "charitable action", over-all Church social responsibility and juridical responsibility, and clerical and citizenship responsibilities.

CHAPTER IV

AMERICAN CATHOLIC ATTITUDE TOWARD VATICAN II'S CONCEPT OF SOCIAL ACTION

In the last analysis, the nature and direction of all social involvement depends upon the attitude taken toward that involvement. In the case of the American Catholic Church, any awareness of Vatican II's concept of social action will be transformed into programs in line with the Council's concept only if the Church has a favorable attitude toward the Council and its positions. The total American Catholic reaction to the Council's concept of social action will involve, then, not only its awareness, or lack of it, but also its attitude. If it has a positive attitude toward what is actually the Council's position, then programs corresponding to that position will be developed and supported. If it is negative toward the Council's position or positive toward something which is mistakenly thought to be the Council's position, then Council-inspired programs may be stunted in development or hindered in execution.

This chapter will deal with that attitude, or attitudes, which the American Catholic writers seem to have toward what they perceive to be Vatican II's concept of social action. Only that material will be utilized which contains

explicit evidence for a particular attitude. About one-fifth of the texts in this research contained such material.

1. The Term "Social Action"

There was, in fact, no explicit evidence relating specifically to an attitude toward Vatican II's meaning of the term. This is probably an important fact because it indicates that either the writers read their own meaning into the Council's use of the term or the Council used a meaning similar to their own. The former situation would not be too surprising, since no definition of the term was contained in the final documents and its meaning there had to be derived from the context.

Because of the lack of evidence indicating an attitude toward the term itself, the material in this chapter will pertain only to the attitudes ascertained in regard to the Council's concept of the mission of the Church in the temporal order and consequent roles in regard to that mission.

2. The Church's Mission in the Temporal Order

The attitudes to be examined here are contained in material which referred either to the social mission in general or to some specific aspects of this mission. It might be expedient to determine the general attitudes first before concentrating on those that are more specific.

A. References to the Mission in General

It is significant that all of this material contained only favorable references to what was perceived to be the Council's position on the Church's temporal order mission. It cannot be concluded from this that there were no negative reactions, since those with such opinions might simply have felt that it would have been inappropriate to express them in those sources available to this research. Examination of the range of positive reactions in this area would, however, be illuminating.

One writer, Joseph Novak, expressed a rather positive attitude toward the Council's position on the social mission with a brief question:

Can we think of a more fitting expression of the Christian renewal being worked out in Vatican Council II than a torrent of concern on our part for the poor in our midst?¹

This kind of practical response, indicating that "a torrent of concern" would be "fitting" in the context of the Council's positions, stood almost alone among the other responses which tended to be no less enthusiastic but a little more theoretical.

John Dearden responded positively insofar as he felt that "the theology and the social principles of Vatican II

¹ Joseph Novak, Editor, Christianity Today; A Book of Readings, New York, Holt, 1966, p. 346.

[...] should become familiar to every Catholic and should somehow be made known to the community at large".² Others also referred specifically to the Council's thinking in an enthusiastic manner: Edward Marciniak stated that "the seeds sown by Vatican II" resulted in a "revitalized theology of Church";³ John Cronin remarked that the Pastoral Constitution "enhanced [...] the] literature of Catholic social teaching";⁴ and Leo Farragher spoke of "the enlightened social doctrine of Vatican II".⁵ Cronin also became a bit more specific as regards the Pastoral Constitution when he quoted the first words of article 1 ("The joys and the hopes, the griefs and the anxieties [...]") and then called them "our mandate" and "our inspiration for action".⁶ (Rev.) Robert Kennedy made like comments when he said that as a result of the Council

2 John F. Dearden, "Challenge to Change in the Urban Church", in The Church and the Urban Racial Crisis, edited by Mathew Ahmann and Margaret Roach, Techny, Ill., Divine Word, 1967, p. 47.

3 Edward A. Marciniak, "Catholic Social Action: Where Do We Go From Here?", in America, Vol. 123, No. 19, December 12, 1970, p. 514.

4 John F. Cronin, "Social Action Today", in The Homiletic and Pastoral Review, Vol. 68, No. 4, January 1968, p. 293.

5 Leo Farragher, "To Live is to Change", in The Priest, Vol. 25, No. 11, November 1969, p. 607.

6 Cronin, Op. Cit., p. 295.

there must be much "soul-searching and change".⁷

Three references pertained not so much to the Council's thinking itself as to its resultant effect. William McCormack seemed pleased that "after Vatican II" he found a "sense of immediacy in promoting social good and justice";⁸ Robert Howes mentioned that "Vatican II proclaims a new relevance for the Church in 'the modern world'";⁹ and Farragher added to his previous comments by emphasizing that "the directives of Vatican II" were "relevant" to "social problems".¹⁰

It might have been expected that there would have been more general comments on the Council's position on the Church's social mission, despite the fact that the material utilized was limited to that which contained the term "social action". Possibly the more specific references will indicate more interest, whether of a positive or negative nature.

7 Robert Kennedy, quoted by Ed Wakin, in "A Priest Struggles for Power", in The Sign, Vol. 48, No. 12, July 1969, p. 15.

8 William J. McCormack, "Is Ministry the Message?", in Worldmission, Vol. 19, No. 3, Fall 1968, p. 37.

9 Robert G. Howes, "Priests and Civic Problems", in Pastoral Life, Vol. 14, No. 9, September 1966, p. 495.

10 Farragher, Op. Cit., p. 609.

B. References to Specific Aspects of the Mission

The material in this section also carries with it a general attitude toward the social mission, but the comments are aimed at more specific things such as types of action, specific results of Council-related positions, and the relation of specific Church structures to social service.

Although most of the material here also contained favorable references, there were two instances where there could be detected a kind of hesitance or at least ambivalence of feeling toward what were perceived to be Vatican II's positions. It might be best to begin with these texts. Neither explicitly express any doubts or hesitations, but the problems involved are described in such a way that reservations are possibly implied.

F. X. Murphy seems to express a latent antagonism, or at least ambivalence, toward the Council's policies when he expresses distaste at the result they seemed to have had regarding the "missiology of Christian social or political action":

It is the height of absurdity, therefore, for the post-Conciliar expert in missiology of Christian social or political action to tell the bishops and leaders of these churches that what they have done or are doing is all wrong and that they must consequently introduce radical changes in their missionary attitudes and technical achievements.¹¹

Murphy appears to imply that "radical changes" which may have in fact been called for by the Council are really not necessary and that, at least in this area of "missionary attitudes and technical achievements", it would be best to leave things as they are. What may also be the case, however, is that Murphy does not perceive these changes to have been called for, at least not such radical changes, and feels that the "post-Conciliar expert" has drawn unwarranted conclusions from the Council. Nevertheless, there does seem to be in his statement at least implied annoyance at the fact that the Council expressed itself in such a fashion that it was open to misinterpretation by an "expert".

Mark Hurley seems to have expressed a very similar attitude, although he does indicate that he feels that those of whom he is critical did misunderstand the Council ("under the presumed aegis of the II Vatican Council"):

¹¹ F. X. Murphy, "The Christian Commitment in the Modern World", in The Church In the Modern World, edited by Charles P. O'Donnell, Milwaukee, Bruce, 1967, p. 30.

In an incredible contradiction and under the presumed aegis of the II Vatican Council, voices are calling for a closing of Catholic schools in the name of everything from liturgy to social work.¹²

Although it could be concluded from this that Hurley is actually favorable to what he perceives the Council to have really said, there does nevertheless seem to be expressed the same kind of annoyance as mentioned above. The vehemence of the two statements ("height of absurdity", "incredible contradiction") might also indicate a latent but unconscious suspicion that the criticized attitudes might in fact be based on actual Council positions.

In contrast with Murphy and Hurley, a substantial group of writers reacted to specific Council positions or resultant effects with clear-cut expressions of agreement. The National Council of Catholic Men seemed gratified with the "brief but important" section on the political community (article 76) in the Pastoral Constitution.¹³ John Hill expressed relief at the fact that the Church had been delivered from "the law of ecclesiastical insularity which prevailed before Vatican II, which law must be considered a deviation

¹² Mark J. Hurley, "Teacher Power in American Society" in The Priest, Vol. 24, No. 4, April 1968, p. 296.

¹³ The National Council of Catholic Men, The Spirit of Renewal; A Short Course in Vatican II For Lay People, Washington, D.C., NCCM, 1967, p. 67.

from the norms of love and unity laid down by Christ".¹⁴

Three writers were pleased specifically because as a result of the Council the Church is to be more service-oriented. John Sheerin emphasized that now "the corporal works of mercy are to be held in highest honor by the Church";¹⁵ Kenneth Woodward referred to the Council as "our guide" to making the parish a community that is "of service to the world";¹⁶ and James Gallagher gave the opinion that if the churches followed the directives of the Council, they would "find richer understanding of themselves, of each other, and of the men they jointly serve on Christ's behalf".¹⁷

A feeling of satisfaction that as a result of the Council mankind would benefit by a more socially effective Church was quite evident in the work of some writers. Mathew Ahmann was very definite in stating that the Council was responsible for helping give the Church a "change in orientation" that would allow it to be more socially effective, especially as regards racism:

14 John J. Hill, "People of God", in The Parish in Crisis, edited by John McCudden, Techny, Ill., Divine Word Publications, 1967, p. 29.

15 John B. Sheerin, Decree on the Apostolate of the Laity of Vatican II, Glen Rock, N.J., Paulist, 1966, p. 18.

16 Kenneth Woodward, "Spotlight on the Parish", in Ave Maria, Vol. 103, No. 14, April 2, 1966, p. 25.

17 James J. Gallagher, "Of Many Things ...", in America, Vol. 114, No. 20, May 14, 1966, p. 679.

[...] the Catholic Church had not been able to face racism effectively because it was institutionally self-serving (concerned for survival and growth in resources and numbers), and was preoccupied with a narrow theology of sin and personal salvation to the exclusion of concern for love, community, and witness. A change in this orientation is well underway; many movements are responsible for the change, but it was energized by [...] the Second Vatican Council, and all that has followed.¹⁸

Ahmann is obviously pleased with what he perceived to be the Council's contribution to the developing of "concern for love, community, and witness". Ronald Hayes has very specific ideas on social involvement and appears glad to be able to refer to the Council as backing for his positions. He begins by stating that "the directions of renewal from the Second Vatican Council" would be a "benefit" to "social service programs, under the auspices of the Catholic Church"¹⁹ and then goes on to ask for Church social action (justice), saying that "In the Vatican II documents, one can easily see repetition and emphasis on the Church's responsibility to [...] deal with the causes and not just the symptoms of distress".²⁰ He indicates his conviction with a strong statement:

¹⁸ Mathew Ahmann, "Strategies For the Future", in The Church and the Urban Racial Crisis, p. 232.

¹⁹ Ronald C. Hayes, "Social Action in Catholic Charities", in Catholic Charities Review, Vol. 51, No. 7, September 1967, p. 9.

²⁰ Idem, ibid., p. 11.

What better arguments do we need to demonstrate that the priority demands of our time require social action to bring about improvements in the general welfare of this entire human family [...]?²¹

Hayes' enthusiastic promotion of what he perceived the Council's position to be was probably not surpassed by any of the other writers, especially in the light of his concluding remarks:

I am convinced that the mandates of Vatican II require this kind of examination as to where our priorities should be. [...]

As you have observed from my remarks, it is inconceivable to me that a sound operation of Catholic Charities would not be involved in social action at a time when deprivations of all kinds are so overwhelming that we have to develop schizophrenia in order to read in the same evening [...] the Vatican II documents and also the newspaper reports of the people who are suffering in our own communities and throughout the world.²²

Hayes, then, is completely convinced of the value of the Council's positions for what he considers the necessary social effectiveness of the Church. His sentiments would seem to be echoed by Robert Reicher who mentions that, as a result of Vatican II, now "Both secular and ordained Christians [...] might affect the world in which both live".²³

Although only approximately fifteen percent of the writers whose work was considered suitable for this survey

21 Hayes, Op. Cit.

22 Idem, ibid., p. 14-15.

23 Robert Reicher, "Tomorrow's Christian, A Review Article", in Chicago Studies, Vol. 8, No. 3, Fall 1969, p. 232

included in their work references explicitly indicating a particular attitude toward what they perceived to be the Council's meaning regarding the Church's temporal order mission, such a large majority of these writers (ninety percent) expressed a favorable attitude that it might be tentatively concluded that at least a small majority of American writers are favorable. This conclusion would be tentative because many who might have opposed the Council may not have dared to do so directly.

3. Roles Involved in the Church's Mission in the Temporal Order

Because the Council was rather clear about the laity's obligations in the social order, it can be expected that attitudes toward the Council's position will likewise be clear-cut. But its ambivalence concerning the roles of clerics might lead one to expect that an attitude of confusion in this area would be in evidence among the American Catholic writers. On the other hand, this same ambivalence could cause the writers to presume that their own opinions were actually being reinforced, and, as a result, it would not be surprising to find attitudes of satisfaction expressed by individuals holding views actually contrary to those of the Council.

The majority of the texts pertaining to roles contained favorable references to what was perceived to be the Council's view on the matter; however, there were three indications of dissatisfaction. Although he seemed satisfied with the Council's presentation on the laity, Colin MacDonald mentioned that, for him at least, the presentation on the clergy left something to be desired: "Vatican II determined the position of the bishops and the laity, but the position of priests was never quite clear."²⁴ Vincent Giese felt the same way about the result of the Council: "At present many questions remain unsolved regarding the relation of the priest [...] to the civil rights movements, to the inner city [...]"²⁵ Finally, an editorial in the April 1966 issue of The Sign, after noting that "the Council itself called for strong involvement of the Church", expressed a slight hesitation concerning clerical involvement to the effect that clerics should make "prudent and even sparing use of their power".²⁶ This editorial also expressed dismay over the fact

24 Colin A. MacDonald, "Documentation: The Priesthood Today", in The Priest, Vol. 25, No. 10, October 1969, p. 557.

25 Vincent J. Giese, "The Role of the Priest Among God's People", in Our Sunday Visitor, Vol. 54, No. 47, March 20, 1966, p. 9.

26 "Involvement of the Clergy", in The Sign, Vol. 45, No. 9, April 1966, p. 33.

that, seemingly due to the Council, "many of the more articulate laity seem to be using their new-found freedom to urge greater clerical participation in secular problems".²⁷ This type of doubtful attitude is very understandable, given the implicitness of many of the Council's statements concerning the role of clerics in the social mission.

Among those texts expressing a positive attitude, the one by the National Council of Catholic Men was about the most explicit in regard to the role of the laity. The NCCM perceived the Council as defining the laity in terms of their social involvement and expressed satisfaction at the fact that "optional commitment" had been "routed":

For too long the Church has allowed the layman to escape involvement and responsibility by asking of him little more than his assent to principles officially formalized. Not infrequently these principles could be sufficiently qualified and counter-qualified to enable the layman to do or not to do, according to his pleasure.

The offer of an optional commitment is routed by the Modern World Constitution! The layman is confirmed and acclaimed by his involvement--in the political life of the community, in social action and economic movement, in whatever pertains to the common good.²⁸

The NCCM's enthusiasm is correctly placed insofar as the Council's "routing" of the idea of an "optional commitment" is concerned, but it is not as correct insofar as the NCCM

27 "Involvement of the Clergy", Op. Cit.

28 NCCM, The Spirit of Renewal, p. 60.

seems to presume that this pertains only to "lay" citizens, rather than to all Christian citizens.

The rest of the texts deal more specifically with the role of clerics, and all express at least some degree of agreement or satisfaction with what is perceived to be the Council's position.

Richard McKeon is especially pleased that the Council seems, to him, to say that priests should become involved in "political and social action", and he expresses his feelings in this way:

No true priest can read the constitution on the "Church in the Modern World" without feeling the fire of apostolic zeal [...]

By what authority do we priests teach and participate, especially in those matters which seem far beyond the function of the clergyman? The authority is simple: the voice of Christ speaking [...] through the Vatican Council.²⁹

Later on he speaks of this perception as leading to a "joyful wedding of the priest's interior life and his social apostolate".³⁰ In another article McKeon expands on this topic by expressing the attitude that as a result of the Council, priests should "dare no longer" to separate themselves from the world and thus would find "a greater and more zealous spirituality [...]" not by withdrawing from secular

²⁹ Richard M. McKeon, "Priests and the Social Order", in Pastoral Life, Vol. 14, No. 4, April 1966, p. 209.

³⁰ Idem, ibid., p. 212.

things but by participating in them".³¹

Farragher seems enthusiastic about what he believes to be the greater responsibility given to priests by the Council. His opinion is that now "all of us priests are challenged to be prophets of the enlightened social doctrine of Vatican II [...]".³²

The restoration of the permanent diaconate by the Council was greeted by the Bishops' Committee on the Permanent Diaconate and the National Director of Catholic Charities in a very responsive manner, especially as regards the service aspect of the diaconate:

In the wide sweep of history, today's restoration of the permanent diaconate is especially timely. Just when the Church has changed her emphasis on "despising" earthly things in contrast to heavenly things and has rather seen all of life as sacred and as experiencing redemption, just at this time when the Church has reemphasized her servant role, so at this time does she restore an office of certain Christians to be living symbols of that service.³³

This same kind of positive feeling can be ascribed to Lawrence Corcoran when, speaking for Catholic Charities of the United

31 Richard M. McKeon, "Economic Development: the New Name for Peace", in Pastoral Life, Vol. 15, No. 10, October 1967, p. 547.

32 Farragher, "To Live is to Change", in The Priest, Vol. 25, No. 11, p. 607.

33 U.S. National Conference of Catholic Bishops, Bishops' Committee on the Permanent Diaconate, Permanent Deacons in the United States; Guidelines on Their Formation and Ministry, Washington, D.C., USCC, 1971, p. 5.

States, he makes the following statement:

The restoration of the permanent diaconate has been described as one of the "most significant structural innovations instituted by the Council in regard to Church office." From its viewpoint, Catholic Charities in the United States would subscribe to this analysis. [...]

The restoration of the permanent diaconate [...] immediately establishes the ministry of service in its rightful place as a legitimate and necessary ministry in the Church.³⁴

Because of the official nature of the sources, the texts by the Committee and Corcoran might be more significant than others, especially since they are the only ones to mention that the restoration of the permanent diaconate represents social involvement of the official Church. Their positive attitudes might represent the attitudes of a greater number of individuals.

On the whole, only a very small percentage (approximately seven percent) of the writers whose works were included in this survey made references explicitly indicating a particular attitude toward what they perceived to be the Council's meaning regarding roles in the social mission of the Church. The majority of the writers, however, seemed gratified at the Council's emphasis on the social involvement of both clerics and laity, although most took lay

³⁴ Lawrence J. Corcoran, "The Permanent Diaconate in Relation to Catholic Charities", in Permanent Deacons in the United States; Guidelines on their Formation and Ministry, NCCB, Bishops' Committee on the Permanent Diaconate, p. 58-59....

involvement for granted and concentrated on the involvement of clerics. This might provide an indication that the American Catholic writers as a whole were responsive to the Council (especially given their approval concerning the Church's temporal order mission), but it would seem difficult to make this conclusion on the basis of the small number of texts involved.

4. Conclusion

Although it may be legitimate to attribute a certain attitude to an individual if his article seems to have a certain positive or negative tone to it, the amount of subjectivity involved would probably render the conclusions at least questionable. It might be justifiable, however, to conclude that the proportion of positive and negative reactions found in the material containing explicit indications of attitudes can be projected to the material that does not contain such explicit indications. If that be the case, it may be concluded that the American Catholic writers included in this survey are largely favorable to what they perceive to be the Council's positions. However, as is evident from the last chapter, their perceptions differ markedly at times. Since there was very little indication on the part of the writers that the Council's positions (as they perceived them) differed from their own previously-held opinions, the large

percentage of favorable reactions may actually indicate that the Council's statements were sufficiently varied, at least on superficial reading, to support opposing positions.

Another possibility that cannot be overlooked is that a large number of writers may have concerned themselves with the Council's positions on social action and the related issues, but then concluded that there was nothing of sufficient importance involved to warrant a reaction of any kind. This may be because they felt the positions were too weak or indefinite, or because they considered the statements to be simply reiterating what had been presented in previous Church statements. The possibility of such an alternative attitude must be given at least some credibility because of the relatively small amount of material available to this research from such a large number of sources.

CONCLUSION

The American Catholic Church has long included among its programs of social concern those bearing the title of "social action". These programs have varied in content and support, but on the whole they have remained in the forefront of the consciousness of American Catholics. Therefore, when Vatican II spoke out at some length, especially in the Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World, on the question of social concern on the part of individuals and the Church, American Catholics tended to include social action on the list of activities to which they presumed the Council was referring.

The Council, however, used the term "social action" only once, although in a very positive statement, and did not include in the text a definition of the term. The context in which the term appeared was one which indicated that, for the Council, social action referred to activities pertaining to justice and was definitely distinct from "charitable action". Examination of the schemata verified this indication and provided a definition of the term which linked it explicitly to "the renewal of the social and economic order".

The Council gave evidence of an attitude favorable to the development of the temporal order and explicitly

assigned the Church a mission in this order, indicating that this mission involves both "charitable action" and activities aimed at the reform of the social and political systems. However, the Council also explicitly stated that no social involvement is proper to the Church, although the Church is obliged to initiate works of "charitable action" when the need arises. These apparent contradictions are not explicitly resolved in the documents. Close examination of the documents and schemata, however, provides evidence for the conclusion that the Council was operating with an implicit distinction between the Church as institution (the juridical aspect of the Church) and the Church as a people (the non-juridical aspect of the Church). The Council limited the institutional Church to initiatory charitable action, while it did not impose any limitations at all on the Church as a whole. The Council did not explicitly relate this distinction to the roles of Church members in the social mission but implied that both clerics and laymen share responsibilities, to different degrees, in all areas.

Considering the importance of Vatican II and the popularity of the term "social action" in the American Catholic Church, there was surprisingly little American Catholic material containing both the term "social action" and some reference to the Council--approximately 130 works from over three thousand books, documents, and periodicals.

This relative scarcity of material serves as an important qualification for any conclusions regarding the American Catholic reaction to Vatican II's concept of social action.

The American Catholic writers included in this research reflected the ambiguities apparent in the Council documents themselves, and, as a result, it can be said that the Council failed to adequately represent its viewpoints concerning social action, something which it called "an outstanding work" of the social apostolate. This failure was probably to be expected because the schemata which contained critical evidence, were printed only for the Council participants and were never published or translated into English. In addition, there has not been a comprehensive work done on Vatican II and the social mission of the Church.

A majority of the writers included in this survey used or implied a meaning for the term "social action" that was similar to that used by the Council. There was little evidence, however, that the Council was responsible for this,,, and a significantly large group of writers used alternate meanings to warrant the conclusion that the Council did not, by and large, have any great influence on American Catholic use of the term and probably will not in the near future.

There was quite a bit more reaction to the Council's positions on the mission of the Church in the temporal order.. The positions which the writers chose to discuss were

generally positions which met their approval. Some concentrated on the Council's promotion of social involvement, while others, however, concentrated on its statements restricting Church involvement. They did not distinguish between Church social action and Church charitable action. As a rule, the writers did not make a juridical/non-juridical distinction in referring to the Church. However, several did make this distinction, indicating that possibly it will become more prevalent in the future.

The role of the laity in social involvement did not cause much difficulty for the American Catholic writers. They were generally aware of, and approving of, the Council's positions. Very seldom, though, did they mention the involvement of the laity in social programs of the official Church.

The matter of clerical roles is another issue, one which caused considerably more difficulty and, consequently, received more attention. Without a juridical/non-juridical distinction to guide them, the writers either promoted or restricted clerical social involvement. There was some indication, however, that the American Catholics are beginning to recognize and support the Council's position that clerics are also citizens and, as such, have the responsibilities of citizenship.

The overall effect of the Council on the American Catholic writers as regards social action seems to be very

limited as far as the majority of writers go. Nevertheless, those who did react seemed to have been affected by the Council. Those who favored social involvement were reinforced and those who were not enthusiastic seemed to soften their opposition.

One effect of this research could be the clarification for Americans of the Council's position on official Church involvement as well as the juridical/non-juridical distinction in the notion of the Church. This research could also be beneficial insofar as it verifies that an apparent lack of social interest on the part of American Catholics as a whole is paralleled by a similar lack of interest on the part of their writers. It has also clarified just what difficulties these writers have or what ideas they most favor as regards the social mission of the Church.

There are several areas that could be profitably explored as a result of this research. One would be the implications for American Church programs of the Council's distinction between "temporal action" and "charitable action" and its implicit distinction between the juridical and non-juridical aspects of the Church. Another very beneficial study would be one dealing with the place of American Catholic clerics in social action programs. Both of these studies would help promote further awareness of Vatican II's positions as well as assist in the development of more relevant

and effective programs of social involvement for the American Catholic Church.

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20.

"Where Do We Go From Here?", in Ave Maria,
Vol. 1031, No. 2, January 8, 1966, p. 16-17.

APPENDIX 1

Periodicals Used As Sources

1. Academic

The American Benedictine Review

Chicago Studies

Continuum

Cross and Crown

Cross Currents

The Ecumenist

The Journal of Religion

The Journal of the American Academy of Religion

The Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion

Listening

Spiritual Life

Theological Education

Theological Studies

The Thomist

Thought

2. Pastoral

The American Ecclesiastical Review

The Catechist

The Catholic Charities Review

Dimension

The Homiletic and Pastoral Review

Living Light

Pastoral Life

The Priest

Religious Education

Review For Religious

The Religion Teacher's Journal

Schema XIII

Sisters Today

Worldmission

Worship

3. Popular

A. Monthlies

Catholic Mind

Catholic World

Critic (bi-monthly)

Jubilee

The Sign

U.S. Catholic

B. Weeklies

America

Ave Maria (A.D.)

Commonweal

C. Newspapers

The National Catholic Reporter

Our Sunday Visitor

The Wanderer

APPENDIX 2

ABSTRACT OF

The American Catholic Reaction to the Concept "Social Action" in Vatican II¹

An integral part of the program of the Catholic Church is its diakonic (social service) function. This function has different aspects and can be described in different ways. The concept of "social action" is used at various times to explain part or all of the Church's diakonic function. The term "social action" is currently enjoying wide use in the United States as a title for specific Church interest and official ecclesiastical programs and offices. The term, however, is utilized ambiguously, and the Documents of Vatican II do not seem at first glance to provide a ready solution to the problem of just what social action consists of and to what extent the official Church is to be involved in social action. To understand the current place of social action in the American Catholic Church it is imperative to determine both Vatican II's concept of social action and the reaction of representative American Catholic writers to it.

¹ Joseph A. Torma, doctoral thesis presented to the Department of Religious Studies of the University of Ottawa, Ontario, 1973, xii-207 p.

Vatican II definitely, but implicitly, distinguished between "temporal action" and "charitable action" in the social mission of the Church. "Social action" is part of "temporal action", which refers to action in pursuit of justice. The Council also implied a juridical/non-juridical distinction in the notion of the Church and assigned "social action" to the non-juridical aspect of the Church. The Council also implied that all Church members, clergy and laity, share responsibility for all aspects of the Church's mission.

Probably because of the implicit, and therefore ambiguous, nature of many of the Council's positions, the American Catholic concept of social action is not clear-cut. The term "social action" is generally, but not always, understood to refer to action in promotion of social reform, Church involvement in the social order is both encouraged by some and discouraged by others, as is the social involvement of clerics.

The American Catholic writers do not give explicit evidence of being aware of the Council's meaning of the term "social action". This may be because many take it for granted.... Most seemed aware that the Council promoted Church social involvement, but they did not make the necessary juridical/non-juridical distinction in the idea of the Church. This lack of distinction also confused their appreciation of the role

of clerics in the social mission. In general, they did not seem to distinguish between civil and ecclesiastical functions.

The writers involved in this survey generally approved the Council positions that they dealt with, but this was because they seemed to concentrate on those positions that would reinforce their own previously-held opinions. The matter of clerical involvement in the social mission, however, was a source of confusion and hesitation, since the writers did not seem to understand clearly what the Council intended.

A relatively small number of American Catholic writers dealt with the topic at hand, so all conclusions must be qualified by this fact. The definite ambivalence of the writers in regard to the meaning of the term "social action", the place of the Church in social action, and the role of clerics in this area, leads to the general conclusion that the Council did not have a very formative effect on the American Catholic Church in the area of social action.