

CURRENT THEOLOGY

CO-OPERATION: SOME FURTHER VIEWS

To my mind, the outstanding merit of Father LaFarge's article on interdenominational co-operation in the September issue consisted in the breadth of perspective in which he viewed the problem. There is indeed a certain incidental value in taking positions on particular co-operative techniques—for instance, the dialogue idea. Actually, however, the question in view—an alliance of effort between Catholics and non-Catholics, within some organizational framework, and on the basis of some pre-existent agreement of minds and wills, for the effective application of Christian and ethical principles to the right ordering of the socio-temporal life of humanity—necessarily brings up the more inclusive problem of the relationships between Catholics and non-Catholics in general, not only as individuals, but as religious groups, within the context of a society that will, as a matter of fact, continue for a long time to be religiously pluralistic. And this latter problem—which is not simply theological, but also social in the widest sense, and complicated by strong psychological and emotional factors—has to be viewed in the still larger, and ominously shadowed, context of the cultural crisis of our times.

This problem, therefore, needs to be discussed. And in the discussion of it I think that a good deal of light can be derived from the considerable literature on the subject put out in Germany during the last twenty years, by both Protestants and Catholics. Allowance will have to be made for different circumstances, but a certain transfer of ideas will be legitimate.

One of the most intelligent and prolific writers on the subject was Max Pribilla, S.J., of the staff of *Stimmen der Zeit*. No one who is at all familiar with the reunion movements of the past thirty years will question his competence in the field of interconfessional relationships.¹ It is based on a sureness in the possession of principles, a remarkable acquaintance with modern religious thought and feeling, an acute realism in the estimation of the present situation, and above all, a generous sympathy of mind and a consciously irenic method and attitude. In this latter respect, of course he was within the tradition of the *Stimmen*, set in the field of religion during the last war by Matthias Reichmann, S.J., and followed, too, in other fields, notably by Przywara in the field of modern philosophy. The question of

¹ He has three books on the subject: *Um die Wiedervereinigung im Glauben* (Freiburg: Herder, 1926); *Um kirchliche Einheit* (Freiburg: Herder, 1929); *Die eine Kirche* (Paderborn: Schöningh, 1939).

interconfessional relationships must, for reasons of space, be left to a later date;² I shall here analyze simply his contribution to the problem of co-operation.

He took up the question formally as far back as 1929, in his book, *Um kirchliche Einheit*, an historical and critical study (whose value has been generally recognized, even by Protestants) of the reunion movement, and particularly of the Stockholm and Lausanne Conferences, in themselves and under the light of Catholic principles. His discussion of "Unity in Work" takes its rise from a recognition of one of the positive values and right ideas which inspired Stockholm,³ namely, the fact that in the existent world-situation "all Christians (and not only all Christians, but all men), in spite of their dogmatic differences should work together toward a solution of the practical problems of life," in the social, economic, and international fields.⁴

At the time, Catholics were charged with a refusal to face this fact. In particular, the encyclical *Mortalium Animos* was interpreted as enjoining upon Catholics a withdrawal from any share with men of good will in the common tasks of humanity. Pribilla points out that such was not the case: "Rome's negative attitude toward Stockholm, based on religious grounds, is not to be interpreted in the sense that the Catholic Church, and Catholics in general, did not wish, and were not allowed, to join in a common effort with those of other faiths toward the solution of social, political, and international questions. The encyclical *Mortalium Animos* did reject the way taken by Stockholm; but this rejection is to be understood in the context of the whole encyclical, in reference, namely, to the establishment of a *unity in faith*. As against this, the Pope declared: Unity in the exercise of charity is very far from being unity in religion; it is, moreover, no sufficient substitute for the one Church of Christ, which tolerates in her midst no contradictory teachings. One cannot, therefore, play off charity

² We can leave aside the writings of Reichmann, Sierp, Muckerman, Overmans, et al. Some of Pribilla's more interesting articles in *Stimmen der Zeit* are these: "Um die Wiedervereinigung im Glauben," CLX (1925), 401-15; "Um Glaubenseinheit und konfessionellen Frieden," CXIII (1927), 99-114; "Ökumenisch," CXIX (1930), 257-70; "Canterbury und Rom," CXX (1930-31), 94-110; "Nach vierhundert Jahren," CXXIX (1935), 155-68; "Der Kampf der Kirche," *ibid.*, pp. 242-53; "Die Fremdheit," CXXX (1935-36), 19-31; "Die Überwindung der konfessionellen Fremdheit," CXXX (1936), 528-40; "Konfessionskunde und konfessionelle Verständigung," CXXXVII (1939-40), 140-63; "Zum Gespräch zwischen den Konfessionen," CXXXVIII (1940-41), 211-219.

³ "Einheit in Wirken," pp. 240-64. This book, *Um kirchliche Einheit*, is hereafter cited as *Einheit*.

⁴ *Einheit*, pp. 240-41.

against the true faith. And besides, perfect love will only be possible when all are also one in faith. That is the sense of the statements of the encyclical which are directed against Stockholm. Whether, and how, a *practical* co-operation of the adherents of different confessions is possible or advisable, does not belong to the theme of the encyclical.”⁵

Like the Decree of the Holy Office, of July 4, 1919, *Mortalium Animos* had primary reference to the Lausanne “World Conference on Faith and Order,” which aimed specifically at the discovery and constitution of a unity in faith. The Stockholm “Universal Christian Council for Life and Work,” however, so far as its immediate intention and professed program went, aimed at effecting practical co-operation among Christians in social tasks. It, too, fell within the purview of the encyclical, because and insofar as this co-operation itself had the character of a religious movement, a “reunion of the churches,” or, in the concrete, a “World-Protestantism.” But it certainly cannot be said that *Mortalium Animos* rejected the very idea of co-operation itself, even between Catholics and non-Catholics. Its frame of reference was more restricted. In fact, Pribilla adverts to the suggestion in the introduction: “. . . controversias sane plurimas, quae ad tranquillitatem prosperitatemque populorum pertinent, dirimi nequaquam liceat, nisi concors eorum actio atque opera intercedat, qui civitatibus praesunt earumque negotia gerunt ac provehant. . . .” And he asks: “How is this to be achieved in the present world-situation, unless the adherents of different confessions join hands in practical questions?”⁶

Since the question is sometimes asked, I may here refer to the attitude of the Church to these co-operative movements, even in cases where it is obliged to withhold its participation. A norm, I think, has been supplied by the letter of Cardinal Gasparri to the three Scandinavian bishops, expressing the sentiments of Benedict XV with regard to the plan that eventuated in the Stockholm conference, whose idea, as he put it, was “ut in hominum societate, immani hoc bello ad finem tandem adducto [the letter was written June 19, 1918], christianae caritatis magis magisque vincula firmentur”:

Ipse vero persuasum habet civilem societatem plena constantique pace et tranquillitate frui non posse, nisi christianae fraternitatis praecepta rite serventur. Quare in hac tanta odii conflagratione quidquid hoc spectat, quidquid ad hunc finem adstruitur, Augusto Pontifici et iucundum et optabile est, idque eo magis quod viam sternit ad obsequendum

⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 241. The encyclical is analyzed and discussed on pp. 220-36.

⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 242; cf. *AAS*, XX (1928), 5.

votum evangelicum illis contentum verbis: 'Fiat unum ovile et unus pastor.'⁷

It is noteworthy that the Pope recognized the plan as the expression of an impulse of Christian charity, and a desire for a Christian thing—abiding peace in human society, based on the principles of Christian brotherhood. It is still more noteworthy that he viewed the united activity of Christians in the temporal order, animated by a spirit of love, as *per se* a preparation for the perfect religious unity of the "one flock and one shepherd," which is the will of Christ. We may see two principles here. The first is to take ideas at their best, and give them not only respect but positive welcome, even while we recognize the defect in their inspiration. The words of Augustine in another connection are applicable: "Neque enim quia non omnia facit, ideo quae facit, improbanda sunt."⁸ The second principle is to acknowledge the genuine unitive value (at least in a preliminary sense) that attaches *per se* to a common exercise of Christian love. We may take this as it stands, without pausing to consider how far it was justified by the results, for instance, of Stockholm. The pattern of the world's religious history is certainly not clear to us as yet; but we do know that those who do the truth (as they see it), come to the light (John 3:21).

Moreover, I think that this principle is susceptible of extension to the question of co-operation in temporal tasks between Catholics and non-Catholics. At least, it would be a mistake to commit oneself antecedently to the opposite principle, that such co-operation *per se* fosters indifferentism, which is the negation of religious unity in any real sense. This latter result, however threatening in the concrete, need not be considered necessary—a danger inherent in the very idea of co-operation. On the contrary, from the standpoint of its idea, co-operation of itself, and in the long run, can just as well be the destruction of indifferentism. As an exercise of Christian charity, its real intrinsic finality should be unity, not the dispersion of indifferentism. And when and if it fails of this finality, the fault is not in the idea, but in its concrete embodiment and application, by reason of a lack of realistic intelligence and judgment, a failure to control circumstances, and particularly, mutual misunderstandings, and faults in the necessary initial pedagogical preparation. In other words, the problem is in the practical order, not in the idea.

To resume, after this digression. I shall omit Pribilla's further argument for the legitimacy of a practical co-operation with non-Catholics, since it rests on certain official utterances of the Church which will be

⁷ Text printed in *Einheit*, p. 319. ⁸ *De libero arbitrio*, I, n. 13 (*PL*, XXXII, 1228).

handled in more complete fashion in a forthcoming article.⁹ His conclusion is that the "right idea" of Stockholm can be carried out "without fear of collision with the principles of the Catholic religion."¹⁰ In fact, he adds, there is a necessity for it: "Social, economic, and international problems have become complicated to such a degree, and have so broadened to the proportions of a world-problem, that a gathering together on a grand scale of all forces of positive value must be considered. For a very evident reason, therefore, it is to be recommended that the framework for practical co-operation be made wider than it was at Stockholm. The abuses in the life of nations at present overstep the boundaries of countries and religions, and have assumed such proportions that even the united energies of all Christian groups are, as a matter of fact, inadequate to their removal. . . . If we would achieve a reform of public life, we must take the lead in accordance with a plan that will bring us the greatest possible number of associates."¹¹ (The plan he had in mind at the time, in 1929, was a "moral renewal," a new "ensoulment" of the League of Nations.)

To the question as to what the bond of unity would be between the various Christian groups, Pribilla answers: ". . . agreement on the goals to be achieved."¹² The thing in view is common activity in the practical order, and for community in action common agreement on the finality of the action is both required and sufficient. It is not necessary to have agreement on motivating principles. Co-operation among Christians will be, he admits, evidence for some "common Christian collective consciousness"; but nothing firm in the way of common motivation can be built on this. In fact, he puts away decisively the idea of a search for a common Christian ground in the ordinary sense of that term: "All attempts of Christians of different confessions to construct a 'common Christian basis' have always led to confusion, suspicion, and conflict, and have rather sharpened than smoothed existent oppositions. It is advisable, therefore, once for all to renounce such constructions. . . ."¹³ He gives it as his view that all union of mixed religious groups in the interests of co-operation should establish themselves simply on the basis of the natural law. In this way they will avoid the danger of misinterpretation, the suspicions attaching to the idea of "interconfessionalism," and the dangers of sectarian disputes. Moreover, such a basis is adequate to the purpose, "since in the course of co-operative efforts among different confessions, the questions that come up are almost always concerned with the moral and juridical order."¹⁴

⁹ *Einheit*, pp. 242-46.

¹² *Ibid.*, p. 250.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 246.

¹³ *Ibid.*, p. 251.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, p. 247.

¹⁴ *Loc. cit.*

From this exposition it is evident, first of all, that Pribilla has in mind co-operation in the most formal sense of the term—co-activity, the union of men of different faiths simply in joint action. The only thing properly shared in common by the partners is the action, together with the practical judgment that the objective of the action is good and desirable. This common practical judgment forms a principle of unity that in the case is sufficient by itself. There is no need to go behind it, and inquire whether there is any kind of agreement on its speculative premises, its dogmatic motivation. Moreover, the waiver of this further inquiry is not unintelligent or dishonest; one might call it methodological, warranted because the only question at issue is a practical one—the necessity of common action for a commonly desirable end. Agreement on this practical question is an independent reality, and by it no one's dogmatic convictions or ecclesiastical loyalties are compromised. (Some sort of an analogy would be a military alliance, in the face of a common enemy, for military objectives, concluded under the waiver of political opinions; but this analogy might be misleading, since political opinions are not of the same order as religious convictions.)

It is, of course, true, as Pribilla points out, that the fact "that certain men or groups desire *this* particular end, and are agreed about it, is connected with an agreement on certain views and principles, but it is not necessary that these views and principles should first be formulated, in order to make co-operation possible. When it is a question of a common effort to combat inadequate housing, alcoholism, or the exploitation of the economically underprivileged, I do not first have to ask my associate whether he believes in the divinity of Christ. It may be quite true that for an individual this religious conviction is the dominant motive in his work of charity; but it is not a necessary presupposition for the contemplated co-operation."¹⁵

This idea of dispensing from any precarious attempt antecedently to formulate some "common ground" in the order of religious truth has evident practical advantages. Such formulations are the prime embarrassment for Catholics, as are the conferences that necessarily must precede them. There is, I think, something inevitably disquieting to the Catholic sense in reading the title: "Declaration of Fundamental Religious Beliefs Held in Common by Catholics, Protestants, and Jews."¹⁶ And the point of it all—the triumphant assertion of a certain confessional unity—seems

¹⁵ *Loc. cit.*

¹⁶ Cf. *Toward Brotherhood*: Annual Report 1942 of the President of the National Conference of Christians and Jews, p. 19. My remark is not intended as a criticism of the Catholics who signed the Declaration in question.

more doubtful when, on reading the document, it appears that one need be neither a Catholic nor a Protestant nor a Jew in order to accept it, but simply a human being, endowed with a sufficiently enlightened and unperturbed reason. Catholics would obviously have no difficulty in being equated with other men as men, intelligent and moral. In fact, I wonder if such assertions of unity would not be more powerful if it was made clear that the unity in question was simply human. Outside of that unity no one could stand. And it is precisely this fundamental human unity, damaged by our religious divisions as well as by secularist individualism, that we must restore in the general consciousness.

At any rate, even apart from its practical advantages, Pribilla's waiver of preliminary inquiry as to agreement in specifically religious beliefs and motivation is quite logical. He evidently conceives the objectives of co-operation to be confined, first, strictly within the temporal field—the good order of human society as such, and secondly, within the limits of the natural law in its application to this field. This is “Christian ground,” indeed, but only because it is common human ground. As such, therefore, this concept of co-operation does not entail as a necessary consequence any confessional egalitarianism in the false sense. It has, when strictly analyzed, no specifically religious character at all. It rests simply on the assumption that all men are equal in their subjection to the moral law, and that all should be equal in their efficacious desire to see the objectives prescribed by it actually realized in social institutions, legislation, customs, habits of thought and action—in a word, in the total life of man. As far as its principles and its program are concerned, it abstracts from all other questions. And that is legitimate enough: “*abstrahentium non est mendacium.*”

Consequently, I do not myself see how any objection could be raised to this theory of co-operation, inasmuch as it is a theory. But the difficulties of reducing it to practice, without seeing it deformed in the process, are undeniable. In 1929 Pribilla asked whether the contemporary leaders of “Life and Work” would be content with such a form of co-operation, and answered: “Many reasons make it appear improbable.”¹⁷ That was certainly true. The theory of co-operation which underlay Stockholm was certainly not the theory just set forth. It bore a specifically religious character. The common activity in the interests of peace, charity, justice, and brotherhood, which it envisaged, was to be deployed within the framework of a specifically ecclesiastical movement. In at least temporary

¹⁷ *Einheit*, p. 263.

despair of a higher form of unity, this common activity was held, more or less explicitly, to be itself a newly-discovered form or way of ecclesiastical unity. Stockholm's theory of co-operation was, in fact, an ecclesiology. Catholics, therefore, could not in conscience accept it.

Even at the time, of course, there were Protestants who objected to the confusion of two distinct things, church unity, and united effort toward the solution of social problems. However, even today the generality of Protestant opinion views the "unity of co-operative action" as a form—at least an inchoative form—of church unity;¹⁸ it entails in the minds of the partners a certain mutual recognition of the legitimacy of each other's corporate status within Christianity; and it implies, generally, a certain community of specifically religious strivings. Among Protestants, therefore, *co-operatio in caritate* is very likely to imply a certain *communicatio in fide*, and in a "faith," moreover, which Catholics do not share, since its object is a still non-existent church unity (or at least a church unity once existent, now lost, and to be reconstituted in some new form), towards whose progressive development co-operation in works of charity will contribute. On the other hand, the Catholic concept of co-operation views it indeed as a *co-operatio in caritate* (understanding that duties of the natural order are embraced in the precept of charity), which, however, involves no share in the "faith" just described; for it is of Catholic faith that Christian unity—which is the unity of the world—already exists, a mystical reality embodied in visible form, a Body and a Soul, with all the necessary means for its preservation, its functioning, its growth to all-inclusiveness.

Here, I suppose, is the real divergence in the theory of co-operation, as between Catholic and Protestant. It crops up continually. Father LaFarge pointed out—what all have noted—the "well-meaning attempts of some of the organized enterprises on behalf of civic amity to go beyond the simple quest and strive for amity between the religions themselves—a striving most natural between the divided Protestant religious bodies...."¹⁹ Moreover, one is never quite sure whether certain of these enterprises simply regard the existence of divergent religions as an established fact in the present, to be reckoned with on the basis of justice, charity, and the rights of conscience, and in the interests of social cohesion (which is quite intelligent and acceptable), or whether they regard this religious pluralism (which at times they wrongly identify with cultural pluralism, on the "liberal" ground that all religions are simply humanly originated patterns of thought and

¹⁸ Cf. H. Paul Douglas, *A Decade of Objective Progress in Church Unity, 1927-1936* (New York: Harper and Bros., 1937), pp. xv, xvi.

¹⁹ THEOLOGICAL STUDIES, III (1942), 330.

behavior) as a good-in-itself, a social enrichment, etc. (which is quite stupid, and unacceptable, not only to Catholics but to an increasing number of thoughtful non-Catholics).²⁰

The root difficulty is that Catholic and Protestant differ radically in their concept of church unity. And their respective doctrines are irreducible: either Christian unity already exists in a divinely constituted form, and therefore by its very existence creates the obligation for every one to assume the share in it to which he is divinely called; or it does not exist in any divinely constituted form, and therefore its very non-existence imposes on everyone the obligation of bringing it into existence in some humanly constituted form, which, however, could have no particularly obligatory character. Behind these views lie two whole worlds of divergent religious thought and attitude. We cannot in any way accept the Protestant view of church unity. On the other hand, when the proposal of co-operation on the temporal plane is made, we cannot antecedently demand that they accept ours—I say “cannot,” on the principle of respect for the actual state of one’s neighbor’s conscience. We shall, of course, set forth our doctrine of the unity of the Church with complete clarity, courage, and courtesy (and with an intelligent effort to have at least its inner logic understood). This is our first charity, to be charitably performed, on the principle (was it Francis de Sales’?), that, “*la vérité qui n’est pas charitable, vient d’une charité qui n’est pas véritable.*” But when this is done, the fact is that the problem remains exactly where it was, and only one part, albeit the most important part, of our duty has been done.

The practical question is: can we in complete loyalty to the truth, and in perfect integrity of conscience, come together in a unity of co-operative action for the solution of our common temporal problems? In facing this question, it must be admitted that Catholic and non-Catholic stand on a certain footing of equality, in the sense that the task in question is the right ordering of human society in its terrestrial aspects; and certainly both

²⁰ It may not be out of place to say that I myself would certainly not impute this latter theory to the Honorable Carlton J. H. Hayes, some of whose statements were criticized in this periodical. It would, of course, be extremely interesting to pursue the question as to the sense in which we can say, “*Felix culpa!*” with regard to our religious divisions, on the principle that God’s permissive will has a good for its object in permitting evil. Moreover, I would agree with Father Sherwood that there is a real sense in which we not only can but should desire a greater fidelity to their traditions on the part of Jews and Protestants, and this, not only as a lesser evil, but as a positive value. But this is a subject hardly to be discussed in brief. It remains true that the prudence of making statements, which are in themselves rightly understandable, must be judged by circumstances.

Catholic and non-Catholic have an equal stake in a just social order, and therefore an equal concern for its establishment. (Actually, the Catholic should have a greater concern, since he believes that the Church has a divine mission, in which he shares, also in the temporal order—which does not, of course, mean that she is to carry it out solely through the members of her visible communion.)

A solution lies, I think, in the fact that while Catholic and Protestant differ radically in their concept of co-operation *in its relation to church unity* (the difference that is part of the theme of *Mortalium Animos*), they need not necessarily differ in theory about co-operation itself. The separation of the divergent doctrines on church unity from a theory of co-operation is quite possible, and would do violence to neither party in their religious convictions. Such a separation leaves intact their mutually-shared doctrine of human unity, whose bond is the law of nature. Then, on the Catholic side, the danger of occasioning indifferentism would be reducible to *scandalum pusillorum*. And the remedy for that is education of the *pusilli*.

Naturally, in the concrete organization and activity, and in the case of all the individuals involved, there would be considerable difficulty in preserving this requisite distinction between *co-operatio in caritate* and *communicatio in fide* (both in the sense explained). But this difficulty would be to a large extent obviated if we were in a position to furnish initiatives in this whole matter. I cannot resist the impression that the problem of co-operation would be not a little simplified if we were farther along in our own program of operation in the temporal order. As it is, we are confronted with the necessity of a response to initiatives that come from without; we are invited to step into frameworks that are already prepared. Doctrinal and prudential grounds dictate reserve. This is inevitable, as it is also inevitable that their negative workings should be heightened by the traditional defensive mentality of Catholics in the United States. But these are particular questions, not pertinent here.

To complete the exposition of Pribilla's thought, I should note the three objections that he feels might be raised against his theory of co-operation.²¹ He nowhere deals with the notion that co-operation would foster indifferentism; I do not know the reason for the omission, nor what significance to attach to it. The three objections center about the appeal to the natural law as the co-operative basis. The first is that today many non-Catholics either contest or doubt about the existence of the natural law. His answer is that the doubt is more of the theoretical than of the practical order, and that

²¹ Cf. *Einheit*, pp. 252–55.

it does not touch the run of religious people, who in practical life admit the validity of the principles that we term the natural law.

The second difficulty is more serious: "the adoption of the natural law as the basis of co-operation dismisses the motive power of the Gospel from social and political life." The answer is a distinction: the inner convictions proper to Christians as such are indeed operative as motives, not only in the strictly religious field, but also when Christians join with each other, or even with non-Christians, in co-operative enterprises; but it is not necessary that these convictions be expressed in the co-operative program, nor put formally as the basis of cooperation, since the co-operation as such does not envisage ends beyond the natural order. Nevertheless, the work done remains a Christian work: "Prescinding from the fact that this work is directed by the individual to Christ, and hence can and should be supernaturally sanctified, it is today the indispensable condition for all Christian work. The precise reason why we have collapsed into today's chaos is that in the past we have been too little concerned about the natural prerequisites of a moral and religious life."²² He is speaking of social and economic factors.

The last objection is that on the basis of the natural law only partial solutions can be given to the great evils of political and social life by men who remain in their deepest selves divided. This, however, is precisely the penalty of religious disunity. We must build, with what materials we have, a structure that can only be preliminary and imperfect, but that is all that is possible at the moment. At that, the value of the structure should not be underestimated. In a social order based on the natural law in its integrity one would find operative all the moral precepts proper to Christianity; for strictly speaking, Christ instituted no new morality. By His positive will He brought into existence only the supernatural reality of the Church, with its structure, its doctrine, its sacraments.²³ In the moral order His activity limited itself to a clarification of the law already written in the heart of every man, and to a confirmation of that law by His divine authority. To which activity, of course, He added the force of His own example, whereby men would be prompted to transcend the limits of the strictly obligatory, and imitate His self-emptying love. The natural law, therefore, would be adequate to base an integrally human social order. It is another question whether there reside in human nature as such the moral energies necessary to call into being such an order. Catholic doctrine holds that the integral observance of the natural law is impossible to man without the aid of grace.

²² *Ibid.*, p. 250.

²³ Cf. S. Thomas, *Quodl. IV*, a. 13: "Lex nova, quae est lex libertatis . . . est contenta praeceptis moralibus naturalis legis et articulis fidei et sacramentis gratiae."

As a matter of fact, therefore, integral humanity, whether in personal or social life, is the gift of the Holy Spirit of Christ, who indwells as a divinizing, and therefore humanizing, power in the Church and in the individual. This truth, I take it, is the basis of the objection in question. And the basic answer is the Catholic distinction between the enduring validity of human nature in its order, and its insufficiency to achieve even the perfection proper to its own order. What is insufficient is not therefore useless.

The foregoing developments have been based on Pribilla's ideas as set forth in 1929. At that time he sustained two points: the legitimacy and the necessity of co-operation between Catholics and non-Catholics towards a solution of common human problems. It may be interesting to conclude with a passage written in 1936, after the critical events of 1933. It occurs in an article on the necessity and the means of overcoming the dreadful alienation that exists between Catholic and Protestant: "We Christians . . . today . . . see ourselves exposed to violent and bitter attacks against the whole of Christianity. . . In such times the magnitude of the danger which threatens all Christians ought to offer an obvious occasion to join hands over the frontiers of the different creeds and to rally together at least in an external offensive and defensive alliance."²⁴

He adds that even the well founded doubt as to how much of the Christian tradition still exists among our allies "does not stand in the way of a union of Christians for the defense of Christianity. . . It is sufficient that they still have enough conscious or unconscious Christianity to oppose the barbarity of out-and-out godlessness. In the great army of Christians a lot of people have marched who could not stand up under strict criticism, and it is not only the saints who have fought the battles of God."²⁵ This is not the reckless rhetoric of one who overlooks theological values: "I know full well that efforts aimed at a union of all Christians in defense of Christian principles are disdained in many quarters today because they supposedly do not envisage the real theological problem in its full extent. But this disdain betrays a lack of insight into the actual situation of Christianity, and the demands that it makes. When in earlier ages Catholics and Protestants banded together to resist the Turk, the inner theological question between them was not thereby settled, to be sure; but the West was rescued from invasion by Islam—a thing that was, supposedly, of some value for Christians and for Christendom."²⁶

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²⁴ "Die Überwindung der konfessionellen Fremdheit," *Stimmen der Zeit*, CXXX (1936), 529.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 530. ²⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 531.