Religious Leaders Plead For Mutual Respect And Sympathy Among Masses

Prominent Catholic, Jewish and Protestant Personalities Exchange Views at Rhode Island Seminar on Human Relationships

Heralds of a bright new day in religious understanding, Catholic, Jewish and Protestant leaders of national prominence agreed, during the Rhode Island Seminar on Human Relationships, held at Brown University and Providence College this week, that the dawn gives promise only if bonds of lasting sympathy and friendliness are bred into the great masses of peoples adhering to the three faiths.

It is not enough, they pointed out, that the priest, the rabbi and the minister shall be kindly disposed to and respect the rights of those who do not believe as he does; there must be mutual appreciation among the laity in each group if tolerance and equality are to prevail and cloudy, overcast skies are to be dispelled.

Three major conclusions were arrived at during the deliberations, which took the form of addresses, discussion groups and "U-Table" conferences, during which many fancied prejudices were probed and dissipated; recognition that religious freedom is not a favor, to be granted by one religion to another, but a right; education and discussion among groups representing different faiths as a means of eliminating prejudice and persecution, and the candid acknowledgment that a variety of religions not only should but must exist if there is to be color, warmth and zest in living.

In his address at the opening session, Rabbi Samuel M. Gup of Temple Beth-El sounded the keynote of the conference.

"We live together; we fight together; we suffer together," he declared. "But we also have to look closer at one another and understand one another better that we may be more just and considerate." He stressed the fact that while much religious intolerance is due to ignorance, a considerable portion of it is attributable to moral apathy. He maintained that there will always be honest differences between the faiths, differences for which the highest respect must be cultivated. Mgr. Peter A. Foley, speaking for the Catholics, and Dr. Arthur H. Bradford, pastor of Central Congregational Church, speaking for the Protestants, echoed this sentiment.

Under the guidance of Rev. Everett R. Clinchy, director of the National Conference of Catholics, Jews and Protestants, a confessional was held, members of the three religious faiths, laymen and women, as well as clergymen, airing all manner of prejudices. These, during the discussion groups and "U-Table," were dissected, analyzed and erased, the real differences at the same time being clarified and acknowledged. Among the leaders in the discussion groups were Charles C. Brown, Mrs. Caesar Misch, Rabbi Maurice M. Mazure, Rabbi Israel M. Goldman, Rabbi Louis Wolsey of Philadelphia, Rabbi Isaac Landman and Rabbi Gup.

At the "U-Table," which consisted of five Catholics, five Jews and five Protestants, were seated Rabbi Goldman, Judge Philip C. Joslin, Rabbi Landman, Rabbi Gup and Rabbi Wolsey.

The latter delivered the fracture address during the second day's conference, speaking on "Areas of Co-operation." The fact that true differences do exist between faiths works to mutual advantage and adds a desirable color to life, he pointed out.

"One of the first demonstrations of co-operation for me would be to go out and educate my own group in good-will," he asserted, "and I presume this is true for Catholics and Protestants here present." Widespread political corruption, gangsterism, kidnaping, poverty and other social problems are areas of co-operation in which Catholic, Jew and Protestant can stand shoulder to shoulder, he explained.

Max L. Grant presided over the luncheon meeting in Providence College auditorium following Rabbi Wolsey's address. At the close of this session, groups of various faiths joined in a tour of churches and temples of the city. They visited Temple Beth-El and Temple Emanu-El and guides pointed out and described the religious equipment in each place.

Speaking on a "Layman's Outlook" of present-day human relationships, Judge Joseph M. Proskauer of New York hit out at the "chauvinism, hatred, bigotry and misunderstanding in religion, resulting from man's inhumanity to man." He expressed doubt that education alone would eliminate intolerance.

"At least today we have a legalistic freedom of conscience and worship," he explained. "But I am not content with legalistic tolerance. I dream of a spiritual summit where men shall live together in mutual toleration, forbearance and love. I believe the basis of religious prejudice is to be found in the emotions and early impressions. There is no relationship between ignorance and prejudice.

"See to it that in the minds of our young people there is not lodged the conception that they are especially favored of God. Let us not imitate others, but be ourselves."

The concept of a tribal god, whose aid and protection is withdrawn when the tribesman leaves his clan, or who is hostile to one who pays homage to another deity, the speaker described as the most blasphemous in history. He closed with the plea: "Oh, brother man, fold to thy heart thy brother; where pity dwells the peace of God is there."

The Providence Seminar was described by Rabbi Landman, editor of The American Hebrew, as "an historic day in the history of religions." He paid tribute to Bishop William A. Hickey and President Lorenzo C. McCarthy of Providence College.

"So far as I know the records," he declared, "this is the first time in history that Catholics, Jews and Protestants have met under communal auspices in a Catholic college, at the invitation of a Bishop of the church, for a friendly discussion of those divisive elements that destroy proper human relations.

"To many Protestants, Catholics and Jews this information is unbelievable. It is good news that should be heard around the world. It is a new thing in the religious life of the world: Protestants, Catholics and Jews, under a Dominican roof, seeking to understand each other's religions in order to lay open causes of inter-religious prejudices so that by understand we may dissolve them and create bridges of mutuality."

JEWISH LEADERS CONTRIBUTE TO CATHOLIC COLLEGE FUND

New York, May 6—(JTA)—Davis Fineberg and J. I. Kislak, two prominent Jewish leaders of Hudson County, New Jersey, are among the contributors to the $750,000 new building fund campaign for St. Peter's College, Jersey City, a Roman Catholic institution. The Rev. Joseph S. Dineen, President of the college, announced that Mr. Fineberg, who is a member of the Hudson County Welfare Board contributed $1000 and Mr. Kislak, $500.

Two other Jews donated $11; one a $10 bill and the other one dollar. The latter promised to get pledges from nine of his friends for the building fund, "because the Jewish boys at Fordham University are treated in such a fine manner."