

### 3. Society, State, Church

By a society an I understand a group of individuals ~~en~~ engaged in realizing a concrete instance of that structure of the human good described in chapter two. As the reader may recall, the structure stands on three levels. On the first level one considers the needs and capacities of individuals<sup>†</sup> and their operations which within society become cooperations yielding flows of instances of the particular good. On the second level one considers their plasticity and perfectibility and their training for assuming roles and performing tasks in a manner that secures the continuous flowing of instances of the particular good -- a continuous flowing that <sup>results from the</sup> ~~is named the~~ good of order. On the third level one considers their originating value of freedom and responsibility, their basic option for self-transcendence or for alienation, their personal relations with other members of the society, and finally the terminal values they bring about in themselves or encourage in others.

Since all human beings have needs and since cooperation vastly increases the possibility of satisfying them, society is a universal phenomenon. But it is realized <sup>in</sup> ~~as~~ a great variety of stages of technological, economic, political, and cultural development, in areas of intense cooperation ~~and~~ and across frontiers where interchange is great or small, regular or intermittent. So one may envisage an international society, or consider smaller units such as the nation, the region, megalopolis, the city.

The ideal basis of society is community, and the community may take its stand on a moral, a religious, or a

Christian principle. The moral principle is that men individually are responsible for what they make of themselves, but collectively they are responsible for the world in which they live. Such is the basis of universal dialogue. The religious principle is God's gift of his love, and it forms the basis of dialogue among the representatives of all religions. The Christian principle conjoins the inner gift of God's love with its outer manifestation in Christ Jesus and in those that follow him. Such is the basis of Christian ecumenism.

But while the ideal basis of society is community, while society does not survive without a large measure of community, it remains that commonly community is imperfect. Egoists find loop-holes in social arrangements and exploit them to enlarge their own share and to diminish the share of others in current instances of the particular good. Groups exaggerate the magnitude and importance of their contribution to society; they provide a market for the ideological façade that would justify their ways before the bar of public opinion. Men of common sense are immersed in the concrete and the Present; they have little grasp of large movements and of long-term trends; they are anything but ready to sacrifice immediate advantage for the enormously greater good of society in two or three decades.

To cope with the problem of imperfect community there gradually develop specific agencies within society. The two with which we are concerned are the church and the state.

of one another's actions, and an ever deeper crisis in the situation.

8. in Communications  
The Agent of Practical Theology

The agent of practical theology is the church.

While the church may be named a society in the medieval sense of that word, here it is conceived as a process occurring within human society. The substance of that process is the Christian message conjoined with God's gift of his love and resulting in witness to Christ, Christian fellowship, and Christian service of mankind.

The church is a structured process. ~~It~~ As does human society, so too it trains personnel, distinguishes roles and tasks, has already understood and accepted modes of cooperation, promotes a good of order in which Christian needs are met regularly, sufficiently, efficiently, facilitates the spiritual and cultural development of its members, encourages them to transform by Christian charity their personal and group relations, and rejoices in the terminal values that flow from their lives.

The church is an outgoing process. It does not exist propter se. It exists for the kingdom of God not only in the after life but also in this life, not only within its own organization but in the whole of human society.

Finally, at present, the church is divided. But the existence of different confessions and allegiances does not entitle us to forget Christ's prayer that "... may they all be one..." (John 17, 21) or to neglect any endeavor to promote the cause of ecumenism.

9. The Basic Action <sup>in Communications</sup> ~~of Practical Theology~~

The basic action <sup>in communications</sup> ~~of practical theology~~ is communicating the Christian message to ~~the~~ Christians and to non-Christians.

Now to communicate ~~is~~ is to have another share in one's cognitive or constitutive or effective meaning. Those, then, that would communicate the cognitive meaning of the Christian ~~message must know it; to this end the seven other functional~~ message, first of all, must know it; at their service, then, are the seven previous functional specialties. Those that would communicate the constitutive meaning of the Christian message must live it; for one cannot have another share in what one oneself does not possess; and without living the Christian message one does not possess its constitutive meaning. Those that would communicate the effective meaning of the Christian message must themselves ~~practice it~~ practise it, for actions ~~spea~~ speak louder than words.

The Christian message is to be communicated to all nations, to every class in every culture. But such communication is possible only in the measure that teachers and preachers ~~manman~~ stretch their horizons till they include the common sense, the ways of thought and feeling, the achievement and the further virtual resources of the language of the culture and subculture of those among whom they labor.

Still such mastery of the language and culture is only a possibility of communication. If the Christian message is to be communicated in a non-Christian milieu, there is a need for creativity. The virtual resources of the language have to be tapped. The relevant carriers, elements, functions, realms, stages of meaning have to be explored, and possible solutions

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Society, state, and church are understood concretely