

Japan, the Eta is a class of people who are segregated because they are involved in the slaughter of animals. There is no mention of integrating Eta and non-Eta. In the Phillipine Islands, the black citizens are in a social limbo with no signs of an effort toward integration.

In America, there is discrimination. But the walls are tumbling down. Periodically we have terrible bombings and riots. We have tensions and fears. But we must remember that these conflicts are symptoms of social change and readjustment. Although we shudder at the physical violence, it is good to remember that even this is not a sign of stalemate but a rear guard action by those who are fighting change for the better.

Contrasted to those who proclaim a stalemate are those who tell us that the process of integration is an easy thing. You may hear them say that "our parish and congregation was integrated with no trouble at all."

I don't believe it—don't you. Racial changes are major social adjustments, fraught with conflict, fears and indecision. For a priest of ours, or any church, the utmost is demanded in these situations. The creeping paralysis of despair will tug at his soul. And yet, in those closing hours of the day when he looks to our Lord, a priest who offers the sacraments to all, a priest who gives himself to all the people, this priest is a man who will smile at God.

Editor's Note: This is the text of an address made recently by John McKnight at Bishop Anderson House before a meeting of south side and west side urban clergy. Mr. McKnight, who is a member of St. Luke's Church, Evanston, is a staff member of the Mayor's Commission on Human Relations.

The Continuing Crucifixion

By John L. McKnight

In our great American melting pot it is regrettable that all too often a man's tartan is his race. It is amazing that this remains true when we consider the innumerable population shifts, growths and changes to which Americans have successfully adjusted in a short period of time with a minimum of conflict.

Throughout our history the American dream of an equal opportunity for all has usually guided us as we have moved, built and met others. Our neighbor's national or religious background has increasingly seemed unimportant in a nation of monumental change.

But the genius of the American way, somehow, has not trampled down the barrier of race. Perhaps one reason for this has been that, buffeted by change, we have wanted some kind of identity, roots—a firm rock. Amidst the human changes, race has been one of the few readily apparent absolutes. Color has been a source of identity because of its constancy—there is no choice involved in pigmentation. For many Americans, the color of a man's skin has become a herald, a mark of self or of oppression.

In Chicago, one cannot help but be impressed with the constant use of race as a mark of identity. You have only to listen to our words as we speak of those of a different color and you will hear, "my race," "your people," "their race," "our people," terms that quietly, but surely, delineate race as the key to identity.

As I hear these terms, I am reminded

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of a comedian named Orson Bean who put these ideas in proper perspective when he described a buxom young starlet named Jayne Mansfield as "a fine healthy girl who is a credit to her race."

Let me not seem unrealistic. I realize that there are some partially generalized differences of American people of differing skin color. But then, how could anything else be the case when we are separated into two groups so that Chicago, for example, has become two human cities—one white, one Negro. Racial separation permeates American cities and their schools, businesses, neighborhoods, and unfortunately, churches.

It is therefore inevitable that we have two cultures and the resultant cultural differences of many of the people in the two groups. It seems that only God is oblivious to these differences.

Differences, per se, are not evil. In fact, man's "differentness" is one of the glories of God's creation. But enforced differences are another matter, for if a man cannot make a choice of how he will be different, he is not free. Those of us in Chicago who are Negro people are not free. Why?

I remember getting the idea in my college days that the trouble was bigotry. In fact, the idealistic university ethos led me to believe that outside the ivy walls were certain people who were behind the whole thing, people called bigots. If you looked these people in the face, you would see that they had two long sharp fangs. However, since becoming professionally involved in human relations I have often had the opportunity to look into the faces of those one might suspect as bigots, and I have seen, not fangs, but the faces of men torn by fear.

To give an example, when there is a neighborhood in Chicago that is tense with racial fears, staff members from our Commission are usually assigned to the area to gather information. Recently in one of these neighborhoods, the first Negro family moved into a home in a previously all-white block. A crowd of white people gathered outside the home while I was visiting inside

with the Negro family. As the crowd shouted epithets and threw stones, we drank coffee and tried to talk of other things as we waited for the police. It was a tragic moment as the husband told me of his long struggle to save enough money to purchase a home, of his joy at finding a decent place to raise his children, and of his desire to be nothing more, nor less, than a good neighbor.

Later in the evening when the police had dispersed the crowd, I went down to the corner where there was a neighborhood tavern—a very good place to ascertain neighborhood opinion! There I sat down beside an old man who had come to America from Czechoslovakia many years ago. In the ensuing conversation I found that his was the home next door to the Negro family that I had visited earlier. The words he spoke and the tears in his eyes told eloquently that he fully believed his life had virtually ended, that his home, representing all of his savings, was valueless, that his neighbors would leave him behind, and that his family was doomed. It was difficult to see him as a bigot.

One could become quite deterministic about this situation. Perhaps the poet would see a tragic beauty in the situation and call it "man's fate." The sociologist, economist or psychologist, might say that education of various kinds would lead us out of the dilemma. But I doubt it.

I believe that, ultimately, there is only one answer. That answer is our Lord's magnificent answer that we are brothers before Him. Our only identity is with Him.

This answer shapes the ministry of reconciliation, a ministry that challenges you each day in our City. The need has never been greater. And I am heartsick, as you are, that in our church the ministry is too often limited because we have all-Negro and all-white congregations. Many of you must preach the universal church from color-bound pulpits. And worst of all, the identity of race taints even the priesthood as petty quarrels develop among priests of differing color who dispute over parishioners. Surely, these facts

are those over which the tears of our Lord are shed—the continuing crucifixion.

The great tragedy in this matter is that the Church is weakened. And we need the Church as a bulwark. Believe me when I say that, working daily in the inter-group relations field, the churches of God are the first, and the last, resort. If the battle over segregation is to end in America, it will be fought, and I hope won, in the churches.

I say this from personal knowledge. As our Commission attempts to deal with neighborhood tensions over racial issues, we know from experience that our most fruitful approach is through the churches and synagogues and their priests, ministers and rabbis. And if, in those churches and synagogues we find men of little faith, we know that we are beaten before the battle begins.

As priests of the Episcopal Church, I believe that your task is difficult in that our Church has popular class identifications that militate against all-inclusiveness. However, you do have one great advantage over the Protestant churches in that ours is a liturgical church.

We face the altar and the sacraments and this is a real advantage over those denominations that have what might be called group-centered services. When men face God instead of each other, they are less likely to see their differences of color. And ultimately, they are more likely to realize that God's grace is for all.

Surely, these are difficult times. There are those so weary of inter-group conflict that they say the racial issue has come to a stalemate. They are wrong. In America there are great forces at work to bring men together. The Church, with all its failings, is foremost among these forces.

Having travelled widely in the Orient, I have seen that America is rather uniquely successful in seeking to effect these great human changes. In India there is no attempt to integrate the Moslems and the Hindus. Partition is the answer there. Here, partition of the races is being fought at every level. In