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ON FATHER HANS KÜNG



When a lecturing theologian fills Stepan Center with university students, a crowd comparable only to that previously drawn by popular entertainers, that's news -- and a hopeful sign of intellectual and religious vigor. Judging from the turn-out Monday night, Father Hans Küng's lecture will be one of the highlights of the academic year.

The Religious Bulletin fittingly takes note of the event (some will say, "Hops on the bandwagon") not to comment or criticize but by quotations from Dr. Küng's books to clarify and expand two of the points touched on in the lecture or in the question period.

On the matter of the relationship of obedience to freedom, Dr. Küng wrote in The Council, Reform and Reunion:

"Loyalty to the Gospel involves loyalty to the Church who preaches the Gospel to us. Sentire in Ecclesia, thinking in the Church (which is the original Ignatian idea, rather than the less exact sentire cum Ecclesia, thinking with the Church), is an essential requirement for any reforming action. Renewal of the Church must not be revolution, must not lead out of the Church but deeper into her. Hence it must be carried out in a genuine, loyal, honest, free obedience to the Church's leaders, whose duty it is to feed the flock and in whose voice we hear the voice of the Lord. Obedience, which always involves self-denial, will mean that one will often do something for the good of the whole which, if left to oneself, one would not have done; and will leave undone much that, if left to oneself, one would have done. One will often be silent when one would like to speak, wait when one would like to hurry, serve when one would like to put one pressure, pray when one would like to grumble. In short, one will obey, and so demonstrate precisely the liberty of a Christian man, a follower of Jesus Christ himself. Obedience to him, to whom alone as free Christians our obedience is due, becomes a concrete reality in the Church. All this has absolutely nothing to do with the pernicious principle that 'orders is orders,' making those in authority arbitrary and depriving those under it of all responsibility. Ecclesiastical obedience is not according to the letter that killeth but the spirit that quickeneth. True obedience is rooted in a loving faith and confidence (both in those who hold authority and those who are under it) in the workings of the Holy Spirit, who animates the whole Church." (pp. 56-57)

Connected with the question of freedom of conscience are his remarks

in the last essay of his more recent book: That the World May Believe.

"There is all the difference in the world between doubting the faith because, deep down, one doesn't seriously want to believe; because the practical consequences of the faith are uncomfortable, and so one would rather cling to the question and the doubt; and so, instead of bravely and believably saying Yes despite all the obstacles in the way, one takes refuge behind the obstacles like a slacker and a coward and labels everything with a lazy-minded question mark: 'After all, who knows whether any of that stuff is really true?' Between that and, on the other hand, seriously wanting to believe and not shrinking from the consequences of the faith but, with the best will in the world, still having temptations to disbelief; because one is now a thinking Christian at last, not asleep but awake, and aware of the difficulties in the faith; because one feels thoroughly shaken by them sometimes, possibly even violently mixed up and turned upside down. Doubts of this second kind are really better called difficulties. We don't create them ourselves, they happen to us...

"...Faith means decision: are you going to rely ultimately on yourself or on God? Are you going to take everything self-sufficiently into your own hands or leave everything selflessly to him? Are you going to trust his word or not, believe or not believe?

"It's quite clear that a child could not be faced with this decision in the same way that you are. A child takes a great deal for granted which you can't take for granted any more, and don't need to. Your knowledge in every field has increased. Your idea of the world has changed and broadened. You are living in a different environment. All this is not irrelevant to your faith. Your faith is going through a crisis of growth. It's still the same, but what it wants is to become the faith of an adult. Anyone who thinks he can go through the whole of life with nothing but the catechism is trying, as an adult, to climb mountains in his baby shoes...

"...Doubt is the shadow cast by faith. One does not always notice it but it is always there, though concealed. At any moment it may come into action. There is no mystery of the faith which is immune to doubt...

"When doubt gets hold of you, the thing to do is to trust in God, and not to leave go of Christ and his grace, not to lose hold of him. In moments like that, even when you cannot see any solution, you mustn't weaken. You must carry your faith through the difficulty, believing here and now and in spite of it! There is one thing you can always do in a crisis: pray for faith. There is nothing automatic in the fact that you believe. Your faith is a gift of the Holy Ghost. It isn't a gift you have once for all. You need to keep on praying for it. Even though you do believe, you are constantly threatened by unbelief. And so it is so consoling and encouraging for us to have the prayer of the man in the gospel, who believed but was threatened by unbelief and said: 'I believe, Lord: help my unbelief.'" (pp. 140-147)

In Your Charity	Please pray for the following. <u>Deceased</u> : grandmother of Ed Anderson of Morrissey; grandmother of Joseph Fanelli of Farley; cousin of Pat Shelley of Sorin (killed in an auto accident); uncle of Jack Tate, Off-Campus. <u>Ill</u> : friend of Mike Kiley of Cavanaugh.
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