From ‘Interests’ to ‘Values’:
A Shift in Policy, 1972–1976

With the Denver convention, the NFPC shifted its emphasis to wider concerns of pastoral and social ministries. Of the 109 resolutions to be passed in the next three conventions, approximately sixty-seven would be related to the ‘value’-concerns of the NFPC. Only twenty-four would deal with ‘interest’ issues, and the remaining would concern the internal affairs of the NFPC. Why the change? First of all, due process was an accomplished fact in most of the dioceses. Secondly, in terms of collegiality and shared responsibility, the NFPC felt that this was being accomplished through an informal mode of operation. The NFPC, being sufficiently institutionalized, was a reality that the NCCB couldn’t hide, much less avoid. Collegiality, in other words, was being accomplished painfully and pragmatically. By sponsoring continuing education and spiritual workshops, the NFPC had gone far in redefining the priesthood. The NFPC concluded, after the World Synod meeting in 1971, that the celibacy issue was a dead horse and that to devote any more time to it would be a waste of energy. Finally, the NFPC felt that boldness and confrontation relative to ‘interest’ issues of priests had been a necessary strategy to dramatize the depressed situation of priests, but that it was time now to turn one’s swords into plowshares. While some delegate-leaders, especially the more militant association members, didn’t agree with this change of emphasis, it would become the NFPC’s general policy for some years to come.

Thus, the NFPC felt that sufficient victories had been won to produce a climate for greater freedom, autonomy, and experimentation. Now was the time to pursue in a cooperative manner these opportunities for leadership and become more accountable to the ministry. Furthermore, the hierarchy was gradually being replaced with younger men who were both sensitive to the fellow priests’ needs and supportive of new initiatives. The NFPC itself began to
view the hierarchy on the plus side in terms of working together (see Castelli, 1972b).

DENVER 1972: DOES ANYONE KNOW WHAT REALLY HAPPENED?

The transition from ‘interest’-oriented to ‘value’-oriented issues, from confrontation to respectability, came into force at the Denver convention. Because the NFPC had been scathed as a result of the ‘Moment of Truth’ statement, many of the 207 delegates at Denver, representing 127 affiliates, were sensitive to the point of caution in regard to NFPC’s image. One indication that the NFPC had tarnished its image was the difficult time it was having collecting dues from its affiliates. Some delegates, for opposite reasons, were estranged from the NFPC’s leadership. (See the section on consensus in Chapter 5). The NFPC was trying to find itself in Denver. The delegates were in the doldrums. The NFPC was like a listless ship in the middle of a deadly calm. After the ‘Moment of Truth’, the NFPC seemed to be experiencing a moment of hesitation.

Thus, the convention moved at a snail’s pace because the delegates were on guard to save the NFPC from a ‘radical image’. For instance, the same resolution on optional celibacy that passed in Baltimore by a vote of 182 to 23 (89 %), was approved in Denver by a vote of only 128 to 70 (65 %). The delegates also voted down a resolution allowing membership to the Society of Priests for a Free Ministry, a group dedicated to the cause of married priests. And though the delegates defeated a motion to expel the associations, the more liberal affiliates, from the Federation, the fact that such a motion was even made demonstrates the wariness of many delegates.

There was a certain air of retrenchment present. Father Bonnike felt that, rather than retrenchment, the NFPC was becoming more representative of the rank-and-file priests. The profile data on the Denver delegates in Chapter 4 support this conclusion. It is also a fact that more delegates at this convention were required by their councils to vote a certain way on particular resolutions. In a personal interview with one delegate, he ingloriously referred to the convention as ‘the arrival of the Archie Bunkers of the Priesthood’.
While this is a caricature, there is no doubt that the meeting reflected more accurately than ever before the rank-and-file sentiments. As noted in Chapter 4, the ranks in the American priesthood were much more moderate than the NFPC leaders (see also Castelli, 1972b; Maddock, 1972).

The main focus of the convention was on justice and peace and, although there were no new breakthroughs, the convention did raise the level of awareness of societal oppression and injustice. The theme, that social, economic, and political responsibility were the responsibilities of priests as well as of lay persons, permeated the major addresses. Father Eugene Boyle blasted the 'doctrine of cleavage' and 'theology of rift' which separate the priest from secular matters. He said:

... as Christ, too, it [the Church] must not shrink from this task for fear of getting its hands dirty, or because it may be called bad names.... Such a community does not think first of its own survival, of its membership statistics (Castelli, 1972a: 6).

One item of business which caused a moment of whirlwind in the calm was the presidential election. Father Jerome Fraser was sponsored by the more liberal Michigan delegation to run against the incumbent Father Bonnike. Fraser felt that the NFPC was becoming too concerned with the feelings of the bishops. He called for greater autonomy and 'selective disobedience' of bishops. Bonnike won reelection by 167-33. A consequence of Fraser's candidacy was to cast Bonnike in a moderate image. And moderation was the spirit of Denver (see Castelli, 1972a: 6).

The policy directives of the NFPC were reflected in Bonnike's 'State of the Federation' address. He described the NFPC's main responsibilities as holding the church establishment accountable and insuring shared responsibility, especially in the area of social justice ministries. He further advised that while 'now is the time for cooperation with the bishops', it is not the time to relinquish newly won autonomies and the freedom to speak for priests' councils.

While many of the issues which predominated at Baltimore were actions which the NFPC would champion, Bonnike emphasized the involvement of priests in the plight of the poor, oppressed, and exploited (Bonnike, 1972a). Bonnike said that the two top priorities of the NFPC were to assist in ending the war in Vietnam and in
solving the problem of poverty. While the emphasis of the address was on these 'value'-related issues, Bonnike included other areas of concern. There was the need to establish a personnel board, due process machinery, a pension program, and a continuing education program in every diocese. Bonnike urged that if these were not in existence by July 1, 1973, the bishop should resign (see National Catholic Reporter, 1972). The NFPC reached a watershed at the Denver convention. It would begin, at first clumsily, to direct most of its energies to the wider issues of the ministry.

Resolutions

There were sixty-two resolutions passed at the Denver meeting. Of these, twenty-four were 'value' issues dealing with social justice and the pastoral ministry, while only fourteen resolutions related to 'interest' issues such as personnel affairs, council structure, bishop-clergy relationships, and continuing education. Twenty-four resolutions dealt with internal affairs of the NFPC, of which ten pertained to the restructuring of the Justice and Peace Committee. (See Table 7.1 near the end of the chapter for a listing of these resolutions.) The resolutions document the shift in policy to 'value'-oriented questions.

The social ministry resolutions dealt with civil rights, economic justice, issues of war and peace, and international justice. The pastoral ministry resolutions related to such matters as ministry to homosexuals, alternative ministries, marriage legislation, the abortion issue, and public religious education. The 'interest' resolutions dealt with the same problems treated in previous conventions, such as optional celibacy, laicization, priests' life style, selection and tenure of bishops, and continuing educational programs. (See Appendix D for a complete itemization of these and the Detroit and San Francisco resolutions.) Of significance at this convention was the fact that each resolution which was introduced called for some specific action to be implemented in the home diocese (Priests-USA, 1972d).
NFPC: 1972–1973

While one would correctly predict an emphasis on pastoral and social ministerial concerns, the NFPC nevertheless continued to involve itself with ‘interest’ issues. Work in the area of justice and peace was largely conceived in terms of insuring that local councils could work effectively in this area.

The NFPC’s Office of Justice and Peace was strengthened by the employment of a full-time director, Father Eugene Boyle. In August, Boyle released an action program for local councils. This included organizational efforts assisting local councils to set up justice and peace committees. While criticising the U.S. political and economic system because it ‘cannot guarantee us a generation of peace’, Father Boyle stated that the NFPC’s function must be to stimulate a new populism (Priests–USA, 1972i). Specifically, the NFPC intensified its involvement with the cause of the United Farm Workers. The Justice and Peace Office vigorously fought California’s Proposition 22, which was intended to prevent boycotting (Priests–USA, 1972m: 1).

Another significant area of involvement was corporate responsibility and church investments. In July of 1972, NFPC announced a research project which was to develop the moral principles by which church investment performance could be evaluated. It was also intended to produce models for investment review and to educate local councils regarding this issue. By March, 1973, NFPC had joined with nine other Catholic organizations to form the National Catholic Coalition for Responsible Investment. It sponsored traveling workshops designed for consciousness-raising on the topic of theology of investment and church responsibility (Priests–USA, 1973a: 1).

The NFPC also began efforts toward pastoral accountability and ministerial effectiveness. Much of this effort went into establishing and strengthening contacts with other Catholic organizations such as the National Association of Women Religious, the Leadership Conference of Women Religious, the Conference of Major Superiors of Men, the National Assembly of Religious Brothers, and the Federation of Catholic Seminarians (Mayo, 1973a: 2–3). This area of accountability would become the theme of the NFPC’s convention in Detroit.
The NFPC continued to show interest in issues which had been predominant at previous conventions. In May, 1972, Bonnike met with the School of Canon Law at the Catholic University of America. Topics discussed were familiar ones: shared decision making, selection of bishops, protection of priests' rights, clergy remuneration, celibacy, the permanent diaconate, and pastoral accountability (Priests-USA, 1972g: 1). Other NFPC developments included the completion of a national survey of priests' incomes, endorsement of the Parish Evaluation Program (PEP), the establishment of a national pension plan for church personnel entitled 'Personnel Group Benefit Trust', a clergy distribution research project, and prayer symposia.

The Federation was also responsible for initiating both the National Association of Church Personnel Administrators and the National Organization for Continuing Education of Roman Catholic Clergy. The latter organization, incidentally, was in response to the NCCB document entitled 'the Program of Continuing Education of Priests' (Mayo, 1973a: 2).

Except in one instance which I will discuss later, the tone of the NFPC leadership regarding 'interest' issues and programs was moderate and conciliatory. For instance, in clarifying the NFPC's stand regarding the selection of bishops, Bonnike explained that the NFPC favors a more representative voice for priests, religious, and laity in the nomination process for bishops, but does not support a totally democratic selection process (Bonnike, 1972b: 2).

Bonnike continued to address the issue of optional celibacy by stating that the Church cannot demand that a person surrender an inalienable right (freedom to marry) for a lifetime. He further stated that the Church has an "obligation in justice" to those priests who have married and wish to continue service to the church (Bonnike, 1972c).

The issue of the celibacy norm and its dispensation soon occupied the front burner again. On June 26, the Sacred Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith issued a rescript tightening the procedures for priests' resignations. In effect, the decree stated that the desire to marry was not sufficient grounds for dispensations. In strong language, Bonnike, acting on his own initiative, denounced the rescript as 'punitive' and condemned its authors for their hypocrisy and ulterior motives (Bonnike, 1972d). Father Eugene Kennedy concur-
red with Bonnike, stating that the rescript denies freedom and that it is the authors of the document who are estranged from Christianity (Priests-USA, 19721: 1). The November issue of Priests-USA (1972n) reported that priests responded 6 to 1 in favor of Bonnike's charges, citing the main reasons for opposing the rescript as violation of human dignity and disrespect for the woman's role in the church. In regard to women's rights, it is important to note that the delegates at the Denver convention voted to support the ordination of women (Priests-USA, 1972e).

The NFPC continued to respond to charges that its structure did not allow it to properly represent priests. Bonnike, in response to Father Munzing's 'blueprint' of criticisms, pointed out that the NFPC did not claim to represent all American priests; rather it spoke for priests' councils who do represent the rank and file. Monsignor Joseph Baker and Father Joel Munzing continued to criticize the NFPC as unrepresentative and charged the NFPC with granting membership to unofficial organizations (associations), with being self-serving, and with having an influence which is wholly negative. In an editorial (Priests-USA, 1972j), the NFPC stated that, though it wasn't perfect, it was, for better or for worse, the only representative organization existing for priests in the United States.

The NFPC experienced a change in leadership, when, in January, 1973, Father Bonnike announced his resignation. No reasons were given for this decision (Bonnike, 1973), but one could infer that Bonnike was under great pressure. There was substantial negative reaction to his response to the rescript on resignations of priests, even from his own diocesan council. There were also continual charges that the NFPC was unrepresentative. Finally, there was the question and quandary concerning the purpose and functions of the NFPC once the NCCB had established its national Office of Priestly Life and Ministry. Bonnike had previously recommended to the Executive Board nine structural possibilities for the continuance of the NFPC. One of the more significant options was that the NFPC, while retaining certain autonomies such as selection of its leadership, would become part of the NCCB's organization, USCC. The Executive Board was at variance with Bonnike on this issue.
NFPC AND THE BISHOPS

In April, 1972, Bonnike reported a hopeful note in regard to NFPC-NCCB relations. He stated that the NFPC was in constant contact with the NCCB and its committees. In July, an editorial (Priests-USA, 1972h) spoke to those who would have the NFPC take a more confrontative stance with the NCCB. It emphasized that the NFPC's goal was collaboration, rather than confrontation, with the NCCB, but that the NFPC would still confront the NCCB when the need arose. The April NCCB meeting, however, was a great disappointment to the NFPC.

It is our consideration that meaningful episcopal dialogue was wanting... because all but a handful of the proponents of change elected to be silent and accept the more aggressive tactics of the champions of the status quo (Priests-USA, 1972f).

Observers at the NCCB meeting were blocked from proceedings which they had been told they could attend. A further complaint was the continued postponement of the publication of the NCCB's studies on the priesthood.

Observers to the November NCCB meeting, however, were glad to see an emphasis on 'value' issues, such as Bishop Hurley's call for leadership from the bishops on the issue of human values and technology, attention to the plight of the Spanish-speaking people, and the establishment of a Committee on Priestly Life and Ministry. But there were disappointments. Cardinal Krol had given little direction in regard to amnesty and the NCCB's statement on the Indochina war was described as an 'innocuous word game'. The situation of farm workers was largely overlooked. It was also reported that, out of twenty secretariats of the Committee on Research, Plans, and Programs, fifteen had neither new programs nor plans to report (Priests-USA, 1972: 1). In summary, the NFPC was softening its approach to the NCCB. It felt that progress was being made in terms of communications, if not collaboration. The NCCB began to accept the existence of the NFPC in a pragmatic way, but it was still suspicious and fearful of the NFPC since it had no control over its policy and deliberations.
NFPC and Local Council Leadership

In a progress report on NFPC provinces and member councils, the formidable problem for the provinces was called 'a conspiracy to do nothing'. The most common problems seemed to be organizational in nature: leadership, organizational skills, effective regional meetings, diocesan planning, and a parochial outlook (Priests-USA, 1972k).

As mentioned in Chapter 5, the NFPC initially had been more successful in consolidating the minds and hearts of local council representatives than in effecting unity in collaboration and communication. Its influence on the local councils was modest; its influence was even less on the local bishop. Yet it was highly effective in becoming a representative voice and was successful in the due process issue. Then came Denver. The 1972 data showed that, while the NFPC still had a high degree of consensus and cohesion, it wasn't effective in maintaining this level, especially in regard to agreement on leadership approaches and policy directions. At the same time, these delegates reported some improvement in collaboration and communication between the NFPC and its affiliates. These representatives also stated that the influence of the NFPC on the local council and the bishop had grown. In terms of goal attainment, the greatest progress in 1972 was related to 'value'-oriented goals. The NFPC continued both its policy of emphasizing ‘value’ questions and its cooperative approach throughout 1973.

Detroit 1973: Tensions in Accountability

The turbulent years of the NFPC seemed to be over. There was a new mood within the NFPC calling for active collaboration with all segments of the church, especially with the bishops. The approach of the new NFPC president, Father Reid Mayo, and the softening of militant tactics during the previous year, gave the impression that the Federation was striking a balance. Mayo stated:

If groups threatened to secede, scornful of the toned-down voice that a maturing NFPC had developed over the past six years, they
would have to do so. The determination of the NFPC to present a responsive image to the bishops was not going to falter (Mahoney, 1973: 149).

The theme 'Tensions in Accountability' certainly wasn’t the language of confrontation and militancy. There were and would be tensions, for the NFPC still addressed itself to relevant issues dealing with priests’ interests and ministerial experimentations while, at the same time, centering its activity on ‘orthodox’ issues that would command the hierarchy’s cooperation. During a wintry week in Detroit, the assembly of 225 delegates and alternates, representing 131 councils, attempted to attain this balance. The March blizzard that met the delegates had a stormy counterpart in their three days of deliberations. Tensions there were, not between the NFPC and the NCCB, but among the delegates themselves. Certain issues, such as celibacy and women in the ministry, revealed that the NFPC leadership was, in the words of John Mahoney (1973), ‘... an unstable and sometimes volatile coalition of opposing groups’. The issue of celibacy was a case in point. The Detroit resolution did not request a change in the celibacy law, but called for a survey of the laity’s reaction to a married priesthood. One will recall the strongly worded resolution which passed in Baltimore by a vote of 182 to 23 (89%), and a similar resolution approved in Denver, although only by a vote of 128 to 70 (65%). Now, a harmless resolution on celibacy was passed by a vote of only 106 to 67 (61%). Moderation was the spirit of the convention, at least in regard to ‘interest’ issues of the priesthood. (See America, 1973.)

Father Mayo embodied this new spirit of moderation. He evidenced a political maturity which maintained the autonomy of the NFPC while embarking on a road of active cooperation with the U.S. hierarchy. Mayo’s efforts were strengthened by the welcoming comments of Cardinal Dearden who said, in calling for collaboration, ‘We [the bishops] can’t do it alone and neither can you [NFPC]’ (Castelli, 1973b: 1).

Accountability of the priesthood was stressed in Mayo’s ‘State of the Federation’ address. He stated:

Mature interdependence, exercised in a responsible collegial manner, is urgently necessary if we are to address ourselves to the needs of God’s people. . . . Perhaps the greatest injustice that we
perpetrate on one another is not trusting each other enough to allow for the process of becoming . . . . How often we are prone to deciding, based only on assumptions, just who a person is, and then take away his freedom by not allowing him to become and grow (Mayo, 1973: 3).

This notion of accountability was echoed by Bishop Remi De Roo of Victoria, British Columbia, who said:

Accountability implies sufficient freedom so that my actions or omissions are under control of my reason and will. It also supposes an obligation . . . . to exercise that freedom (Castelli, 1973b: 1).

Much of the convention was devoted to the personal accountability and evaluation of priests in order to facilitate both their professional competence and their ministerial effectiveness. In a sense, this policy emphasis on professional accountability in the ministry is a revolutionary theme. Priests have never had to answer, in a systematic way, about their ministerial effectiveness. Application of this policy will no doubt bring tensions to the priesthood. One speaker touched on this point specifically. Father Gill, a psychiatrist at Harvard University, said:

. . . . it must be obvious . . . . that we can expect the most intense opposition to a system of accountability will be put forward by those priests who have been in the past most ineffective. . . . . Those who have not reached a stage of maturity and dedication which would prompt them to make whatever sacrifices are entailed in order to serve their people as well as they possibly can (Gill, 1973: 13–15).

The delegates were also told that they must face up to their accountability to women in the ministry. Bishop De Roo told the priests that:

. . . . the mystery of salvation . . . . cannot be fully lived while women are restrained in their service to the ministry. . . . . We priests and bishops will be failing in our accountability unless and until we recognize the full partnership of woman as a sister to man (Castelli, 1973a).

Sister Francis Borgia Rothluebber, president of the School Sisters of St. Francis, called for a releasing of the ‘feminine’ qualities in the church and the ‘free-flowing, wholesome relationships between men
and women' in the Church. While the delegates supported a proposal furthering the role of women in the ministry, they were not willing at this time to accept equal status of women in the ministry, as evidenced by the defeated motion calling for the ordination of women (Castelli, 1973a).

Elaborating on accountability, Father Mayo reminded the delegates that the NFPC was accountable to its founding goals (see Appendix I) and stressed the accountability of the affiliates and of the priests belonging to the local councils to work toward these goals (Mayo, 1973a: 1).

In outlining the future efforts of the NFPC, Mayo emphasized justice and peace issues, such as renewed efforts on behalf of the farm workers, investment accountability and corporate responsibility, initiation of a peace education program, support of legislation to improve poverty programs, and the study of new types of ministries. Other areas of concern were the strengthening of provincial structures, cooperation with local pastoral councils and the Office of Priestly Life and Ministry, distribution of clergy, and a clergy retirement policy (Mayo, 1973a: 3-4).

The NFPC delegates were also brought up to date on the NCCB’s Office of Priestly Life and Ministry. Monsignor MacDonald, the pro-tem executive director of the committee, criticized those who felt that the office would replace the NFPC. He said that the Federation has been an important rallying point for priests and should continue as one. He also said that it was needed for what it could do in cooperation with the bishops’ conference and as an advocate of social and ecclesial programs in the U.S. (Castelli, 1973b: 15).

The NFPC had reached a plane of political realism in Detroit. The NFPC would continue to direct its policy to wider ‘value’ concerns of the ministry. To be effective in the pastoral and social ministry, it would stress both personal and organizational accountability to foster the renewal of the Church and society.

Resolutions

There were twenty-three resolutions passed at the Detroit meeting. Sixteen dealt with the ‘value’ concerns of justice and peace and
From ‘Interests’ to ‘Values’: A shift in policy, 1972–1976

ministerial activity; only five resolutions were related to ‘interest’ issues of the priesthood. Two were about the internal affairs of the NFPC.

The NFPC voted to establish a peace education program using the World Without War Council as a consultant. The program would act as a catalyst, aiding other Catholic structures in the justice and peace field by providing research, planning, the program functions to local councils. Guidelines for ethical investments and corporate responsibility, which had been developed during the past year, were implemented in a resolution concerned with the Federation’s share of stock in General Electric: at the next shareholders’ meeting, the NFPC would vote in favor of establishing a committee on economic conversion. Another resolution called upon the affiliates to join in organizational efforts to back the rights of the poor who were the targets of administration cutbacks. Other ‘value’ issues dealt with prison reform, amnesty, support for social justice movements, solidarity with oppressed people in Latin America, justice at Wounded Knee, opposition to abortion, and alternative ministries.

The ‘interest’ resolutions dealt with optional celibacy and the laicization process, priest distribution, and bishop-clergy relations. It is clear that the shift of the NFPC’s policy which began in Denver continued to expand in the area of commonweal concerns.

A Year with the United Farm Workers of America

Father Mayo, to a large extent, set the tone for NFPC policy directions in an article which set forth the major goals of the NFPC as the attainment of peace and harmony in relationships with others. In this context, he emphasized the need for respect, trust, and honesty (Mayo, 1973b). He elaborated on this theme in an address to the priests’ councils and bishops of Region XII in Spokane, in October, 1973. His emphasis here was on leadership as an open, candid observation, communication, and guidance. Leadership was defined as collegiality and guidance, mutual recognition and respect (Mayo, 1973c). But all was not peaceful. The drama and controversy, however, was not within the arena of episcopal authority, but in the vineyards of California.
NFPC's involvement with the UFWA dominated 1973. On June 29, more than twenty priests, including Father Mayo, lined up with UFWA workers during a strike at Coachella, California. This NFPC action was initiated by Father Boyle, NFPC Justice and Peace director. On July 31, more than forty priests were arrested, along with many farm workers, for violating an injunction that prohibited pickets from assembling within a hundred feet of one another. All the priests agreed to remain in jail until the farm workers were released (Priests-USA, 1973g).

In another NFPC activity of major importance, the National Catholic Coalition for Responsible Investment initiated its first symposium in April at Milwaukee. The workshop stressed the ethical principles involved in church investments. The Church's primary responsibility is not profits, but to insure that corporations are serving the common good. Also in April, Father Mayo spoke at the General Electric stockholders meeting supporting a resolution that asked General Electric to establish a committee on economic conversion (Priests-USA, 1973c).

Mandated at the Detroit convention, the NFPC established a program of peace education designed to establish a training program, coordinate NFPC justice and peace projects, and work with other Catholic organizations in this endeavor. In July, it also announced the establishment of a task force on prison reform. Its purpose was to develop a statement of theological and sociological principles regarding prison reform and to design models of action for local councils (Priests-USA, 1973e).

The NFPC was concerned both with informing councils about local actions in regard to pertinent issues of the priesthood and ministry and the utilization of priests who have resigned from the ministry. In order to implement this concern, the NFPC Personnel Committee established both a clearinghouse of information and a Search and Share Directory. The former was designed with the intention of assisting the Church in utilizing the services of resigned priests. The latter was to make available successful diocesan programs, policies, and instruments to member councils (Priests-USA, 1973f).

To assist in the professional growth of priests, the NFPC began to establish ties with the Catholic University of America during the fall
of 1973. The important proposals centered around a sabbatical continuing education program and a training program, sponsored by the Catholic University of America, for chairmen of local councils' Research and Development Committees (Priests-USA, 1973i: 1).

A major concern of the NFPC was the problem of representation of religious order priests. Nearly half of the priests in the country belonged to religious orders; yet only a handful of religious order councils were affiliated with the NFPC. At Baltimore, the delegates had addressed themselves to this imbalance by encouraging the admittance of religious orders. Following the Detroit meeting, an eleven-man caucus of religious order priests sent a letter to all the U.S. religious superiors asking them to initiate discussions regarding affiliation with the NFPC. Research on religious order representation in diocesan councils revealed that the religious were under-represented by 50% of their number and that the barriers to representation were both the lack of motivation by religious and structural deficiencies on the part of the councils (Stewart, 1973a).

**Bishops Begin to Listen**

The period between the Detroit and San Francisco conventions was characterized by more cooperation and less conflict between the NFPC and the NCCB than at any previous time. MacDonald, executive director of the NCCB ad hoc Committee on Priestly Life and Ministry, stated: '... officially the NFPC is still considered a non-entity by the NCCB. Unofficially, there has been a tremendous amount of liaison and dialogue'. He went on to say that the NFPC is needed as a cooperative element with the NCCB (Priests-USA, 1973b). Reports of regional meetings of the bishops indicated that, by and large, the hierarchy no longer saw collegiality as a threat. Instead of closed doors, most regional meetings revealed that the bishops were listening to both priests and laity (Priests-USA, 1973d).

While observers at the November NCCB meeting felt that it lacked sufficient free and open dialogue, they did feel that the work of the regional meetings was having an effect on the bishops. For instance, the NCCB moved into the area of prison reform, issued a
statement concerning the Middle East War, and unanimously endorsed a motion to support the UFWA strike and boycott (Priests-USA, 1973h). Another indication that the NCCB was beginning to respond to the NFPC and priests in general was an announcement in January, 1974, in which the NCCB called for broad consultation in the submission of names of candidates for executive secretary of the permanent Committee on Priestly Life and Ministry. Moreover, priests would be selected as consultants to the Committee (Priests-USA, 1974a).

SAN FRANCISCO 1974: A REASON FOR HOPE

The NFPC was founded in a turbulent era for both the Church and society. There was a polarization between priests and bishops. Priests were demanding their rights as persons and searching for leadership to bring about a renewal of spirit and structure. The American society was also shattered by urban riots and protests against a war described as immoral. It seemed as though dissent was about to destroy the unity required for the survival of church and society. Immorality and injustice had been institutionalized in law and custom. Yet change had to come about lest human dignity and freedom be destroyed. These were big problems.

Who would be bold enough to take on the establishment? Who would be wise enough to discern that much of the oppression in the church and society was a result of paternalistic neglect? The rhetoric of 'power to the people' got to the core issue of the 1960s more than many people were willing to admit. The NFPC became one response to this crisis of self-determination. At the New Orleans convention, which started the NFPC off on an agenda for action, Father O'Malley said that the NFPC was a sign of hope to the priest who was experiencing doubts and frustrations about the Church, the priesthood, and himself.

The NFPC returned to this theme in San Francisco, 1974. 'Priests-USA: A reason for hope...Si, se puede!' was largely a reflection of the current status of the NFPC. In 1974 the NFPC, whose very existence, as well as its activities, had long been surrounded by controversy and opposition, could point to both a
long list of accomplishments and increasing recognition by priests and hierarchy alike.

In serving the needs of the priesthood, the ministry, and the wider society, the influence of the NFPC on local councils and the NCCB had grown in a positive way. Although this influence, sometimes direct but more often subtle, is hard to measure, it is doubtful that recent local council initiatives or developments in the NCCB regarding social justice and the ministry would have taken place without the NFPC.

The NFPC had emphasized during its first four years of existence the concerns and interests of priests relative to their status and rights in the power structure of the Church. Judging that these issues were on their way toward solution, it changed its direction in 1972 toward wider issues of the common good. This emphasis was again evident in San Francisco when over 200 delegates, representing 130 councils, came to deliberate the major social issues of the day. The de-emphasis on the internal welfare issues of priests may in the future cause problems for the NFPC. While personnel and due process issues have been achieved, shared leadership and responsibility on national and diocesan levels are still problems. Many of the experienced delegates seemed to be of the opinion that priests of the nation were seriously in need of a vision of hope and leadership. They were tired of the bishops making a major issue of a non-issue like communion-in-the-hand while neglecting the economic and political corruption found in American establishments (Priests-USA, 1974b). In the estimation of many priests, the way for enlightened and courageous leadership to develop was through team leadership and collegiality. The full realization of this goal is still in the future.

Perhaps the NFPC will be a sign of hope also for this segment of the priesthood. The NFPC realizes that there is still a leadership vacuum in the U.S. Church. In his ‘State of the Federation’ address, Father Mayo referred to this situation by saying:

The Church today is looking for new forms of leadership. . . . The NFPC is becoming . . . the vehicle whereby the Church, through its priests particularly, can come up with new directions, fresh ideas, and new insights (Joyce, 1974).

The most newsworthy issue of the convention was the rights of
homosexuals. The approved resolutions called for the development of a theology of homosexuality; opposed all civil laws that make consentual homosexual acts between adults a crime; and objected to discrimination against homosexuals in employment, governmental service, housing, and child-rearing which involves either natural or adoptive parents. But the delegates rejected a call on the Catholic Church to end discrimination against homosexuals in its own employment practices.

The Executive Board voted not to release a report, prepared by the Salvatorian Fathers’ task force, on the ministry to homosexuals. Father Mayo said that, based on reactions to the report by Father Charles Curran, professor of moral theology at Catholic University, and by Father Eugene Kennedy, professor of psychology at Loyola University of Chicago, the Board had decided that the theological aspects of the report were undeveloped (National Catholic Reporter, 1974: 24).

In light of the evidence presented in this book, one would not expect to find the NFPC on the brink of another controversy involving the authority of the hierarchy. The potential controversy, this time around, involved a ‘value’ issue as opposed to the past controversies of the NFPC. One explanation of why such a document (stating that homosexuality is theologically good) came before the House of Delegates is that the leadership of this report was from a religious order council which has specialized in alternative forms of the ministry. And it is a fact of Church life that religious orders are more free and flexible in their ministry than diocesan priests; thus the potential for controversy.

Yet ‘newsworthiness’ does not denote the dominant concerns of the delegates and the significance of the 1974 convention. The salient features of the convention were both the spirit of sensitive concern and the competency demonstrated in addressing social justice and ministerial concerns. The warmth that greeted Cesar Chavez and the enthusiastic reaction to Father Dwyer’s address on spiritual formation and the ministry reflected these priorities (see Egan, 1974).

Except for intense debates over the issues of homosexuality and the resolutions calling for the impeachment of President Nixon and increased priests’ participation in political affairs, the convention
moved along in a methodical, business-like way. In his ‘State of the Federation’ address, President Mayo echoed the spirit of the deliberations by saying, ‘There is hope in the patient steady efforts to resolve controversies and to achieve reconciliation’ (Mayo, 1974a: 38).

Most likely Mayo and the NFPC leadership had come to the realization that the NFPC was crossing a new threshold which could be called ‘institutionalized recalcitrance’. As with many other social movements, such as the civil rights effort, the NFPC initially began to dramatize the injustices within the Church. Victories came relatively quickly, if not easily. Some issues of priests were solved only in part or not at all, such as co-responsibility and celibacy. The NFPC, to maintain its momentum, moved on to wider and more complex issues of social justice and the common good. Most of these issues were ‘boggies’ in the society’s system of responsibility and ethics.

Within this framework, injustice, oppression, racism, and denial of human rights were everyone’s fault and nobody’s responsibility. To get out of this bureaucratic paralysis demanded replacement models and norms. The effort to tear down and replace irrelevant and immoral norms of the status quo would be met by the recalcitrance of institutional behavior. A great deal of defense would be personal and protective, for no one wants to freely relinquish power and prestige. But the most potent enemy of church renewal and societal reform is the blind stubbornness of large-scale institutionalization which can only produce dull managers of stability rather than wise leaders of innovation.

The NFPC seems to have come to the decision that organizational recalcitrance to shared leadership and world justice could only be confronted by ‘patient steady efforts’.

Efforts for the year would be mounted on many fronts. Although Father Boyle resigned as the full-time director of the NFPC Office of Justice and Peace, the NFPC continued to work diligently in the defense of the powerless, Blacks, Indians, and farm workers; to educate and train leaders for peace. Mayo encouraged member councils to find ways to utilize the talents of priests who had resigned; to establish constructive, collaborative ventures with other church organizations; to strengthen the provincial structures; to
work with sisters' and pastoral councils in effecting collegiality; and to develop leadership within their own ranks (Mayo, 1974b). Mayo's emphasis throughout the 'State of the Federation' speech was on the NFPC as a facilitator of collaboration, both in the church and in society.

A new twist has developed in the NFPC's policy. It involves a new definition, or rather a redefinition, of the function of the NFPC. Over the years the NFPC's policies have shifted in emphasis from 'interest' to 'value' questions, but almost always it was acting alone in spearheading innovation. It is now beginning to see itself as a communicative and collaborative exchange system, building up a network of relations with other organizations. Regardless of the issue, be it a 'value'-related or 'interest'-related question, the NFPC is viewing itself both as a promoter of inter-organizational effort and as a generator of 'new directions, fresh ideas, and new insights'. The leadership may have had this in mind during the past two years when it decided on a policy of keeping the NFPC organizationally 'trim and tidy'. Instead of elaborating an administrative bureaucracy, the NFPC launched, as independent organizations, the work of personnel boards' administrators, continuing education directors, and the work of the National Catholic Coalition for Responsible Investment. This allowed the Federation time for research and reflection.

Over the years, the NFPC's research arm, under the direction of Fathers Larry Wiskirchen and Don Bargen, has greatly influenced NFPC directions and programs. These projects included the studies of priestly celibacy, clergy distribution, an evaluation of NFPC's effectiveness, studies of the remuneration of clergy, the ethics of church investment, religious order representation, evaluation of provincial structures, and vocational recruitment. Research has been carried on by other committees also, such as the 'Search and Share' directory, guidelines for personnel boards, assessments of diocesan efforts in the area of justice and peace, and continuing education.

The NFPC has seen well-informed judgments as requisite for effectiveness in developing creative ministries. It will intensify this effort during 1974 by seeking foundation support for its research and programs (Mayo, 1974a: 34). Most likely the NFPC will
continue to expand the functions of creating and communicating ideas for more effective programs.

**Resolutions**

Of the twenty-four resolutions passed in San Francisco, seventeen were related to ‘value’ questions of social justice and pastoral ministries; only five dealt with ‘interest’ issues of the priesthood. Two dealt with the internal affairs of the Federation. (See Table 7.1 for the summary listing of resolutions. See Appendix D for a comparative itemization of all resolutions for the past six years.)

The major social justice resolutions dealt with amnesty, the arms race, racism, prison reform, corporate responsibility, political participation by the clergy, and impeachment of the president. Resolutions on ministerial concerns were related to homosexual issues, divorce, teaching of religious values in public schools, use of the ‘Search and Share’ directory, rural ministry, anointing of alcoholics, and ministerial cooperation with other organizations.

The ‘interest’ resolutions dealt with the selection of bishops, continuing education, laicization, and an evaluative study of the NFPC. Thus one sees the ever-expanding concern of the NFPC for the broader issues of the common good.

The graph in Table 7.2 provides the reader with a clear picture of the policy trends of the NFPC. ‘Interest’ issues captured the NFPC’s attention in the beginning, dominated its activity up to 1972, and then sharply dropped as issues of major concern. On the other hand, the ‘value’ issues received less attention in the beginning, but gradually became more important in the ensuing years.

**NFPC: 1974–1975**

The major thrust continued to be issues of justice and peace. The week of April 28 to May 4 was designated as National Farm Worker Week and Mayo called for increased support of the boycott. The National Catholic Coalition for Responsible Investment conducted symposia in six ecclesiastical regions. The NFPC also addressed the
annual stockholder meeting of General Electric. Father Steve Adrian, the NFPC’s representative, asked G E to evaluate each proposed project in terms of environmental and energy conservation. Also, Father Patrick Carney, the NFPC’s representative on the board of IMPACT (an interfaith legislative network) asked priests’ councils to petition Congress to cut military expenditures. Other
social justice activities taken up by the NFPC during 1974 included (1) an invitation to all councils to participate in a campaign against the U.S. government B-1 supersonic bomber, (2) the launching of the 'World Without War' program, (3) taking the position in favor of unconditional amnesty for war resisters and developing an educational program addressed to this issue, and (4) authorizing the hiring of a full-time Justice and Peace director. The Justice and Peace Committee also continued its working relations with the Catholic Committee on Urban Ministry, National Farm Workers Ministry, and the Inter-religious Foundation for Community Organization.

In the pastoral ministry area, the NFPC developed resource materials for use by priests' councils in the selection of bishops. The guidebook contains suggested procedures for prior consultation regarding candidates for the episcopacy. In other actions, (1) the NFPC produced a research report on religious values in public schools; (2) prepared a study on the diocesan collegial structure: the relationship among the pastoral council, priests' council, and the bishop; (3) called for the restoration of the diaconate for women; (4) expanded the Search and Share Directory; (5) cosponsored with the National Center for Church Vocations an in depth study of changing values in vocation recruitment; and (6) launched the first leadership training workshop for presidents of local councils.

The NFPC, the Glenmary Fathers, and the National Catholic Rural Life Conference initiated a national collaborative program to address the needs of rural America. The program calls for affiliated
local councils to sponsor workshops on the social, political, economic, and religious aspects of rural issues, their relation to the rural experience and the Church’s role in it (Priests-USA, 1974e).

RELATIONS WITH THE BISHOPS

Tensions in reciprocity were still in evidence between the NFPC and the bishops. Archbishop Jean Jadot, U.S. Apostolic Delegate, addressed a special message to NFPC President Mayo expressing his concern over bishop-priest polarization. He cited the need for solidarity and collegiality in the context of respect and patience (Priests-USA, 1974c). About the same time, Bishop Thomas Grady, chairman of the NCCB Committee on Priestly Life and Ministry, stated that his committee has no intention of co-opting the NFPC, but recognizes the NFPC as a significant organization in the work of co-responsibility. In June, the Committee on Priestly Life and Ministry held its first meeting. Father Mayo was one of the twelve priest-consultants in attendance. Topics discussed were continuing education of priests with an emphasis on spirituality, values of priests as compared to secular values, new forms of ministry, and the strengthening of senates (Priests-USA, 1974d).

The election of Archbishop Joseph Bernadin to the NCCB presidency in the fall of 1974 symbolized the emergence of a new leadership among the bishops. Bernadin called for a new cooperation among bishops, priests, religious, and laity to participate in the transformation of the world on behalf of justice. A symbol of this fresh emphasis on collegiality was the call to the Catholic community to join the bishops in observing two days of fast every week. Also, the well-received report of the Committee on Priestly Life and Ministry points to serious cooperation with priests and the NFPC (Priests-USA, 1974f).

THE ST. PETERSBURG CONVENTION: 1975

The theme of the 1975 convention was ‘Reconciliation: Risks and Possibilities’. Five dominant areas in need of reconciliation were determined by the NFPC leadership as judged by feedback of eighty
percent of the member councils. The areas selected by the affiliates were: (1) distribution of world resources, (2) alienated youth, (3) liberal-conservative Catholics, (4) divorced and remarried Catholics, and (5) resigned priests.

A new convention format, which will be used in future meetings, allowed a more extensive participation in the decision-making process. Each delegate to the convention was equipped with resource materials in one of the five focal areas of concern. During the first two days of the convention, he along with a selected number of other delegates devoted their time exclusively to developing a working plan of action. A drafting committee designed a total statement incorporating the five plans of action. On Wednesday the statement was reviewed and amended at provincial meetings of the delegates, then sent on for parliamentary debate on Wednesday afternoon and evening. Thus, the convention took on the air of a workshop devoid of major speeches. The only experts present were resource persons for each of the five focal concerns. The delegates passed four of the five units in the working paper, while assigning the liberal-conservative area to a task force for further study.

Although the working paper on reconciliation is not a policy statement, it does give general directions to the member councils’ agendas for 1975–1976. Major items of this plan of action include: (1) call for members of local councils to pledge 10% of their individual gross incomes for one year to help feed the world’s hungry; (2) mandate a full-time NFPC justice and peace director and call on local councils to plan a wide range of educational programs in the area of world hunger; (3) request that U.S. Bishops consider lifting the excommunication sanction of divorced-remarried Catholics and urge that, out of respect for the primacy of conscience, exclusion from the Eucharist no longer apply to parties in a second marriage; and (4) urge consultation between the NFPC and the NCCB to find ways to reconcile and reinstate married priests in appropriate ministries (Priests-USA, 1975a).

Besides the issues of reconciliation found in the working paper, there were two resolutions passed at the Florida convention. One urged Congressmen to support a national health insurance bill which would incorporate a respect for the ‘primary right’ of life for unborn as well as born infants. The other resolution gave support to the United Farm Workers’ boycott of Gallo Wines. The full weight of
the NFPC was put behind the 'value' issues of the commonweal both in the wider society and the Church. There was the call of reconciliation; a call to recognize, respect, and reciprocate with such diverse groups as alienated youth, divorced Catholics, reactionaries of the right and the left, resigned priests, and the poor of the world. Implementing this agenda of action will certainly cause tensions and conflicts. This was foreseen by Father Mayo and noted in his state of the Federation address (Mayo, 1975):

Will this reconciliation involve risks? Indeed, it will. Some clergy and laity will not understand, some will threaten, some will withdraw. Giving the 'liberal' an equal standing in a conservative congregation, or acknowledging the leadership of a 'conservative' in a liberal community will be disturbing to some. Going out to the alienated youth may cause some to take scandal. Publicly showing respect and special ministry to the resigned priest will cause many to fear that other priests will be encouraged to leave the active ministry.

Reconciliation with the divorced and remarried will require less concern about scandal and more flexibility in marriage cases and certain changes which will appear to some as arbitrary. And the poor—can we not give them the privileged place they have in the Gospel? It will hurt to sacrifice—and they will not always be grateful.

Many will object that this approach will disregard justice, upset the 'faithful', undermine good order and seemingly encourage disregard for the law. Some will not understand that the dogma and revealed truths of the faith are one thing—for example, with regard to the indissolubility of marriage—while the pastoral practices are oftentimes another. Undoubtedly these are dangers, but dangers that are small in comparison to the danger of being a people of hardened hearts.

The controversies which the NFPC will embark on during the next several years will continue to lie in the pathway of 'value' concerns of justice and equality as against the 'interest' issues of priests' rights.

By the Denver convention, the NFPC had ceased to be a militant social movement regarding priests' issues. The rights and benefits of priests were no longer its primary concern. In terms of social justice issues, it became one more organization joining the fight to end
oppression. It was no longer making headlines in the secular press. Some thought that the NFPC was retrenching. Others judged that it was entering into mature relationships with the bishops. Sociologists might think that the Federation was experiencing a 'routinization of charisma'. Other analysts, however, might say that it was simply changing directions. All these perspectives have some measure of truth. The NFPC has left behind a confrontation approach to the bishops. What are some of the implications of these changes for the NFPC as it moves into the future?

**The Serious Seventies**

Conflict and change are as much a part of society as stability and harmony. Individuals and organizations dissent from inhuman and outmoded structures. With new vistas and normative arrangements, they attempt to replace rigid beliefs and embedded rules and sanctions.

Social movements are organizational phenomena involving ideologies, action, demands, and change (see Gusfield, 1970; Evans, 1973). A movement consists of attitudes about what is wrong with society. By collective action it advocates change, demanding reform from the establishment. The pressure for reform or call to revolution reflect the frustration and discontent of some segment of society. But who and why the discontent in America in the 1960s!

Post-war America experienced a revolution of affluency. Everyone, so most of our leaders thought, was content because they lived in a land of freedom where material well-being was just a matter of hard work. Then came the Montgomery bus boycott of 1956 and the civil rights movement began. Harrington discovered the forgotten poor and the welfare movement started. With the so-called 'generation gap', a youth movement began. The Vietnam war spawned the peace movement. Women were being treated shabbily; the result was the liberation movement. The church renewal movement started with the NFPC as one of its organizational manifestations. These movements of the 1960s have continued into the 1970s somewhat altered. For instance, the civil rights
movement developed into racial nationalism, which later broadened to include Native Americans, the Spanish speaking, and European ethnics. A segment of the youth movement, converting itself into the Jesus movement, began seeking an interiorization of the spirit against the din of demonstrations. Middle-class altruists began to leave the movements of the underclass and formed environmental and consumer movements.

These movements centered on discontents resulting from the violation of human dignity, including the institutional denial of human rights of ‘life, liberty, and pursuit of happiness’. Discrimination against the races and oppression against the poor had become so institutionalized that their patterns are almost invisible. This violation also included the denial of self-determination. In a democracy, government by and for the people is the ideal, but governmental and corporate bureaucracies crushed out the notion of self-actualizing communities. The 1960s saw all sorts of people, for all sorts of reasons, rise up in anger. They were not a hopeless mass, but people with talent and time to challenge the structures of inequalities.

But the enthusiasm and drama of these movements have subsided. There is activity, serious activity, but it localized in certain institutional sectors of civic life. But the activity no longer commands the mass involvement of peoples affected. There are numerous reasons accounting for the subsiding of the various civil rights movements. Victories have been won, thus the ‘problems’ seemed to be solved in the eyes of many. Conflict and controversy takes its toll of energy and dedication. Many leaders are worn out with the years of turmoil. Other overriding issues such as inflation, recession, unemployment, and energy shortages have taken over the limelight. In the middle seventies, minorities are experiencing downward mobility and the attendant despair. College students are seeking careers not causes. The middle class are fighting inflation not inequality. The concentration of power and regulation of life by economic and political corporate giants have left many citizens powerless and inert. The sanctions and demands of the ‘third’ and ‘fourth’ worlds are altering our economic structures, policies, and life styles. The NFPC with its emphasis on ‘value’ issues of the common good will face the obstinacy of the serious seventies.
The NFPC, as part of the renewal movement, has challenged the hierarchy for about the same reasons that the secular movements protested against the establishments of society. It has fought for the rights of priests and has pressed for self-determination and shared leadership.

The fate of the NFPC depends a great deal on the contingencies and conditions of history. I have looked at the NFPC from a natural history perspective, showing how it has developed through several career stages. Some sociologists have a propensity to show how movements start with a clamor of enthusiasm, set up an agenda of goals, score early victories, arrive at a plateau, and finally devote their energies toward self-perpetuation.

This coming of power and its effective mobilization of course requires some stabilization. A movement must become institutionalized if it is going for the ‘long haul’. It is in this process that danger lurks. Formalization often leads to the glorification of the organization itself. Leaders then become maintainence men wary of doing anything significant, which usually means controversial, for fear of losing the organization’s status gains and legitimacy. The paradox is simply one in which its successes often become an obstacle to its original spirit.

As a movement continues to grow, it becomes susceptible to the pressures of change from its relevant environments. These changes produce new problems for the organizational requirements of internal and external adaptations, especially for the procurement and utilization of effective leadership. Events of history and shifts in societal currents may critically influence its authenticity and present a severe crisis to its policy and direction. The question of how to remain true to itself will always haunt the leadership.

Another set of problems deals with the internal consolidation of an organization or movement. Both failures and successes may destroy the solidarity of a movement. The effort to find new and relevant goals and to establish their priorities may create divisions and factions over how changes should be handled (Gusfield, 1970: 498–500).

The kind of solidarity and unity a change-oriented organization requires is one of creative tension, mature dissent, and functional conflict. Without a structural complementarity, an organization
faces stagnation and sterility. A successful organization must institutionalize challenges to itself to insure its innovative spirit.

The NFPC has had the genius to maintain a divergent leadership which promoted stability and change. Although there have been attempts by the Federation to throw out the associations, the leadership had defeated such moves. The uncomfortable company of senates and associations has been a small price to pay for maintaining creative leadership, but there are signs that things are changing in the NFPC environment, presenting it with a dangerous dilemma.

After the San Francisco convention, the NFPC entered a 'new era' of growth. It has been successful in affiliating more councils, most of which are senates, and none of which are associations. More importantly, many of the affiliated associations have been gradually losing the zest and urgency they once had. Some are even folding. Without this more liberal perspective, the NFPC is in danger of losing the much needed complementarity which insures a vital leadership.

What must the NFPC do to keep itself vibrant and avoid the pitfalls of formalization and self-perpetuation? It would be wise, organizationally speaking, for the NFPC to maintain its 'unofficial' status vis-à-vis the NCCB. To push for and receive official recognition would make it much more susceptible to control. To combat formalization and promote flexibility, the NFPC should strengthen its structural dialectic of senate and association memberships. It might consider a new mechanism such as a pre-convention caucus day in which the House of Delegates would be separated into two chambers representing the senates and associations. This would provide a sharper focus on the kinds of rationales for or against resolutions to be debated before the full House.

The NFPC should strengthen its provincial structures and regional meetings to insure democratic representation and provide opportunities for the percolation of fresh ideas and new approaches from the rank and file. Periodically the NFPC should be punctuated with charismatic leaders in the top offices. This would renew the original purposes of the Federation, providing it with a certain sense of destiny.

Probably the most important thing the NFPC must do is to
continue ‘to know the territory’. It must analyze conditions, climate, and trends within both the church and the world.

If any word could summarize the climate in the church and in the world, it is powerlessness. People, not just the lower classes but all segments of society, feel alienated from their leaders. Recent polls have shown a tremendous drop of confidence in our major institutions. O’Brien (1974: 5), in an address to the 1974 House of Delegates, stated:

The sense of powerlessness so broadly present in our society... pervades the Churches, as well, producing the phenomenon of intense personal religious experience amid the gradual disintegration of Church programs and Church structures.

Who among us has recently met a really enthusiastic exponent of renewal in the American Church? Where does one find that excited militancy that characterized the early days of such groups as the National Association of Laymen or the National Federation of Priests’ Councils?

O’Brien went on to say that concentrated power in society, whether exercised by corporate or ecclesiastical bureaucracies, will pervert the political process and destroy the foundations of democracy. Active participation in the life of the Church is necessary to make social life truly human (O’Brien, 1974: 18–19). Shaw (1973) sees the root of alienation of American Catholics in a secular value system which has become dominant. The Supreme Court has institutionalized these values in its decisions on abortion and public assistance to parochial schools. The abortion decision reflects a utilitarian approach to human life, while school aid involves the question of whether American Catholics will be accepted on their own terms or the dominant society will define what terms are acceptable.

This sense of powerlessness has affected bishops, priests, religious, and laity alike. But the alienation is not total. While bishops are in a quandary not only in regard to the Supreme Court and wholesale political corruption, but also in regard to the Vatican, they are beginning to show some courage, independence, and initiative. The NCCB voted to reverse the Vatican decision to end experimental procedures regarding marriages and annulments and voted to express concern to the Vatican regarding the norm of
confession before communion (Casey, 1973: 1). Perhaps the recent mission of the NCCB to Rome in regard to these questions, as well as the initiation of the 'Campaign for Human Development', which funds social action projects, bodes well for a new kind of leadership.

As middle managers of the Church, priests have felt the sense of marginality more than any other sector of the Catholic Church. It is small wonder that nearly 14,000 priests officially resigned from the ministry between 1964 and 1970 (O'Grady, 1972: 3). Other adaptations to alienation by priests have been assignment relocation and passivity (Seidler, 1974). Those most likely to leave the ministry are associate pastors who have no powers except those which are delegated. Loyalty to the priesthood is strongest in religious orders. One reason for this is that they elect their superiors for set periods of time (see Greeley, 1974). This points to the need for continuing the trend of democraticizing the Church.

But another response has been one of mobilization. The clergy, brothers, laity, sisters, and seminarians have organized themselves in numerous ways to bring about change. They are changing their ministry in response to new societal trends. The Catholic Committee for Urban Ministry is responding to the institutionalized repression of ghetto life. The Catholic Conference on Urban Ethnic Affairs is ministering to the ‘new pluralism’ in American society. The Padres and Black Clergy Caucus are listening to the voices of cultural pluralism. The revitalized National Catholic Conference on Interracial Justice will concentrate on fighting injustices faced by blue collar workers. The Church’s involvement in recent community organizations is also with these middle income groups. These newer ministerial approaches are addressing a new trend of an ‘urban populism’. It is a trend that needs careful analysis because the interests of working-class ethnics and racial nationalism of the lower classes have the potential for either a new kind of urban protest or coalition.

Another trend is the tremendous impact of women religious. They are at the forefront of ministerial experimentation, serving as assistant pastors, preaching, and counselling. They are no longer cloistered in the convent, but involved in the totality of society, such as service in public schools, education for prisoners, rehabilitation of drug addicts, political lobbying, and community organization. This
trend will continue to mount pressure for ordination of women and equal status with men in governing the Church.

Even the Catholic charismatics, whose emphasis has been on the interiorization of the Spirit, healing, and reconciliation, are beginning a thrust toward social action (Castelli, 1974).

Another important trend is the marked decrease in polarization in the Church. In the nearly ten years since the close of Vatican II, the Catholic Church experienced divisions of crisis proportions. Many of the changes demanded by the liberal segment of the Church are now accomplished. Democracy, representation, consultation, and even shared governance have increasingly become a norm in such structures as diocesan and parish pastoral councils, Catholic school boards, diocesan senates, and personnel boards. Bishops have been more willing to both share their authority and to exercise progressive leadership.

While there are still unmet challenges, especially in renewing the world with justice and peace, the accomplishments within the Church have presented problems for some of the more liberal organizations. They are experiencing, on one hand, a loss of purpose and an agenda for action. On the other hand, a large number of the liberal segment have become either apathetic or have left the Church. This factor has also contributed to the 'sense of calm' in the Church. The polarization which still remains in the Church has shifted from liberals confronting the once conservative hierarchy to conservatives, especially among the laity, attacking the church leadership on matters of progressive religious education and liberal views regarding social issues.

The rise of vocal conservatives is an important development within the Church. These traditionalists are concerned that too many liberals are moving into control of the chanceries, seminaries, and parochial education. They are also upset with the growth of 'unorthodox' theology creeping into religious textbooks and the increasing relativity of Catholic morality, such as homosexuality, remarriage for divorced Catholics, and abortion. Though small in number, they command a great amount of influence by the fact that they control to a large extent the national Catholic press (see Time, 1974). This trend will have a great impact on the renewal process, perhaps causing a polarization of larger proportions.
I have sampled just a few trends in the Church and society which will influence the future course of the NFPC. To maintain its effectiveness the NFPC will need to continually inform itself of the implications of such trends for the ministry.

The most important job the NFPC has is to develop replacement models for old traditions and values. Relying on the strengths of democratic participation, group leadership, dialectical unity, inter-organizational cooperation, and ‘think tank’ activities, it can carry forth the servanthood of Christ, transforming the human condition. Doing this the NFPC will be a reason for hope . . . *Si, se puede!*