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## BOISI CENTER FOR RELIGION AND AMERICAN PUBLIC LIFE

not. That he wanted very much to come and address the subject. But I just feel that I should make – and take some of the burden off of his shoulders by saying that the invitation long preceded these events in Boston. And it's entirely up to Father Hehir whether he wants to address the situation here and more generally or not.

We know him, of course, as someone who has many things to say about other issues we're also facing at the moment. None more important than issues about warfare and just war and the just war tradition, about which Father Hehir is probably America's leading expert. I've done a kind of random sample throughout the audience and you all know who he is. You all know that he was the Dean of the Divinity School at another

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that affect society. I will talk about the prophetic tradition in this sense, as the pedagogical manner. That is to say, the characteristic of this view of prophetic is that the church carries on a pedagogical effort around the questions that are embodied in the social tradition.

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The prophetic style is a very concrete way of manifesting the prophetic tradition. It is a way of addressing social issues. Now, the contrast between the prophetic style and the prophetic tradition can be looked at, I think, in three senses. First of all, the style of analysis used, and the address to issues. Secondly, the objective of addressing issues. And then, thirdly, the method of addressing issues. Now, here I'm trying to summarize a lot of material.

The style of analysis in the prophetic tradition, I think, is always drawn with great clarity - thus sayeth the Lord and then the Lord speaks through the prophet. It is usually - it does not usually take a lot of Xerox paper to put a prophetic statement down. You do it clearly, concisely, you have come to a conclusion, you draw the line in the sand, thus sayeth the Lord and you are convinced that you carry the Lord's word. The pedagogical style tends to, in a sense, emphasize complexity over clarity. It is more about on the one hand and on the other. There are three

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process, a long, complex process in the life of an individual, and even more complex, in the life of a society as a whole.

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Finally, the method. The prophetic style, I think, is given to the dramatic gesture, in many different ways. One finds it in some of the Hebrew prophets. One has found it in our generation, in our time. The Berrigan's burning draft cards, blood on draft cards, Martin Luther King going to jail, purposely writing the letter on Palm Sunday. These are very orchestrated events that are carefully chosen, precisely to bring the society and individuals face-to-face with a moral crisis, and to say in a sense, at least implicitly, as I have done, I expect you to do.

The pedagogical method is much more given to university lecture halls, sermons and homilies, debates and committees. Prophets are usually not welcome people in committees. They make the running of them very difficult and they make the possibility of a unanimous report well nigh impossible, unless you let the prophet write the report, and everyone else signs it. So there is here a different style.

Now, once again, I think the church, the Catholic Church, the Christian church generally, needs to be big enough to incorporate both within the

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church's posture in the society as a whole? This debate has, as I say, surfaced much more in the latter part of the 20<sup>th</sup> century than I think was evident previously, except for one footnote. Troeltsch said, "Well, this broad conception of the church, that is Catholicism, how did it handle the inevitable quest for sort of sectarian perfection that you find in the Christian community?" And Troeltsch said, "Well, the answer to that is simple. It handled that through religious orders."

So the great moment for Troeltsch that showed what he thought was the wisdom of the Catholic church was when Saint Francis appears on the scene, who has many characteristics of the prophetic and the sectarian and it just so happened that Saint Francis appeared on the scene when Pope Innocent III was holding the chair of Peter. Innocent III, roughly speaking, was sort of the Pope and Kissinger combined. He had a modest conception of reshaping Europe as part of the papacy. And lo and behold, so you've got Innocent III governing the church and you've got Saint Francis out with the little band on the street. And Francis comes to see Innocent III to have a little dialogue about the gospel and how it should be lived. And Innocent III, Troeltsch says, in great wisdom, says to Francis, "We can both do this together." See. "You run the little band of brothers and I'll run Europe. And we will together put this church together." And Troeltsch said, that's exactly what Luther couldn't do when Luther was faced with the same challenge during the Peasant's War, where there was a sectarian push and Luther pushed the sectarians. Troeltsch said, out of the church. So for Troeltsch, Catholicism solved the problem by incorporating and co-opting the sectarian impulse into religious orders and then they were the sect within the wider church.

Well, what's interesting in the second part of the 20<sup>th</sup> century in American Catholicism, is that that won't hold, because not everybody who wants to witness in the prophetic manner narrowly defined, if you will, or specifically defined, wants to go in the monastery. They want to live as lay people in the world, but as Christians committed to the gospel, and they want a voice inside the church and they want the church to represent their angle of vision in its broader teaching. Meanwhile, the wider church, which has neither most people wanting to go into religious orders or go into the sectarian option of prophecy, is carrying on what Troeltsch would normally expect the Catholic church to do, a broadly-based conception about who belongs, many belong inside, and secondly, a view of the society where the church is to be a major social player and cooperate and collaborate with multiple institutions.

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Second kind of question. The first question was clear in the social

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Certain kinds of issues may bring the whole church to a point that it is convinced that it only can say, thus saith the Lord, because the answer is so clear or the evil is so great that all you can do is stand against it. Whereas other issues may be filled with moral consequence and moral dimension, but not at all clear exactly where you ought to put your foot on the ground, and say this is where I will stand. So let me just sort of use exemplary case studies for the point of not analyzing issues, but trying to analyze this question about how Catholics would debate prophetic witness.

One has to begin in 2002 with the war and peace issue, partly because this has always been the classical issue. This has been the classical issue perhaps more often than any other issue that divided prophetic broadly defined and prophetic specifically defined. I've already said that in Troeltsch, the great example of prophetic specifically defined is the peace churches. Peace churches who read the gospel as to say that the only way one could read the gospel is that the disciples of the Lord would not resort to force. And that that conception of the issue was enough to define specifically what it meant to be Christian. So it was clear that that was the issue that was to set you off from the wider society. It is even the case, I think, that in these traditions of the peace churches, sometimes I think they are misunderstood. They are misunderstood as being unrealistic, their goals are unrealistic. But I think it has always been the case that, for example, Mennonites in this country never thought you'd have a Pacifist Secretary of Defense. They were just sure you'd never have a Mennonite Secretary of Defense because that job was off the reservation. So the sense here of war and peace, one side of the issue was there is no common ground with the secular state. There is no common ground with the wider society. We witness to a way of life that will probably never be intelligible, but needs to be witnessed to.

The alternative vision said the use of force is always a problematical question for the Christian tradition. How could it not be if one read the gospel? But the question about whether the best moral answer is an absolute refusal to use all instances of force, was answered by saying, no, you need to morally distinguish between uses of force that fit within

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institutions with the state itself compromises Catholic identity, Christian identity. Compromises because the argument is how can you possibly expect that a secular state responsive to a pluralistic constituency, with all that that means, is ever going to live up to the gospel. So if you collaborate with it, aren't you collaborating with something that's always going to be less than satisfactory?

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So we locate ourselves in a big church model, but there are ways in which, on both issues, we get pushed in a sense by the logic of issues into what are much closer to prophetic positions even as we play the big church model. Certainly in the healthcare debate today, it has become, unfortunately, literally a prophetic proposition to support universal healthcare. To support universal healthcare for every American citizen is something that virtually no member of the U.S. Congress is prepared to do at the present time. After the debate in the early '90s which was the fifth try to get universal coverage for healthcare for every American citizen, after that debate, that proposition was regarded, has been regarded as almost a third rail of American politics because the cost seems daunting. So therefore, the debate is all about — it's really all about marginal incremental changes of an existing system.

Affordability in healthcare. You can take it with you from job to job. Let's cover children. Let's not cover everybody, but let's cover children because children really make people guilty. So you can say you're going to turn down healthcare for children, that probably won't get you beaten in an election, but if you say healthcare for everybody, it's just a third rail. Prescription drugs, prescription drugs because that focus is on a to turn down heal (or c) 0.2 (hi) 0.2 (l) 0.2 goi prejfor c tta not2h 8.2 (. -0.2 (e) .2 (s)

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Let me turn my final point on this, and that is abortion and capital punishment. Both of these issues, now position us in prophetic posture in the American political system. Just the uttering of the basic position we hold on both of them places us where the Mennonites usually expect to find themselves on war and peace. That is to say, at the margin of the society. So you have a big church, the large big - I don't mean big simply in terms of numbers. Big meaning fits into the wider society, find the consensual position, work it out, compromise. You've got a big church with marginal positions in the American political process. Or if you take simply the standard, I don't mean any particularly radical view, simply the standard consensual teaching at the present minute that direct intentional killing of fetal life is wrong, and that the legal system should, on the whole, protect that proposition, that proposition is a marginal proposition, in terms of much of American political life today. And therefore, we are faced holding that proposition to resort to Mennonite tactics about living in this society. We have to negotiate conscience clauses for our institutions, and conscience clauses for individuals. Why? Because the broader social consensus runs in a very different direction. So just as you need conscientious objection to protect a Mennonite's view when you go to war, you need conscientious objection clauses in this arena also. Capital punishment often is an issue for a different part of the political spectrum, but once again this position, as it is held today, is held differently than it was held under the Pius XII. So again like warfare there's been change. But the proposition is that capital punishment is not a necessary instrumentality in this society. That one can defend the society, if broadly speaking, in both its moral needs and its security needs without resort to capital punishment. And the subordinate argument is that the use of capital punishment by the state, in fact, erodes respect for life in this society. That is a proposition that is a minority proposition in the Roman Catholic Church. It is the consensual teaching position for the minute, but minority. So in that sense, we look like prophetic in the specific sense even though we are advocating a proposition that is prophetic in the broad sense.

Well, let me finally come to a very different set of reflections, and then open myself to what you will do with me. And that is the question that I raised earlier about the internal life of the church and its external manifestation. The first point to be made about this was it was a non-issue until after Vatican II. We simply were at the other pole of what the sectarian Mennonite position ecclesiologically always was. A good strong sectarian Mennonite thinks of the social teaching of the church as prophetic for the church. The audience is the church. To teach it how to live in a society that does not share its assumption. We always thought the social teaching was what the church said to the wider society about how it

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those who do not share our conceptions of faith or what we might hope to be as the church, but have a right to be able to demand that we meet minimal legal obligations.

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Thirdly, it is an administrative problem in the sense that our failure to address it effectively in the first two levels has been due, in part, to our way of addressing. This has not been universally true. The problem we

tell them that is worth saying. So the public arena is the possibility that the internal life of the church could eviscerate its possibility for effective moral witness. And to some degree, while the first one, the question of the parishes, we have some data on, the second one we don't have any data on. We don't know what this has done to our capacity for public moral discourse. We may find it out, I or somebody else, before some congressional committee when we make a great transcendent statement and some tough congressman sits you on your ear, and tells you that it would be better if you spent more time getting your own house in order than telling him how the country ought to be run. That is a distinct possibility, as we try to deal with what was before self-evidently taken as our responsibility to speak publicly and morally to the country. My view is, of course, we

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