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Allies Advancing Justice: Cooperation between U.S. Bishops and Call to Action to Promote the Peace and Economic Pastoral Letters (1982–1987)

Anthony J. Pogorelc

The Catholic University of America, Institute for Policy Research and Catholic Studies, Maloney Hall 300, Washington D.C. 20064, USA; E-Mail: Pogorelc@cua.edu; Tel.: +1-202-319-5999 or +1-202-615-1225 (Mobile); Fax: +1-202-319-6267

Received: 3 July 2012; in revised form: 26 September 2012 / Accepted: 29 September 2012 /

Published: 1 October 2012

Abstract: This article discusses a phase of an ongoing relationship between a social movement organization (SMO), Call to Action, and the institutional organization (IO) in which it is embedded, the Catholic Church. Relationships between SMOs and IOs are dynamic. At times they may engage in heated conflict related to the SMO's goal to reform the IO and the desire of the IO leaders to maintain stability. There can also be times when such relationships are less adversarial and even cooperative. This article draws on periodicals, archival data and interviews to describe and analyze a period (1982–1987) when the values and interests of Call to Action and U.S. Bishops coalesced and led to a period of cooperation in which they together promoted the Peace and Economic Pastoral Letters written by the U.S. Conference of Bishops.

Keywords: Roman Catholicism; hierarchy; Vatican II

1. Introduction

While the relationship between U.S. Bishops and the social movement Call to Action (CTA) is usually characterized as long-standing opposition, when one examines its history, one will discover that it has oscillated between cooperation and opposition. Call to Action has had multiple phases. It has been (1) a conference sponsored by the National Conference of Catholic Bishops (NCCB) in 1976; (2) an independent social movement, centered in Chicago, that emerged from a dormant Chicago Catholic Action movement in response to the NCCB's rejection of the Call to Action Conference

(1978–1989) [1], and (3) a national social movement that arose out of the Chicago movement when it gained national visibility after it issued a "Call to Reform" (1990 onward) [2]. This essay examines the relationship between CTA and bishops from 1982–1987 when CTA, then a Chicago based social movement, actively supported the NCCB in the face of criticism from political, economic and religious conservatives who opposed the Peace and Economic Pastoral Letters issued by the NCCB in the 1980s. The common ground between Bishops and CTA was their commitment to Catholic social teaching, which led leaders of the NCCB, especially the major archbishops who chaired the Peace and Economic Pastoral Letters' committees and CTA to perceive one another as allies advancing justice.

2. Call to Action: A Brief History

I begin by briefly examining the history of Call to Action. In 1971, Pope Paul VI marked the eightieth anniversary of *Rerum Novarum* [3], a cornerstone of Catholic social teaching, by issuing an Apostolic Letter, *Octogesima Adveniens* ([4], pp. 347–383), which extended a "call to action" to Catholics to challenge unjust structures in their own respective societies. Three years later the U.S. bishops voted to observe the United States' bicentennial by holding a national conference. The bishops perceived the occasion as an opportunity to familiarize Catholics with the church's social teaching and to mobilize church resources to promote justice and peace in the world. John Cardinal Dearden was chairman of the NCCB committee responsible for the event. In preparation for the conference, the U.S. bishops engaged in consultation at the parish and regional levels. Six congressional style hearings were held to allow both experts and ordinary persons to testify about pressing issues of justice in society and the church ([5], pp. 545–60).

The Call to Action Conference held in October 1976 was attended by 1,340 delegates representing 152 out of 167 U.S. Catholic dioceses and 92 national Catholic Organizations [6]. The conference produced recommendations that were expected to be discussed by the bishops at their November 1976 meeting, with the possibility of "ad experimentum" implementation and evaluation over a five-year span.

Following the Call to Action conference, Archbishop Joseph Bernardin, president of the NCCB, criticized it before the press saying: "First, in retrospect, too much was attempted...the result was haste and a determination to formulate recommendations on complex matters without adequate reflection, discussion and consideration of different points of view. Undoubtedly, many good recommendations emerged which will provide the groundwork for a constructive reflection and action in the future; but to be realistic, others must be considered problematical at best ([7], p. 324)."

Msgr. George Higgins, a long-time NCCB staff member said this action reflected Bernardin's prudence. (He knew) "The church was not ready for confrontation over those issues...Bernardin was not politically astute for his own good, but he was politically smart. He knew these resolutions (liberalizing contraception, ordaining married men and women) would never be adopted (by Rome)" [8]. Any appearance of his supporting them would have ended a promising ecclesiastical career.

After President Bernardin distanced the NCCB from Call to Action and the conflict that ensued, it created a program to gracefully bring about closure. In May 1978, the NCCB in collaboration with U.S. dioceses committed itself to a five-year plan for the social mission of the church in the U.S ([9], pp. 12–16). Two years later, in spring 1980, a survey was conducted by the *ad hoc* committee for the Bishops' Call to Action Plan to inquire what the dioceses of the U.S. were doing to implement the plan

which had been renamed "To Do the Work of Justice." Auxiliary Bishop Joseph Francis, S.V.D. of Newark, New Jersey, chairman of the committee reported some "encouraging results" such as the existence of specific agencies for justice education in two thirds of U.S. dioceses. He also said that some of the survey data "gives us cause for concern." Francis reported that bishops felt that the NCCB Call to Action follow-up "has not been well received locally by laity and clergy and that the overall impact will be quite small" ([10], p. 378). The U.S. bishops fulfilled their commitment to support a Call to Action follow-up plan for five years. It was terminated in 1983 and no longer listed among NCCB-sponsored programs in the *Official Catholic Directory* [11]. As a body, the NCCB never made another official statement about Call to Action.

Lay groups attempted to continue Call to Action through social movement activities independent of the bishops. Chicago's independent movement was the only one with the resources to sustain itself and adopted the name and logo of Call to Action. As a Chicago based SMO, CTA's relationship with the hierarchy was focused around its relationship with the archbishop of Chicago. The relationship between CTA and Cardinal John Cody was one of strong opposition and remained so until his death on April 25, 1982. In the summer of that year, the Vatican appointed former NCCB president Archbishop Joseph L. Bernardin as the new archbishop of Chicago. The man who squelched Call to Action in its first phase, was now in a position to deal with it as an independent social movement.

3. Development of a Cooperative Relationship

The relationship between Bernardin and CTA was by and large cooperative. Several factors contributed to this: (1) he was not Cody; (2) he had achieved the pinnacle of success as a diocesan bishop and had greater latitude in making pastoral decisions; (3) Bernardin and CTA were able to find common ground on social justice issues.

It is not uncommon for the Vatican to use episcopal appointments to correct the course of a diocese or trends in the church. By appointing Bernardin to Chicago, the Vatican was attempting to reverse some of what Cody had done. Reese quotes Archbishop Jadot, apostolic delegate to the United States from 1973–1980 on this matter:

A bishop is appointed to balance what went before. If the diocese is well managed, but the bishop did not have contact with the people, if he was authoritarian, or a weak administrator then the opposite would be appointed...Sometimes a bishop might be only concerned with schools and not social programs. There might be diocesan problems hanging around unresolved. The diocese might have to be divided and the bishop has been opposing it or procrastinating—"after my time." Certainly in Chicago the way of operating as bishop was a factor in the choice of Bernardin ([12], pp. 21–22).

According to Reese:

Every archbishop is compared to his immediate predecessor. The style of his predecessor creates expectations on the part of people in his archdiocese...Cardinal Bernardin was greeted in Chicago with a sigh of relief by his clergy and people after their negative experiences with Cardinal John Cody ([12], p. 73).

Sheila Daley, co-executive director of CTA, reflected on the end of the Cody era.

The first (phase of Chicago CTA) was the era of Cody. Even though we had a committee to work against racism and for justice the thing that was fueling us was church reform. We focused on decision-making and financial accountability and even just getting clarity. Financial reports from the archdiocese were rather obscure. That ended rather abruptly when Cody died' [13].

Relief that the Cody era had ended, and Bernardin's reputation as a centrist who engaged in dialogue and built consensus made him appealing to CTA and Chicago Catholics in general.

CTA greeted Bernardin's appointment with relief and joy. His role in distancing the NCCB from the Call to Action conference seemed to be forgotten. When Bernardin's appointment was announced, CTA issued statement saying:

We are encouraged by the choice of Archbishop Joseph Bernardin. He has shown a commitment to shared responsibility with laity and clergy as well as leadership on the peace and social justice teachings of the Church...If we have one fond hope, it is that he can heal recent wounds and spark the many talents of laity and clergy in Chicago ([14], pp. 1–3).

In contrast to his predecessor, who would never directly engage Call to Action, Archbishop Bernardin responded directly to CTA's letter of congratulations. He also stated that he wanted to collaborate with groups "who sincerely want to promote the mission of the church" but that his values required him to "always work within the framework of the Church's teaching and discipline" ([14], p. 5). The appointment of Joseph L. Bernardin to Chicago gave CTA a sense that someone at the highest level of the church shared its values. It also satisfied their interests because they thought that Bernardin would stand in the tradition of the Chicago archbishops who preceded Cody and work collaboratively with the priests and laity of Chicago. Sheila Daley said of Bernardin's appointment: "When Bernardin came we had a positive sense. As reformers, we thought we could sit back; we did not have to be on top all these [internal church] issues right now" [13]. Because of Bernardin's reputation, CTA believed Chicago now had an archbishop who held common values with it in regard to shared responsibility and social justice.

Archbishop Joseph L. Bernardin's qualifications and experience made him a prime choice for a see like Chicago that was large, diverse and filled with contention from the Cody years. Archbishop John Quinn, one of Bernardin's successors as president of the NCCB described him as "a great conciliator. He has a great gift for keeping peace and keeping people together and of course he is a man who has a great sensitivity to issues and tried to keep a balanced approach to weigh all sides" ([15], p. 48).

Through the appointment of bishops, the Vatican influences the policies of the church in a particular nation. Through the bishops he selects, the pope places his stamp on the college of bishops and through his selection of archbishops for the metropolitan sees the pope makes his men the most prominent Catholic prelates. The Vatican very carefully deliberates on who will be selected to fill the largest sees [12,16]. According to Reese, "It is likely he (the pope) gives more attention to the appointment of archbishops than of other bishops" ([12], p. 30). Since 1924, it has been customary for the archbishop of Chicago, like others in major urban sees, to be a cardinal, thus having a role in electing the next pope.

Through the years Bernardin showed himself to be an extremely competent, loyal and conciliatory member of the hierarchy. His decision to distance the NCCB from the controversial results of the 1976

Call to Action Conference were seen by the Vatican as an indicator that he had the correct values. This letter to Bernardin from the Vatican Secretary of State, Cardinal Villot, affirmed his response to the Call to Action conference.

I am writing to acknowledge your letter of May 9th 1977 concerning the Call to Action Conference held last October, and the response to the recommendations of this assembly made by the American Hierarchy during their recent meeting in Chicago. I am grateful for the information contained in your letter and for the documentation you enclosed. In particular I have noted the clear indication of the intention of the Bishops not to pursue the recommendations that are at variance with Church teaching or discipline, such as the ordination of women, the setting aside of celibacy, the permitting of contraception, etc. I have brought the entire matter and all your observations to the personal attention of the Holy Father [17].

The cardinal then delivered a message from Pope Paul VI expressing the pope's gratitude for Bernardin's support of the Vatican.

His Holiness now directs me to commend you in his name for all that you have done. He appreciates the pastoral service that you have rendered to God's people in the United States, as well as the able spiritual leadership that you have exercised within the Episcopal Conference itself. He is deeply pleased with your desire to maintain close ecclesial communion with the See of Peter and with the universal Church. In particular he thanks you for your vigilance on behalf of the Catholic and apostolic faith, which is the source of life and salvation and hence of fulfillment and joy for the people entrusted to your pastoral care [17].

Bernardin's appointment to Chicago was the summit of his career. He would soon achieve the highest office held by diocesan bishops: cardinal archbishop. He had demonstrated that his values and interests reflected the ideals the Vatican expected in the head of one of the church's largest sees. I propose that this achievement and the conditions under which he took on the responsibilities of the Chicago Archdiocese gave him greater freedom to act in a pastoral manner with the laity in his diocese. Earlier, Bernardin knew that his ecclesiastical career depended on how he dealt with the Call to Action Conference. As the ordinary of Chicago, how he dealt with CTA was up to him.

4. Common Ground in Catholic Social Teaching

Catholic social teaching is a clearly discernible body of official teaching on the social order in its economic and political dimensions. Pope Leo XIII's encyclical *Rerum Novarum* (On the Condition of Workers) initiated modern Catholic social teaching ([3], pp. 207–248). Pope Pius XI augmented it with his encyclical *Quadragesimo Anno* (Reconstructing the Social Order) [18].

The periods immediately before and after Vatican II were especially rich for the development of Catholic social teaching. The Vatican II document "Gaudium et Spes (The Church in the Modern World)" was foundational in its affirmation of human dignity and address of social issues such as marriage, culture, economics, politics, war and peace. ([4], pp. 171–284).

The pontificate of Pope John XXIII (1958–1963) represented a new phase in papal documents, placing the church in a new stance regarding the major social and economic questions confronting humanity. Instead of viewing itself as a perfect society removed from the world, the church embraced the modern world and claimed a role in it. In *Mater et Magistra* (Christianity and Social Progress)

Pope John XXIII examined questions of global interdependence and the disparity between rich and poor nations He expressed concern for the situation of workers and encouraged collective bargaining ([4], pp. 44–116). In *Pacem in Terris* Pope John XXIII presented an analysis of human dignity and rights asserting they are the only sure foundation for a just and peaceful world. He affirmed a universal common good and democracy with its freedoms ([4], pp. 117–170).

This trend continued with the writing of Pope Paul VI. In the encyclical letter, *Populorum Progressio* (The Development of Peoples) he explores the meaning of development in regard to its cultural, social, religious and economic aspects. He urges fair trade relations and international cooperation ([4], pp. 307–346). In the Apostolic Letter, *Octogesima Adveniens* (A Call to Action), Pope Paul VI focused on political power and discussed urbanization, discrimination, the role of women and the environment. He emphasized the responsibility of Christians to apply the gospel to life in their particular contexts ([4], pp. 347–383).

Pope John Paul II built on the teachings of his predecessors and added to the opus of Catholic social teaching. In his first encyclical *Redemptoris Hominis* (Redeemer of Men), he condemned the material disparity that characterizes the countries of the world.

Indeed everyone is familiar with the picture of the consumer civilization, which consists in a certain surplus of goods necessary for man and for entire societies—and we are dealing precisely with the rich highly developed societies—while the remaining societies—at least broad sectors of them—are suffering from hunger, with many people dying each day of starvation and malnutrition. ... This pattern, which is familiar to all, and the contrast referred to, in the documents giving their teaching, by the Popes of this century, most recently by John XXIII and by Paul VI represent, as it were, the gigantic development of the parable in the Bible of the rich banqueter and the poor man Lazarus ([19], p. 105).

In his encyclical *Laborem Exercens* (On Human Work), John Paul II advanced his belief in the "priority of labor." The pope says "Treating workers as mere tools does no justice to their personal dignity...The workers and their families come first in any consideration of property rights, wages, unions, unemployment, welfare, emigration, pensions or the workers and their families" ([20], p. 46).

Catholic social teaching stresses that policies ought to be ethically evaluated by how they affect the poor and vulnerable members of society. Since Vatican II, the promotion of Catholic social teaching has become an important element of a bishop's ministry. The commitment to social justice is one of a number of criteria the Vatican uses in the process of selecting of bishops. In an interview, Francis Butler, a former member of the NCCB-USCC (The United States Catholic Conference was the social policy arm of the Bishops' Conference.) staff who lobbied the government on behalf of social justice issues said that a commitment to social justice is part of the profile of a good bishop today. "A person without a serious commitment to social justice would not be considered for the episcopacy, I don't care of what ideology. Before this it was not front and center." He reflected on the changes that have occurred since Vatican II [21].

The promotion of social justice becomes an essential part of functioning as a bishop regardless of ideology. There was a genuine commitment of the bishops to justice...The 1971 synod on justice in the world was abstract. By the '80s bishops were into this in a serious way...Contrast bishops of late 1970s with earlier ones. A good example is the way bishops dealt with racial integration in the 1960s. Then it was just a few

individuals who stood out. Some bishops here and there were good in these issues. There was (Archbishop) Rummel in New Orleans for example. But as a group there was a lot of unconfronted racism. That would not happen today.

Cody, consecrated a bishop in 1947, a pre-Vatican II bishop selected on the basis of different criteria, did not have had the capacity to find common ground with CTA for the promotion of social justice while Bernardin, ordained a bishop immediately after Vatican II, did.

CTA members stressed that their values were rooted in the opus of Catholic social teaching and in the promotion of social justice. They believed they shared these values with the bishops as these excerpts from their monthly newsletter, *Call to Action News* indicate.

(Today) CTA is very much alive and well, even in the highest official echelons of the American church. The U.S. bishops' document, "Political Responsibility: Choices for the 1980's," (a statement of the USCC Administrative Board with excerpts appearing in the last column on these pages) reflects many of the concerns of the Detroit CTA assembly of lay and religious leaders from across the country and makes very similar recommendations. For example, CTA called for "a comprehensive health care policy" from the federal government, a "redistribution of resources for the hungry of the world," and "a national commitment to income security by providing opportunities for employment for all who can work." It also urged the church to "be among those who lead in protesting the production, possession, proliferation and threatened use of nuclear weapons...Read the USCC statements on the choices for the 1980s. They are crisp, clear and direct" ([22], p. 1).

In an editorial on the 1980 elections, co-director Dan Daley wrote:

As for the church's role, both people and hierarchy have a lot to say and do. Recent papal and episcopal pronouncements on social issues such as disarmament, global justice, unrestrained capitalism, dangers of consumerism, neglect of the poor, are important principles that should permeate new political alliances or reform the traditional parties positive antidote to directly or indirectly counter the myopic features of the "moral majority" ([23], p. 8).

5. Bishops' Conferences and Catholic Social Teaching

Bishops' conferences applied and extended papal pronouncements on Catholic social teaching. Following Vatican II, they issued important documents addressing the social conditions of their own areas. In 1968, the bishops of Latin America met in Medellin, Columbia to consider four themes (1) structural injustice, (2) the preferential option for the poor, (3) conscientization and (4) the struggle for liberation.

In the United States, the conference of bishops also challenged social problems. In 1983, the NCCB published *The Challenge of Peace*, popularly known as the Peace Pastoral. It critiqued the stockpiling of weapons and the effects it had upon the poor. Archbishop Joseph Bernardin, then of Cincinnati, chaired the bishops' committee writing the Peace Pastoral. Archbishop Rembert Weakland, O.S.B., who chaired the committee writing the Economic Pastoral, discussed the NCCB's agenda to promote Catholic social teaching.

Having completed the pastoral on Marxism, the bishops voted at their meeting in November 1980 to proceed on two other pastorals: one on war and peace and one on capitalism. The latter was suggested since it seemed only natural for the bishops of the United States, truly the leading nation in world economy, to reflect on the nature of that particular economy and not just on the communist system. The pastoral was not approached in a negative atmosphere or with negative prejudices; rather the bishops were simply recognizing the fact that we in the United States of America were passing through a new and critical moment in our economic history, one quite different from previous economic changes. It also had to be admitted that our economic positions affect other nations especially the Third World countries in decisive ways. These new dimensions called for new reflections ([24], pp. 754–59).

According to Bernardin, in the composition of both pastorals the bishops "adopted this theme of dialogue with the world and sought to adapt it to the style of the democratic, pluralistic culture in which we minister" ([25], p. 306–308). This process of dialogue led the bishops to conduct hearings similar to those that preceded the Call to Action conference. Persons from a variety of sectors of society were called forth to advise the bishops [26]. Chicago Call to Action participated in this process [27–31].

6. The Context of the United States

The pastoral letters, written in the 1980s stood in contrast to the political stance that prevailed in the U.S. In November 1980, conservative Ronald Reagan was elected president of the United States. He won a landslide victory over Jimmie Carter, a southerner and born again Christian who was perceived as an ethical man, but an ineffective president. Carter's administration was characterized by high monetary inflation and low esteem for the United States. The nadir of the United States' esteem was epitomized in the Iran hostage crisis, which preoccupied the last year of Carter's administration.

Reagan was swept into office by promising to make America great again. He captivated many Americans by extolling traditional values such as individualism, hard work and national military strength. He sought to reduce the role of government by placing less restraint on markets and increasing military power His strategy was based on the premise that to increase economic growth government had to be reduced. He believed curtailing programs sponsored by the welfare state would promote the interests of the most competent individuals and force the less competent to become more self-reliant [32,33]. According to Phillips:

Reagan's long-standing negative attitudes toward public sector encroachment were largely philosophic. Government isn't the solution, he insisted (both before and after reaching the White House): "Government is the problem." ([34], p. 87).

Reagan built on an American ideology that revered success and saw it as a product of individual effort [35]. He viewed those who did not achieve success in this land of opportunity as inferior. According to Dunn:

The premise upon which the Reagan administration based its plans relates to poverty being defined as the "pathology' of the poor...poverty is viewed as a personal failure. Welfare mothers must be put to work at any sort of menial or make-work task because working is good for the character. This philosophy is an echo

of Social Darwinism which held that there is no place for such realities as unemployment, lack of training and skill, no transportation, lack of child care, bias discrimination, and lack of job opportunities that pay living wages ([32], p. 104).

Reagan supported and spread the ideology that those who prevailed upon the social programs of the federal government such as Medicaid, Aid for Families with Dependent Children (AFDC) and Food Stamps were parasites.

Both AFDC and Food Stamps recipients are considered by the Administration to be "undeserving poor." In the absence of widespread political support, both programs were prime targets for the cutback initiatives of the Reagan Administration ([32], p. 4).

Frances Fox-Piven and Richard Cloward maintain that the cutbacks in welfare programs represented "one part of a larger strategy to increase business profits" ([36], p. 1) Phillips corroborates these claims.

By the middle of Reagan's second term, official data had begun to show that America's broadly defined "rich"—the top half of one percent of the U.S. population—had never been richer. Federal policy favored the accumulation of wealth and rewarded financial assets, and the concentration of income that began in the mid-1970s was accelerating...Even adjusted for inflation, the number of millionaires had doubled between the late seventies and the late eighties...No parallel upsurge of riches had been seen since the late nineteenth century, the era of the Vanderbilt's, Morgan's and Rockefellers ([34], pp. 8–10).

The wealthiest Americans benefited from the Reagan plan while the status of the poorest Americans plummeted.

The Reagan administration was also blatantly anti-communist. Reagan's economic policies were designed to increase the power of the U.S. military to put an end to the "evil empire" of Soviet communism. Reagan cut government spending across the board with one major exception: "The defense program was the one federal program that Reagan proposed to increase" ([32], p. 28). The cold war intensified and America again pursued an arms race with the Soviets.

The reduction in spending on domestic programs subsidized the increased defense spending. According to Niskanan:

The major budget challenge of the new Reagan administration was that spending for many domestic programs would have to be reduced or terminated if the proposed acceleration of defense spending was to be financed without a continued increase in the federal budget share of the GNP ([33], p. 20).

Phillips corroborates Niskanan's claim:

Increased spending for defense was a prime factor in shifting dollars away from human resources...human resources down from 28 percent of all federal outlays to just 22 percent, defense up from 23 percent to 28 percent ([34], p. 87).

The Reagan administration continued talks aimed at limiting the arms race, but it was not negotiations but the stockpiling of weapons that was the backbone of Reagan's strategy.

Although talks continued with the Soviets regarding the limitation of nuclear weapons, each proposal the United States put forth during the Reagan first term was conceded to be a proposition that

the Soviets could not reasonably be expected to accept. U.S. gestures toward disarmament appeared to be mere public relations posturing ([37], p. 7).

According to Niskanan: Reagan continued the cold war policies that had been the backbone of earlier U.S. foreign policies.

The defense buildup was designed to support traditional postwar U.S. objectives, not an expansion of these objectives. The primary contribution of the one major new program, the strategic defense initiative (SDI), would be to reduce the vulnerability of the land-based missile force, a force that is uniquely valuable only to maintain the potential for extended deterrence ([33], p. 29).

7. The Bishops Challenge U.S. Policies

In their November 1980 meeting, which occurred shortly after Reagan's election to the presidency, the NCCB voted to write pastoral letters that opposed militarism and laissez-faire economics. Because the bishops critiqued Marxism in a 1980 pastoral, some felt the need to address issues related to U.S. ideologies and policies. In a personal communication, Archbishop Rembert Weakland, O.S.B., the chair of the Economics Pastoral committee, told me that the pastoral letters were a response to policies that preceded Reagan.

The announcement about the pastoral letters was delayed until after the election in order not to politicize them from the beginning. They were being planned months before the election and I can say that Reagan's policies were not the real target but a broader and more long-standing perspective that went back to the post-World War II era [38].

Jim Castelli, in his study of the Peace Pastoral, *The Bishops and the Bomb*, said that the bishops' concern with the nuclear issue preceded the Reagan administration, but Reagan's rhetoric strongly influenced them.

The nuclear issue was a major concern of the bishops during Carter's presidency; many of the policies that became a public issue for the bishops during the Reagan administration were born under the Carter and Ford administrations. But Reagan's election—with the rhetoric and policies he brought to office—was the single greatest factor influencing the bishops' discussions in November 1980 and all that followed ([39], p. 15).

Niskanen, who served in the Reagan administration, also asserted that his defense policies were continuous with developments in the previous administration. "(T)he defense buildup represented an acceleration of changes initiated late in the Carter administration" ([33], p. 29).

In their pastoral letters, U.S. bishops challenged trends the American government had been cultivating over time and that were being pursued aggressively by the Reagan administration. The "Peace Pastoral": *The Challenge of Peace: God's Promise and Our Response* addressed the necessity of working for peace and challenged some of the premises of defense that governments had adopted [40]. The "Economic Pastoral" *Economic Justice for All* addressed economic life and asserted that an economy must be judged by how it affects all people and allows them to participate in it. "Every economic decision and institution must be judged in light of whether it protects or undermines the dignity of the human person" [41]. In contrast to Reagan's negative view of government, U.S. bishops in the Economic Pastoral outlined a positive role for government.

Government should assume a positive role in generating employment and establishing fair labor practices, in guaranteeing the provision and maintenance of the economy's infrastructure. ... (I)t should regulate trade and commerce in the interest of fairness. Government may levy taxes necessary to meet these responsibilities, and citizens have a moral obligation to pay these taxes. The way society responds to the needs of the poor through its public policies is the litmus test of its justice or injustice ([41], p. 123).

The bishops cited the tradition of Catholic social teaching and its insistence that government act to promote the common good.

(I)t is all the more significant that the teachings of the Church insist that government has a moral function; protecting human rights and securing basic justice for all members of the commonwealth. Society as a whole and in all its diversity is responsible for building up the common good. But it is government's role to guarantee the minimum conditions that make this rich social activity possible, namely, human rights and justice ([41], p. 122).

In the Peace Pastoral, the bishops quoted Popes John XXIII and John Paul II to criticize the strategy of deterrence pursued in Reagan's Strategic Defense Initiative as the backbone of American arms policy ([40], p. iii).

Deterrence is not an adequate strategy as a long-term basis for peace; it is a transitional strategy justifiable only in conjunction with resolute determination to pursue arms control and disarmament. We are convinced that "the fundamental principle on which our present peace depends must be replaced by another, which declares that the true and solid peace of nations consists not in equality of arms but in mutual trust alone" ([40], p. 151).

In current conditions "deterrence" based on balance, certainly not as an end in itself but as a step on the way toward a progressive disarmament, may still be judged morally acceptable. Nonetheless, in order to ensure peace, it is indispensable not to be satisfied with this minimum, which is always susceptible to the real danger of explosion.

The U.S. bishops condemned strategies of deterrence without negotiation as immoral.

No use of nuclear weapons which would violate the principles of discrimination or proportionality may be intended in a strategy of deterrence. The moral demands of Catholic teaching require absolute willingness not to intend or to do moral evil even to save our own lives or the lives of those we love ([40], p. iii).

The bishops quoted Catholic social teaching to condemn the arms race for its effects on the poor and vulnerable ([40], p. iv).

The arms race is one of the greatest curses on the human race; it is to be condemned as a danger, an act of aggression against the poor, and a folly which does not provide the security it promises [40].

The bishops reiterated this point in the economic pastoral.

The investment of human creativity and material resources in the production of the weapons of war makes these economic problems even more difficult to solve. Defense Department expenditures in the United States are almost \$300 billion per year. The rivalry and mutual fear between superpowers divert into projects that threaten death, minds and money that could better human life ([41], p. 20).

Quoting Pope John XXIII, the U.S. Bishops stressed the value placed on negotiations between parties.

Negotiations must be pursued in every reasonable form possible; they should be governed by the "demand that the arms race should cease; that the stockpiles which exist in various countries should be reduced equally and simultaneously by the parties concerned; that nuclear weapons should be banned; and that a general agreement should eventually be reached about progressive disarmament and an effective method of control" ([4], p. 151).

In the Economic Pastoral, the bishops condemned the philosophy behind the domestic policies pursued by the Reagan administration. Instead of viewing the poor as parasites on the economy the bishops, standing in the tradition of Catholic social teaching, challenged Americans to remember:

All members of society have a special obligation to the poor and vulnerable. From the Scriptures and church teaching, we learn that the justice of a society is tested by the treatment of the poor ([41], p. x).

The bishops condemned the increasing stratification as a scandal and especially lamented its consequences for the most vulnerable.

Harsh poverty plagues our country despite its great wealth. More than 33 million Americans are poor; by any reasonable standard another 20 to 30 million are needy. Poverty is increasing in the United States, not decreasing. For a people who believe in "progress," this should be cause for alarm. These burdens fall most heavily on blacks, Hispanics, and Native Americans. Even more disturbing is the large increase in the number of women and children living in poverty. Today children are the largest single group among the nation's poor. This tragic fact seriously threatens the nation's future. That so many people are poor in a nation as rich as ours is a social and moral scandal that we cannot ignore ([41], p. 8).

8. CTA Supports the Bishops' Challenge

Through the Peace and Economic Pastorals the U.S. bishops expressed their clash of values with American policies. Chicago Call to Action also experienced this clash of values. CTA stood in a tradition of lay Catholics who were involved in social movements such as CFM (Christian Family Movement), YCS (Young Christian Students) and YCW (Young Christian Workers) [1]. These movements were rooted in Catholic social teaching and consistently challenged national policies of militarism and laissez-faire economics. In an interview, Bob McClory, a charter member of Chicago Call to Action, recalled how some of its prominent members were pillars in the earlier social movements.

Ed Marciniak (a lay activist) ran a newspaper called "Work" that was into urban issues in the '40s. It was directly related to (Msgr.) Hillenbrand and the "look, judge, act" of Catholic Action. This was meant not only for the church, but also for the world and it led to involvement in political movements. (Msgr.) Egan was big on saying that an active Catholic laity had the right and the duty to be involved in citywide issues. [42].

Jeffrey Burns, in his history of CFM writes about how the values and interests of Catholic social movements were congruent with those of liberal American politics.

While not all CFMers were political liberals, the inquiry programs tended to support a liberal social agenda. CFM, through its yearly programs, tended to endorse the progressive social legislative agenda as articulated by the great Catholic social theorist Monsignor John A. Ryan. So, even though CFM never officially took a

national stand on any legislative issue, the tone of the annual programs was liberal—against discrimination toward minorities, for labor unions, for the right of the state to intervene in the economy for the common good, and so forth. When asked about the liberal slant of CFM, Hillenbrand remarked that CFM was liberal because the Gospels and the papal encyclicals were liberal ([43], p. 99).

The values and interests of liberal Catholic social movements such as Call to Action clashed with the conservative agenda of the Reagan administration but supported Catholic social teaching. Shortly after the 1980 election, *Call to Action News* featured an interview with state representative Susan Catania who criticized Reagan's military policies.

America's growing arsenal of atomic weapons is already wreaking destruction—on the poor and minorities, said Republican state Rep. Susan Catania, and thoughtful Catholics must make their opposition visible through public statements and action including demonstrations at the Pentagon. In an interview with CTA News, she said the impression is being created that Catholics as a group are lining up behind Ronald Reagan's hard line defense approach, yet that approach is contrary to the American church's tradition of stressing progressive social action as a first priority ([44], p. 8).

In the same issue, Dan Daley criticized the Reagan administration's economic strategy.

Four Reagan years will convince Americans that the problems are beyond traditional Democratic and Republican solutions—that limitless growth through transnational capitalism will be impossible and attempts to achieve it will compound problems at home and abroad ([44], p. 7).

The following year, CTA participated in actions to protest the Reagan administration policy on Latin America. One particular action was focused on registering disapproval of the administration's military aid to El Salvador.

The petitions gathered at the vigils were presented to Sen. Charles Percy on March 24 and to local congressional offices in the following few days...all signatures collected will be presented to President Reagan when he or his substitute gives the commencement address at Notre Dame University on Sunday May 17. The Chicago Religious Task Force on El Salvador is sponsoring a nationwide rally at Notre Dame at 1:00 p.m. on that date and is inviting concerned people to join them as they urge President Reagan to stop military aid to El Salvador, reduce the U.S. military budget and restore funds for human needs...At its May meeting the CTA steering committee will be discussing recent events and positive diplomatic alternatives towards a negotiated settlement ([45], p. 2).

The April 1982 issue of *Call to Action News* focused on nuclear weapons policy. The headline read: "Catholics Wrestle with Nuclear Buildup" [46]. The issue contained an article by Bishop Roger Mahoney entitled: "Deterrence Immoral" and another by Archbishop Raymond Hunthausen, who withheld the portion of his federal income that he estimated went to armaments, calling for "Unilateral Disarmament." CTA members participated in a Holy Saturday peace walk opposing current military policy ([47], p. 3). Anti-nuclear activity was third on CTA's list of priorities for the year ([48], p. 3). *Call to Action News* columnist Jim Morrissey wrote in December 1982:

The Reagan administration plans to spend 1.6 trillion dollars over the next five years on the military. Included in the budget are funds for stockpiling nuclear weapons, enough explosive power to kill every man,

woman and child in the world several times...This is a call for you to take responsibility for the use of your money: consider resistance to taxation for war ([49], p. 6).

Chicago Call to Action, represented by co-directors Dan and Sheila Daley, joined with other Catholic groups such as Network, a Catholic social justice lobby, to oppose Reagan policies such as the MX missile, covert aid to Nicaragua, and budget cuts affecting the poor ([50], p. 5). In fall 1984, CTA co-sponsored a lecture by anti-nuclear activist Dr. Helen Caldicott who said:

Halting the arms race is "the ultimate right to life issue"...She urged her audience to get involved in electing candidates who can change "the state of madness" which grips U.S. and Soviet leaders and called the 1984 presidential election "a referendum on the fate of the earth." Ronald Reagan, she declared, seems bent on plunging the world into a nuclear conflagration ([51], p. 1).

The headline of the February 1985 issue of *Call to Action News* condemned Reagan's strategic defense initiative saying: "Star Wars: A Suicidal Blunder" ([52], p. 1). CTA joined forces with the Quixote Center in opposing the Reagan administration's policy on Nicaragua. In Sept. 1986, *Call to Action New* reported "Many CTA members responded to out call last March to send "no contra aid" postcards to their Congress people" ([53], p. 3). In early 1988 it was announced:

CTA reached an agreement last month to serve as the Quest for Peace (QfP) organizing arm for Nicaragua aid shipments through 1988...Since QfP grew up as a humanitarian alternative to the Reagan Administration's funding of the Contras many QfP activists also participated in the intense lobbying that resulted in the 219–211 Congressional turndown of Reagan's Contra aid request Feb. 3 ([54], p. 1).

During this period we see a convergence of values and interests between the NCCB and CTA. As the bishops critiqued military growth and *laissez faire* economics in their pastoral letters, CTA inspired by those pastorals challenged these matters through its actions. This convergence of values and interests led the parties to perceive each other as allies.

9. Allies Advancing Justice

The convergence of values and interests expressed by CTA's public support of the NCCB played a role in Cardinal Bernardin's development of a positive perception of the SMO. This is seen in his praise of CTA for its contributions to the economics pastoral consultation. The cardinal wrote:

I wish to acknowledge your letter of March 11 and to thank all of you for your very thorough reflection on the first draft of the pastoral "Catholic Social Teaching and the Economy." The previous testimony of members of your working committee has already been submitted to the Conference and I will be sure to forward your commentary and response as well ([55], p. 5).

Other gestures also indicated Bernardin's positive perception of the SMO. In September 1986, Bernardin wrote to the president of CTA, Mary Ann Sevard, thanking her for "sharing with me your concerns and those of other Call to Action members" regarding the removal of moral theologian, Fr. Charles Curran from a tenured professorship at the Catholic University of America ([56], p. 4). Bernardin's positive perception of CTA laid the groundwork for the possibility of cooperative activity.

By directly acknowledging their efforts, Bernardin showed openness to CTA that was unthinkable in the administration of his predecessor.

This convergence of values around the Peace and Economic Pastorals led members of Call to Action to perceive Cardinal Bernardin and the bishops who supported the pastoral letters as allies. It confirmed Dan Daley sense that the bishops' social justice initiatives were compatible with the values of Call to Action.

CTA's own history and 1983 goals dovetail with the above initiatives and we look forward to working cooperatively with archdiocesan leaders wherever we can. Some examples include: our soon to be announced plans for education and supportive action on the Peace Pastoral between now and the U.S. bishops' final draft meeting in Chicago, May 2 and 3; offering critique and exchanging ideas with those serving on the various reform committees (there are a number of long-time CTA supporters and committee members on the various Priests' Senate taskforces); reprinting important documents that have received limited coverage in the secular or Catholic media. In January we sent the full text of Cardinal Bernardin's racism address (delivered at the Chicago Commission on Human Relations luncheon) to our 400 Spirituality and Justice monthly reprint subscribers. Part of this pervasive optimism we feel is due to the confidence that not only accolades, but constructive suggestions from many sides will be seriously considered ([57], p. 5).

Cardinal Bernardin's role as chair of the Peace Pastoral committee, his activities in promoting Catholic social teaching and his collaborative style contributed to CTA's positive perceptions. Dan Daley wrote:

We're very excited about the new life in the Chicago Catholic community triggered by Cardinal Bernardin. Some examples dear to CTA's heart are: his leadership on the U.S. Bishops' Peace Pastoral; his recent addresses on racism and U.S. policy in Central America; his comments on the importance of the lay vocation in the secular world; his initiative through the Priests' Senate to develop an Archdiocesan Pastoral Council; greater financial accountability (the annual report came out just as we go to press); social ministry revitalization; a revised circulation plan for Chicago Catholic; his willingness to meet with groups such as CTA, ACP, CCW, Dignity ([57], p. 5).

In an interview, the co-directors shared their perceptions of Cardinal Bernardin. Sheila commented: "He was very friendly—very gentle. You always had a sense you were respected even when he disagreed with you." Dan added: "The more we talked, I think he realized that in a lot of things we were cousins" [13].

Unlike Cardinal Cody, Bernardin legitimated CTA by directly communicating with them. The era of the Peace and Economic Pastorals was not only an opportunity for CTA to work together with the archbishop to promote common values; it also offered CTA an opportunity to advance its interests.

Because of CTA's cooperation, bishops perceived it as a positive and constructive organization. This extended to the staff of the NCCB which forwarded CTA's critique of the first draft of the Economic Pastoral to the faculty of the College of St. Thomas in Minnesota in response to their request for "substantive critiques," and to the Diocese of Raleigh, N.C., in response to its request for concrete suggestions as to how the church can implement the principles of the pastoral in its own institutional structures and policies. Working with the U.S. bishops in promoting the Peace and Economic pastorals gave CTA legitimacy.

CTA served as an advocate for the bishops when they were criticized for "meddling in politics". When some prominent Catholics criticized the bishops for writing the Peace Pastoral, CTA expressed its positive perceptions of the bishops and defended their right to address social issues. In an editorial in *Call to Action News*, Robert McClory wrote:

Those who criticize the U.S. bishops for meddling in politics are missing the point. The proposed pastoral letter on nuclear disarmament is not a political statement. It is, at least in the drafts so far discussed, a statement about morality... The 25,000-word second draft is a balanced argument based on Scripture, tradition, and sound moral theology. No one can argue that the Bishops' Committee on War and Peace, chaired by Archbishop Bernardin, failed to do its homework...The bishops are judging the present world order by fundamental standards of the gospel, telling us what they see, and proposing some moral—not political—guidelines for consideration in creating order—before it's too late. They are no more meddling in politics than the man who notifies the fire department of a raging blaze is meddling in city services ([58], p. 3).

Criticisms of the bishops' Economic Pastoral were even more organized [59]. A committee of Catholic laypersons who were influential in the national political and business communities, and who supported a view of economic life that limited government intervention to a minimum, expressed their disagreement with the bishops' economic pastoral by issuing their own document: *Toward the Future: A Lay Letter* [60]. Again CTA expressed its positive perceptions of the bishops and their work and defended the bishops by forming a speakers' bureau composed of CTA members who spoke to groups in the Chicago area about the Economic Pastoral ([30], p. 8).

CTA received direct praise from Archbishop Rembert Weakland, OSB. chairperson of the NCCB economic pastoral committee who wrote:

We were happy to receive that report of the Special Committee of Chicago Call to Action. Thanks to you and all the members who spent that time to provide such a thoughtful and reflective response to the first draft of the pastoral letter on Catholic Social Teaching and the U.S. Economy. Blessings in your own work ([30], p. 3).

CTA established a performing arts ministry that produced a musical titled *Between the Times* based on the themes of the Economic Pastoral. This group toured nationally and even performed at a conference sponsored by the bishops. Official church organizations were enthused and CTA was given accolades by the church officials. In 1987, it won a Vatican World Communications Day Award.

The musical which ran through fourteen live performances in four states won an award from Cardinal Bernardin and the Archdiocese of Chicago. which wanted to honor, Call To Action, "for the contributions they have made to a better understanding of Catholic social teaching and the crucial questions of economic justice in this society" ([61], p. 3).

Between 1982 and 1987, Cardinal Bernardin and CTA worked together to promote social justice His dialogical approach and a convergence of values on Catholic social teaching paved the way for the mutual respect and trust that enabled a period of cooperation.

10. A Shifting Relationship

While Reagan's social policies conflicted with Catholic social teaching on the role of government and assistance to the poor, he was allied with the Catholic hierarchy in opposition to abortion. Both

sought to reverse the Supreme Court's 1973 decision legalizing abortion. U.S. bishops were pleased that two years after Reagan became president the U.S. Senate conducted a clear vote on the "pro-life" constitutional amendment even though the amendment fell 17 votes short of the required two-thirds majority in the Senate [62].

Cardinal Bernardin's opposition to abortion was advanced in the context of a consistent ethic of life or "seamless garment", which linked "the problem of taking life (e.g., through abortion and in war) with the problem of promoting human dignity (through humane programs of nutrition, health care, and housing)" [63]. In an address at St. Louis University in March 1984, Cardinal Bernardin said:

I contend that the systemic vision of a consistent ethic of life will not erode our crucial public opposition to the direction of the arms race; neither will it smother our persistent and necessary public opposition to abortion. The systemic vision is rooted in the conviction that our opposition to these distinct problems has a common foundation and that both Church and society are served by making it evident [63].

Upon the deaths of the incumbents in two major archdioceses of the east in 1983, Pope John Paul II appointed two bishops who were known not for their capacity for dialogue but for their ability to take an aggressive stance in promoting Church doctrine [16]. Cardinals, John J. O'Connor of New York and Bernard F. Law of Boston, shredded Bernardin's "seamless garment" seeing it as an impediment to addressing s the primary "pro-life" issue: abortion. Over time the positions advocated by Cardinals Law and O'Connor prevailed and the climate became more confrontational. Explicit opposition to abortion was seen as the foundation for cooperation with the hierarchy [64]. Even if Catholic politicians gave support to Catholic social teaching in regard to alleviating poverty and promoting health care, they could not be credited if they did not oppose abortion and in time same sex marriage. Even institutions within the Church such as the LCWR (Leadership Conference of Women Religious), who have stressed the centrality of Catholic social teaching and direct service to and advocacy for the poor in their mission, have been placed under scrutiny for not making opposition to abortion and support of traditional views of marriage, the family and women's' roles in Church and society an explicit emphasis.

The cooperation between CTA and the USCCB from 1982 to 1987 was a distinctive moment shaped by the openness and spirit of collaboration of Vatican II, the weight given to social concerns and, from today's perspective, the relative civility of the time. After this period, CTA without wavering from their support of Catholic social teaching on peace and the economy, placed greater emphasis on church reform and took positions on cultural issues at odds with the bishops. They were to be known for their advocacy of opening ordination to married men and women, advocacy for gender and marriage equality and for democratizing the Church. The primacy given to positions taken on these issues by CTA and U.S. Bishops led to an ongoing period of opposition between them from the late 1980s to this very day.

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