

Fr. Joseph Kentenich

America Report

**Reflections and Observations from His First Visit
to the United States, June-September 1948**

Excerpts translated and annotated
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Waukesha, 1997

[Translator's note: Cross-references to the German refer to the two-volume version mimeographed by the Schoenstatt Sisters of Mary in Waukesha in the 1970s. Emphasis as in the original. Some paragraphs have been further subdivided for ease of understanding.]

America Report Part One (September 1948)

I, 1-13 (Introduction)

‘Upon your word I will cast out the net’ (Lk 5,5). This insightful Bible verse, together with the context of events in which it was spoken, is well adapted to serve as a key to unlocking the mysteries of our eventful family history for ourselves and others: its driving forces, its turning points, its hours of risk and danger, and its blessings. These words accompanied me on my journey to and through the United States and lent substance, direction, form, and firmness to each event and experience. For that reason it shall be the keynote and central theme around which my travel report will revolve.

Peter’s believing response need only be interiorly spoken or devoutly heard—then all at once the story of the great catch of fish awakens vibrantly in our souls. Our Lord wanted to preach and chose to use Peter’s ship as his pulpit so that he could gain a little distance from the masses that were following him. At the end of the sermon he gave the command, ‘*Duc in altum...*’, [that is,] ‘Put out in deep water and cast out your net’ [Lk 5,4]. Peter, the fisherman, is the expert here and is in his own element. He has already worked the whole night without catching a single fish. Humanly speaking, therefore, this command must have struck him as outrageous and absurd. But he sensed that he was enveloped by another, unfathomable power which measures using other standards and must be judged using other norms. He was therefore willing to go along. He set aside all his reservations. He sensed that he was in a completely

different dimension of life and existence. The new attitude of his soul is captured in the clear and powerful statement: ‘I have worked the whole night and caught nothing and I know that by all normal reckoning nothing more can be expected, but upon your word I will cast out the net one more time’ [cf Lk 5,5]. And the catch was beyond all telling. There were so many fish that the nets began to tear. Again, Peter could feel that a supernatural power had entered his life. This stalwart, down-to-earth man was deeply shaken and could only stammer, ‘Depart from me, Lord, for I am a sinner’ (Lk 5,8). The others involved were similarly touched, an effect which intensified when the Master explained the symbolism of this miraculous event. Peter shall become a fisher of men, and in that capacity he shall experience a similar catch through the millennia to come. For the apostle and his two fellow fishermen James and John it is the unfathomable hour of vocation. All three abandon their nets at once and follow him [cf Lk 5,9-11].

It is not difficult to rediscover how each of the different parts of this event are reflected in miniature in the history of our [Schoenstatt] family. In particular, the words of our Lord, ‘*Duc in altum...*,’ have given us no rest since the founding of the International [in Dachau in 1944]. Put out into the deep, onward into the widest dimensions! For us, wideness and depth have since become radiant symbols of the whole world. All the nations are standing before us and calling for our apostolic love and sacrificial dedication.

God does not only communicate his wishes to our ears and hearts through the spoken word, but also through the things which happen. Creatures of pure spirit serve as God’s messengers, but so do life’s happenings and the signs in the heavens of our times. The First Founding Document, itself drawing on such sources of insight, already discerned this injunction of the Lord. The urge for world-wideness, the drive for international dimensions, the longing for a universal apostolate is simply an innate part of our family. A deliberate searching for God’s will, a receptive penetration of his intentions, and a respectful intuition of the things to come and the high and glorious goals which we would ultimately seek, are found

hidden in the words which have such a prophetic sound:

‘You gather what I am aiming at: I would like to make this place a place of pilgrimage, a place of grace for our house and for the whole German province, and perhaps for even further afield¹.’

The end of the document speaks even more clearly. It believes in a mission for our nation and fatherland—even for all of Europe:

‘This sanctification I demand of you. It is the armor that you shall put on, the sword with which you shall free your country from its overpowering enemies and place it at the head of the Old World².’

This spirit would later produce the prayer:

‘Mother, with your Child from heaven,
descend upon the *German plains*,
so that in following your footsteps
it find true and lasting peace.
Mother and Child, united in love—
Fatherland, only so can you be healed³.’

The European War turned into the World War. God’s will. Our horizons were broadened. Our Lord’s injunction to ‘put into the deep’ gained new meaning. The whole world became our field of action. That is the attitude expressed in the prayer:

‘Mother Thrice Admirable,
teach us, your knights, how to do battle
spreading devotion to you
despite the number and might of the foe,
so that *the world*, renewed through you,

¹ Schoenstatt’s First Founding Document, October 18, 1914, No. 7, in: *Schoenstatt—The Founding Documents* (Waukesha, 1993), p. 30.

² First Founding Document, No. 11A (1914 version).

³ This prayer was written by Fr. Kentenich in 1916. The normal English translation transposes “Germany” into “country.” See *Heavenwards* (Waukesha, 1992), p. 172f.

may pay homage to your Son⁴.’ We began to see the MTA more and more as the Mother and Queen of the World. In 1929 it came to the dramatic words, ‘In the shadow of the shrine the destiny of Church and world shall be essentially codetermined for centuries to come.’ It was at that very time that the beast from the abyss, the many-headed Hydra, the ancient serpent arose in the diverse forms of collectivism to make its bid for the dethronement of God and world rule. The family’s world mission became clearer. Our young Sisters’ community, founded in 1926, accepted this legacy in all its implications and considered itself a special carrier of the world apostolate. They had hardly been founded when (in 1933) they began to send their members overseas and to develop a flourishing mission movement at home. It is therefore no wonder that the Second Founding Document [October 18, 1939] simply took world apostolate as a given. The ‘Hymn of Thanksgiving’ therefore prays in this spirit:

‘You may send them forth

To the ends of the earth.

They pledge themselves to you today

to complete your kingdom on earth⁵.’

The things which the family had made its own were adopted by the Third Founding Document in 1944 as the clear and radiant idea which has since been at work as an essential force in every part of our family history.

When we reflect on the past in this manner, we have occasion to gratefully recognize how the Lord’s words to ‘put out into the deep’ have more and more clearly resounded in our family and how with

⁴ Prayer written by Fr. Kentenich in 1916. Also translated as follows:
Mother Thrice Admirable, Mother of Grace,
Teach us your enemies bravely to face,
Never regarding their number and might,
Spreading your love over the earth’s dark night,
So that the world through you made new
Pay to your Son his homage due.

⁵ *Heavenwards* (Waukesha, 1992), p. 166.

each passing year—first in a handful of individuals and later in whole communities—they awakened the powerful echo: ‘At your word I will lower the net...’ Since 1944, this wish of our Lord has become more urgent and audible than ever. And it has been primarily directed to me. It is consequently dominant in my entire soul. Because of the passport difficulties [in occupied Germany], no one else has had the opportunity to travel the globe, and because the papal *Passaporto di Servizio por l’Estero*⁶ opened the world to me and because the victory of the MTA over every difficulty at home seems to be sufficiently secured since January 20, 1942, it was simply a matter of course that I, in the name of the family, would take [Peter’s] response seriously: ‘At your word I will cast out the net...’ So I traveled to South Africa and South America. The catch was not overly great, but for a beginning it was nonetheless of some significance. As soon as the door opened to the United States, I was ready to go. I went in willing openness to God’s will, but also went in the *interests of my nation* and those of this *legendary land of dreams and dollars*. In the First Founding Document we already find our serious and binding responsibility for *Germany* quite clearly depicted.

There [in Germany] the ideologies of East and West, the power mongers of collectivism and democracy are now battling for supremacy. Those who want to provide their country with enlightened service, who mean to give it counsel in these days of befogged intellect and many shades of uncertainty, and guide it through every squall and night and darkness, those who want to help realize the great vision of the future from the 20th of May⁷ must know the facts on both sides, must be familiar with both the stated and unstated intentions and intellectual currents of East and West. Reliable knowledge can only be gained first hand. I became particularly aware

⁶ Fr. Kentenich’s Vatican passport.

⁷ Fr. Kentenich is referring to his vision of the future portrayed in the letter from Nueva Helvetia, Uruguay, May 6, 1948, written for the occasion of the official diocesan erection of the community of the Schoenstatt Sisters of Mary by Archbishop Franz Rudolf Bornewasser (1866-1951) of Trier on May 20, 1948.

of this as I stood before the White House in Washington and as I contemplated the Capitol, and as I visited New York, the largest city of the world, with its skyscrapers that tower to fearsome heights. There it stuck me all at once: ‘Washington and Moscow are, together with Rome, the present centers of the world. They represent the two sole political powers struggling for world supremacy. And between them both we find Schoenstatt as a part of the Universal Church with a specific mission for our time. You have had the opportunity to study the Eastern [European] mentality from generous and reliable sources⁸. Now you have an opportunity to do the same with the structure and inclinations of the Western soul. Through it I have the obligation to courageously use [this opportunity] so that my counsel and leadership at home is on the mark, so that my advice is prudent and my aim sure.’

My visit consequently took on the character of an accentuated time of study. Each and every effort to do serious research in this direction should be seen as a response to God’s will and understood as a casting out of the nets. My efforts to open the *American soul*, to form and shape it in the spirit of Schoenstatt and for Schoenstatt were equally important. The thought that always followed me in that regard was that such transformation really means doing founding work on behalf of the International. At the same time, this work can also come back to serve the interests of our own country. After all, the contemporary American trends are relentlessly trying to make strong inroads in Europe through radio and the press, through habit and decree—not least of all in Germany, where they would like to sweep into dominance. What is done for America is therefore a plus for Germany. It was obvious, of course, that such an undertaking would not be easy. A nation which has evolved into the leader of the world wants to rule and leave its mark, and is not inclined to let itself be influenced by other nations, especially those it has conquered. The victor’s swaggering self-assurance and confidence will result in a

⁸ Fr. Kantenich is referring to his contact with Poles and Russians and other Eastern Europeans during his years in the concentration camp in Dachau.

long period where ideas and impulses from other lands are rejected out-of-hand—in some cases brutally and openly, in others courteously and in the background, but always as if it were the most natural thing in the world. The onset of change and adaptation will only come long after the storm has passed. It is therefore possible for a militarily and politically subjugated people to outpace and dominate its rulers.

Such anticipated difficulties, which become all the more hopelessly tangled the closer one looks at them, did not deter me. On the contrary, they underscored the need for action. When God issues his directive, human shortsightedness must take the back seat—there is no place for the protest of human weakness and helplessness. There is only one proper response, namely the spirit and words of St. Paul: ‘*Non possum non praedicare*’⁹. Applied to our case: A holy compulsion is upon me. I cannot do otherwise. I must proclaim Schoenstatt’s message everywhere. I must cast out Schoenstatt’s nets in all places—even where the obstacles seem insurmountable. God’s arm is stronger than every opposing might. Since January 1942 he wants to perceptibly glorify his Mother in the whole world through Schoenstatt. It is his obvious will that she set out on a march to victory throughout the world. The greater the difficulties, the weaker the instruments, the more obvious it will be that the victory is *her* doing. That is the context of the prayer:

‘Reveal your power
in the dark and stormy night.
Let the world see your active hand
and stand in admiration before you,

‘so that it speak your name with love,
profess loyalty to your kingdom,
fearlessly carry your banner far and wide
and victoriously defeat every foe.

‘Let Schoenstatt remain your favorite place,

⁹ It is impossible for me *not* to preach (cf. Acts 4,20; 1 Cor 9,16).

a stronghold of apostolic spirit,
a leader on the way to holy battle,
a source of everyday sanctity,
'a firebrand glowing for Christ,
scattering sparks of searing brightness
until the world, a sea of flames,
burns to the glory of the Trinity'¹⁰.

Through my report I want to make it possible for all interested parties to relive my American travels and itinerary, their lessons and their fruits. This report also wants to be an introduction to the intellectual and spiritual situation there so that we can reorient ourselves for the intellectual struggle at home and abroad, and to go a step beyond mere retelling of events by offering an attempt at a study of scholarly character. From this standpoint it will consider

the testing of the waters,
the casting of the nets,
and the catch,

and should develop into a handbook of contemporary history and insights in education

I.

The *fish* mentioned here is meant to symbolize the American soul. The discussion revolves around nothing more and nothing less than the *soul of the American people*.

But isn't it a risky and *disrespectful* game, an impious and tactless deed to begin in this manner?

Besides the personal qualifications [of the researcher], every psychological study must rest on the foundation of sufficient observation if it wants to have a claim on serious attention and recognition. That is particularly true when the subject is not only the soul of an individual but of a nation, and when that soul, as in this

case, presents itself as a complex organism that is constantly changing and—because it is a conglomerate of peoples from almost every nation in the world—that knows neither a guaranteed native body of tradition nor an indisputably clear program nor unchanging expectations, when that soul is still in the process of becoming a nation and consequently—even when it does represent one of the world powers—not yet clear enough about its unique mission in the family of nations.

Former President Hoover [1874-1964] wants to bring about some progress here. As a result he likes to talk about the 'American idea'. Whether his audience is sufficiently prepared and receptive is another question. A child has no interest in the reflective formulation of his ideal. He may, of course, unconsciously live and act and make decisions on the basis of this ideal and thereby naturally grow into it. I suspect that this is the American situation. He stands for the most part in a natural, unreflected bondedness with his environment. He allows himself to be formed by his surroundings and undertakes modifications of them without being particularly aware of the process or giving it much thought. Other circles may exist which have the turbulent features of adolescence, with its probing and searching for a unified and unifying central thought and central experience—for its personal ideal. They do not appear to be numerous. Where they *are* to be found, they have not yet attained complete clarity. Very few Americans make it their business to consciously and broad-mindedly penetrate the American idea at a level of adult reflection.

If a foreigner intends to speak out in such a situation, he needs to have spent long years in the country, must be thoroughly familiar with the language and literature (it is a mirror of the soul) and with its entire history (it is the trustworthy elaboration and manifestation of the national soul in the making—or already formed). I lack all of these qualifications. What are three months in an unknown and unexplored land without knowledge of language or literature and without a deep insight into its secular and ecclesial history? The only source left to me was personal observation and discussion with natives and foreigners. But these possibilities were also very limited.

¹⁰ *Heavenwards*, p. 130-131.

This country does not divulge its secrets or answer its riddles very readily to the European, and much less to a new-comer who had little or no access to the wider circles of society. Dr. [Heinrich] Bruening, who was informed of my coming by Dr. Kühr, one of my companions from Dachau, was on home vacation¹¹. Dr. Strasser, who had worked with Hitler at the beginning but later became his archenemy, was out of my reach in Canada. The circumstances were similar for other important personalities of both native and foreign fame.

[In my mind's eye] mocking faces appeared, whose lips were pressed together for the sarcastic remark: 'And in spite of that you *still* want to try it..., want to add to the droves of superficial tourists and empty conversationists who make fly-by-night visits and then think they can deliver a reliable opinion about the land and its people...

Deep within I had still another reservation: Even if every other barrier and hindrance would be removed, would not gratefulness move me to suppress each critical remark about a country which hospitably took me in despite my lack of a valid passport and provided me with room and board for three months and even wished that I stay longer?

All of this is true, and both thought and quill want to express it here. On the other hand, I feel obliged to my followers who have so long and selflessly towed my share and energetically taken care of hearth and home. I owe them a block payment at the very least...

Here it is. I can only give it to you when I am sure that it will be read as it is presented and as it is conceived—imperfect and with reservations. The reader should add after each statement: subject to

¹¹ Dr. Heinrich Bruening (1885-1970), German Chancellor from 1930 to 1932 and leader of the German Center Party until it was dissolved in 1933 in the wake of Hitler's rise to power. Fled Germany in 1934 and emigrated to the U.S., where he became professor of economics at Harvard University. Dr. Friedrich Kühr (1895-1950) was doctor of political sciences and one of Bruening's associates in the Center Party. Incarcerated in Dachau, he came into contact with Fr. Kentenich in 1942, and became the charter member of the Schoenstatt Family Work which Fr. Kentenich founded in Dachau on July 16, 1942.

revision on the basis of better knowledge... In the end, it is not a publication for broadest circles but food for thought for mission-conscious and responsible collaborators and friends... Then the risk [of misunderstanding] shouldn't be overly great. Perhaps it can even provide the Americans with a few inspirations and thereby serve as a small return of thanks to my host. Schoenstatt apostles who come after me and follow the same paths can use it as a basis for further examination, correction, and supplementation so that our overall view will be complete, reliable, and constructive.

In order to make the serious and heavy thoughts more palatable, they will be laced with a few anecdotes. Practical daily life may always be drawn on as the basis and starting point so as to make this condensed and modern compendium of contemporary, cultural, and intellectual history more understandable and varied. This will also provide a description of my travels as the broad outline, with various events and experiences scattered throughout.

For the sake of clarity, we will distinguish between the *encounters* and the *blessings*. They are so intertwined that it is impossible to clearly distinguish them. On the other hand, it is both possible and advisable to occasionally accentuate one aspect or the other in my travel experiences.

I, 14-19 (Passport Problems)

A. The Encounters

with people, circumstances, and ideas were quite numerous. For the most part, they can be grouped without too much trouble around the difficulties with my passport, with money, and with the climate.

The Difficulties with my Passport

are quickly described. They are interesting because of their curiosity, but even more so because one can use them as a starting point for considerations of broader principles.

The difficulties already began in Rome¹². (...) In Brazil I suddenly had the idea—perhaps a sympathetic papal nuncio would have the authority and readiness to extend the passport? And in fact, both the nuncios of Uruguay and Chile said they would be ready to immediately give such an extension for one year. At my request and so as not to lose a single month, they wanted to wait until the end of July so that the passport would be secured until July 1949. With that said, I set out in good spirits for the United States on June 4. It was my plan to stay one month, or if necessary, to stretch out my visit until the expiration date of my passport, i.e. until the end of July, and then return to Chile to apply for the extension that had been promised me there. The flight went off without incident and the airplane landed on American soil the next day in Miami.

a) I approached customs and urged for haste so that I could catch the plane to Chicago—which was already boarding—on time. Then I was told: the passport has already expired and is consequently invalid. I tried to prove that the contrary was true using the documents at hand. The passport was valid until July 31 and today was only June 5. It turns out that according to American law and usage, all passports are treated as having expired two months before the expiration date. Since it was already June 5, the passport had already been worthless for five days. I still have to chuckle when I look back on that situation. The officer frequently used the word ‘canceled’. I had no idea of what ‘canceled’ meant and could only associate it with the word ‘chancellor’. (...) I then explained at great length which chancellor had issued the visa and that it would have been easy for me to obtain an extension of the passport from the nuncios of Chile or Uruguay and my reasons for putting it off... It was all in vain. Both sides retained their composure. The moment the situation took a turn for the worse, I prayed to myself:

I trust your might, your kindness, O Mother dear,

¹² When it was issued in 1947. Fr. Kentenich gives a full history of the development of his passport and visas relevant to his visit to the United States. Only the end of it is translated here.

I do believe that you are always near.
Schoenstatt’s great Queen, O Mother mild,
I blindly trust in you and in your Child.

Since we were making no progress, however, I asked that I be taken to the consulate. Instead, two officers of Pan American Airways came to my assistance.

They called Washington and discussed the situation while I prompted them, explaining what kind of passport I had. The response was immediate. I could stay one month, but I would have to leave the country by July 5 if no official extension [of the passport] had been made by then. The following was written in my passport: Valid until 7-5. My hopes nearly fell when I first saw that; then I quickly noticed that the Americans usually write the number of the month first and then the number of the day.

In the meantime, however, my plane to Chicago had long since departed. At my request the official called [the Pallottine Fathers in] Milwaukee and informed them of my new time of arrival. I offered him a tip, but he refused to take it, pointing out the medal he wore under his shirt and saying, ‘I’m a Catholic.’ Another official drove me with an airline car about 15 minutes into the city to a house of the Jesuits. I stayed there until the departure of my flight which was towards evening. The official refused to accept any payment for the ride and asked instead for my blessing for himself and his family.

This was my first encounter with American officials. On several later occasions I would encounter other officials and secretaries, including the police. The policemen that I met were examples of courtesy and helpfulness down to the last one. It is a typical saying here that the policeman is the friend of the people. That is even more true of other officials. They consider themselves ‘civil servants’. While in New York and Brooklyn, I took advantage of the opportunity to visit Dr. Meyer, the owner of our house in south Germany. He lives in a country house in Scarsdale, near New York, is a Jew and was able to flee from Germany in time. I wanted to discuss with him the future of his property [in south Germany]. We had trouble finding the way. We asked the policeman and four or five

came together right away to study the maps so that we would be sure to find the way.

Traffic policemen are very strict in administering the traffic code. This is necessary. The excellently maintained roads bear a single unbroken stream of cars that can be seen almost continuously both day and night. They remind one of a busy anthill or the Milky Way in the sky. Pedestrians are few. Nonetheless, when approached, the officials are always obliging, especially to clergymen. They are usually satisfied when they have pointed out the transgression and then add that the clergy ought to be a good example for the laity. Gasoline is sold at 'service stations'¹³. When you pull up for gasoline, an attendant immediately stands at your service to wash your windows and check your tires. Now and then you [even] see posted, 'Service is my business'. Americans normally don't do anything for free. They make everything into a business and want to be paid for everything. For instance, it is practically impossible for religious periodicals to find contributors who write for free, as is the usual case in Germany. They all want to be paid so much that practically the whole profit of the magazine is lost. This is the reason why the 'Catholic Apostolate' published by our fathers¹⁴ hardly brings in any money, in spite of a circulation of 4,500. What happened to me next must also be understood in this light. The two officers gave me their addresses and that of their supervisor. They requested and expected of me a letter of recommendation. When I came to my first destination, I fulfilled their wish. I did so out of gratitude, but also in the interests of future colleagues who may have to rely on similar services. I promptly received a letter confirming that my recommendation had been received and that the appropriate information had been noted in the files of the respective gentlemen. Since this letter speaks with a tone that reflects a bit of the American soul, I include it here:

¹³ The English term "service office" is mistakenly given in the original.

¹⁴ The "Catholic Apostolate" magazine published monthly by the Pallottine Fathers at Holy Cross in Milwaukee.

'My dear Reverend Kentenich:

I greatly appreciate your letter of June 14th commenting upon your service and particularly the assistance which you received from the Messrs. Quevado and Maynulet upon your arrival from South America. Appropriate notations will be made in the personal files of these gentlemen and they shall be advised of your expressions.

Trusting that we shall have the opportunity of serving you frequently in the future and again thanking you for your letter, we are,

Sincerely yours,

Pan American Airways, Inc.

W.L. Morrison'

I, 19-27 (The Decline of German Culture in America)

b) With the *Jesuits in Miami* I also came into first contact with three significant questions that would accompany me throughout my trip. The occasion for this was a minor one. The rector who welcomed me, although he was a Bavarian, could only stutter a few words of German. That drew my attention to the *question of ethnic identity*.

I was told of the numerous vocations and the *question of vocations* was my constant companion thereafter.

Since it was a brutally hot day¹⁵, I was taken to the room of one of the Fathers so that I could change. The room had a closet and its own bath-room—toilette and bath—but was otherwise extremely simple, not overly large, and not extravagantly furnished. Above all, it bore the character of true poverty, and made me aware of the *question of adaptation*.

For me *the question of ethnic identity* quickly specialized to the question of German identity. It was a matter that was constantly on my mind, begging for an answer. Here it has a much different flavor

¹⁵ According to the *New York Times*, the high temperature in Miami on June 5, 1948 was 89 degrees Fahrenheit (31 degrees Celsius).

than, for instance, in South America. To the extent that I could, I carefully investigated this question in all the places where I went. Heart and blood gave me no other choice. The mission which the conclusion of the founding document gives for our own nation [Germany] demanded it of me.

Having completed this visit and conscientiously weighed the evidence of the observations I could gather, I can draw three conclusions. The *German language* is utterly lost as a colloquial language; *German blood* is generally despised; and the *German character* is in considerable danger. And all that despite the fact that 40 million of a total population of 140 million are German. (...) Until 1914 there were entire regions where only German was spoken and preached. World War I so badly broke the back of the German ethnic group that it never recovered. It can therefore only be a question of salvaging what can be saved.

The *German language* has been uprooted with relentless passion almost everywhere. Most Germans are ashamed of their background and meticulously strike out every hint of the Old Country left in general usage. They don't want to be counted among the 'Huns' who stirred up trouble for the world in two world wars, who keep the world in continuing tension, and who are consequently hated by all. Youth of German descent prefer not to learn or speak the mother-tongue. There are enclaves, of course, where the old dialect is spoken by at least the older generation. That is especially true where immigrants from the same part of the homeland have come together. On the prairie¹⁶ I got to know communities that emigrated from the Alsace to Russia and from there to here. There the Alsace dialect is still spoken as it was when they emigrated. Basically the same can be said of New Trier and New Ulm¹⁷. It is not easy to work as pastor in these regions. No one speaks High German except the priest, and only the elderly understand the dialect. Nowadays English is almost the only language in which sermons are given. To be sure, there are

¹⁶ In Trail City and Glencross, South Dakota.

¹⁷ Both towns are in Minnesota.

still a few parishes where the languages rotate on a two-week basis. I held a 'triduum' in one such parish to introduce the whole community to Schoenstatt. The sermons were translated into English for the few Irish parishioners and the youth. Confession was supposed to have been only for the German-speaking children. The pastor meant well, but the directive was impossible to enforce. For better or for worse I had to hear confession and respond in English for the first time in my life. It went extremely well. It strikes one as comical to see native Germans past midlife deftly use the new language in daily life, yet need the German to count properly. In St. Paul I was taken to a respectable hotel. The waitress soon discovered that I was from Germany. She turned out to be from Bavaria and started to talk without end. In this conversation she said that she normally prayed and went to confession but counted in Old Bavarian.

It is understandable that in such circumstances the *German newspapers* which once flourished are in a battle of life and death. It will not be long before there are not only no more German-speaking readers, but also no more qualified editors. I took the time to speak with a few men from this field. That was the case of [Joseph] Matt in St. Paul and [Val] Peter in Omaha. Both are old warhorses who have dedicated a lifetime to the preservation of German spirit and who continue to hold the banner high even when they see the handwriting on the wall. Among other things, Matt told me how the German paper *Waisenfreund* which once had 75,000 subscribers can no longer hold on and how the remaining 7,500 subscriptions were transferred to *Der Wanderer*, which is itself a newspaper with a difficult battle to face and therefore appears in both English and German. The writers for the German articles aren't paid despite the commendable intellectual level of their articles.

Where German is still spoken, we are often faced with a *bilingual melange* which is difficult to decipher—the notorious 'German-American'. On one occasion I was in a parish rectory. The elderly housekeeper was of German origin. She told how she preferred to speak German. I don't know if she said that for my sake or out of real personal interest. After having been shown the house

and church, I expressed my amazement that there was a house chapel in addition to the church. The housekeeper explained, ‘*Im Winter wird die Chapel [sic] nicht ge-used.*’ In good German that means, ‘The church isn’t used during the winter.’ The reason for that is the icy cold of winter. With permission of the bishop, the house chapel is open to the faithful. The ability to understand written German is also becoming increasingly poorer. Following the general national trend and primarily out of consideration for the native vocations—a large portion of which is, interestingly enough, of German descent—English has become the standard language in our [Pallottine] houses. That has become such a part of our Germans that they can hardly express themselves in German. Our Schoenstatt literature can only be read with great difficulty and is therefore inaccessible to all but a few. The question which quite naturally follows from this is: who will see to it that we have good translations in the most widespread modern languages? (....)

The things which always last the longest are the German swear words and folk songs. In Texas (Corpus Christi) I was the guest of the Benedictines. Almost all had German names and were of German descent. The prior of the monastery must certainly be a relative of our Sr. Ottildis. He has the same last name (Fuhrmann), the same facial features, comes from the same part of the countryside around Trier, and has—as his confreres jokingly explained in his presence—the same bull-headedness of all Fuhrmanns. We sat together in the evening around a beer and I had to talk. Slowly and tediously, the memories of my listeners dredged up long forgotten German phrases. Not a few of the Fathers came from old German settlements. The atmosphere livened. Before I knew it, the room was reechoing with genuine old-time German folk songs, the words and melodies of which they recalled from their childhood days, though I couldn’t tell just how much they understood of what they were singing. (....)

The sad state of languages falling into disuse is regrettable because of the intimate interrelationship of language with culture and religion. When literature and language are endangered, so are the

culture and native religion that [this nationality] brought with it. That does great damage to the spiritual and religious substance of the American people...It is possible to minimize the losses by having good translations or by giving a deeper introduction to German literature at the level of higher education so that at least an intellectual elite has a feel for the riches of German culture. All that, however, is only a weak and inadequate substitute, and one which only very few find desirable or acceptable. In general, the whole situation is impregnated by a [trend to] ‘de-foreignization’ which is consciously cultivated, if not to speak of a vast hostility for European culture, even when it is known—or ought to be—that America owes the lion’s share of its culture to Europe. Professor Allers¹⁸, the father of individual psychology who has come to Washington to take up a position as professor, said in a conversation that he thought he could discern a subtle change of attitude in educated circles. He told me about one of his students, a young philosophy professor who traveled in Europe and came in contact there with the intellectual culture of France and Germany. He was so impressed that he said, ‘we Americans have a lot to learn—we are babes in arms compared to the great intellectuals and intellectual achievements of Europe’. [But as the German proverb says,] ‘One swallow doesn’t make a summer.’ Remarks and enlightenments of this kind are probably only very few and far between, even in educated circles.

I, 30-34 (Discussions on the Same Topic)

Only *twice* during my travels through the land did I encounter *benevolent interest* for German culture and language in independent-thinking, native-born Americans. The first time was in Detroit. There I had a long exchange with *Father Coughlin*¹⁹, a recognized figure on the American scene. Two diocesan priests accompanied

¹⁸ Dr. Rudolf Allers (1883-1963), Austrian-born professor of psychology at the Catholic University of America in Washington.

¹⁹ Radio personality Fr. Charles E. Coughlin (1891-1979).

me, Father Reichenberger of Glencross²⁰ and Father von Peck. Through his famous radio talks he had begged together 2.5 million dollars for his majestic Church of St. Therese, a unique church-in-the-round that evokes admiration even here. He felt obliged by the circumstances to move into political terrain. His radio talks were absorbed by millions of listeners. They were a first-class power. At first he supported Roosevelt but later became his opponent, made no bones about it, fought against him publicly until the Church silenced him. I therefore feared that there would be a certain bitterness in his soul and—since he had been informed that I came from Rome and had a *Passaporto di servizio*—that his lips would be stiffly buttoned. Precisely the opposite was true. The reception was very natural and down-to-earth. The broad-shouldered Irishman, the very picture of blossoming health and bursting virility, ceremoniously greeted me together with his assistants. All except for a Franciscan wore simply a shirt and pants. The brutal heat made such a practice understandable. By the way, one is even greeted now and then by bishops in this manner. This is how it was with Bishop Ledvina in Texas.

The conversation with Coughlin revealed no trace of bitterness. He answered all questions with great candor and unhesitating openness. I will repeat a few fragments here because they support our own standpoint in judging today's world events, and indicate the direction in which we ought to do further research. '...I regret having entered the political arena. I will never do that again... Just as the barbarians overran the civilized nations during the [Germanic] migrations of the early Christian era, the peoples of the steppes will flood and conquer Europe... Moscow is prepared to sacrifice 20 million Russians to foreign atomic bombs if this price would mean the conquest of London... The battle today is ultimately a battle between Christ and the devil, between the *Corpus Christi et diaboli*

²⁰ Fr. Emmanuel Reichenberger (1888-1966), Bavarian born priest who fled Germany from the Nazis and came to the Diocese of Rapid City, South Dakota. He generously accompanied Fr. Kentenich for several weeks of his 1948 visit in late July and early August (including to St. Paul, the Canadian border, the Dakotas, Nebraska, Milwaukee, Chicago, and Detroit).

*mysticum*²¹. Salvation can only come through the Mass and Our Lady... I first stood up as an opponent of the president when I authentically learned that he had donated 10 million dollars to the Free Masons... The U.S. is nearing serious economic crises. Around 1953 we can expect an attempted clarification and resolution [of the tensions between East and West] through confrontation... The Morgenthau Plan continues to be the covert blueprint and norm for American policy... I was present when Bruening negotiated with Roosevelt for a loan of 500 million dollars in order to dig the ground out from under the feet of the Nazis. The answer was in the negative with the reason: I will crush Germany. The world is consciously kept in the dark about *the German resistance movement* [German Christians who opposed Hitler during World War II]. If the files would be opened up, it would be recognized that *all of Church history has scarcely seen an episode of heroism to match this one*. Europe is currently in a condition of complete intellectual disarray. Germany will be the first nation to regain its intellectual equilibrium.

At the end and in the presence of the others, Coughlin kneeled and asked for my blessing out of respect for a prisoner of the Third Reich. His last request was: 'If you have any influence in Rome, see to it that the evening Mass is introduced.'

(....)

The second American who showed a genuine interest in Germany was a *young journalist*. I met with him twice. We spoke long and thoroughly about contemporary problems and questions which touch the lives of Americans. Drawing on his well-informed secret sources he confided that Russia has now discarded its mask of religious tolerance, taken off its toga of openness to religion, and once more put on its old, bare face of godlessness and hatred of the divine... In America he said that the efforts to cast off the old concept of separation of church and state and replace it with an anti-religious content are making progress. He had heard about the German Resistance from a Belgian. He wanted to know more details and

²¹ The (mystical) body of Christ and the mystical (body) of Satan.

asked why such *significant political events* are kept from the public although they could relax and detoxify public opinion and make for a *friendlier attitude towards Germany*. I pointed out the Morgenthau Plan and the fact that, as it is said, it still provides the rationale for American policy despite all declarations to the contrary. That seemed unlikely to him, if for no other reason than because the best-oriented American newspaper, the *New York Times*, was pro-German. I pointed out the difference between official policy and political schools of thought. (. ...)

I, 40-62 (The Morgenthau Plan)²²

The word that characterizes *the official attitude of the [U.S.] government* is “I will break Germany!” It accurately captures the spirit of the Morgenthau Plan and the secret accords agreed to at Teheran, Quebec, and Potsdam.

The *Morgenthau Plan* takes its name from Secretary of Treasury [Henry] Morgenthau.

It was September 1944 when Roosevelt wanted suggestions for dealing with and solving the German problem. Secretary of State Cordell Hull presented a proposal which can basically be summarized in two points:

1. Germany must be subjected to military occupation for 25 to 50 years until it has given up Naziism and the theory of the master race.

2. Germany’s standard of living should be kept under the average of the countries around it. Its gradual increase would be dependent on the degree of change in attitude to ideas of human rights, personal freedom, and peace.

Secretary of War [Henry L.] Stimson objected to this plan. He did not want the standard of living of the German population to be

²² The published writings of Fr. Reichenberger (printed in Germany and Austria between 1949 and 1955) give us reason to believe that most of Fr. Kantenich’s insights into the Morgenthau Plan, etc. came from Fr. Reichenberger and his sources.

reduced to the subsistence margin.

At this point Morgenthau first presented his plan. It was worked out by the Department of the Treasury and stood in total contradiction to the proposals of the competent secretaries of state and war. The conference in Quebec began between Churchill and Roosevelt. At first Churchill resisted this plan of Morgenthau’s which had the appearances of a “Noah’s flood” against Germany. He pointed out that it would leave the German nation a walking cadaver to which England could not permanently chain itself. His objections were broken with the promise of a 6.5 billion dollar loan for England and the indication that Albion would receive Germany’s steel and iron market and take this dangerous competitor off the world market. (...)

What began at Quebec was continued at *Potsdam* through the creation of the problem of the refugees from Eastern Europe²³. The same spirit of hate and revenge is operative on both sides [of the iron curtain]. The fact of this unheard-of eviction of peoples from the East to the West, as well as the way it has been carried out, is a terrible debit against the account of the victors. One must not forget that America also signed the Potsdam Accord.

Bishop Muench²⁴ takes up this issue and comes to the conclusion:

“There is nothing in all of history which can be compared to this brutal eviction of peoples. One American reporter, himself an eye-witness of this human tragedy, correctly stated that this is an ‘most unhuman decision’ ever made by diplomats. We might well expect that the history of the future will deny our times the title ‘civilized.’”

The Holy Father [Pope Pius XII] addresses the same matter in a letter to Cardinal Frings:

²³ The Soviets were essentially given *carte blanche* to forcibly remove any and all ethnic Germans from their traditional settlements in Czechoslovakia, Yugoslavia, Hungary, etc.

²⁴ Bishop Aloysius Muench (1889-1962) of Fargo, in 1948 serving as apostolic visitor of the Holy See and liaison consultant for religious affairs to the American military government in Germany. He became a cardinal in 1959.

“It is unjust to treat someone as guilty, whose personal guilt has not been proven, only because he belongs to a certain community. It is presuming to play God when one attributes a collective guilt to a whole people and wants to treat it accordingly. Every human being has a right to his native homeland, if he has not made himself unworthy of this right to a home through personal guilt...”

(....)

I was able to take a closer look at the German refugee problem through contact with Fr. Reichenberger, prairie pastor and founder and leader of the *Volksbund* of the Sudeten Germans who was able to elude his persecutors in time [in 1938] and is building up a broad work to help his expelled compatriots. Not only out of personal gratitude but also out of a sense of responsibility, I will share in his mission in the future. Out of this attitude I wrote the following letter to the *Arthusrunde*²⁵. This letter deals with still other matters which we will have to cover in more detail in the area of the social justice problems of our times:

“On the occasion of the Golden Jubilee of our oldest confrere²⁶, I am guessing that you will be gathered in happy celebration. Your thoughts are predominantly focused on the past, and rightly so. The life of our jubilarian is intimately connected to the history of our family. But you will not mind if I direct your thoughts for a moment to the future.

“1. It is undoubtedly difficult for you to judge the present situation of the our nation from where you are. For that you are too close to the situation and lack a deeper access to the sources [of information]. One can best capture the essence of the situation by saying: Germany has become a concentration camp—and a colony, not only of the Eastern but also of the Western victori-

²⁵ The “Round Table” of the Pallottines and Schoenstatt Priests who helped Fr. Kantenich in working with the movement.

²⁶ Fr. Michael Kolb (1873-1950), former Limburg Pallottine provincial and longtime supporter of Schoenstatt, celebrated his 50th ordination anniversary on August 15, 1948.

ous powers. (...) How does that stand up to the prophetic sounding promise at the end of the Founding Document? In spite of everything, I believe in its realization—if we remain faithful to our mission and educate ourselves in the spirit of *Heavenwards*. Whoever sees the seriousness of the situation will be amazed at how much effort is expended by certain circles to draw attention and energy to ‘art and culture’ after we can barely see out of the heaps of rubble piled up by the previous years²⁷.

“2. If we want to establish an ‘ideal state,’ we cannot be satisfied with a mere renewal and inward-turning of [our nation’s] attitude. There must also be a healing of [exterior] circumstances, especially in the area of social justice. This is where the mission of the Family Work begins in the strict sense of the word. Members promise to faithfully carry out the popes’ decrees on marriage and family, but also make an earnest effort to overcome the proletarianisation of conditions by buying their own homes, for which the family supplies spiritual wherewithal and financial support. (...)

“3. Try to look at least a little beyond the limited circle of your activities. Look to the left and right and become aware of the broader perspectives and horizons. It do not need to specifically remind you of our pilgrim movement and its significance. It has become very dear to all of us without exception. We may have less understanding for the work of Fr. Barton²⁸. One often simply don’t have the strength to show

²⁷ Fr. Kantenich always insisted that the prime thrust of social renewal must be “moral and religious,” not “artistic and cultural.” The message and style of *Heavenwards* (rejected by many in Germany for aesthetical reasons) was symbolic of that. Though he did not reject the importance of art and culture, his tone here is especially sharp at a time when the very future of the German nation and the German soul is at stake.

²⁸ Fr. Joseph Barton (1912-81) was a Schoenstatt Diocesan Priest who dedicated his life after World War II to easing the difficulties of the German refugees from Eastern Europe. Different fruits of his work with the refugees was the “covenant book” and the beginning of the tradition (in the summer of 1947) of celebrating the 18th of each month as “covenant day.”

interest in what others are doing when one's own needs are so acute. I myself feel the fate of the millions of homeless more acutely than usual. They will never feel at home in the regions where they now live; emigration has been made very difficult and will be a bitter disappointment to most. The only effective cure would be to return to the old homeland. But [that is impossible]—

“I thank Fr. Barton for his arduous work which brings so many blessings. With all my heart I wish him the blessing of many who help him, including some who might find refugee priests. Now the hearts are still malleable. But who knows for how much longer! Will we ever have such an opportunity on such a grand scale to prepare a home for homesick people in the heart and activity of our MTA? So that Fr. Barton must not always come to his growing flock with empty hands, I have asked the abbot of a large Benedictine abbey to regularly send different kinds of things in CARE packages. Will my request be fulfilled? ... If our adoration branch does not provide some solid help, nothing or not much can be expected. Here too, we often have false concepts in Germany. We think that dollars could be found here in the streets. That is not true. ... If God wills, I will later write a detailed report about the way things are here and about the spiritual character.

“4. I can already say one thing in advance. We would have work here beyond all measure... 2000 sisters could immediately be put to work. And they would have a great mission to fulfill. Therefore we repeat: ‘Send, O Lord, laborers...’ (...) There is also plenty of work for our Brothers of Mary.

“It is fortunate that we are not alone and that the Blessed Mother will not let herself be stopped on her march to victory throughout the world....²⁹”

(...)

Innumerable are the times that we Germans at home have felt the

effects of the Morgenthau Plan in our own lives. The affliction of our nation cries out to heaven. We have known that much for a long time. *The only thing which may be new to us is that all of this is guided by a diabolical and deliberate plan and that East and West are striving in equal measure for our demise.*

(...)

Those who perceive the underlying context of this plan and its impact may feel as I do. Before I came to America, I believed in the idealism of the Western powers, especially of America. That is different today. The facts tell a different story. They expose many enigmas which, at the very least, raise doubt upon doubt, if not even turning one around so far as to firmly believe the opposite.

For the purpose of obtaining a loan for Chile, I made contact with the secretary of the Catholic Church Extension Society, an organization comparable to the *Bonifatiusverein*³⁰ in Germany. The position of secretary in this beneficent organization is often the stepping stone to a bishop's hat. Bishop Ledvina of Corpus Christi (Texas), who has asked for our sisters, was once active here. After completing the business to be done, I used the visit—as I had already done on many other occasions—to check and clarify my view of the country and its people in a broad-ranging discussion. This time it was especially meaningful to do so, since the secretary had an expert overview by virtue of his position and was constantly in touch with the thinking and feeling of the people through his work as pastor in a poor neighborhood. He began by singing the praises of how Americans have fought for ideals and the freedom of the nations. He pointed out the nation's spirit of charitable giving and believed that it could therefore count on special blessings from above and on protection from Bolshevism. ‘Our government magnanimously financed the war-effort and supported England and Russia with material and money although no repayment can be expected.’

I gladly recognized the truth of that. I knew that America has a

²⁹ Letter from Fr. Kentenich to the “Arthusrunde, early August 1948.

³⁰ The St. Boniface Society, Catholic support organization in Germany responsible for the Church in the diaspora.

war-debt which is larger than that of any other country in the world—one which experts estimate to be around 250 billion dollars—and that its own people is the backer which made it possible [for America] to become the doughboy and arsenal of the world through the subscription of war-bonds...

‘...But,’ I continued, ‘I doubt the purity of intention, the high-mindedness. I used to have the very same opinion as you. In Dachau and afterwards I even said that if any nation must take over the leadership of the world for the promotion of peace, then history judges the Anglo-Saxon race to be the best qualified. I no longer dare to say that so unreservedly. Having gained an insight into the deeper levels of cause and effect, I have a number of serious reservations. There is an unbridled hatred behind the Morgenthau Plan, a passionate cry for revenge that overrules everything and takes it into its power, even the charitableness of the entire nation. From this perspective, the entire history of the war and its aftermath has an entirely different, an entirely new face.’

The [Secretary] honestly admitted, ‘If the Morgenthau Plan still exists and is in force, then you are correct...’

We further spoke about the material dimension, the economic causes, driving forces, and social goals of modern wars. He unflinchingly admitted, ‘If nothing entirely unexpected comes along, we have no immediate need to fear a World War III. At the moment it is economically more advantageous to be at peace than at war. Previously, the opposite was true.’ I responded, ‘In that case, the ideals for which America fought and stands for today are not so indisputably clear and high.’

We also talked about the invisible powers which stand behind the apocalyptic events of our day. We compared Moscow and Washington and spoke about America’s inner strength and ability to resist Bolshevism and about the American soul and American piety. There I touched areas that Americans hardly ever give any thought or only in passing. The reaction is therefore usually uneasiness and thoughtful silence. If one takes the initiative and makes assertions of one’s own, the response is respectful amazement and simple thanks for such

an unaccustomed clear and accurate presentation of ideas and relationships. The conversation became quite lively, remained in constant motion, and brought surprisingly new, supplementary, clarifying, and telling viewpoints for the enrichment of both parties. At the end, the objective, reflectively listening American dismissed the German with the compliment, ‘I admire your intelligence and highly esteem the courage of your faith which you have proven in the past few years.’

I, 62-68 (American Charity)

In this conversation we also discussed *the charitable giving of the American people*. From what has already been said, it is clear what one must think about the official activity in this direction³¹.

The *private charitability* must be acknowledged without any restrictions whatsoever. We will come back to this later on when we talk about the difficulties with money³² and the problem of separation of Church and state. First of all, one must note that in the area of charity, ethnic belonging has found a place where it can do something without being disturbed or threatened. It is difficult to say just how many ‘alms letters’ arrive, how many sacrifices are made by Germans for Germans. It is touching to see how many rooms in private quarters have instantly changed into packing rooms. Refugees for whom America’s gates opened in time, often do their utmost to send these gifts of love as long as time and energy last. Reichenberger, a simple prairie pastor and prolific writer who accompanied me for weeks during my travels, has already raised \$40,000 for Germany.

Father David Buescher³³, who only recently became pastor here,

³¹ Namely by the U.S. Government.

³² For the second time Fr. Kentenich alludes to “difficulty with money.” He seems to have run short of money in the U.S. and experienced generous help from Americans along the course of his journey. He never actually gets around to giving the details he promises here and on p. I, 14.

³³ Fr. Hermann David Büscher (1898-1972), Schoenstatt diocesan priest from Germany who had to flee the Nazis in 1937, came to the Diocese of Rapid

has sent over \$14,000 worth of packages in just a short time. A simple German painter who visited Germany and on that occasion got to know our sisters in Remagen, sent \$3,000 to Germany.

(....)

Abbot Paul M. Nahlen, OSB of New Subiaco Abbey, who also recently visited Schoenstatt and is interested in our sisters, is personally in charge of a steady stream of shipments [CARE-packages]. His Church burned down, and while I was there, the wind had blown off the roof of his printing building. His concern for those suffering in the Old Country, nonetheless, knows no bounds. His room is full of food and packing material. Whenever he has the chance, he tries to win over the charitable goodness of religious communities and parishes, and also sends packages to some of our own Schoenstatt people.

(....)

That sounds much different than the words which a preacher in Philadelphia spoke to the masses from the pulpit³⁴: “Let them starve!” When it was pointed out to him how unchristian such thoughts and words are and how unfitting for a priest, he is said to have declared in the next sermon, “And I repeat, let them starve!”

I, 68-84 (Analysis of the World-Political Situation)

National psychologists who compare official policy [i.e. the Morgenthau Plan] with the American’s practical charitableness will search *for the deeper reasons for the obvious discrepancies*. They may first look to the *noble sentiments* of human nature, which, even in the face of original sin, lies dormant within and sooner or later comes to the surface, oblivious to all the sirens of hate. They will recall the *Christian substance* which has admittedly found a

City and in 1948 was pastor of Trail City, South Dakota. In his seminary days he belonged to one of the first Schoenstatt groups in the diocese of Münster, Germany. He was also the uncle of Schoenstatt Sister of Mary M. Hermia.

³⁴ Indicative of the hatred of the Germans after World War II.

significant place in the American people as a whole. He knows that of a population of 140 million, about 70 million are Christian and of these nearly half are Catholic. The beneficial influence of Christianity must make itself felt in one way or another. Not infrequently, a certain *strategy* may be at work, concealing its goals and playing the sandman—lulling people to sleep in order to secretly and safely carry out heinous plans. Much of the credit must certainly be given to the research and activity of the *political schools of thought* which heavily influence public opinion through the media. For the sake of completeness I will list all of them, including those who want to deny Germany its right to exist. In this way we can broaden our horizons and increase our ability to properly judge the impulses and reports which come from the press and daily life and take enlightened action.

We dwell on these matters so long that one could think that we, who have so deliberately kept our distance from all politics, now intended or urged that we turn our professional energies toward contact with politicians. That would be a misunderstanding. It is one thing to strive to correctly grasp the situation of the world today and quite another to step into the political arena. A community with a world mission is largely dependent on such information if it wants to remain in touch and make relevant decisions. The world which we have the chance to form as instruments of the MTA and witnesses of Christ is a concrete one; it is a great and definite tide which wants to engulf and sweep away our homeland. Considering the lack of other sources of information, I consider myself justified and obligated to make the ways and fruits of my studies available to my followers, so that on their own, with a clear mind and a calm heart, they can find the way through the chaos of our times.

American foreign policy is often criticized abroad for its lack of a clear direction, and that, as a result, it is constantly at a disadvantage in dealing with Russia. In order to pass judgment on the facts referred to here, one must know that there are three schools of thought which have arisen in the past 15 years. These influence not only public opinion but also foreign policy.

All of these schools are carried by *common ideas* which

dominate American thinking and must be considered part of the Anglo-Saxon heritage. First of all, there is the *emphasis on unlimited economic progress*. And then the faith that America *has a vocation to rule the whole world*. In order to clarify this fundamental attitude, historical and philosophical research will eventually have to return to the political, economic, and religious history of Old England, which was heavily influenced by Calvinistic ideas. Wherever it is found, this brand of religiosity tends to place a strong accent on economic development as a special expression of God's will and favor, and is consequently the forerunner of capitalism. It promotes the concept of "chosenness", which is easily applied as a metaphor to every aspect of life, including politics. In this vein it is possible to understand how Cromwell³⁵ could speak of his nation as "God's chosen people" and had no rest until he had indelibly impressed on his country the fact that it was chosen to rule the whole world. From this standpoint it may be possible to ascertain how deep the crisis is which is currently in the making for parts of England because of the decline of the British Empire—at least for those with a touch of religious fervor. Non-religious circles have separated the two foundations of economic progress and world rule from the notion of God—and may therefore represent twice or three times the threat for world peace. That is America's heritage. Official circles are largely inspired by England. Those who are not aware of that cannot understand the political and intellectual orientation of America.

(....)

(Description of the Luce, Spykman, and Lippman schools of political thought)

(....)

The more we make the effort to penetrate the inner relationships of world events and to understand them, the more we succeed in discerning the motives of the men who 'pull the strings' in world politics, the more complete our view of the times becomes. But also,

³⁵ Oliver Cromwell (1599-1658), Lord Protector of the British Commonwealth 1653-1658.

the greater the penetration of heart and mind [we will need] into a supernatural world, without which the events of this world will always remain an insoluble tangle of riddles. Before we clear the way in this direction and let the stars of the supernatural heavens shine on us, *we want to first make a comparison of East and West*. In order to give an insight into the sources I have had at my disposal, and in order to give you a chance to spiritually accompany me on my journey, I will give Otto Strasser³⁶ the word for a moment.

I have already introduced him. In the beginning he was a co-founder of the Nazi party and a 100% trooper. He and his brother [Gregor] later split from Hitler when their views went different ways. They fought him and his ideas with their own dynamic. After many travels he found refuge in Canada. Entry into the U.S.A. was denied him. Out of the necessity to get to the bottom of all the intellectual currents of our times, I decided to visit him in Winnipeg. There he lay in the hospital—his entire body was enveloped in a cast. I set out [for Winnipeg] but at the last moment I was kept from crossing the American border and had to allow my companion, Father Reichenberger—a friend of Strasser's—to go without me and take my questions with him. I was already familiar with his views through his writings and his private correspondence to my faithful companion, which I had been able to leaf through and study. What especially interested me this time and what I passed along to be asked him, was the enigmatic personality of Hitler. He [Strasser] sent back three answers, which are, for the initiated, three outline points as well[:] Hitler should be seen as an exponent of the intellectual currents of our times on which he was carried and which carried him. Untold thousands of his followers were not so much attracted by his person as by the idea which was embodied in his person—an idea that exactly reflected the deepest feelings of their existence. *Hitler* was irrational to the very core of his personality—the exact opposite of Goebbels. That explains his susceptibility for diabolical influence and the fact

³⁶ Otto Strasser (1897-1974), early Nazi who later broke ranks with Hitler to form his own "Black Front" of Naziism. Fled Germany-Sudetenland in 1938.

that he could be so influenced by his surroundings. That explains why his speeches were always touch-and-go until he had felt his way into the soul of the audience. Then he would let loose without restraint or consideration. *Goebbels*, on the other hand, rode on whichever saddle was convenient. He played any fiddle, gave any chord. One only needed to tell him ahead of time which horse he was supposed to mount.

In Omaha I got to know the editor [Val] Peter, who had just visited the hospitalized [Otto Strasser], a faithful contributor to his newspaper, by plane. Strasser has no source of income and can only live from hand to mouth. His articles hardly earn him any money. Peter wanted to try to help him out. At that meeting he showed me his latest article—which he had already had for some time but didn't want to publish for reasons of prudence—but which he would publish in the end anyway.

(....)

The socialist leader who recently declared that 'Berlin is the Stalingrad of German liberty'³⁷ is badly mistaken if he thinks that the struggle between East and West, between Moscow and Washington is a question of the liberty of Berlin, the liberty of Germany, or the liberty of Europe. It is a question of the final outcome of the power struggle between the two remaining world powers. If the Western powers want to avoid a new miscalculation in German policy, however, they had better ask themselves again and again, 'What would we and our people do, if our country were in Germany's place? The Germans are powerless, of course, but they know that God does not distinguish between victor and vanquished; right remains right, and wrong remains wrong, and God's millstones continue to grind—and in its rumble is the foreboding of the Third World War.'

This candid confrontation deals with that which I have just discussed—East-West relations.

³⁷ The allusion to the siege of Stalingrad, which so devastated the German Army, was probably made by German politician Ernst Reuter at one of the rallies which took place in Berlin in the summer of 1948.

To complete this train of thought, I must devote at least one more word to the fact that the terrible chaos which we have just examined cannot be understood, explained, or untangled without a sustained look at the *supernatural world and reality*. This awakens thoughts and convictions which are well known to us: [On the one hand] we see the Blessed Trinity and the One who crushes the serpent [Mary], and [on the other] the diabolical *trias*³⁸. It is not difficult for us to envision the ranks of men and women revealed to us by a look into our times—and not least of all, the renowned personalities of current events—and see their reliance on either the Divine Might or that of the devil.

I had a long conversation with an American bishop of Irish descent about the topic of America and Bolshevism. He made a point of the fact that he had been a professor of philosophy and therefore in possession of a deeper insight into the inner structure of America. He believed he could say that his country had the necessary inner strength to resist the oncoming foe. America's philosophers at least believed in God, while the European intelligentsia had poisoned the soul of the people with their atheistic systems. He argued that experience has proven that a God-fearing nation can be ruled well. The Church in Europe is supposed to have lost contact with the broad masses of the people while here the opposite is true—the Church has the faithful in the hand. The nation's prosperity and democratic viewpoint are free of social division and interest in Communism. After tossing this intellectual ball back and forth for quite some time, I pointed out that there is still another power behind world events, namely metaphysical evil and evil personified. It had been given unprecedented free reign in Europe. I maintained that it was beyond the grasp of American thinking to understand the European chaos because it does not take this power [of evil] into account. It only

³⁸ In talks on the "apocalyptic priest" held in Germany in 1947, Fr. Kantenich explained this "trias" based on Rev 16,13: the dragon (Satan), the beast (the world political powers which oppose God), and the false prophet (the "wisdom" of the world which opposes God).

compares good with good and evil with evil, but does not consider the interplay of good and evil and completely overlooks the terrible power of Satan. If this power would break forth in America, one could—on the basis of the nature of the American soul—expect a similar if not greater catastrophe than in Europe. The bishop admitted that he had never considered the problem from that angle before and was so impressed by the conversation that he asked me to visit him a second time.

I, 84-103 (Letter to the Institute of Diocesan Priests)

I close these first thoughts with a letter which I wrote to our institute priests in August³⁹. In a few brief strokes it portrays a *comforting vision of the future*, paints a image to contrast with the dark side and tremors of our culture as just described. It points to

“the city of heavenly meadows
so that all people can look up to it
full of confidence⁴⁰.”

Every new insight gives joy, doubly and triply so when it gives us a clear standpoint in the spiritual chaos of our day. But it also fills us with sadness when it opens to us the terrible abyss in which the world of today finds itself. In that situation a bright view of light can be helpful for us all, especially if it gives a certain completion to the previous considerations.

“Dearest Confreres,

“For the first time you are gathered near the shrine in such great numbers as an institute, as a coherent elite community. You do so in order to have the bread of God’s word opened to you by your own council in days of retreat. It is joyful evidence

³⁹ Letter to the Schoenstatt Diocesan Priests of the Institute, from Milwaukee, August 8, 1948.

⁴⁰ Third to last verse of *Heavenwards* (p. 166).

that you have grown in being able to do things on your own and as a closed community. Now all you need is your own home⁴¹ at the place of grace and official recognition by the Church... (....)

“From the very beginning, the leader of the federation [of priests]⁴² saw in his mind’s eye the greatest possible autonomy for the federation. He therefore named Fr. Burdewik early on as his representative and promoted all efforts to give the federation its characteristic flavor as ‘an order in the world.’ His imprisonment and the experiences he gathered with the ensuing development of the federation, especially with regard to its growing desire for autonomy, moved him to the momentous decision: The federation becomes an institute with a completely independent government and administration, even to some extent parallel to the Pallottines. We all still remember well the movement this caused. The division [of the Schoenstatt priests] into league and institute demanded a serious decision from each individual. No sooner was this decided—in part with great heartache—when the federation came to life again as a community in between, so that every possible form of priestly organization is exhausted and brought into mutual contact. The institute is a pronounced elite community. Through close ‘order-like’ community, through demands and education of its members and a constant influence, it secures the federation and league and largely takes over their direction, though without excluding capable members from each of the communities to share in this leadership.

“It wants to be dependent on the local ordinary in every apostolic work ‘as an order of the bishop’ and to willingly be at his disposal; in addition, in ascetical living and striving it lives in dependence on the institute ‘superior.’ The transdiocesan government [of the whole institute], which lives in community life, should ultimately be directly responsible to Rome. In this

⁴¹ The Schoenstatt Priests bought the Marienau just two years later.

⁴² Fr. Kentenich himself.

way the two criteria which the Apostolic Constitution *Provida Mater Ecclesia*⁴³ speaks of for secular institutes are analogously applied to the life of diocesan priests.

(....)

“Now a second thing: God has blessed our sisters with many and good vocations. But—although the harvest is ripe, where are the harvesters? Millions of girls will not be able to marry. And here there is such an abundance of work. Boys Town alone would like 100 sisters at once. A few days ago, I wrote in another letter that I could find work here for 2000 sisters without any trouble. Today that number could be doubled and tripled. Yes, yes. The world here looks much different than it does from Germany. And God’s glory will shine through nonetheless. Our hands feel urged to unite in prayer: Lord, send laborers into your vineyard! But for you, too, I have a request, that you continue to look for vocations and properly educate them from the outset, leading them especially deeply into the spirit of Marian devotion. In that way you will prepare the ground for your own institute and the other branches of the movement. That is how it is, always was, and must always be: Wherever a formation takes root, the others are drawn after it sooner or later, and new foundations take care of themselves. In your education of self and others, always keep in mind—I am speaking now in images—that we must build suspension bridges that do not need many supporting walls⁴⁴. That is the significance of our education in ideals, and describes in an illustration the essence of the new man, [who], without many or strong exterior attachments and

⁴³ The constitution promulgated by Pope Pius XII on February 2, 1947 which established secular institutes as a juridical form of community in the Church.

⁴⁴ The image of the suspension bridges followed Fr. Kentenich from his visit to New York in early July 1948. For him it became a way to describe the juridical form of the Schoenstatt secular institutes: built on extraordinarily few juridical bonds (obedience and loyalty), but deeply anchored in attachments and with the carrying beams of great ideals soaring into the heights. See J. Kentenich, letter from Montevideo, Uruguay, December 14, 1948.

safeguards, by virtue of the perfect covenant of love with the MTA, magnanimously and permanently delivers himself into the hands of the Blessed Trinity and its favorite creation—the Schoenstatt Work.

“Those who have an insight into the hidden machinery of foreign policy here and into the current policy regarding religion, will have a much different view of the world than is painted by noble, trusting human nature and presented by our newspapers back home. To the very last detail it is the picture of the world that is outlined in *Heavenwards*. Those who stand in the spotlight of world events should not be seen as the leading actors, even if all eyes are on them. The divine and diabolical powers in the background are the ones that guide all the events on stage. Those who see clearly will sense the violent battle going on everywhere between the *corpus Christi mysticum* [mystical body of Christ] and the *corpus diaboli mysticum* [mystical body of Satan]. The latter appears to be on the march to inevitable victory—both in the East and West. At center stage is our poor people and fatherland [Germany]. How will it fare when this mighty struggle is over? There is no clearly recognizable demarcation between East and West. The foundation on both sides is the same—materialism. Hence the goals do not significantly differ: a world without God. Even the power-mongering on both sides is alarmingly similar. Communism can be found in the West, despite the democrats. And the West is no less interested in the destruction of our nation [than the East]. Even today, the Morgenthau Plan is the *raison* for official American foreign policy. It will only be happy when Germany lies completely crushed at its feet. The Nazis’ hate of Judaism has evoked an irreconcilable hate of Germanism which is not always blatant, but which is constantly at work. A few days ago I visited a man who is well-known here⁴⁵. He told how he had broadly supported Roosevelt’s politics at the beginning,

⁴⁵ Fr. Coughlin.

especially through his radio programs, but suddenly changed his course when he received authentic proof that the president had written a check for 10 million dollars to the Lodge. He says he was present in person when Bruening visited the president. In response to the chancellor's request for a loan of 500 million [dollars] in order to dig the ground out from under the Nazis' feet, he received the negative answer with the reason: I will crush Germany. Will the goal soon be reached? One of the most influential political writers is already urging that no more American soldiers be sacrificed, and that Germany be abandoned to the East [Russia].

“Do you not sense the same powers of evil at work in the background? May those who have ears hear; may those who have eyes see [cf Mt 13,9.43]. In any case, we stand on the verge of a catastrophic diabolical flood.

“What does the glance to heaven tell us in this situation? First of all, exactly like in *Heavenwards*, it gives us unmistakable clarity about the true state of affairs. [Secondly], it brightly illumines our position, just as *Heavenwards* does in countless many ways. All of us who stand under the judgment of God no longer need to fear the judgment of men. But we also know that purely human strength—be it in the physical or moral sense—will always be wanting when faced with the diabolical powers. The thousands of experiences of the past years sufficiently demonstrate that not even the usual piety can provide the needed resistance. Only a deep and intimate union with God and divine strength can do that, through the cultivation of the three divine virtues and the development of the gifts of the Holy Spirit—as it is portrayed in the ‘Carmel and Camp writings’⁴⁶ and has been proven by practical daily life. (...)

“Kirerkegaard would say: in life there are not only organic

⁴⁶ Fr. Kentenich's writings from the Gestapo prison in Koblenz (September 1941-March 1942) and the concentration camp in Dachau (March 1942-April 1945)

laws of growth, but also major bursts of growth. There are times when one must simply dare to leap onto the sheer wall of rock; organic development alone will not reach the goal. Almost everything which I have done with the movement since my return [from Dachau] has been under the law of bursts of growth. Who has understood this and passed the test? Our Ladies of Schoenstatt have passed with flying colors and have therefore been greatly blessed. But we priests? (...) Imagine a general who must attack a world of enemies in order to conquer a new world, but who is always only allowed to proceed ‘organically.’ Before the soldiers have steeled their resolve for the battle, they are already tired. All in all, the dress rehearsal seems to have achieved its goal after some delay⁴⁷. (...)

“The glance to heaven would be too superficial if we would forget our MTA and her position in the work of redemption. The Christ-bearer is also the official Christ-bearer. If Christ came to destroy the devil's kingdom, then she, too, is present as the One who crushes the serpent, as the great Woman of the Apocalypse, the permanent Helpmate of the Lamb, the Royal High Priest, the Judge of the World and Divine Bridegroom. Today her time has come. She has called Schoenstatt into existence in order to crush the head of the devil. As individuals and as a movement we are privileged to be instruments towards this end in her hand and the hand of the Blessed Trinity—just as it is written in *Heavenwards* as the accurate expression of an attitude which has proven itself in greatest difficulties. (...)

“We go into the battle with two words on our lips. The one is, “*Ave Imperatrix, morituri te salutant*”⁴⁸.” The other is, “*Mater perfectam habebit curam.*”

⁴⁷ Is Fr. Kentenich referring to January 20, 1942 and the Dachau period as a ‘dress rehearsal’ as far as the growth of the priests were concerned? It is well known that it took the priests the longest of the elite communities to make January 20 and the Inscriptio their own.

⁴⁸ Hail, O Queen, those who are ready to die greet you!

I, 104-120 (Reflections on the German Character)

The violent and successful battle against German language and German blood has imperiled *German character* and shaken it to the core. At the same time, however, it has caused confusion in the American soul.

Here we are entering territory that is as yet unexplored, or only minimally. In any case, I have yet to read anything in this direction and whenever the conversation turned this way, I was always the one who had to do the talking.

A favorite description of America and its typical rhythm of life is the *melting pot*. I do not like to use the word. It is the calling card of an intellectual current which has many adherents. It befogs heart and mind, prevents a clear vision, and leads the nation into the abyss. It causes confusion wherever it is used because an aberration is presented as the ideal and a defective development as the normal situation. Every analogy has its limits and this one is no exception. It has room for a number of interpretations which gain color and form through usage and publicity. Those who call America a melting pot want to say that this odd country dissolves, crushes, breaks up, and annihilates each and every foreign national character like in a melting oven. Nothing can remain unchanged; everything unique and individual must cease. In its place comes a factory product that is called the 'American character' but which no one can precisely or even approximately define. One cannot help but think of the saying, 'If it can't be defined, call it Americanism.'

The original inhabitants of this land are the Indians. Are they also asked to leave their mark on the [American] character? Then why have they been forced onto reservations, and why have only two of their culture's products—corn and tobacco—found a place here? One can immediately sense the incongruity of such a statement. It belongs to the essence of the American character that it has never been rooted in a [single] common people or national character, but represents a confluence of every national character present here—coupled, of course, with the common inclinations rooted in

history and geography.

If the national characters which have come and are passed on to the new generations do not *retain their vitality*, then the effect will of necessity be a bland, characterless mass, and no one will suggest that *that* is the American idea. If the [national] characters do not *open themselves* to one another, then the nations will not grow together into a single people. Inter-marriage across ethnic lines is already leading to a certain mixture. But for the education and formation of a nation which is a world power it is extremely beneficial, and to a certain degree necessary, that one not only be guided by spontaneous and instinctive motives, but that one also have constantly in mind a goal flowing from the natural disposition as the conscious will of God, as the clearly defined mission.

I can still hear how [Joseph] Matt talked about Dr. Straubinger, the former director of *Caritas* [German Catholic charity organization] in Stuttgart who is an emigrant German and fruitfully active in Buenos Aires. He had always fought against the reduction of the German character to a nondescript "something" or a totally indiscriminate form. His favorite saying is said to have been, 'We don't want to be the *cultural fertilizer* of foreign nations and peoples.' This familiar image—like that of the melting pot—can have a proper meaning. In this case, however, it is interpreted as an unresisted process of dissolution of the unique character of a people that does not have a co-formative role [in its new land] but must let itself be formed, that does not powerfully preserve and assert itself or become part of the heritage of the new nation but gives itself up to characterless adaptation for the sake of economic, political, or social advance. The official circles here have completely adopted the English character and want to see to it that it dominates everywhere. Every other character must interiorly compromise itself and adapt, must be reformed according to this character—no questions asked. The experiment has succeeded with regard to the language. Outward customs may also largely orient themselves along these lines. But further adaptation [in this direction] cannot be allowed if America wants to become a deeply rooted nation in its own right that fulfills

its mission in the world.

Matt's usual answer to Straubinger was, 'What do we want to do differently? We should be happy we can be a fertilizer.' I am against that if the word 'cultural fertilizer' is used with its accustomed meaning. Nature itself protests; it opposes such a violation [of its dignity]. The ancient law—being determines acting⁴⁹—is as valid today as it ever was, and acting against nature as God made it is always a crime which will sooner or later avenge itself. So why attempt the impossible? Why invest time and energy only to stand before ruins in the end? Why the use of constructive energies for destructive purposes?

But if 'cultural fertilizer' means to say that the German character and what it has to offer for the construction [of America] is adopted and bonds with the natural characteristics of other nations to form a single living organism—just as in marriage husband and wife give the best of their lifestrength for their child—then I am in agreement. A sturdy standpoint would then have been won from which the German in America can—and should—see, judge, and form himself and his surroundings.

I prefer to use another image that isn't so laden with difficult connotations. The American character, as it is willed by God and befits this nation, can be looked upon as a *bell* that is cast from a mixture of different valuable minerals, but which is not yet finished and therefore does not yet give forth its full ring. If this ring is to become pure, each substance in the alloy must remain true to its nature, be carefully cultivated, and unite with the valuable characteristics of the other nationalities. The organism that results is the unique and individual American national soul which cannot be seen as merely an addition or multiplication of individual natural characteristics, but as something new. We [Germans] have been deprived of our language and good name; our 'revenge' should be the conscious and solicitous cultivation of the nobility of our character,

⁴⁹ An allusion to the principle *ordo essendi est ordo agendi*, the order of being is the norm for the order of acting.

the laying aside of all ignoble characteristics, and responsibility for the finished bell and perfected resonance in the interest of the integrity of personality and the happiness and fruitfulness of our new country. That shouldn't be so difficult in a land that is genuinely governed as a democracy.

Whenever I expressed these thoughts during conversations with competent Americans, they reacted as if it were a revelation. Such things do not strike us as extraordinary. Whoever has gone through our school and made our way of thinking their own, would, after having had a look at the situation here, come to the same conclusion without much difficulty. That is different here. I have already pointed out that even intellectual Americans are not yet receptive to the problem as I have described it. The struggle for world supremacy, however, will of itself exact the recognition and delineation of the American idea. Even those fully burdened with the responsibility for education and pastoral work are too insensitive for such deliberations. At least that is my impression. Whenever I would turn the conversation in this direction and present my thoughts, the reaction was often similar to what one occasionally experiences in other situations. A problem is carried along unconsciously, together with an inkling of the solution, but words elude the expression of either the one or the other. Suddenly someone comes along and articulates what was suspected and searched for all along—and a deep tranquility settles over the soul. The natural consequences are a sincere joy, a clear insight and overview of the entire complex of questions and tasks, and a powerful motivation [to reach] for the heights.

Now would be the moment to investigate the *depths of the German soul*, to lay bare its strengths and weaknesses, compare its positive and negative characteristics, and indicate ways in which Germans in America—and even more so in a native Germany currently under such strong American influence and being courted by her—can intellectually and spiritually assert their identity, openly develop their character to the advantage of all, and be receptive to complementation. That would probably take us beyond the scope of this report, however. At last year's four-weeks retreat I tried to

explain in detail the mysteries of the German soul. It is extremely important that the sisters and fathers in charge of the different branches have a clear concept in this regard. We are not yet at the high-water-mark of intellectual confusion and realigning of all values. Interior insecurity is growing... The soul's lack of roots drives it into insecurity and mass-mindedness... Happy those peoples which have leaders in such times of duress who hold undauntedly to final principles out of inner conviction, who make no concessions to faddish ideas and do not let themselves be shaken with regard to the spiritual character of the followers. We therefore wish to dig deep. Today a healthy instinct is no longer enough. Reflective clarity must purify and guide the instinct. For that serious study is necessary. (...)

I may only [take the time to] emphasize two things here:

1. That I am personally *grateful and proud to be a German*. This is all the more true the more I am able to make comparisons on my world travels. I am not afraid to courageously profess and joyfully sing:

‘O Germany of high honor,
the faithful's holy land,
The light of your fame shall ever gleam
in East and West again.’ (...)

I help carry the guilt which my nation has brought down upon itself. I do not deny it, but neither do I condemn my people because of it. I want to suffer with it and be scorned with it, but at the same time help it conquer a place of honor among the nations. This is the language of blood descent, but also the call of practical faith in Divine Providence. Again and again I am reminded of the conclusion of the Founding Document, which sees Germany at the head of the Old World—at least through its intellectual strength and its religious

and moral nobility⁵⁰. In Rome, Canisius⁵¹ had his important vision of the Sacred Heart and was given his great mission for Germany. We are no visionaries in the literal sense, but are nonetheless inspired by a great vision. If every part of the Founding Document has become reality, why should not its conclusion equate with God's plans? And if it was from this vision—be it one of extraordinary form and measure—that Canisius drew the strength to become the second apostle of Germany, why should not we strive to help save our nation for a third time on the basis of our simple yet powerful faith in divine providence? We are and remain instruments in the hands of our Mother Thrice Admirable and Queen of Schoenstatt. We believe in that unwaveringly. The vacuum created in Europe by de-Christianization can only be filled if she [Mary] gives new birth to Christ there. She wants to especially accomplish that through us. This faith awakens in us both courage and confidence. The deference which I have received here and there, the complements which have been bestowed on me, all this I forward to the address of my people and interpret it—small though it be in the [present] context of aversion and hate—as a favorable portent for our mission. I sincerely thank all those who share this attitude and mission, who consume the entire strength of body and soul so that answer and fulfillment be found for that plea of our longing:

‘Mother, with your Child from heaven,
descend upon the *German plains*,

⁵⁰ First Founding Document, No. 11A (1914 version): ‘This self-sanctification I demand of you. It is the armor that you shall put on, the sword with which you shall free your country from its overpowering enemies and place it at the head of the Old World.’ See *Schoenstatt—the Founding Documents* (Waukesha, 1993), p. 33. See also *America Report*, I, 3 (above, p. 3).

⁵¹ St. Peter Canisius (1520-1597), German Jesuit and “second apostle” of Germany after St. Boniface (675-754). The three moments in Germany's ‘salvation’ alluded to by Fr. Kentenich here are the conversion from paganism (St. Boniface), the success of the Counter-Reformation (St. Peter Canisius), and the renewal of Germany in the face of modern secularism and ‘Bolshevism’, including collectivism and Naziism on the one hand and de-Christianization on the other (20th Century).

so that in following your footsteps
it find true and lasting peace.

Mother and Child, united in love—

Fatherland, only so can you be healed.⁵²

We are all united by the one great aim: our common work. The international [dimension] does not hinder the national; the one needs and complements the other, even if there are those who work more for the national and those who work more for the international.

That does not mean, however, that I should not see, know, acknowledge, and stand in awe of the valuable assets of other nationalities. God is infinitely great and worthy to be imitated in all the facets of his perfection, and he creates each thing, down to the smallest, in such a way that it contains some ray [of His perfection]. To perceive this ray, rejoice in it, and help its radiance grow, is and remains one of the most beautiful tasks of a world apostle. For those who see the world as God sees it and allow the nations to pass before the mind's eye, it is not difficult (here as in similar cases) to progress to the final principles and take a stand on all these questions in the spirit of true freedom. But I will never let myself be misled into seeing the others as only good and myself as only darkness, into denying my nation because it must presently play the scapegoat, into throwing stones at it just because it is at the point of collapse under the burden of the stones already heaped upon it. Such judgment and treatment will and must awaken our sense of chivalry. How my heart warms and my will awakens when I remember the conclusion of our 'Magna Carta'⁵³ in the spirit of faith!

I am fully aware of the magnitude of the gamble which this faith entails. To *believe in the mission of Germany* means taking a risk. I know how much guilt my nation has accrued.

—It is largely Germany's fault that *Western Christianity has been so grievously divided*. This [religious division] also produced the religious and moral disunity of the discoverers and

conquerors of the New World and led to their battle to annihilate the natives. The Indians that I visited—driven from their native homes and settled on reservations—raise a painful accusation by their very being and behavior... Perhaps my attempts to sow the seeds of Schoenstatt everywhere—even among the Indians—can be a small contribution toward reparation.

—Germany *gave birth to the ideas*—or independently refined them—which have swept over the East like a terrible storm. By helping unleash the *global fury of totalitarianism*, it has turned the world on its head, and now it lies helpless and crushed on the ground. From every side come the attempts to give this dying patient the final send-off.

But *in spite of everything, I believe in the mission of Germany because it stands in our 'Magna Carta'*. It will and must be the European nation that first finds its way back to clear ideas and religious and moral principles, that gathers new strength for itself and for the relaxation of the international social, economic, and political tensions.

It is an equally great gamble to *believe in Schoenstatt's mission for Germany*. To be sure, it has developed from inconspicuous beginnings into a growing movement of renewal which has an impact in many places. But what is that in the face of such a mammoth task? If the transformation of a single human being takes so much time and patience, how long might it take until a highly talented and endowed, guilt-laden, and hardened people, a despised, persecuted, crushed, and shattered nation finds its way upward, until a world which received Christ and rejected him accepts him again because God, in his infinite mercy, wants to let grace go before justice one more time? Are not Schoenstatt's young shoulders still too weak for such a task? I am aware of all of that, but I believe in its mission nonetheless because our 'Magna Carta' vouches for it. I believed in it when I dictated the unnoticed concluding words of the Founding Document into the minutes of my interrogation by the Gestapo on September 20, 1941. Neither bunker and prison [in Koblenz] nor the hell of Dachau shook this faith. Even having heard for myself what the world thinks of Germany today and with how much caution Schoenstatt is viewed

⁵² Cf. *Heavenwards* (Waukesha, 1992), p. 172f.

⁵³ The First Founding Document.

internationally because it is seen as a product of Germany, my faith cannot be shaken. Since January 20, 1942 it is greater than ever. Since then, there is no barrier which Schoenstatt's stream of grace cannot overcome. The triumphal march of the MTA has taken on massive proportions and will not be held back.

2. It is entirely possible *to be all things to all men without losing or denying oneself or national character*. Our Lord and the Blessed Mother have shown us this in their own lives. Both are entirely rooted in their people and at the same time overcome the narrowness of unhealthy nationalism. How completely at home is the Blessed Mother in the history of her people! How she lives out of that history and out of the promises given to her people! The *Magnificat* is a testimony to that. In this way I can be an American among Americans, a Chilean among Chileans, can be open for all others and open others to me; can give them all due respect, be one of their own, allow myself to be complemented by their character and complement theirs in return—all without losing myself or my German character. And vice versa: The more I am what I am meant to be, the more adaptable and sensitive I am, the more I can lead others upward. In the end, only genuine personalities can have a deep influence on others. Just as they, wherever all their skills are at work and they exhale their fragrance, powerfully form and mold the inner life of their followers without sweeping them away, and lead them to a true self-possession that does not make of them a mass, so too, do they take care that they themselves are not swept away or lead away by the masses. The moment they abandon the core of their personality, they lose their influence, lose their following, and drift through life like the waves of the sea—up and down without anchorage, without energy, without fruitfulness. These are the mysteries of the spark that can leap from one person to another, the enigma of how one person can have an influence on another through advice and education. They will only be understood by those who look inward and struggle to find the answer.

Therefore, I as a German will want to develop my *aptitude for the metaphysical* [for the ultimate philosophical realities], even when

those around me have little understanding for what that is. An American priest who should be taken seriously told me, 'The reason we Americans are so little intellectual is a historical one. First we had to conquer the land and make it inhabitable. Our intellectual and academic dimension can only now begin to be developed.' I hope that really happens! A return to metaphysical thought would be a big step forward for American thinking. It would counterbalance the excessive emphasis on practical application and exterior stimuli. It would also be a valuable bridge to a deeper religiosity. I asked experts to compare for me the academic levels of America and Europe. In the cases where it dealt purely with the humanities, Europe always came out on top. I will report later about the American educational system. Here I will only mention what Professor Allers told me: There [in Europe] the economic interests and the schools are both at a much higher level than here.

I won't let my German *Gemüt* [emotional depth and soul⁵⁴] be taken from me! Preserve me from a too objective thinking, acting, and living, and try to give every aspect of life—including home, work, and pleasure—a soul! Home and garden should be recognizable for their hominess, just as they were back home. If I don't have enough money for everything at once, I prefer to make my investments in home and garden rather than in a car, radio, or movies. If the Americans lack a word for *Gemüt*, then I will try to help them sense what it means through the way I am and how I live.

I will not let the healthy *resoluteness* of my character be broken, that innate part of my nature which has been so carefully tended by my upbringing. Nor will I let myself be robbed of the *trustworthiness of my word and conduct*. It should always be said of me, 'A man of his word!' A reputed architect once confided to me, 'When I have to deal with a German bishop, I know I can count on his word. Yes

⁵⁴ The German language distinguishes between *Gemüt* and *Herz*, while English and most other languages are limited to a single word—"heart". Various definitions of *Gemüt* are: the harmony between the higher (rational) and lower (biological) appetites; the emotional center of the personality; a second, deeper way of feeling (than the emotions *per se*).

means yes and no means no!’ I will retain the discipline of body and soul in every situation. But whatever is reminiscent of boot camp or smells of Prussianism has nothing to do with a real and powerful inner attitude. Neither exaggerated rigidity nor the isolation and aloofness of ‘confirmed bachelorhood’ belong to my essence. That can and must be overcome if I don’t want to turn out like a young assistant pastor from the Aachen area who has found refuge here. The pastor visited the school. The assistant pastor had the children stand up and commanded in a voice as cutting as on the drill field, ‘Children, get up!’ The reaction? The startled pastor could think of nothing else to say than, ‘Are you crazy?’ Another priest who is a refugee here and who works in the chancery office had the habit of standing at attention when his bishop entered. The bishop only shook his head and declared, ‘I don’t like this Prussianism!’ In fact, the relationship between bishop and clergy is less formal in this country than for us. The title ‘Your Excellence’ is never used. True, here and there the title ‘My Lord’ is used, but laity and clergy usually say ‘Bishop’ or ‘Archbishop.’ That does not hinder the episcopate from keeping discipline, however, even when they appear to be extremely democratic in their dealings with the faithful.

A sympathetic party advised me to send our Sisters—who are very much in demand here—to live with another community for a year in order to become familiar with the American mentality and make it their own. I can’t bring myself to do that, however. Whoever is thrown in the water will quickly learn to swim if he doesn’t want to drown. That is how we have always done things, and with good results. It awakens inner strength and the will to assert oneself and advance. If we want to retain our character in its genuine form, we cannot allow ourselves to stand under the influence of others but must form ourselves and find our way in life solely from the perspective of our pure and clearly perceived idea. If we do not, we will be in danger of losing ourselves, our originality, and our mission by adapting ourselves too much. Everything here in America is still in a state of flux, including the individual and the community. There are convents which completely isolate themselves in order to keep from

going under or losing their true character. They teach but otherwise live their own lives and never have contact with the people, except possibly in the visiting room. On the other hand, there are those who adapt so much that they give up their own characteristics entirely. We can learn from both without being enslaved to either model. If we would expose ourselves to their influence, it would be more difficult for us to assert our own style than if we would go it alone from the very start and forge our own way through all situations and dangers. Here as elsewhere, everything depends on whether we retain our character, secure the core of our personality and our unique lifestyle and, at the same time, remain open for American values. That presupposes personalities, of course, who stand out as individual characters, have a delicate sense for adaptation, have a highly developed capacity to feel their way into new situations and a healthy head of common sense, but who also have an enlightened freedom with regard to nonessential forms. Here is a situation where the ‘new man’, for which we so ardently strive, can serve our family by being a scout and pioneer.

I, 120-138 (Reflections on the American Character)

One must not lose sight, however, of the fact that America radiates an air all its own and is enveloped by a concrete atmosphere. The historical development of this country, its climate, task, and way of life leave their mark on all who are here for a longer period of time in four ways—regardless of nationality. It all gives the soul an inclination to the *practical and vital*, to the *things of the senses*, to *this-worldliness*, and to *over-confidence in self*.

As we have already heard, the pioneers’ struggle for existence meant a direct confrontation with life. It released intellectual powers and directed them to discoveries in technology and business. The earth responded in kind with an abundance of natural resources. Nature gave up her secrets and laws with astounding rapidity and placed herself at the service of prosperity and the accumulation of goods. So it is that an *extraordinary closeness to the soil and life can*

be found everywhere. The Constitution declares, ‘All citizens are equal before the law⁵⁵.’ That is the fundamental dogma that governs all relationships between Americans. The law knows no exception, neither positive nor negative. As a result, the Negroes are treated much differently here than in South Africa, at least in the regions that I visited and studied. There are regions in the South, however, where they practically live as slaves. In the schools it is taught as dogma that every citizen without exception is expected to work. This explains why it is simply taken for granted here that even college students—even the millionaires—*work in factories* during their vacation or have *other jobs of a practical nature*. While observing the construction of new buildings, I often met ordinary bricklayers who afterwards turned out to be college students. They were simply a worker among workers, clothed like the others and treated like them.

The young people here grow up *with the automobile like a fish does with water*, and can therefore all drive like professionals and even take care of themselves in the event of an accident. To the uninitiated it is as if all of them were trained mechanics or technicians. One must have good nerves to entrust one’s life to an American driver. With him at the wheel, the car races at 60-80 miles [100-140 km] per hour, as I myself experienced on several occasions. But watch out when an accident happens!

In Washington, our Fratres [seminarians] did all the masonry work themselves in our rather ramshackle house over vacation. They reinforced the foundation and did some remodeling. Others work on the farm as if they were trained experts. During my visit to the Divine Word Fathers, I toured their printing shop and constantly met young Fraters who worked the machines during their spare time or did other jobs for which we Germans would only use trained professionals.

(...)

An attachment to the soil and the material reality does have *many positive aspects*. It is capable of bridging the *gap* between blue-collar

⁵⁵ Cf. United States Constitution, 16th Amendment.

and white-collar workers. It gives *blue-collar work* a positive image in the general populace and eases many *social* tensions. It brings *thinking* down to earth and keeps it from losing touch with reality. It is [also] good for the *health* of body and soul. I therefore have nothing against manual labor for candidates to the priesthood before ordination, provided their studies don’t suffer. It may also be appropriate that the hands and strength of the ordained priests also be available to help with work in the school and church. I was able to see that quite often. Father Dennert⁵⁶ and his men and boys painted the whole school [at Holy Cross] during my stay and he was bone tired when it was done. We have that kind of thing in our parish associations in Germany. There can be no doubt that that helps the *rapport between the priest and the people*. Still, I can only permit that as an exception. If that becomes the rule, then it can only be to the detriment of the spiritual and pastoral work. That is a significant disadvantage for both shepherd and flock, all the more since the separation of Church and state already means that each parish priest has the burden [of financing his parish]⁵⁷. He is forced to come up with the needed financial means for parish and school through fundraising activities. The significance of that can only be appreciated by those who have seen it or done it themselves. An entire apparatus has developed towards this end which takes much of the priest’s time and strength, but which admittedly also brings him closer to the people. *A pastor with huge building-projects and a large debt is the normal everyday reality*. To what extent this carries over into the literature is unknown to me. It is customary that eulogies pick up a characteristic trait of the life of the departed. When Father Muckenhaupt

⁵⁶ Father Josef Dennert (1902-1952), pastor of Holy Cross parish in Milwaukee 1943-1951, including the time of Father Kentenich’s visit in 1948.

⁵⁷ In Germany, a system of mandatory “Church taxes” collected by the government and passed on the respective denominations—unthinkable in the United States—provides the apparatus for Church financing, including the salaries of parish priests and personnel and upkeep of Church property and schools.

passed away, Cardinal Stritch⁵⁸ praised him as follows: ‘He did no building and left no debts.’ In Father Schroeder’s⁵⁹ case, however, ‘He built a lot and left behind a mountain of debts.’ On one occasion, Father Schroeder told the Cardinal about how Vincent Pallotti was rewarded for his confidence in times of meager finances by finding money in his drawer. The Cardinal quipped jokingly, ‘Father Schroeder finds it there, too, but in the bishop’s drawer!’

The American’s practical bent, his at-homeness with the soil and the material reality, in which he can develop his creativity with radiant effectiveness, gives him *a down-to-earth and not infrequently naive and childlike character*. This has its effect in the religious sphere in the form of a simple willingness to follow and obey, provided the superior is at least reasonably competent in these matters. That may be the reason why higher superiors prefer American vocations to German ones. I heard that from at least two sides. What may be falling into the scales at the same time, however, is that superiors are not being careful enough about the screening of their vocations. Either the less qualified candidates are passed on to someone else, or those who apply are accepted without first seeing if they are qualified.

All in all, the German character may be able to act in a complementary and stabilizing manner here, just as it can be complemented and made less rigid, just like the arrow which is led back from its flight in eternity to the hard realities of life.

The givenness to the things of the senses is strongly developed in Americans. That is probably a direct and understandable consequence of their closeness to the soil and material reality, which opens the senses wide and makes them receptive to exterior stimuli. Neon

⁵⁸ Samuel Cardinal Stritch (1887-1958), bishop of Toledo 1921-1930, archbishop of Milwaukee 1930-1939, and archbishop of Chicago 1939-1958. He was named a cardinal in 1946.

⁵⁹ Father Peter Schroeder (1878-1939), first Pallottine pastor in the Holy Cross parish in Milwaukee (1921-1925) and one of the founding members of what would later become the Pallottine’s Midwest Province.

advertising reckons with it. Like all other forms of advertising, technology and industry, it has taken on forms which would be difficult to find in these dimensions anywhere else. Newspapers and magazines are lavishly illustrated. The eye is hungry and always in need of new nourishment.

“Pictures and magazines appeal to the eye with an aim to please. The radio appeals to the ears, delicatessen and comforts stimulate the appetites of taste and feel. Radio brings hours of talks and admonitions about beauty care and physical fitness. Much of that is healthy, but much is also unhealthy. An over-emphasis on the body is one of the most unmistakable signs of our times... Is it not a clearly recognizable fact that more care is given in daily life to the body than to the soul? How little time does the modern world devote to daily prayer! Hardly a single thought is given to the care of the soul, while hours and hours are lavished on the care of the body. How many millions are spent annually for beauty products of all kinds, but how low, in comparison, are the stocks of the cultivation of virtue!” (Bishop Muench)

Under pain of excommunication, a West Virginia bishop forbid [Catholic] girls to participate in beauty contests. Two didn’t let that bother them. One became the beauty queen. The daily press reports news, unlike the communication of fundamental ideas we are used to [in Germany]. Sight and hearing and taste are offered a colorful array of unending variety day in and day out: cinema, radio, luxuries, clothes, jewelry. An abundance of consumer goods of every kind is available. They are brimming with nutrition, quality, and fortification and are so well packed that the German of today is reminded of the wondrous sights of ‘1001 Nights’. Technology outdoes itself in offering convenience devices for every part of life, from the refrigerator to the lawn mower. A single machine can mow, thresh, and bale. In Boys Town I was led to a first-class hotel. By walking past an electric light, a light reflex was broken and the doors opened by themselves. Television has started to catch on here. These and similar inventions paint an ominous specter on the wall: man and

human strength are pushed more and more into the background, unemployment rises, and the question of social justice stands before us in its terrible present-day form.

Another form of givenness to the senses is the craving for excitement. That is the motor behind the sale of detective stories, which runs into the millions. Roosevelt is said to have never been without one so that he could deepen his understanding of people. But they also have a deplorable side-effect—they contaminate the imagination and the heart. They are responsible for children trying to murder their playmates; they wanted to ‘try out’ what they had read.

It is no great leap from *givenness to the senses* to *sensuality*. One demands and urges on the other. A newcomer from abroad is especially susceptible to the dangers, the blinding effect, and the attractions of such a world. Through sheer familiarity Americans may be less sensitive and are therefore less susceptible in many instances. But even they cannot expect to remain immune in the long run unless they adequately mobilize natural and supernatural strength to counteract them. The same circumstances have also led to an opener relationship between the sexes. This, too, poses new dangers for the newcomer, and not every person is prepared to face them.

Americans for the most part are *well-paid*. As a result, their appetites can pretty much have what they want. The *standard of living* is high. It may strike foreigners as curious that milk can be ordered in every restaurant and that it is served at every meal in [the American] home. One would hesitate to compare the people [here] with our starving, bombed-out German countrymen—the difference is too crass. ‘Aren’t we Americans crazy,’ spoke an American into my ear in jest at a larger meal. ‘First we pour in steaming tea, then throw in ice; a generous dose of sugar, then comes the lemon...’ Little *alcohol* is consumed in public. Protestant denominations are striving for the reinstatement of prohibition. The situation may be different in private. Whisky is frequently consumed and with a certain preference, especially by the Irish. Valuable as the Irish character may be, it unfortunately has a great weakness in this regard. I had hardly arrived here when this came to my attention. In Texas I

wanted to visit the bishop, but was mistakenly directed to the auxiliary bishop first, who was supposed to be gone fishing. I came to the house where he was guessed to be. The door opened. A man stood there in shirt and pants—it was the auxiliary. A peculiar silence reigned over the house. Now and then the bishop would disappear into the next room. Then I saw him carry out a priest with the help of another man. The doctor came. My impression, of course, was that the priest was severely ill. The answer, however, was that ‘the gentleman is drunk’. The following day the bishop [Ledvina], who had received the report of this immediately, told how the future looked: ‘That night he had been hitting the whiskey bottle again. Unfortunately I cannot keep him in my diocese any longer.’

As is English custom, there are three meals a day: ‘breakfast’ in the morning, ‘dinner’ at noon, and ‘supper’ in the evening⁶⁰. *Clothing* is determined by the climate, but also plays on the senses. It is much less formal here than in Europe. Women do not particularly follow the usual fashions from Paris. They would rather go their own way. The more conspicuous—and the more she can capture the attention of those around her, especially the men—the better. Whether the figure is well highlighted or not, whether the body is well or poorly covered or not—such things are not of the essence; they are only a means to an end. In many cases there is no real difference between men's and women's clothing. Teenage girls prefer to wear blue jeans. So as to be different, they have to be as crumpled up as possible and rolled up on one side, while the normal length on the other... One often sees women wearing nothing more than a loincloth and blouse. —‘I don’t know,’ complained one good German mother who was able to emigrate from Nazi Germany in time, ‘where I should send my daughter to school and what I should do to counteract the influence there. At the moment, one of my child’s teachers is a nun who sees her mission in informing the class in how to best use make-up. As is the custom here, every high school publishes a yearbook annually which has—in addition to a short report—a picture of the girls. I

⁶⁰ “Supper” and “dinner” are transposed in the German text.

wanted to send it to my mother in Germany, but I don't dare, since the girls are often so immodestly dressed that my mother wouldn't stand for it.'

For better or for worse, the German soul is also exposed to this reality. Unless it cultivates its unshakable adherence to principles and its healthy common sense, unless it fosters its refined sense of tact and propriety, then it, like so many others, will become a easy victim.

That brings us to a third factor which has already been sufficiently sketched out together with the second factor: *this-worldliness*. Whoever can make a little bit of paradise through money and possessions for himself here on earth, whoever gives heart and mind to the things of this world with their values and pleasures, is on the best way to becoming this-worldly. One believes in the otherworldly, of course, allows heaven to exist, hopes too in the eternal bliss to be found there, and has no second thoughts about repeating the words, 'No eye has seen nor ear has heard, nor human heart perceived what God has prepared for those he loves...' [1 Cor 2,9]. But that doesn't go deep enough into daily life. One would like to have eternal bliss as secure as a bank note and the Christian faith is therefore seen as a kind of insurance company. What that overlooks, however, is God's claim to absoluteness. One old gentleman who is well-versed in the things of today's world once complained that he couldn't understand how in so many circles of the Church here, children are educated as if the world were no longer a valley of tears. The thought often came to him that the *Salve Regina* [Hail, Holy Queen] with its allusion to life's misery and the valley of tears is—in the American eyes—a problem already solved. Such a generalization and those like it are overstated, of course, but they give some idea of the trend.

The same thing is indicated by an oft-repeated phrase, 'Take it easy.' That can be variously translated as 'Take life easy' or 'Make yourself comfortable.' In any case, it has a different ring than Our Lord's attitude toward life and the tone of the world apostle [Paul]. It has a good sense, namely the protest against gall-black pessimism, loss of joy in life, and overworry. It harkens the admonition of the poet:

'Rejoice in life as long as the lamp doth glow,
Pluck the rose before it wilts'⁶¹.

If the cup of joy overflows too much, however, and the boundaries become too unclear, then this expression is a declaration of too little willingness to sacrifice, something which closes the soul to the divine and makes it unreceptive to following Christ in the particular sense of a priestly or religious vocation. That may make the concern for the recent drop in vocations understandable, [a drop that has come] with the growth in economic prosperity. I was a guest somewhere in the United States. A young seminarian was in the same house for his vacation. He had taken over the farm work and worked from morning until evening as if he were a farmer by trade. Then came a sudden change. His mother had visited him, seen how he had thrown himself into his work, and chided, 'Take it easy.' This expression and the attitude behind it explain the lack of interest in purely intellectual endeavors and the keen interest in finding many ways to make life easier. It is an interest which technology and commerce use to full advantage, largely awaken, and broadly satisfy. If the homemaker chooses, she can make life very easy for herself. Everything which a good meal requires can be purchased ready-made. It only needs to be reheated, and then dinner and supper are taken care of. In order to save even this expense of effort, it is convenient to go to a nearby hotel and let oneself be waited on, especially on Sundays and holidays.

The American's tendency to be *self-assured* and *over-confident in self* can be considered a bad side-affect of the 'chosen people' mentality and a consequence of the storybook success which has carried it to a position of world dominance shared only with the Russians. There is much power in the idea of being a chosen people. If it is anchored in the religious dimension, the dangers of arrogance and self-assuredness can be easily overcome and made fruitful

⁶¹ From the song "*Freut euch des Lebens*", well-known in the German-speaking parts of Europe. Text by Johann Martin Usteri, 1793, music by Hans Georg Nägeli, 1794, both of Switzerland.

through a deep humility which puts everything in its proper place. That is demonstrated by the lives of the saints. One must take care from the start, however, that mission- and vocation-consciousness are not confused with an erroneous and regrettable pride. In an age where all values and aspects of life become subject to the dominant mass-mentality, anything that “stands out” and dares to be different, that shows real conviction, becomes the object of ridicule. It is called a lack of social sensitivity and non-conformity in the places where collectivism dominates; arrogance and pride in the context of the religious life—when it falls prey to the danger of breaking healthy individuality. It was much different among the first Christians and in the early Church with their extraordinary mission-consciousness. We ought to re-orient ourselves on the best traditions of such times again and again. Just as every form of love progresses from a primitive to an enlightened stage of maturity—be it maternal, filial, or bridal love—so do mission- and vocation-consciousness. The developmental stages and crises should not be confused with the final enlightened condition [of maturity], nor transition with the finished product. If mission-consciousness loses its contact with the dimension of religion, it quickly devolves into a self-idolatry or, in the case of a country, national idolatry. Then the words of Nietzsche⁶² will have been fulfilled: ‘I’m not a man, I’m dynamite!’

Successes easily inflate the pride. They tend to belittle all others and tolerate no rival. The things which can have an ugly effect on the lives of individuals can be catastrophic if they affect the personality of an entire nation.

In Maryknoll I visited the mission society of the same name which lives without vows. I was given a warm welcome. My questions were readily answered. I drew comparisons with our institute, pointed out differences and similarities. Father Haas⁶³, my guide, took advantage of a favorable moment to whisper to me that

⁶² Friedrich Nietzsche (1844-1900), German author and philosopher.

⁶³ Fr. Joseph Haas (1910-88), Pallottine Father and later Schoenstatt Father who accompanied Fr. Kentenich on his 1948 visits in Washington and New York.

Americans cannot tolerate being anything but the best in everything; they always want to be in first place with the grade *non plus ultra* [without equal]. This observation accompanied me the rest of my travels here. I would set the tone of the conversations and the tenor of the questions, and when I would make assertions, I would always ask to be corrected to prevent my conclusions from being one-sided. This policy always worked out well, even when the questions were extremely delicate. I was always received with respect [in America]. Nor was there a lack of appreciation. I have already cited a few examples and extrapolated from the persons to the nation. The same extrapolation may be applied to a letter which was written to me from Boys Town, where I spent two days with Father Reichenberger in order to study the situation and facilities there. Father Edmond Walsh closed his letter of September 2 with the words:

“It was a source of much edification and pleasure to have you and Father Reichenberger with us. We all appreciated that we had two exemplary priests in our company.”

The character of the soul not only has an effect on the relationship between man and man, and between man and world, but also and especially on the relationship between man and God, and therefore plays no small role in the *religious life of individuals and nations*. American piety has not always been viewed in the same light. Pope Leo XIII condemned a particular direction as Americanism. As a result, the overemphasis of the active virtues was reined in to the advantage of the passive ones. Today this piety has a good reputation in the Church. Has there really been such a meritorious transformation, or is the view correct that Rome was improperly informed by the French? Be that as it may, if our own description of the American character is correct, then it will be no surprise to find that it is clearly reflected in the forms of piety.

They can, first of all, be described as *practical*. More precisely: One could speak of a “*charity*” piety. The way that the American character is described in a joke that compares it to the German and Chilean way is not without some truth: The German asks, “Is it my duty?” and gets to work. The Chilean asks, “Is the whole thing

pleasant?” and considers the matter settled. The American takes careful stock of whether there is an economic advantage for him—then everything is taken care of.

Nonetheless, the aforementioned title of honor for his piety has been earned. Because of the separation of Church and state, the Church has to take care of itself. It is entirely dependent on the generosity of its members. In addition to the taxes for public schools, millions have to be raised for the private schools. The same is true for the priests’ salaries and the construction and upkeep of the churches. All of that is done with an overwhelming and unquestioned readiness to give, and the parishes are growing. There are more parishes and the number of Catholics has risen to about 27 million. That makes the Catholics almost as numerous as all other Christian denominations combined.

The *inclination to the senses* has its effect in a *strong emphasis on the veneration of the saints*. It is largely a case of Mediterranean piety which has developed here, apparently also through the influence of the Mediterranean [Hispanic and Italian] nationalities. One difference is conspicuous, however: the dominance of reason over unbridled instinct, in contrast to, say, the much more irrational Italian piety... That the sensational element also plays a role is not surprising. The statues of the saints vary according to the style, penetration, and perseverance of those doing the promoting. Veneration of the ‘Little Flower’⁶⁴ has already seen its better days. That may be because the Carmelites haven’t developed enough vigor in their promotion. The devotion to ‘Our Lady of Perpetual Help’ appears to have gained a permanent place in many circles, because the Redemptorists devote their entire strength to its promotion.... The liturgical movement also has some influence here, though it may take a while until it has won a place for itself throughout the Church here. Few people go to daily Mass. On Sunday the churches are full. The clergy places a great deal of emphasis on the Sunday Mass—perhaps

⁶⁴ St. Thérèse of Lisieux (1873-1897). One Shrine to the Little Flower which Fr. Kentenich saw in 1948 was that run by Fr. Coughlin near Detroit.

because that is when the many collections take place. I don’t know if one can speak about genuine American movements here. I had a long discussion with an American priest about this point. He considered their absence entirely normal and only wanted to know the reason for this unhappy fact.

I have already mentioned the strong *this-worldliness* of American thinking, and it must also have its effect on the piety here. Because economics and earnings are such overriding concerns, these interests absorb the energy of the soul to an extent that there isn’t much left for lifestreams of an outspoken religious nature. Not infrequently religion serves business. The lord becomes slave and the servant rides high on his horse. If religion proves to be a financial disadvantage, it fades into the background or is given up entirely. That explains a number of cases where capitalists have fallen away from the Church... Perhaps this is a remnant of Calvinism. To be sure, I also had contact with a small group of spiritually motivated priests who belong to the ‘Detachment Movement’. Its founder is a Jesuit, Father Lacouture⁶⁵. He had much influence for a time, but his superiors soon put an end to it. A group of diocesan priests under the direction of Dr. J. Hugo continues to work with his ideas. Notable theologians reject them however as too radical. They require their priests to abstain completely from alcohol and tobacco and only allow a work to have merit when it is sanctified by the good intention. The numbers are so few that one cannot speak of a movement. They lack the things that we emphasize so much: organic teaching, organic demands, and organic living. Here, as always, the baby is thrown out with the bath-water. A ‘detachment’ or ‘sacrifice’ movement, if held within sane limits

⁶⁵ Fr. Onesimus Lacouture (1881-1951), a Jesuit of the province of Quebec, Canada, initiated a style of retreats in 1931 that over 5000 American and Canadian priests attended in the 1930s. Starting in 1941, he began to be attacked with regard to the content of his retreats, a shadow from which he could never remove himself. His work was nonetheless carried on by several priests, foremost among them Fr. John Hugo (1911-85) of the diocese of Pittsburgh. Cf. Fr. John Hugo, *Your Ways Are Not My Ways: The Radical Christianity of the Gospel*, Pittsburgh, 1984 (Vol. 1) and 1986 (Vol. 2).

would doubtlessly be a blessing for American spirituality.

The same would be true of an outspoken supernatural attitude. Because of its lack and because of the lack of interest in an attitude of sacrifice, it has been prophesied that Schoenstatt doesn't have much of a future here. 'Quite the contrary,' admitted one American grudgingly, 'for precisely that reason we really do need Schoenstatt.'

It will surprise no one that the danger of secularism is great in such a situation. The American bishops recently published a pastoral letter on this subject which speaks with dead earnestness. It is obvious that the one that suffers the most from the plague of secularism is the family...⁶⁶ It is the sign of a healthy inner attitude that the Church is trying to oppose all the efforts to dissolve [Church and family] with appropriate countermeasures.

(The remaining pages of Part One, I 39-52, are devoted to U.S. and Western policies regarding German immigration in face of post-war anti-German feelings.)

⁶⁶ Cf. United States Catholic Bishops, Pastoral letter of November 1947 against secularism.

Part Two (Late October-Early November 1948)

II, 1-3 (Introduction)

As a German I was interested in the situation of the Germans, as a Catholic and a priest in the religious situation of the country. This latter point demanded my particular attention because I knocked at [America's] gates as the bearer and leader of an international movement of renewal in the spirit of St. Paul's "*omnia instaurare in Christo*"¹—that all things shall be united in Christ, the Head. In the sense of our Schoenstatt mission we add: through his Blessed Mother, the Mother Thrice Admirable and Queen of Schoenstatt, who wants to proclaim and form a new and timely image of man and community for every place in an apocalyptic era. Those who are laden with such a burden particularly turn to those peoples who are the world's pacesetters, who consider themselves world powers, who act and are indisputably acknowledged as such, and who have and give themselves no rest until their banner is raised everywhere, their economy dominates the world market, and their intellectual character and lifestyle have transformed the face of the earth. The atmosphere that they radiate sweeps over the peoples they have conquered and annexed. Movies and fashion, finance and technology, church and denominationalism as they know it follow in their footsteps. Whoever wins them over and schools and forms them, clearly exerts an influence over the widest imaginable circles...

Such deliberations accompanied me on my journeys through the wide open spaces of the United States. If we succeed in making Schoenstatt at home there, then the MTA, with her great mission for our time and her abundantly filled hands, will more easily and surely set out on her march to victory throughout the world as the educator of the nations.

Schoenstatt, however, must first be received in the American

¹ To restore all things in Christ (Eph 1,10).

mind and heart, interiorly assimilated; it must be repoured into American vessels, recast into American coins. If this is not done, Schoenstatt will remain an initiative which is neither continued nor perfected, a tiny flame that soon extinguishes without becoming a roaring fire that encompasses and transforms many circles; it will not become a lifestream which gathers other waters—both great and small—and which sweeps through the world as a source of blessing. Foreigners—even after having been in the country for long years—will have to be satisfied with the awareness that their work is only preparatory. The initiative for this work can also be taken in Germany. The more that hate subsides and open-mindedness replaces cold alienation, the more the receptiveness for mutual cooperation will increase. Why not try and bring the Americans who are here in Germany to Schoenstatt and introduce them to its ‘secret’? Then we would have two irons in the fire—one here in Europe and the other in America—and it would go faster. Whoever wants to conquer a world today can, for the time being, only gain a hearing and lay worthwhile groundwork by making such small contributions. The real successes will be reserved for the native-born. That is true of all Schoenstatt work abroad. We should be ready for this and be prepared to step out of the limelight and give the next generation the leadership as soon as it is able. That may take a great deal of selflessness on our part. Nonetheless, if it is not ourselves that we seek but God and his work, then the difficulties should be easily overcome. At the same time, we don’t want to have our heads in the sand or be fooled by illusions. The ones at the receiving end today will be the givers and leaders of tomorrow and the day after. It is therefore important that we win native vocations everywhere and make them at home in the world of Schoenstatt. That will not take place, however, until we have mastered the language and culture of our newly chosen home as perfectly as possible.

Our secular institutes must especially depend on native vocations in every country if they want to completely fulfill their mission of inspiring the entire movement. This is all the more urgent in the face of the increasing tendency to move away from Europe and become

more nationalistic.

II, 3-7 (Vocations, Materialism)

With that we touch on the *question of vocations* which had already come to my attention in Miami and which continually accompanied me thereafter concerning all the branches of the movement...

We have a unique character that has not yet earned a permanent place in America. Nonetheless, it is possible to draw valid conclusions for our situation from the experiences of other religious communities. Such comparisons are even more reliable if we can demonstrate that the originality of the [Schoenstatt] family encounters a kindred originality in the American soul with its inherited and acquired ideals, which find clearly perceptible expression in words, writing, and deeds; if the soul of the family is in harmony with the soul of the nation; if the two sides come together like question and answer or like two parts of a single indivisible organism.

What can be said to clarify this differentiated and significant complex of problems can be derived from the consideration of the questions

of education,
of [life]style,
and of chosen affinities.

Youth work and education

are excellent ways to gain vocations. They have proven themselves admirably in the U.S. and promise a bright future if we remain true to our character and mission.

1. Contact with the youth is *a matter of life and death* for every religious community. That much is obvious. The implied truth is expressed by the wisdom of proven experience as follows: ‘Whoever has the youth has the future.’ With a few exceptions and qualifications, we would go so far as to say, ‘*Only* those who have the youth

have the future.’ That is especially true in cases like ours where *a holistic and entirely new lifestyle is involved* such as is demanded by God and the Church, even though they represent heights beyond [mere] human reach and are faced with the extraordinary dangers of the situation today. Only the youthful heart is malleable enough, only the youthful soul is as formable as soft wax that willingly receives and lets itself be creatively formed and deeply penetrated by each breath. Normally it is only in life’s springtime that the law of un-lived life or the transformation of the soul takes place with the necessary warmth. At that age the soul instinctively reaches out for the new, for forms of life and goals which are foreign or little known to the previous generation. Only in the time of budding strength and youthfulness do the call to heroism and difficulties and greatness powerfully awaken the hero on the purely natural level who—supported by God’s grace—boldly marches into the life-and-death battle for the ideal.

What could be greater or more difficult than the task which God has placed on Schoenstatt’s weak shoulders? Consider what it means to create a new image of man and community in the frayed and rootless world of today, new in the three ways delineated by the October Week: new for the world, new for the Church, new for the religious life. From this standpoint it is clear just how much our future everywhere depends on youth and its formation. After [the] October [Week] we are aware of what the ‘new man’ looks like and know which is his essence, his significance, and his peril; we also know the difficulties in realizing this ideal.

It is extremely difficult to place a *Catholic of real resilience and character* in the pagan world with its materialistic and collectivistic outlook. Unless we devote serious educational work to the youth, it will be impossible *everywhere*.

Jews of intelligence whom I met in the airplane and private homes, and who had suffered much in the persecution of the Jews but overcome all hatred, pointed out to me that the decline of civilization in the world has not yet reached its lowest point. In their opinion, as long as the world only knows and values the standards of material

well-being, one cannot expect things to get better. An unshakably firm moral order with eternally valid and proven laws must tame the beast in man and be binding in all circumstances, even if it means financial disadvantage. Otherwise we will never escape the battle of all against all. One of them, the owner of a factory in Buenos Aires, had resolved because of this attitude to never lie, even in financial matters, even if everyone around him would make fun of it. At first he stuck out like a sore thumb when he courageously carried out his resolution. But he held his ground and may even have won economic advantage from the reliability of character which this produced. Be that as it may, he wanted to do his part for the establishment of a moral order and therefore contribute to world peace. His wife thought that Germany would soon put itself out of the chaos, and do so more quickly than other nations, because its horrendous poverty [in the wake of World War II] it would be more receptive for higher goods. With that she was obviously portraying the ideal case which will not be so easily realized from one day to the next. She overlooked the fact that the lack of exterior, economic goods does not automatically mean the spirit and heart are freed of materialism. In fact, lack of the most necessary material goods usually stirs avarice and incites it to extreme forms, if it is not counteracted by a basic heroic attitude which triumphs over the “little animal” in us.

A German who had the opportunity to visit his former home in Germany, was not so much shaken by the mountains of rubble that he saw and the great famine which he met, but by the hatred, selfishness, and jealousy of his compatriots which had the effect of an addictive drug in so many places. The Germany people is plainly still a long ways from understanding the meaning of its ordeal. The “new man” is more an idea than reality, if it has germinated at all in wider circles as a brightly shining ideal. A young Spanish editor from Santiago [Chile] explained to me that world peace can only be expected if a youth grows up which is “de-economized².” He saw positive signs for such a reorientation in the cultural sphere of Latin

² In other words, freed from the slavery to materialistic values.

America.

II, 7-13 (Human Rights, Human Dignity, the New Man)

The same message resonates in these and similar words again and again. It is the cry for the ‘new man’ in ‘the new community’, the conviction that these are indispensable, and the helplessness in trying to form them... We are aware that this brings us to nothing less than the underlying problem of our day and age, [the problem] which gives the great men and women of our time no rest. ‘At the bottom of all problems of the world today,’ declare the bishops of the United States, ‘is the problem of man³,’ his essence, value, and dignity, his rights and responsibilities.

“...Unless those who bear the responsibility of world leadership are in basic agreement on what man is, there is no way out of the confusion and conflict which block the road to real peace. Clashes on the question of boundaries, national security, minority safeguards, free movement of trade, easy access to raw materials, progressive disarmament, and the control of the atomic bomb, important as these are, take a second place to the need of unity in protecting man in the enjoyment of his God-given native rights⁴.”

The struggle of the small nations for their inalienable rights and the constraints placed upon the great nations through their struggle for power would permit a difficult but acceptable compromise, if the fate of man as man did not also hang in the balance. This was the opinion of the American bishops.

The essence of human rights is the defense of human dignity. We still have the terrible crimes fresh in our minds which were

³ “Man and the Peace!”, statement issued by the NCWC (National Catholic Welfare Conference) Administrative Board in the name of the bishops of the United States, November 17, 1946, in: Hugh J. Nolan, ed., *Pastoral Letters of the United States Bishops*, National Conference of Catholic Bishops, Washington, 1984, Vol. 2, p. 67.

⁴ Ibid.

committed against millions of helpless individuals—victimized in the merciless clutches of the cruel tyrants of recent memory. Bombs rained down death and destruction on peaceable citizens. A ruthless war machine rolled through our land and crushed them under the devastating fury of iron and steel. Men, women, and children were driven from their homes on short notice. Able-bodied men were forced to serve in the army or dragged into a slavery of factory or field work for the enemy who had occupied their country. Those who resisted were shot or hung or taken to a concentration camp. The brutality that took place there was an outrage to even the most hard-hearted and insensitive. The world resounded with indignation at such attacks on human rights, attacks which dealt them a lethal blow unlike any other in the history of civilization. [Humanity] hid its face in shame and cried. That was yesterday.

Today human rights are counted among the values sacred to all mankind. They are loudly proclaimed everywhere. But can that sound convincing in the face of the brutalities occurring today? Who will claim that human rights are not as endangered today as they were in the years just past? The war is over, of course! The cannons are silent. Armies are not on the march. Aircraft no longer appear on the horizon to rain down fire. They serve peaceful purposes. And yet, human beings are being brutally handled. Brutalities of a new kind. Hundreds of thousands of displaced persons eke out an inhuman existence in miserable camps far from their previous homes.

(...)

The full ethical esteem of man is not possible in the long run without being deeply anchored in the spiritual and supernatural reality. In the age of materialism and collectivism, the existence of the completely moral, inspired, and personal individual is even less thinkable than in ages past without a diverse and deeply rooted relationship to the divine. This already delivers a first indication of what the ‘*new man*’ is—the preeminent international need of the present and the future. No people or nation can ignore this need; all are forced to confront this reality in the interests of their own existence.

The fiery Spaniard mentioned above was full to overflowing with

views about the world and Church of today. Even before I could really put my questions into words, he started talking again. He had been through the Spanish Civil War, seen much of the world, had many connections as an editor. When we parted, he was on his way to speak on radio about the necessity of charity, even when one does not see the suffering with one's own eyes... I pointed out that for a true easing of the tensions between the nations, it would be important for a Latin American cultural sphere with its own unique character to come to bear as a counterbalance to the North American and Russian tendencies... (....)

[He continued:] The Church must not only connect man with God, but also teach him how to deal with practical daily life, especially by helping ease the economic distress in keeping with the example of Our Lord. Only a truly vibrant Catholicism can transform the world, not just having a baptismal certificate and knowing a few prayers. In his estimation, such a vibrant currant has broken out among the youth in many countries, and it gives true reason to hope. Modern movements of reform which are too academic and theoretical and do not take enough into account real life and its transformation will not last long... And so the energetic conversation went on for quite some time.

Why do I write down a few samples of this conversation? I do it to give insight into the bubbling cauldron of intellectual currents in our time. It is not as if I want to say I identify with everything this man said. I only want to point out the main problem. Those who have a good ear will hear “between the lines” of all this helpless stammering and jubilant conviction, of all serious deliberations and responsible plans, what progress is being made toward the image of the “new man” and how it is as a necessity and difficulty and how it sets its hopes on the new generation. The number of those who, with this fiery, no longer very young Spaniard, consciously or unconsciously stretch out their hand for the ideal of the *nova creatura in Christo* [new creature (or man) in Christ], may very well be on the rise among the youth of all the world.

II, 13-15 (Mary's Role in Forming the New Man)

What an overwhelming realignment of values, what quality educational work must precede the broad realization of this ideal [of the new man] and its ‘miracles of transformation’! How much religious and moral heroism will be required to so effectively overcome the mass poisoning of hearts and minds, so that world peace will be sought and found in the *tranquilitas ordinis* (tranquility of order) rather than in the violation of personal freedom. How much heroism will be required before the Catholic personality has defeated the pagan personality and a Christian social order unites the peoples and nations.

It probably cannot be done unless the Blessed Mother becomes still more actively involved. The Marian mystery, as taught by [St. Louis] Grignon de Montfort [1673-1716] and uniquely realized by Schoenstatt, fully takes into account the task of the Blessed Mother. It acknowledges her active role in the physical birth of Our Lord, in his rebirth in our souls, and in his rebirth at his final coming to judge the living and the dead. It demands of us a perfect surrender to the permanent helpmate of the Redeemer of the World through the Blank Check and the Inscriptio. This is an essential condition for the full unfolding of her glory through the formation of individuals and communities for the realization of the full meaning of the apocalyptic events of our times. In this way the ‘new man’ will become a *nova creatura in Jesu et Maria* [a new creation in Jesus and Mary].

It may be a long time before ‘Mediterranean’ Marian devotion satisfactorily fulfills this significant function. That should not imply that its form, often primitive in appearance, may or ought to be dismantled. It should rather be more closely united with its roots—with Christ and the Blessed Trinity—and more consciously used as a way and means towards this end.

The Inscriptio secures a private and sacred sphere, a warm religious atmosphere in which worship of God can rise unhindered like incense to the throne of the Eternal God, even when the body must live in a pagan environment and the entire person is exposed to

influences hostile to God without the benefit of the usual external modes of protection.

II, 15-17 (Youth and Education)

This already touches the *third manifestation of the 'new man'*⁵. The ideal indicated here is so lofty that only an abundance of grace and an extraordinary amount of educational work can justify its aspiration. Those who are not enkindled for this ideal in the years of their youth will falter when faced with the conditions described in the 'May Letter'⁶ and condescendingly look upon them as an idol and an unrealistic utopia.

All of this shows how much we have to concentrate on youth work if Schoenstatt is going to fulfill its mission.

If *the person has already become set in his ways*, if he has become older, he will tend to be less open, to be tough and inflexible unless God's Spirit is especially active in him. He will frequently become immovable and lose his understanding for ideals and for the rhythm and crises of the coming generation. He will constantly lament the loss of 'good old days' which are forever past. After periods of revolution he will irreconcilably feel the need to return to the old shore, will latch onto to the things of the past and feel that it is there and only there that he can find normality while being unwilling and unable to orient himself on the new shore. He is like a wax figure that can no longer grow; he always remains the same, but is no longer a growing organism that can react to every impression in a God-pleasing manner until life's end. He deliberately keeps his distance from the influence of others—unless he has retained a youthful spirit which enables him to grow more deeply with the years

into the spirit of simple childlikeness, a spirit which leaves the soul impressionable and inflammable until the oldest imaginable age.

That's why every intellectual current and its leadership turn to the youth. Those who do not will soon find themselves at an impasse. They are doomed to lose all significance for the future.

A brilliant example of this is Ignatius [of Loyola]. He was inspired by the ideal of an order exclusively made up of priests. For that reason he originally wanted to accept ordained priests only. He soon noticed, however, that vocations among the already ordained were few and far between. In his rigorous manner he immediately built a new floor into the building of his order: to attract the youth in their receptiveness, to try and win them over for his concept of order, to form them for its great tasks, and to draw them into the clearly recognized ideal of the Jesuit. He incorporated his scholasticate and expanded on it. He worked on a *ratio studiorum* [educational rationale for studies] which represents a welcome addition to the *ratio educanda* [educational rationale] of his spiritual exercises. Together, these [concepts] stand for a complete system of formation and education. A reminder of this original idea is the practice, continued until today, that the Fratres make the vow to enter the community as priests. Neither is Ignatius alone in his observations, experiments, and institutions.

We, too, can sing a similar song. This is no surprise when we *recall the greatness and difficulty of our task*. One need only point out how few priests have entered our [secular] institutes—which have a singular unity and purity of form—after ordination. In Dachau, almost all efforts in this direction were in vain. Exceptions only confirm the rule. It was plainly a stroke of divine genius therefore that the movement was entrusted to youthful shoulders from the very outset and that it has sought and found its best leaders and animators in the [Schoenstatt] youth of both sexes ever since.

This is how it must remain in the future. This is especially true for all the institutes without exception. They must place the greatest emphasis on working with and educating young vocations. Otherwise they will soon be old and die out and become unfruitful. Since

⁵ The progression of "manifestations of the new man" here seems to be:

1. *nova creatura in Christo* (in Christ),

2. *nova creatura in Christo et Maria* (in Christ and Mary),

3. in the context of a new form of religious life (characterized by the secular institutes)

⁶ J. Kentenich, letter from Nueva Helvetia, Uruguay, May 6, 1948.

the lay people are not formed as specifically as priests, they can be admitted to institutes at a more advanced age. Our Sisters of Mary have set the age of 27 as the normal limit. After that one must ask for a dispensation. Contact with the youth, fresh vocations from the blossoming stage of life has the effect, just like in natural families with many children, of keeping one fresh and vigorous into a ripe old age, and secures the continuation and prosperity of the community.

II, 18-25 (Schools in America)

2. Bishops and religious communities in the USA have known this and know this today. Because of it they place great emphasis on the formation of youth in *schools, societies, and sodalities*. I did not have the time to study societies and sodalities in any detail. That will have to wait for a later visit.

This time I had to *limit myself to studying the schools*. I saw them in two forms: in the *usual school setting* and in the *orphanage-home/school experiments*.

Immediately after arriving in America in Miami, my attention was drawn to the normal organization of American schools and their relationship to vocations. I encountered that again and again on my travels through this country.

The *Jesuits* led me to their recreation room and allowed me to browse a bit in their library there. I soon had a catalog of the Society of Jesus in my hands which I leafed through with great interest. I soon knew that of the approximately 27,000 Jesuits in the whole world, about 7,000 are in America, divided into different provinces. In answer to my astonished inquiry into the secret of such a success, I was told about the many schools which the Society's Fathers care for here—high schools, colleges, and universities. And after the end of my visit I can add: Under the Jesuits they are indeed run well and with great success. There are admittedly those in their own ranks who wish that the education would be more markedly supernatural and emphasize sacrifice more. Be that as it may, the Jesuit-run schools have a very good reputation and bring the order many

vocations. While faithful to tradition, they also know how to adapt prudently, especially with regard to sports and the cosmopolitan touch. It can be credited to them as a particular advantage that their education is keenly masculine, that is, it is led by men and directed to the ideal of the man in a country where education, including the education of adolescent boys, is mostly in the hands of women.—The *Franciscans* have developed along similar lines, as can be seen by the number of provinces and the size of their houses. *Newer communities* of men and women have more difficulties. They lack tradition and public recognition. Both are of great importance to the American way of thinking. They can not point to great successes or large facilities. The Americans, practical as they are and oriented to the things of the senses, are dependent on that too.

Based on these considerations, our [Pallottine] Fathers have decided to build a spacious apostolic school in Madison for their vocations. I could get an insight into their plans and followed a large part of the realization with interest. The cornerstone will be laid on October 31. The bishop of Madison is benevolently disposed to the whole undertaking. Since his diocese is still young and doesn't have a minor seminary, he wants to send his own diocesan vocations there for their education. Our Fathers are more than happy to oblige. In that way they continue a plan which Vincent Pallotti held dear. Somewhere in an archive, Father Timpe unearthed a letter written in 1849 in which Pallotti answered an inquiry by declaring his preparedness to send priests from his young community to the United States as teachers as soon as the necessary forces were available.

Among the *teaching orders of women religious*, the *School Sisters of Notre Dame* were the most numerous until just recently. Their houses are primarily in the cities. Recently, however, vocations come more from the rural areas, where the Franciscans from Erlenbad are primarily located and therefore have more prospects for vocations.

Even other young communities whose main task is not teaching and education, try their wings in this area. In this vein, the *Pallottine Sisters* have started schools. They are doing so successfully, though vocations are still relatively few... They still largely depend on sisters

being sent over from the Old Country.

The United States largely owes its *Catholic private schools* to the School Sisters of Notre Dame. From the very beginning they set their sights on pronounced Catholic education in a markedly Catholic atmosphere. In spite of many detractors, their position prevailed in the bishops conference, bringing great blessings to the nation and the Church.

The Catholic Church in the U.S. largely owes its prosperity and growth to the prospering Catholic school system in all levels of education. The bishops consider it their essential task to maintain it and, wherever possible, to expand it. Because the schools are private, they have to be built and maintained through voluntary donations. Because the tax-burden to pay for the public schools is mandatory, clergy and people take on themselves a heavy burden. On the other hand, this significant sacrifice helps impress on the next generation the responsibility they bear for Christian education and gives all of piety a charitable inclination. It can be considered a positive sign that the call of Catholic schools is getting louder. Bishop Ledvina of Corpus Christi offered our Sisters his entire school system. "I have school buildings," he explained, "but no sisters." The bishops gladly let foreign communities of women religious into their dioceses, but are closed toward communities of men. They fear too strong a migration of money into foreign countries and an attendant diminishment of real pastoral interest.

(....)

In any case, rote learning is predominant on all levels of education, in contrast to the German approach which places more emphasis on forming and shaping the intellect. State and Church stress *state exams*. Towards this end, the three-month vacation is used for summer courses to work towards degrees which [the teachers] still lack. In Washington I met several Pallottine Sisters who were taking such courses. In the summer months, school sisters often go to parishes which only have public schools in order to give religion classes. At the request of the parish priests, they make up for what they have not learned in condensed courses. *Corporal punish-*

ment is illegal everywhere. Other means are used in order to maintain a healthy discipline. Father John Haas⁷, who enjoys the reputation of being a good teacher and knowing how to keep discipline, wrote down a few things about his approach at my request. He works in Pius XI High School, which is in the parish of our Fathers and which will move into a large, new building in a few months, the largest in all of Milwaukee.

Although Father Provincial Joseph de Maria has poured a large portion of his life's energy into the project, it does not belong to the Fathers but to the parish. The memo [from Father Haas] reads as follows:

'Discipline at Pius XI High School (The following applies to most other high schools here, parochial and public):

'In a school with over 800 students (this fall we will have an enrollment of 900) aged 14-18, order and discipline are obviously of the essence. A system which we have developed and improved through the years has proven to be very effective.

'*Physical punishment* is forbidden by law in all schools from Kindergarten on up. The 'demerit system' plays an important role in keeping order and discipline. Each teacher has a tablet of pre-printed demerit slips. On them are listed every imaginable transgression of the rules: pranks, truancy, smoking within 2 blocks of school, talking in the halls and stairways before and after classes, disruptiveness, etc... The slips are filled out by the teachers and sent to the principal. Most demerits are penalized by having to stay after school—at least half an hour, or more if it is a repeat offence—or in lesser cases the students are given work to do. All those who have to sit in come together after school in one of the large classrooms where they do their homework in the presence of one of the teachers, or are put to work sweeping the classrooms and hallways. But even then the demerit is not entirely forgotten. Those with 5 or more demerits during the semester cannot be freed from doing the written

⁷ Pallottine (1914-1972), brother of Fr. Joseph Haas.

exams at the end of the semester, even when their grades have been good. Repeated demerits are also reflected in the grade for deportment. Anyone who belongs to the football, baseball, or basketball team had better watch out for demerits. One of the best players was suspended from participation in one of the deciding games against another school—even at the risk of losing the game—because he had been misbehaving in one of my classes. A very effective medicine, and not only for him but for the other players as well. (....)

‘To a newcomer from Germany, the school-age youth here may give the impression of being overly “democratic” and obsessed with its freedom. But in the given system, especially with the good rapport between parents and teachers, the whole school situation runs smoothly even with the unusually large enrollment. By and large, American boys and girls have a deep sense of justice and simply accept their punishment without letting it get between them and their teachers. In general, the student-teacher relationship is more personal than I ever experienced it in Germany.’

II, 25-38 (Orphanage Schools, Especially Boys Town)

The circumstances were such that I could visit three *orphanage-home/school complexes*: in Boys Town, Chicago, and Dubuque.

The oldest was the Angel Guardian Orphanage in Chicago. Its founder and director is Monsignor Eisenbacher⁸, a Bavarian. He himself admitted that he had brought the idea and plan from Germany, where he had an insight into many of the initiatives which had sprung up in the pre-Hitler years. It is unknown to me whether German influence can be found in [the development of] Boys Town or Dubuque, but it seems likely.

The one which is most often mentioned is ‘*Boys Town*’, an excellently developed city for boys which has achieved international

⁸ See note on p. 108.

renown in a relatively short time. It is not called an ‘orphanage school’, but I will use the term anyway because it is built and run on the same principles, even if done in grander style.

Our Fathers already drew my attention to this founding shortly after my arrival in Milwaukee. I considered *going there and studying the situation*, but my ailing purse had the final word. Boys Town is, after all, near Omaha in the state of Nebraska—a respectable distance [500 miles from Milwaukee]. For me the matter was settled. It was not long after that, however, that I received a letter from Sr. Virginia in Germany, telling me that a priest⁹ from Boys Town had been in Schoenstatt and was considering the thought of winning over our Sisters for his ‘town’.

It started this way... The founder of Boys Town was a talented and charismatic educator of Irish origin—Father Flanagan¹⁰. In 1917 he gathered wayward boys in Omaha in order to form them into useable personalities. His efforts found general approval and were highly successful. In 1921 he moved with his boys to a large property not far from Nebraska’s largest city [Omaha]. Today it bears the name ‘Boys Town’.

Boys Town is ruled by one of the boys who is elected mayor for a short term of office by the boys themselves. He is even the publicly recognized official. In line with the principle of guided leadership, his rights are within the bounds of a healthy reliance on the spiritual director, who has the support of several assistants. Of these, two that I met there had themselves gone through the facility and vouch for its orientation on proven tradition. The 425 boys and their educators are a kingdom of their own, a family in themselves. There is no lack of room. In terms of civil law they are the juridical equal of any other civic community. They consequently have an independent administration and approach to discipline. The moderate amount of self-

⁹ Fr. Leo Wolpert (1916-1981), native of Bloomfield, Nebraska, ordained for the archdiocese of Omaha in 1944, assigned to Boys Town 1944-1949.

¹⁰ Fr. Edward Joseph Flanagan (1886-1948), emigrated to the U.S. from his native Ireland in 1904.

government by the boys which is built in is said to have proven its worth. The reputation of this young foundation has spread through the whole country in a short time. A film¹¹ which depicted the place and its successes in a way that appeals to Americans had great moral and financial repercussions. Money came from every side—a situation that continues into the present.

After the war, Father Flanagan was invited to Japan to take a look at the situation there and realize his idea to the benefit of the Japanese. After his return [from Japan] he was called to Germany to the American sector of Berlin for the same reason... He went... He also intended to bring back Sisters after his native Ireland turned him down and because it was unable to provide the required number of sisters (73) all at once. In the midst of his work in Berlin he was struck down by a heart attack.

Among those accompanying him was one of his assistants, a relative of one of our Schoenstatt Sisters of Mary. Through her he found out about Schoenstatt. It is best that I now give her the word:

“Sorglos, weil treu! [carefree because loyal] Liebfrauenberg, July 4, 1948

“(....) This time we have such a fine opportunity to pass along mail to the U.S. My uncle and his son, who is also a priest, were in Germany for 4 weeks in order to look up all the relatives again. On Friday, July 9, they will travel back to America. It was a joy when he came to visit. I took my vacation right away to be entirely at his service. Leo, the priest, had other things to work on and accomplish besides visiting relatives. We hadn’t known each other before, although I had written letters to my uncle. Now that we have met, that is entirely different. He immediately inquired about our community, about its goals and responsibilities. I couldn’t tell him enough. He thought that he had once heard about Schoenstatt in the home [in Boys Town]. In any case, it was a picture of Joseph Engling that first came

¹¹ The Academy Award winning (best actor, best script) 1938 film *Boys Town*, featuring Spencer Tracy and Mickey Rooney.

into his hands. Leo works in the boys education facility in Boys Town, founded by Father Flanagan. The two priests, Father Flanagan and Leo, wanted to meet in Germany in order to look into possibilities for finding Sisters. Then the former died of a heart attack in Berlin. The two of us, my cousin and I, drove to Schoenstatt on a Friday. My uncle had caught a cold—otherwise he would have come along, too. In [House] Sonneck we were cordially received and had everything we needed. (...) We stayed in Schoenstatt until late Saturday afternoon. The stay was too short to see everything, but the houses didn’t particularly interest my guest. He was much more interested in the world of Schoenstatt and in the shrine. In House Wasserburg, Father Fischer¹² tore himself from his work to devote some time to him for an hour in both the morning and the afternoon. Father Fischer expertly explained the whole world of Schoenstatt to him in a single sweep. Leo was so open that it was a joy for Father Fischer to tell about our beautiful world. In the afternoon we also asked Father Fischer to tell something about Dachau, which he did. In the evening we drove back. Sister Dietlind in House Wildburg must have especially impressed him. She had kindly told about the economic troubles—how the Blessed Mother had punctually rewarded prayer and confidence time and time again. At the end he figured that if the Sisters’ prayers were heard so well, we should also pray that they soon find Sisters for their home in America. They could use 30-35 Sisters. We left Schoenstatt filled with gratitude and joy. Father Fischer and the American exchanged addresses so that they can stay in touch by mail. It is now the hope that Father Wolpert meets you in America so that you see his home, too, and can see if it would be

¹² Fr. Josef Fischer (1904-1978), one of the Pallottine Fathers working in Schoenstatt and one of Father Kentenich’s most important companions in Dachau. Old House Wasserburg was the center for pilgrims (between the present Haus St. Michael and Pilgrim House) near the Original Shrine in Schoenstatt. This house has since been replaced.

a place to send our Sisters. *M.h.c.*¹³

“So it is that the Blessed Mother will soon begin her march to victory in the United States.

“Father, if you have time to spare, do visit the home of my uncle in Bloomfield, Nebraska. I am so happy and cannot thank the Blessed Mother enough that my relatives in America are so open for our world. The eldest son is a doctor and leads an ideal family life. (...)

“Please greet my uncle and Leo Wolpert there. Hearty and joyful greetings via the shrine. We accompany you with our continuing prayers and sacrifices.”

I explained the situation to Father Timpe¹⁴ during my visit in Brooklyn. He immediately countered, ‘They only want German girls as service personnel. That’s all we’re good for. They want to keep the recognition for themselves...They tell you that if you accept the offer, the Sisters’ fame would be made in a single stroke, not only in all America—which comes in droves to visit—but in the whole world, and that they could count on many vocations. That’s nonsense. There are already Sisters there... Who talks about them? Who knows their name?...’

[Fr. K.:] ‘It is said that [the Sisters in Boys Town] don’t have enough vocations, are unable to satisfy the demands, and for that reason want to quit.’

[Fr. T.:] ‘There you have it... If things were as rosy and sure as they make them out it be, there wouldn’t be any reason [for the other Sisters] to quit. Many vocations would have already begun to come...’

[Fr. K.:] ‘Their answer to that is that they are Polish [Sisters].’

[Fr. T.:] ‘That may be... But in my opinion your Sisters would be wasted on such an outfit. If I understand your founding correctly, it is dedicated to apostolic, social, and educational goals and not to ‘Cinderella’ work like housekeeping and such things...’

¹³ *Mater habebit curam*, Mother takes care.

¹⁴ Pallottine Father Georg (or George) Timpe.

[Fr. K.:] ‘In a letter from Schoenstatt I was told that they would be grateful if we would help with the education of the boys. If we were interested, they would be willing to support a similar facility for girls...’

[Fr. T.:] ‘I’m not so easily convinced... It would be better if you would go to Maryknoll and give the operation there a look...’

This sober conversation had two results: It gave me the impulse to make the detour and visit Maryknoll—I will report about that later¹⁵—and to be more on my guard in evaluating Boys Town than even my usual cautiousness dictates in the face of the unknown. When, as in this case, the unknown subject is also heralded by sensational reports, then it is to be approached with a double dose of caution. At the same time, other things had to be taken care of. Boys Town faded more and more from my list of interests. Father Timpe’s remarks as well as the long distance and the burdensome journey played no small role. In addition, there was no lack of offers for our Sisters.

Weeks passed. I was in Dakota, in the vicinity of Fargo, the diocese city of Bishop Muench. It was there that I learned that Father Leo Wolpert had sent the letters which he had brought from Germany to Milwaukee, and that he urgently invited me to visit Boys Town. I called there. The interim head, Father Walsh¹⁶, came to the telephone, offered to cover the travel expenses, insisting that I stop by, regardless of whatever else I might do. Since it was essential that I know whether the Sisters would only be used for house-work, I asked about this at once and was told that it would be of the highest value for Boys Town if the Sisters would be active in the school and in education. With that much cleared up I agreed [to come]... Father Reichenberger came along on the exhausting day and night journey.

¹⁵ Fr. Kantenich did not give any further details about his visit to Maryknoll in the remainder of Part II of the *America Report*, all we know about this visit is in Part I.

¹⁶ Fr. Edmond C. Walsh (d. 1963), interim head of Boys Town from the death of Fr. Flanagan on May 15, 1948 until the appointment of Msgr. Nicholas Wegener as the permanent head on September 15, 1948.

It was good that I went. It is always valuable to gather first-hand impressions before making important decisions, in order to be able to accurately estimate the light and dark sides and to carefully weigh the advantages and disadvantages.

“I don’t have the time to go into peripheral detail. If my goal were simply a description of my travels, I could make a grand digression here and contribute a thing or two to the knowledge of the land and its inhabitants. This report only uses events and experiences as the framework, as an occasion and basis for fundamental considerations. I will therefore not go into such illustrative portrayal and detailed imagery; I will not describe the fantastic modern facilities of Boys Town’s splendid buildings—its large houses and cozy blocks, its school rooms and workshops of every kind, its dining hall, its auditorium and gymnasium—all of which give the impression that they are intended for rich men’s sons. I will pass over the exemplarily organized administration with its large number of educated employees and the unbelievable correspondence which unites this tiny spot on the map with the whole world. I will not speak about the life and pranks of the boys in class and at work, about sports and prayer, about the sick—for whom Boys Town has its own hospital—and the healthy—who apparently want for nothing. Neither will I depict the beautiful, family-style life together in the neat little blocks, which is under the care of one of the helpers who lives together with the boys... All of that is familiar to those versed in the situation of orphanage schools. One only needs to imagine everything—measured by the standards of pre-war Germany—grander, more remarkable, more comfortable. Then he has the picture in sharp focus. Only one additional thing needs to be imagined: an uninterrupted stream of visitors from the whole world which ebbs and flows as if it were a place of pilgrimage. They come: religious, priests, lay people, men and women, young and old, educated and uneducated, alone and in community. (...)

The priests took time out for us, were always available, took us everywhere, and kindly answered all our questions. One of them was suddenly approached by a simple woman who broke away from the

crowd of visitors. She inquired if he was part of the home’s staff. After hearing his yes, she presented him \$25... She explained that she wasn’t Catholic, but had made a habit of saving every penny she received for the foreign missions, and every dime for the home missions. This little episode shows how much this entire work is in the eye of the American public and where the money comes from.

“I went as often as I could to kneel at the mortal remains of the late founder, whose sarcophagus is found in the baptistry [of the Boys Town church] and which bears the following inscription¹⁷:

Father Flanagan founder of Boys Town
Lover of Christ and men
July 13 1886
May 15 1948

I asked this hard-working, devout, and extraordinarily talented educator and friend of the young to intercede for me at God’s throne for clarity in the question of whether it was in God’s plans that we serve his work, and if such were the case, to bless the Sisters who would carry on his mission here, to preserve them from danger, and to bestow on them a part of his charismatic educational skill.

He had an irresistible influence on young people. Liars broke down as soon as they stood before him, openly admitting their error. Whenever he returned from his travels, nothing could dissuade him from saying the convent Mass, regardless of how late that meant he would get to bed, and from praying the customary rosary with his boys.

The relationship to the leading persons in Boys Town was very quickly a friendly one. It was therefore not difficult to talk openly about education-related questions. The description of our educational principles found open ears.

¹⁷ The site of this important scene was the original tomb of Fr. Flanagan located in the original baptistry of the Dowd Memorial Chapel, located at the left end of the vestibule as one enters the main entrance. The tomb has since been translated to a larger “founder chapel” located at the right end of the vestibule. The first site of the tomb is presently a reconciliation room.

My misgivings concerning both the theory and practice [of education] *in Boys Town* were objectively received and just as objectively, though not entirely satisfactorily, answered.

My *first misgiving* concerned the interdenominational nature of the home. Their response underscored two things: the American situation, where things are very mixed and not predominantly Catholic, and the loss of public interest in Boys Town if it would give up its interdenominational character. In addition, at least 65% of the boys are Catholic, and among the remainder there had been 30 converts in the most recent years.

A *second misgiving* was directed at the unusually plush conditions found in every area, something entirely out of touch with the reality which the boys would later face in the world. I therefore pointed out the danger that this would breed dissatisfaction, lack of self-worth, and rebellion.

The response was the following: We consider our approach correct because we are especially concerned that the boys be freed from their personal and situational inferiority complexes... Quality equipment and treatment can engender a personal awareness of one's esteem and equality... In order to avoid the disadvantages you fear, we point out to them three months before the end of their stay what they have to expect in the world.

A *third misgiving* concerned the difficulties which a completely interdenominational lifestyle—and one that goes well beyond the classroom situation—pose for the delineation of a unified and effective community ideal.

The answer was sought and found in the idea of the Mystical Body of Christ, where every denomination can feel at home and which is a sturdy principle for education.

Later, while I heard the opinions of insiders and experts all over the land, *other misgivings* developed. Isn't the financial backing too uncertain? Not to doubt the charitable spirit of the Americans! But how long will it last without an ingenious method to keep it alive and able? And who can guarantee that such genius will be there in the long run? And how is it with the formation of the educators? Not

everyone is a born charismatic educator. It may be a consolation that the present head, Father Walsh, studied sociology and education at the university. But what about the others?

Be that as it may, *it is some comfort in any case* that the educators themselves are aware of the difficulties they face and can give solid reasons for their approach. But at the same time it does not keep me from confessing that *none of their responses fully satisfied me*. When the time comes for us to open such schools—as we had planned at one time—I want us to do it differently.

I will report on how the matter with the sisters was decided at a different point, namely when we talk about casting out Schoenstatt's nets and the catch¹⁸.

II, 38-46 (The Role of Ideals in Education)

It should be noted here that our discussion [in Boys Town] centered for quite some time around the topic of *education through ideals*. Choice and function of the community ideal urged us in that direction. It encouraged us to more closely investigate the theology and philosophy, the psychology and laws of our entire education to ideals.

I gladly concede that the idea of the mystical body of Christ can be readily made the central thought of theology and morals, of asceticism and education. Enough attempts of this kind are being made in Germany. The dissociation of religion and life, of being and acting, of knowledge and action, and the dismembering of science into specialized fields quite naturally urge toward the definition of such holistic goals. The dangers which are associated with precisely this ideal in practical application should not be overlooked, however. The extreme philosophical idealism and intellectualism of the turn of the

¹⁸ Fr. Kentenich did not return to any of these topics within the framework of the *America Report*.

century¹⁹ can easily hide behind it—even if it is ostentatiously spiritual in tone—gaining nourishment and infecting all aspects of life to the enormous detriment of both the individual and the community.

The mystical image of Christ must therefore be complemented by the historical image of Christ. In teaching, both belong together; they must therefore also form life together. That is especially true for adolescents of both sexes.

Without a doubt, *ideas* have a strong capacity to form and educate. Nietzsche points that out when he says, ‘I want to know your great idea!’²⁰. The motto ‘Ideas are realities’ goes in the same direction.

In mid-October [1948] I held a retreat in Buenos Aires for the Fathers of the Holy Family and was introduced to the life and teaching of their founder, Father Berthier, who died on October 16, 1908²¹. Those who knew him considered him a genius in education. His style made him a warm representative of education through ideals, though I would add: without defining it in a scientifically exact and carefully thought-out system of education. He used every opportunity to call on his sons to be devoted to great ideas. He was convinced:

“Souls are directed by *great ideas* which they hang onto with passionate fire, which inspire them and drive the body to action. Let us therefore nurture *great ideas, high ideas*, which stand for the final goals of love of God, his greater glory, and the salvation of souls.”

On another occasion he emphasized:

¹⁹ These currents played a large role Fr. Kentenich’s interior crisis as a seminarian. Cf. E. Monnerjahn, *Joseph Kentenich: A Life for the Church* (Cape Town, 1985), p. 33-35, and J. Niehaus, *The 31st of May* (Waukesha, 1995), p. 14-18.

²⁰ Cf. *Also Sprach Zarathustra*, Part 1, “Vom Wege des Schaffenden”, para. 9.

²¹ Fr. Jean Baptiste Berthier (1840-1908), born in Chatonnay, France. He founded the Congregation of the Holy Family in Grava, Netherlands in 1895. The cause for his beatification was opened in 1953.

“Those who want to accomplish something must have an *ideal*, an *ideal* as the orientation for everything they do. If I would not have had an ideal when I came here, I would have been discouraged by the very first blow. But the thought of forming priests kept me going. The same applies for you: Have an *ideal* and everything will become an easy task, provided that you have fought your way clear to the goals that you want to achieve.”

This admonition is found again and again in his talks and writings:

“Without an *ideal* you will never bring about anything of greatness. How will you want to elevate others to the *summit of perfection* if you yourselves remain stuck to the ground! You can lay out a route in advance, a plan which you want to follow in the future, but if you do not strive for perfection yourselves, you will always remain poor penny-changers for paradise.

“Stand fast to your superior, in case differences of opinion develop among you later on. Be one with him and you will find strength therein. My children, to be a missionary you must have a heart. Never make yourself a burden to others, for it is miserable to be a burden. Prayer that the good god will awaken in our work (of the Holy Family) *men with great ideals*.

“...I don’t think someone is a good man of the cloth if he thinks he is owed a certain vesture or house. Without an ideal you will never achieve anything great in your lives. Your ideal, however, will pull you through in difficult hours, give you new strength when you are in danger of sinking. Your every act will then be directed for a higher goal which, with God’s help, you can attain as well.”

Great ideas can only become completely effective, however, when they are *incarnated in great personalities*. They then become tangible for the senses and both attractive and accessible to all the levels of our being. At the same time, the person who is animated by an ideal seems to be enveloped by a mysterious reality and on a higher level. He is a signpost of the supernatural and background realities, of the metaphysical and divine. Personalities are most

powerfully enkindled by other personalities. They can only find the full realization of life's meaning in personal confrontation, in receptiveness and surrender to a personal *you*, in a personal and mutual giving of self and being accepted, in a covenant of love between the personal *I* and the personal *you*. (...)

The incarnation of an idea can be experienced in either a *great saint of the past* or in a *leading personality of the present*.

Either way we are dealing with an application of the law of God's government of the world, which reverently gives *secondary causes* their due and applies them using the law of organic transference and transmission²². Education and pastoral work have almost completely lost sight of this, since they are still too strongly infected by the [philosophical] idealism of the last century. Romanic thinking and feeling has largely remained untouched by this, while the Germanic soul, made receptive by the infections of Protestantism and Kantian philosophy, is interiorly so devastated and disordered that it has largely and unknowingly lost its healthy native aptitude for seeing reality and life as an organic whole. One notices this when world travels give one an opportunity to freely make some comparisons.

Berthier especially emphasized the educational importance of *saints as ideals*. He therefore never tired of pointing this out to his sons. He did this almost always in the context of speaking about the significance of great ideas:

“When one has fallen, one must ascend. Impress this deeply on yourselves and look to the *example of the saints*. In the midst of the fallen world into which they were born, they had the courage to ascend. That is what is expected of you. This was my most burning wish when I gathered you to myself. Be well aware that anyone who wishes to ascend does not keep company with those who seek to descend, with the worldly, but with those who seek the heights, with the saints... (...)”

St. Paul, in his down-to-earth way and uninfected by the “paleness of ideas,” has no qualms about going another step further. He wants to

see the great idea embodied in *living personalities*. Nor, to his uninhibited way of thinking, does it matter if in this context he must point out himself. He is not only the great teacher of the dogma of the Mystical Body of Christ, but also the eloquent proclaimer of the basic pedagogical truth which is often branded by today's educational thinking as a heresy to be avoided and a sick and distracting focus on self: “Be imitators of *me*, as I imitate *Christ*” (1 Cor 11,1). He suffers birth pangs until Christ is reborn in souls. In this manner he emphasizes two things: the great person of Christ and the way it is mirrored in a living transparency—in his own person. This is, in common words, a classical description of the law of organic transference and transmission in the context of a wondrously coherent natural and supernatural organism of attachments, one which has been breaking down in the intellectual culture of the Western World for centuries, but which most recently has begun to race with an incredible tempo toward a horrendous total disintegration.

The same thing could be said of the compact words of St. Peter: “*Ego forma gregis*”²³.

II, 46-53 (The Danger of Philosophical Idealism)

St. John Bosco's pedagogical legacy goes in the same direction²⁴. He wrote, ‘My education is a daughter of love.’ Because of that, he liked to give the following advice:

“If you want to be obeyed, see to it that you are loved... Do you want to be loved? Then you must love. And that alone is not enough. You must go one step further. You must not only love your students, but they must know it as well. And how will that happen? Ask your heart—it will know the answer.”

Failure to observe the basic function of great educator personalities has exacted a heavy toll... The dangers which attend personal attachment and interpersonal relations are momentarily avoided, but at the

²² See J. Niehaus, *The 31st of May*, p. 139, 157-167.

²³ I am the form of the flock (i.e. the example), cf. 1 Pt 5,3.

²⁴ St. John Bosco (1815-1888), Italian priest and founder of the Salesians.

price of a *cramping of the soul* and *rootlessness*, often even leading to an extensive arousal of *lowest sensuality*. There is no circle of society that cannot sing a lamentation of this kind.

In summary we draw two conclusions:

1. *The disintegration of the organism of attachments* is the festering wound, the core cause of the disease which is leading modern humanity to disaster. Even healthy organisms and life processes are in severe danger of being dragged into the terrible whirlpool by the grasping tentacles of collectivism.

2. *The meticulous observance of the organism of attachments* with its laws of organic transmission and transference is the commandment and concern of the hour, the way out of the desperate pedagogical situation of the present, and the reliable guide on the labyrinthine paths of the future.

Many educators face this task with helplessness. They have not yet sufficiently overcome the philosophical idealism and intellectualism *in their own lives*, and they orient themselves too stubbornly and exclusively *on the old shore*, on the conditions of yesterday and the day before. They do not reckon enough with the other, the *new shore* which the spiritual and intellectual currents of our times are moving toward with clear matter-of-factness and according to irresistible laws. They pay no attention to the new world order which is already discernable in its clear outline. They do not even see the dark shadows of the advance of a dehumanizing cultural uniformity and the depersonalized ‘uniformity man’. (...)

Even less is their ability to be enkindled by the features of the new image of man and community which the past October Week²⁵ showed us in greater detail. *They are incapable* of taking central ideas as coherent organic realities and separating them from their historically concrete forms of expression, so as to proclaim them in a way which is close to life and to foster the useful new organisms

²⁵ The main theme of the 1948 October Week (annual convention of the leaders of the Schoenstatt Family in Germany) was the new man in the new community.

which result—inspired by the new shore and adapted to the new world order, making them resilient and ultimately creative, thereby helping conquer the new world order for God and the Church. They do not know how to make such ideas into dominant objective and subjective idea- and value-complexes²⁶ and how to effectively overcome the illusory values which oppose us.

Since 1912 we have become increasingly at home on both shores, and constantly let ourselves be advised and taught by both. We have *developed an educational system* which tries to take both [shores] into full account and tested it in real life. The things which life and study sent our way, be it in a fragmentary or holistic encounter, can be radiantly found today *in our education to ideals, attachment, and the covenant*.

From the very beginning, this *triple star* has guided us safely and victoriously through all the storms of the times. In the future it will and must fulfill the same function—if possible, even more completely and perfectly. We have always seen and cultivated these three as a *single unity*, even if we did not always expressly name the three parts together. We can see that in the clear features and illustrative understanding of the theory of the personal ideal, together with its practical application in everyday sanctity and instrument piety, which transpose the education to ideals, attachment, and the covenant into daily life. Because the clock is racing forward and the disintegration of all life conditions is taking on fearful forms, even leading to nihilism, we would do well in the future to always see and proclaim these three stars *consciously as a unity and in their inner relatedness*. (...)

*Hengstenberg*²⁷ claims that our pedagogy of ideals is the very

²⁶ *Wertsättigung* or “value saturation” is a key to Fr. Kentenich’s pedagogy. Meant is the progression from knowing an objective truth (preferably not only as a disjointed idea but in the context of an “idea-complex”) to being in its possession as a subjective value. The educator wants to “saturate” the values associated with the objective truth by helping the pupil conquer it as meaningful. Ideally, such values grow into an organic whole—the subjective “value-complex.”

²⁷ Hans-Eduard Hengstenberg (b. 1904), German Catholic theologian. His works, including *Die Marienverehrung im Geisteskampf unserer Tage* (Marian

thing we believe we have overcome: a hidden remnant of no less than the *philosophical idealism* he feels called to speak out against. He sees it as a proclamation of arbitrarily constructed ideas going contrary to natural law, ideas which violate human nature and remove us from God's sovereign authority.

Based on what we have already said, the *answer* to this accusation is simple. Our education to ideals always includes an education to covenant and to attachments. The pedagogy of attachments moves in the framework of a universal, God-willed natural and supernatural organism which knows the meaning of higher and lower [orders], left and right. It does not only include attachments to ideas, but also to persons and places, thereby breaking the strangle-hold of ideas and preserving us from the danger of arbitrarily constructed ideas, fixed ideas, psychological compulsion, and disintegration. All of these functions are especially emphasized and reinforced through the education to a covenant, which always knows how to encounter God as a great personal "You" and which secures and intensifies the educational power of the educator as a transparency of God. (...)

In the face of the dissolution of all bonds of life, we vigorously and constantly stress the God-willed, universal organism of attachments in its totality and in all its parts. In the face of the mechanization and atomization of the human person, we call for and cultivate the personal covenant of love with God and man. In the face of the disenfranchising of the mind by irrationalism and vitalism, we stress the importance of clear thinking; in the face of the overemphasis of the material world and the influence of the masses, we do battle for the majesty and power of God and the God-filled personality.

It is only through this *future perspective* that bright light falls on the modern feeling for life. It spontaneously mirrors itself in certain

devotion in the intellectual struggle of our day) (Würzburg, 1948) helped shape Fr. Kentenich's terminology used to describe the dangers of "philosophical idealism" (Hengstenberg's word) and "mechanistic thinking" (Kentenich's word). In spite of Hengstenberg's criticism of Schoenstatt, Fr. Kentenich quoted him at a crucial point in his 1952 "Letter to Msgr. Schmitz" as quoted in J. Kentenich/J. Niehaus (ed.), *Schoenstatt's Covenant Spirituality* (Waukesha, 1992), p. 155-160.

turns of phrase which seem foreign to anyone only in touch with the old shore. It becomes clearer and clearer in this age of the atomic bomb and mass-mindedness that the most serious crisis in modern life is the horrendous fear stemming from an all-encompassing uncertainty of mind and soul and insecurity of life. It is gelling more and more into an oppressive and tormenting problem *in its own right* for education and self-education. *Specific problem and specific solution spontaneously seek out a specific way of putting itself in words, both spoken and written.*

This is how the word "*Blank Check*" found its way into our vocabulary. Through this analogy, the entire problem and its solution are accurately characterized. It associates the image: I give God a blank check and sign it. He can write whatever he wants on that check. Regardless of what happens and for the rest of my life he can do with me whatever and however he likes. The usual terminology of the past will want to say, "But that is just the act of conformity with and abandonment to God's will. Let's call the child by its proven and well-known name." *Objectively*, this response is correct. And yet, *pedagogically*, it is not quite on target. The recommended terminology of the past comes from a time which did not know the same horrific degree of insecurity concerning the future. Because of this, the terms "conformity" and "abandonment" connote much more our attitude to the suffering of the present and the past. The two expressions do not capture so immediately and tangibly the utterly difficult need of man *today*. Try it yourself. Explain the Blank Check in the context of the oppressive crises of life. One will find how "blank check" awakens much different associations and results in a different response on the level of life than the usual words.

The fact that "*Blank Check*", like *capital of grace*, is adapted from economic terms, is an appropriate application of the law of pastoral adaptation in an era when economics is so important in the life of men. It is also an appropriate application of the methods of Our Lord to the modern feeling of life. In an age when the masses are on the rise, it gives proper due to the orientation to the things of the senses and the hunger for symbolism in Christianity as a religion of

the people. It also makes it easier for the “high religionists” to come down from their intellectual heights into the wide halls of being close to life and the Christian people. In this way it also helps the spiritual unity between the elite and the masses.

One may nonetheless be *turned off by the expression and reject it*. But one should not forget that the coining of new phrases cannot be avoided today if we want to understand and be understood by the people. The cultural change has been too broad and all-encompassing for that. The so radically different feeling of life demands adequate expressions. Suggest other words, but remember that it is impossible to create them at will in some theoretical think tank. They must be the outflow of a richly flowing life if they are to really shape and form life. But once they have become part of the vocabulary of an international movement, they are practically impossible to uproot. One may banish them energetically from this or that sphere, but they will always return victoriously from exile. The more they are persecuted, the more they assert themselves. It is like people when they are made into martyrs. In the regard, life has a unique dynamic which defies mere logic. Is it not better in such cases to follow the counsel of Gamaliel (cf Acts 5,34-39)?

II, 54-60 (Defense of Total Surrender to Mary)

We give the *Blessed Mother* our Blank Check (and Inscriptio); in other words, we seal and perfect covenant of love with her and thereby give full recognition to her position in the plan of salvation as the permanent helpmate of the Lord in the entire work of redemption. *One should not say*: This contradicts the exclusive sovereignty of God’s infinite majesty. *My response is*: If total surrender means adoration, then the misgivings are justified. They may also be justified to the extent that there is no total surrender apart from God. But if total surrender is given to a creature, as it is here to the Queen of heaven and earth, and if it is cleanly done in keeping with the law of organic transference and transmission, then it undoubtedly corresponds to the salvific will of God and is perfectly correct. Healthy

Catholic common sense, finely developed instinct, and organic holistic thinking do not protest in the slightest. Quite the contrary! It feels quite at home in this world.

From here we see bright light cast on *Catholic obedience* which can never be understood without such laws [of organic transference and transmission].

From here, too, we *give proper weight and measure to apologetic attitudes*. In all who have ears to hear and eyes to see, the last remnants of overly apologetic thinking and speaking are overcome. In their fearful reserve they are as careful in Catholic circles as if they were constantly besieged by heretics and pagans. Through their splitting of hairs and fighting over trivial differences in wording they stifle every spontaneous expression of Catholic life, preventing it from reaching full maturity. And all of this in times when life is doing battle with life with all its might. If one would compare this with the words and life of the ancient fathers of the Church or of other Catholic peoples, two images would immediately come to mind—on the one hand a desert with dry and withered vines, on the other hand a luxuriant meadow with blossoming flowers and trees laden with fruit. In all of this our goal is not just that our peoples survive the modern vitalistic currents, but that they absorb these currents and lead them upward. We should not forget: Life can only be mastered and elevated by life.

And finally, what have we achieved through the apologetic hair-splitting of the last decades? Is not today’s best apologetic a prospering, blossoming, fresh Catholic life which develops its own dynamic and becomes capable of absorbing all other healthy currents to its left and right?

At the center of this Catholic lifestream is the total surrender to Mary. That is simply self-understood to the thinking and feeling of any warm-blooded Catholic. If it needs any confirmation and encouragement, it is abundantly evident in the teaching and lives of the saints and the writings of the most recent popes, in the observance of practical everyday life and in the beatification of Grignon de

Montfort²⁸. Through the latter, the teaching of this great missionary of Marian devotion, culminating in total surrender, can be seen as in keeping with the spirit of the Church.

Anyone who rejects perfect surrender to Mary is presuming to correct the salvific plans of God. He deprives the Marian-consecration current inaugurated by Pius XII of a significant portion of its mission and strength, obstructs Our Lady in the unfolding of her full fruitfulness, and robs his people of a proven means of overcoming religious and moral decay and climbing from night and darkness to light, from decline and disaster to the heights, from degeneration to reconquest of its historical mission for the peace of Europe and the entire world²⁹.

(...)

It is characteristic of our source of knowledge and way of thinking that the Pre-founding Document proclaims—through the conditions of the times—God’s message of the importance of pronounced personalities and firm character, along with the task and mission of the [Schoenstatt] family in this regard. The whole text is so clear that no doubt can be possible. Today, 36 years later, we understand many sentences better than in 1912. They sound as if they were written just today. Let me include a few samples:

“One does not need much knowledge of the world to realize that *our time*, with all its discoveries, cannot remove *our inner emptiness*...”

“...Or has not our time rather become a slave to its achievements? It has indeed. Our command of the gifts and powers of nature around us has not gone hand in hand with the subjection of the elemental and animal forces in our own human breast. The powerful discord, this immeasurable cleft, is becoming ever greater and wider—and in that state we will stand before the specter of social justice, before societal bankruptcy, unless we

²⁸ St. Louis Grignion de Montfort was beatified by Pope Pius XII in 1947.

²⁹ Fr. Kentenich seems to be speaking here primarily to the opponents of Marian devotion in Germany.

invest all our strength in initiating a change soon. Instead of becoming masters of our achievements, we are becoming their slaves; we are becoming slaves, too, of our own passions. Either—or! Either forwards or backwards! Well, then backwards!

“So, let us return to the Middle Ages, tear up the railroad tracks, cut the telegraph lines, leave electricity to the clouds, return the coal to the earth, and close the universities!

“No, never. We do not want that, we may not and cannot do that.

“Then forwards! Yes, on with the exploration and subjection of our inner world through dedicated self-education. The greater the exterior progress, the greater the deepening of our inner life. That is the call, the slogan which will be transmitted everywhere, not only in the Catholic, but also in the enemy camp...”

“In the future we can no longer allow ourselves *to be ruled* by our knowledge but must rule our knowledge. It can no longer happen that we know foreign languages with the proficiency expected in class but remain purest midgets in the knowledge, the understanding of the language of our hearts. The deeper our insight into *the mysteries of nature*, the more we have to be able to stand up to the demonic powers within ourselves...”

“...*Our progress in knowledge must be matched by our progress in spiritual growth*, our spiritual development. Otherwise an immense emptiness will exist in our soul, a mighty cleft which will make us deeply unhappy. Therefore, self-education!³⁰” (...)

A few months later we found a word for the caricature which we wanted to overcome with our “personalism”—it was the “mass man.” Ever since, the word and its meaning have given us no rest. The definition we used back then was quite primitive, but understandable.

³⁰ *Schoenstatt—The Founding Documents* (Waukesha, 1993), p. 16-19, emphasis according to the *America Report*.

We could repeat it in unison and see it in our dreams; that is how deep it went in: The mass man is someone who does what others do because others are doing it.

The *Founding Document* changes nothing of this goal. It only tries, through an original covenant of love, to win over the Blessed Mother as the Great Educator for the great work of personality formation. Read some of the text. Our Lady says:

“Do not think that in times like these, when momentous decisions are being made, that it is something extraordinary to increase your striving beyond that of previous generations, indeed to the highest degree. According to the plan of Divine Providence, this World War with its mighty incentives is meant to be an extraordinary help for you in the work of your self-sanctification. This sanctification I demand of you. It is the armor that you shall put on, the sword with which you shall do battle for your desires. Diligently bring me contributions to the capital of grace. By fulfilling your duties faithfully and conscientiously and through an ardent life of prayer, earn many merits and place them at my disposal. Then it will please me to dwell in your midst and dispense gifts and graces in abundance. Then from here I will draw youthful hearts to myself, and I will educate them to become useful instruments in my hand...”³¹

(...)

II, 61-77 (The Mass Man)

In 1932, Lippert³² pointed out *to the public* the coming radical realignment of all aspects of life. He wrote:

“A new world seems to be rising with incomprehensible, violent changes and terrible hardships. The new reality that arises red and bloody and monstrous in the morning sky of world history is the collectivistic man.”

³¹ Ibid, p. 34 (No. 11, Ending C).

³² Fr. Peter Lippert, SJ (1879-1936), German theologian.

When these lines appeared in the press, we had already recognized the situation for years, and were working to overcome it.

The terminology of 1912³³ gradually broadened in all directions, but the central thought remained the same. It will one day be the task of a comprehensive history of our [Schoenstatt] family to examine the details. Such a history must consider two things: the unbending consistency and loyalty of the family to its original idea, and its remarkable divine guidance through the currents of our time. Here I will only briefly touch on two lines of thought. The first points out the mass-man who radically and absolutely rejects from within all God-willed attachments (to God, man, soil, and idea), and his opposite: the enthusiastic community man who accepts from within all God-willed attachments. With that, the foundations of our universal organism of attachments are laid bare and come into our full, waking awareness. The other line points out the dedivinized, depersonalized, de-moralized, de-souled, and divided man that cries out for the through and through divinized, moralized, animated, and integrated man. (...)

This complete ‘running on empty’ affects the *whole* person: mind, will, and heart. Because the faculties of the soul no longer find their proper object, the soul can be compared to a machine which is totally running on empty. The mind is deprived of truth, the will is deprived of the good, the heart is deprived of persons whom it can love. It almost seems to us as if we could feel the cancer spreading in all parts of the human person. As a result, the soul lacks roots, life, fullness, depth, tenderness, and richness. It is completely at the mercy of every outward influence, be it the pressure of a dictator, the suggestion of the masses, or the allure of the senses and the drives.

If the *mind* is capable of thinking at all, it is *disjointed, devoid of context, dot-to-dot*. (...)

The same is true of the *will*. It is unable to do anything with the

³³ Fr. Kentenich first addressed the problem of the “mass man” while spiritual director in Schoenstatt—in the “fourth talk on the microcosm”, November or early December 1912.

royal gift of freedom and its dimensions of making decisions and carrying them out. (...)

The *poor heart* experiences the same ‘running on empty.’ The heart is in need of a personal You, personal nearness and attachment, personal acceptance received and given. Collectivistic man may always be moving in the masses and be driven by it, but his heart is completely empty and numb, for he has not allowed a personal You into his heart nor has he found access to the heart of a personal You. There is no creature on this world which feels as lonely and alone as he does. I do not know who I should compare him to. A hermit? He is only outwardly alone; interiorly he knows of the alluring mystery of two-in-oneness with God. A door-to-door salesman? It may be that he is turned away from door after door. But here and there at least he finds someone who shows him some heartfelt kindness, who returns his friendly greeting and is interested in what he is doing. A prisoner in a lonely cell? He at least carries something of a world inside of himself and has joy in meeting the few creatures he meets, even if it is only insects and bugs. At least the urge for freedom is still alive in his heart. All of that is unknown to the collectivistic man. This is why he is constantly fleeing from self, from his aloneness, into work and the masses, to films, clubs, theater. This is why his entire personality is rapidly on the decline. Mass society sweeps away the core of his personality. (...)

His mass-minded, running-on-empty, dried-out, withered-up heart is scarcely capable of any personal emotion any more, not even hatred. Acts of hatred which are ordered from on high cannot necessarily be viewed as personal acts. The exceptions are fear and greed. The collective and its dictator know how to cleverly manipulate this psychosis of fear, so as to keep the human “pieces of the machine” constantly in motion. It even knows how to keep the “pieces” in a good mood. That is why it makes sure there is work and food. (...)

Have I painted too dismal a picture? I would be happy if someone could point out a discoloration, simply for the sake of the dignity of our poor humanity. I also know that not every feature will

be found to the same degree at all times in each person. That is not what I am trying to say. The aim here, as in any typology, is simply to make plain to what end all the collectivistic currents are racing. Along the way, of course, there are an enormous number of routes and modes and variations.

In any case, the Good Samaritan must first be familiar with the wounds of the robbers’ victim before he can pour oil and wine into them (cf Lk 10,29-34). Whoever wants to remake room for God in the souls, whoever has the task of helping Our Lady give birth to Christ in today’s constellation, may and must know the details of how things look, so that his pastoral zeal does not go limp, his spirit of sacrifice does not die out, and his trust in the power of God always strives for the highest. Where is the educator—even the most brilliant—who can hope to transform the described ruins of human nature into a masterpiece, a new image of man and community! Only the Blessed Mother can do that, the great educator of the nations. We have experienced the greatness of her educative power countless times in the past years. The history of our family is filled with men and women who have remained ‘personalists’ to the very core in impersonal times. I think of our deceased, those who died in battle, those who were murdered. (...)

We can say in summation: this short excursion through the forest of modern pedagogy convinces us that our view is very universal, avoids exaggerations, is built in all cases on final principles, and therefore cautiously brings together the old and the new.

II, 77-80 (Return to the Discussion of the Orphanage Schools)

It was not easy to discuss such difficult problems in Boys Town in a foreign language... The difficulties grew since we were discussing not only individual education, but also and especially community education with its peculiarities. (...)

With Father Walsh I was only able to handle one or the other point in general terms. The difficult problem of modern religious formation—both on the individual level and in community—is not everyone’s cup of tea.

The second orphanage-home/school that I visited was the *Angel Guardian Orphanage in Chicago*³⁴. As a German foundation, it was planned for German children—for boys and girls in separate wings. The house is run by the ‘Dernbach Sisters,’ who moan and groan because of too much work and the lack of personnel. The buildings are large and roomy. Pictures of the ten priests that have come from the orphanage are found hanging in the halls. Girls live here until age 18, boys until 21. The family blocks are solid but not furnished beyond the normal mean. In each is a sister who lives with her charges the entire day except for the meals, when someone else takes over. All are together in the dining room, but with boys and girls separated. The principle of living as a family is carried out here, too. Each block has its own table. Everything is done in good taste, but also simply, as befits the principle, ‘Nobility of furnishings and surroundings awakens nobility of the soul.’ The children help themselves, even if that means the danger of having many scraps leftover. In this way the children learn how to use things, how to respect them and to let themselves be formed by them. After all, the same attitudes will have to have a place in their own lives later, especially when they marry. The inspiring tour gave me cause to ask myself: Are we, who call ourselves a movement of education and educators, already capable of running a boarding school in such a family-like manner? It is already time that we, quite aside from the many spheres of work which we have taken over, more strongly specialize and strive to do quality work in every field, especially the field of education. (....)

A third tour [of an orphanage] took me to Dubuque (in the state of Iowa). The outer construction of the [new] boarding school there, which is being built by the *Caritasverband* [Catholic charities], is not yet complete. It will only retain children until the age of 12. That plays a significant role in the form of the construction. It is oriented

³⁴ 2001 Devon Avenue, Chicago. Founded by Bavarian born Fr. George Eisenbacher (1875-1950) and staffed in 1948 by about 60 Sisters of the Poor Handmaids of Jesus Christ (“Dernbach Sisters”). At the time of Fr. Kentenich’s visit, it housed about 400 boys and 300 girls.

on the general principles of orphanage-school complexes.

At one point the archbishop there [Archbishop Rohlman] told me that he allows—in contrast to the usual American custom—his seminarians to study at the large Loras College and hear philosophy classes with the lay students. He has also permitted women religious to study there. This moderate amount of coeducation had been there when he became bishop and he retained it. It is supposed to have proven its worth. His diocese is said to have the lowest rate of priests who have left the priesthood.

(....)

II, 80-83 (Final Thoughts on Vocations)

3. With that, the *question of vocations*, which was the starting point of our deliberations and which has accompanied us the whole time, is *practically clarified and solved in our spirit*. We can expect vocations in America to the extent that we do *useful educational work*. The prospects will be brighter if we can prove that we are especially competent in this field. Thus a good deal will depend on our efforts to entirely be what we are meant to be: *a pronounced movement of educators and education*.

We live in God’s plans as an apostolic community of action and education. We must therefore strive to integrate both as perfectly as possible in the course of our development. (....)

The circumstances, in accordance with God’s will, have caused us to see our educational character as being in the forefront. It will probably remain there for quite some time, in part because of humanity’s deep crisis today and in part because the image of man and community which we have a part in forming is so new, so different, and so lofty that it will require all our energy and attention for decades to come. That applies for all our institutes, but in particular for those groups who are directly and professionally responsible for the administration of schools. This is a responsibility which our Sisters will have as soon as they establish themselves in the United States. There we will have to specialize from the outset, adapting to

the needs there and giving due weight to the wishes of the episcopate. We may even expect a special benevolence, since in every detail our methods and goals give a unique answer to the wishes and expectations of the American soul. I will expound on that more fully later, when I consider the question of chosen affinities.

It is therefore time that we deepen our consciousness more than ever that we are a pronounced community of educators and education and that this requires that we serve the Church in this field with particular excellence. A historical resume of our development will remind us of the fact that the entire family owes its existence and success to God's call (through the superiors and the circumstances of our times) to educate. [It reminds us] that Schoenstatt, as described above, has created a unique system of education and pastoral care and has continuously oriented itself by it. [It also reminds us] that Schoenstatt's main contributions have, up to this point, been primarily in the field of education. That is not to say, however, that we have already attained the ultimate heights. Quite the contrary! I think I can prove that in most things we have only gone half-way. The difficulties which the times have placed on us and the burden of too much work may be at fault for the fact that we—although we have a clear model—have too few really talented and professionally trained and proven men and women in the educational field who can reconquer the family's public reputation as a movement of educational and pastoral care which is especially blessed by God.

The questions concerning vocations are not only questions of education, but also questions of style and affinity. Here, too, we have things to offer which could make our work in the United States especially attractive. But before that [can happen] we need to have our lifestyle clear for ourselves so that we can form it in the most perfect way possible, and by way of the fundamental relationships of our character [form] the structure of the American soul³⁵.

³⁵ End of the Second Part. Fr. Kentenich planned a third part, but it was never written.

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