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JOSEF HROMADKA AND THE WITNESS OF THE CHURCH
IN EAST AND WEST TODAY

by Charles West

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Let me begin with a statement that sounds standard but is overwhelmingly true: in the year 1989 we stand on the threshold of a new era in the relation of the world's peoples to each other. A new drama, long in preparation, is beginning. The remarkable changes in the Soviet Union under the leadership of Mikhail Gorbachev have raised the curtain on it, and we find ourselves in a new history of forces and ideas. Let me illustrate:

a. The political power balance by which we have measured everything since World War II is softening and breaking up. More than that, a new conception of the relation of power to national interest is emerging. Stockpiles of strategic weapons are still there. Military minds in the United States and the Soviet Union continue to press the logic of deterrence and security. But diplomatic initiative lies elsewhere, in radical proposals for disarmament, in a shift of emphasis from defense to industrial technology and trade, and in discreet cooperation, coping with the trouble spots of the world.

b. The ideological front is breaking up, despite the protests of hardline Marxists-Leninists on the one side and free enterprise dogmatists on the other. Marxism is open to reinterpretation and criticism in its central tenets. Socialism is being redefined. Class solidarity and revolutionary power are being called into question. All this leaves us and the rest of the world scrambling for new concepts and movements with which to deal with greedy and oppressive powers, and express human hopes for a more just and free society.

c. Economic forces at work in this world are out of control. No agency -- national or international -- is able to call them to account. No world planning can give them effective direction, and only the blindest dogmatists believe that world market forces will solve the problems they create. Bureaucracies are ineffective, even when backed by state power, as the breakdown of socialist economies in Eastern Europe demonstrates. But they are equally ineffective when composed of international bankers, business executives, or U.N. officials.
Meanwhile, the world debt crisis threatens catastrophe unless it is controlled. The gap between the world's rich and the world's poor grows greater, and transnational corporate entities concerned primarily with feeding themselves roam the earth like dinosaurs.

d. Our technological exploitation of God's non-human creation is out of control. In a few cases such as the international treaty limiting fluorocarbon emissions to protect the earth's ozone layer, an extreme and obvious danger has produced universal agreement. But the world's rainforests are still being destroyed. The oceans are still being overfished. Long-term changes in climate are still being produced by atmospheric pollution. We have not solved problems of toxic waste disposal. One could go on. Socialist and capitalist societies have wrestled with these problems and none has as yet controlled them. Marxists, process philosophers, technocrats and environmental idealists as well as Christian theologians, have tried to project a guiding concept of human life in balance with nature, but none has yet captured the allegiance of technological power or human ambition.

e. Meanwhile in the absence of unifying ecumenical visions of world peace and justice, plural loyalties are knitting human community together around alternative centers, and are tearing it apart. This tendency has its creative and its destructive side. Culture, community, and sense of mutual responsibility for the common good are rooted in nations with their common language, their kinships, and their sense of solidarity. Yet racism, xenophobia, imperial domination, and violent conflict are as well. What is a nation? What are its rights? And how are they related to world justice and peace? In a time when the solidarity of the oppressed poor in struggle for world liberation has proved to be a myth and when the promise of universal prosperity through the operations of a world free market system has also betrayed us, we need new visions of community, both national and ecumenical.

We are on the threshold of an era with tremendous possibilities. It is no less than earlier a time of crisis. The historical forces at work here, though otherwise deployed, are rooted in the long history of the last two centuries. We are confronted in them today, as before, with the question of the judgment and grace of God at work in human events and the calling of the church to be God's servant and witness in their midst. This is why a dialogue with Josef Hromadka can be so helpful to us.

Why Hromadka? I think for three reasons.

First, he was a leader in whom the East and the West combined. With Slavic sympathy, he experienced the drama of Russian history as his own. He probed the depths of human nature and Russian culture with Dostoevsky. He experienced the Russian Revolution as an event in the life of his world. At the same time, he was a man of Western culture, a Protestant in the tradition of the Czech Reformation, trained in Vienna, Basel, Heidelberg and Aberdeen, steeped in the spirit of free critical inquiry, political democracy, and personal response to the word of God in the church. His mind is not a fascinating alien world to
explore, as is that of Nicholas Berdyaev for example. Nor is he part of a Western world caught behind the Iron Curtain, as are many of the articulate creative theologians of the Evangelical Church in East Germany. In Hromadka, we find a man of two worlds, united in one spirit.

Second, Hromadka’s theological task is also ours: to place the history of the world in the context of the word and act of God made known in the biblical story and in the life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. He was a servant of the living God, a witness to the reality of God’s kingdom, in his situation as we are called to be in ours. Our lives are in the same context of reality known by faith. It is our worlds that differ somewhat. We can learn from him, therefore, in a special way, different from the way we learn from our Western theologians, how to hear the word of God, how to live with Christ, how to be the church, and how to hope for the world.

Third, Hromadka has posed more sharply than any other theologian I know the question of the meaning of secular historical events in the context of the providence and the promise of God. We may or may not agree with his historical perceptions. I for one have taken sharp issue with him at times. But in all his thought and action, he was a Christian witness. Never were the judgment and grace of God absent from the events and powers of human history; never was the saving promise of God absorbed into these events. We need to learn this art from him today and practice it ourselves.

A few words more about each of these need to be added.

1. The Crisis in East and West

Josef Hromadka was a man in whom two worlds combined. It would be more accurate to say that he was a central European who allowed all the social and cultural forces, all the historical catastrophes of his world to work within his soul. The result was a sense of reality expressed so well in the title of his first English book *Doom and Resurrection*. It was a reality he experienced in many ways. As a Czech Protestant in the Hussite tradition, he belonged to a church that had been crushed in the 17th century, lived in persecution, flourished again in modern Europe until the new suppression under communist rule. In what reality does such a church live, hope and bear its witness? He was also a child of the old Austro-Hungarian Empire. In his autobiography he bears eloquent witness to the spiritual-psychological community which the peoples of that Empire had shared for centuries. The Empire fell and in its place the Czechoslovakian nation arose with its own spirit and its liberal democratic institutions, led and inspired by the philosophy of its president Thomas Masaryk. This nation was crushed by Hitler, betrayed by the Western powers and when it rose again, was caught in a Communist revolution. How does one make spiritual sense of such a history and how does one live responsibly and with hope in such a world?
Hromadka's response was to draw on a sense of the human drama which was profoundly Russian. Nicholas Berdyaev describes it as "maximalism," a perception of the total demand of holiness on human life and society, an impatience with skeptical criticism, relative analyses of better or worse, and the calculated contracts of bourgeois liberal society. The obverse of this spirit is a profound sense of the demonic at work in human nature, in culture, and in politics, and of the catastrophe to which it leads. Hromadka's mentor was Dostoevsky, an intensely personal prober of the depths of human depravity, in a world without reference to eternal truth and love, and of the witness of the suffering Christ therein. Like Berdyaev, Hromadka discerned in this the pattern and fate of a whole culture, expressed finally in the victory of the Bolshevik revolution. Unlike Berdyaev, he found the same pattern in the world west of the Pripet Marshes. His appreciation of Thomas Masaryk's understanding of the crisis of Western society as reflected in the history of Russia, and his final rejection of Masaryk's idealistic humanist religion and democratic politics, illustrate this. So does his affirmation of the early Karl Barth's theology of crisis. The message from all of them is the same. In Hromadka's own eloquent words:

The crisis of our civilization is deep, deeper than any of us are prepared to admit. The civilization as it existed prior to 1914, and, in a way, until 1930, is gone. The cathedral of common norms and ideas, standards and hopes, disintegrated from within. The present world war manifests in an unparalleled way the destruction of the (certainly imperfect yet real) unity on which the community of the civilized nations had rested...We are living on the ruins of the old world both morally and politically. Unless we understand this state of affairs, we cannot help groping and stumbling at noonday as in the night. All is literally at stake. No one single norm and element of our civilization can possibly be taken for granted.¹

The old order is gone, destroyed by its inner moral decay and by human depravity. The bourgeois liberal order of the West is weak, self-centered and self-indulgent, without the discipline of relation to a single ultimate truth, to a united spirit, and unable to call forth the sacrifice necessary to build a new society. The Communist revolution in the Soviet Union is spreading not only in Europe but throughout the Third World driven by its humanist self-confidence, the devotion of its believers, and the power of masses of poor downtrodden humanity. Through all of this and behind it, the God of judgment and mercy, the crucified and risen Lord is at work. Before this Lord no halfway measures will work. In his words: "Once the walls between the 20th century and the days of the prophets and the apostles became transparent, once the distinction between yesterday (Abraham, the prophets, Jesus Christ) and today became impossible, the theologians of crisis grasped the awful "no" between God and man, were crushed by the burden of human helplessness, and only then,

¹Doom and Resurrection, 1945, pp. 118-119.
in the hell of mortal fear and nakedness, on the deathline of human existence, they were overwhelmed by the divine "yes."

Is the historical crisis this ultimate? Should Dostoevsky and the Russian revolution be our guides in understanding it? Has Barth's theology of crisis been drawn here into a basically Russian Orthodox apocalypticism which is contrary to its true message? Does the total surrender of the sinful self to God in faith imply the total surrender of a sinful society to the new forces of history?

All these are questions one might ask Hromadka. One can only do so honestly, however, when one has heard the challenge of his prophecy, a society does not save itself by defending itself and exalting its own fallible relative righteousness but only by repentant openness to the transforming judgment of God on every aspect of its life.

2. The Faith of the Church

Josef Hromadka was an evangelical theologian. There is a tension in his thought, I believe, between the sense of total crisis which we have just examined, and the evangelical theology, rooted in Jan Hus and the other reformers, of which he is one of the greatest 20th century expounders. To this four points should be made.

First, in his theology of crisis the tension come closest to being resolved. Hromadka, like Barth, clarified his awareness of the living word of God by struggling with the liberal religious thought -- in his case that of Troeltsch -- of his time. Barth, like Hromadka, was driven by the deepening social crisis of his time -- in his case the failure of socialism and Christianity alike to transcend nationalisms of the first world war -- to ask with final seriousness the question of a truth which speaks to human beings from beyond themselves. "What is going on at the precise point where the personal, vertical challenge of the living God cuts across the very existence of our personal life?" asks Hromadka interpreting Barth. "What does it mean that God, the God, and not our idea of the Prime Cause, not our idea of the Holy, not our better self, nor the Spirit of Nature, nor the Harmonizer of the Universe, encounters us and demands a personal inescapable life and death decision? A decision Hic et nunc at the present moment, a decision that cannot be shirked or delayed and postponed? These are the central questions of theology."2 "Just as the word of God is an event," he wrote elsewhere, "so also theology as an action of thought, is an action of decision, extending hands, receiving gifts of grace and marching to the point of final destination."3 It is the word of the living God which calls us to listen, to obey. In this revelation knowledge begins.

2Ibid., pp. 91-92.

3Theology Between Yesterday and Tomorrow, pp. 25-26.
In this reality, we live by faith and from it we understand our world. For Hromadka, like Barth, God's living word destroys every other basis of human self-justification in culture, in religion, in ideology, or in political systems. We live by grace alone.

Second, this gracious word of God is not only over us but with us in Jesus Christ. "In Jesus of Nazareth, God himself has done and does now his work of salvation." He is the reality of our human life. He conquers the powers of darkness in the world including our own sin and therefore sets us free.

He is the final authority before whom each of us must answer for our deeds. He, the lowly, the scorned, the rejected and the damned one, has gone through death to life, through hell into the glory of God to prove that nothing was hidden from him, that he knows the human way from cradle to grave, from paradise to hell, that he knows what hunger, thirst, sin, guilt, disability and powerlessness are... The whole ladder of physical suffering, social injustice, moral corruption, and the violence of the powerful, was known to him... He knew the breadth of human life in its glory and its shame not only as an acute observer. He knows it as one who was fully part of human life, as one who took personal responsibility for it all. His glory did not begin with his resurrection and ascension. His glory, his power, his victory are clear to the eye of faith precisely in the places and moments of darkness, disability, curse and death.

Third, the church of Jesus Christ is rooted in history, but it is the biblical history of the covenant calling of God and of the life, death and resurrection of Christ, not the history of worldly power, national aspirations, or even revolutionary movements. "The church is not at home under any political regime, nor under any social and economic order." It lives in the world as the gathered community of those who are free to be for the world in Christ because they do not depend on human powers or worldly goods. "The church as the community of pilgrims has to be always on the way, resisting any danger of petrification and institutionalism." In its freedom from the world, it is the servant of the world, as it shares the servanthood of Christ to all who are in need while it points the world beyond itself to the justice and mercy of God. The church participates in the struggles of the world for freedom and justice, behind and in which God is also at work, but always with a message of critical prophecy and redemptive servanthood.

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4 *Das Evangelium auf dem Wege zum Menschen*, p. 132.

5 Ibid., p. 179.


7 *Theology Between Yesterday and Tomorrow*, p. 44.
Fourth, the church lives in expectation of the coming of Christ into his kingdom and therefore infects the world with an everlasting hope, always relevant to but never exhausted by human achievements. The promise of God works in the midst of historical events judging, redeeming, and transforming them. The kingdom of God transcends human achievements and infuses the world with hope despite the betrayal of its secular visions. Christians hope for the movements and peoples of the world more than they can hope for themselves, by relating them both to the judgment and to the saving grace of the triune God.

All of this is standard evangelical theology in the Reformation tradition. For Hromadka, however, it had a special meaning. It was gospel for human beings like himself and his compatriates, caught up in the despairs and the utopian visions, the sufferings and the coercive powers, which multiplied in the upheavals of his world. It meant distinguishing month by month and year by year between a human word -- even a religious word -- of compromise with the power of the state or of comfort for sullen opposition and withdrawal, and the word of God. It meant discovering new forms of servanthood and sacrifice in a society where bearing the name Christian was already a stigma. It meant practicing in the church both transcendence and involvement under a government which welcomed only an irrelevant form of one and a conformist form of the other. It meant counselling and inspiring with hope people caught in two forms of despair: some over the loss of the humane culture they once treasured, others over the betrayal of the revolution by its leaders. We have a great deal to learn from all of these experiences for our own Christian witness.

3. History, Judgment and Promise

"Looking history in the face", or being "confronted with raw history" were among Hromadka's favorite expressions. It was clear that for him the Bolshevik revolution in Russia was the first and remained the paradigmatic expression of this history. Looking back in old age on his reaction to that revolution in 1918, he put it this way:

Beneath all the horrors, cruelties and brutalities of the revolution and the onset of the civil war, I heard an ominous but clear cry that the division of the world into central European theocratic empires and Western liberal democracies was not the last word. There is a far deeper, an abysmal division between poor and rich, between those who have economic and financial power in their hands and those who have only empty hands or educated heads. This division pervades the whole world, characterizing both victors and vanquished. That which we call the class struggle is not just a propaganda slogan or a cheap call to action. It embraces the most serious of human problems: the
fight against poverty and hunger, against the humiliation and exploitation of men and nations.

There was no doubt in his mind that Soviet Communism with its outreach in Communist parties throughout the world was the vehicle of this struggle. "Communism is not only a doctrine, a theory or a political conviction," he wrote in 1945 to his own Czechoslovak people.

The Communism that we are speaking about today is a revolutionary historical phenomenon and a complicated trend in social life. Communism means the Soviet revolution and Soviet Russia. Communism means the workers' movement based on the Marxist program. Communism means a particular philosophy, Marxism, scientific socialism and dialectical materialism. Communism also means the Communist political parties in Russia, China, in our country and in many others. Communism is also the dynamic which is so hard to define in contemporary history, something that is in the air, something which -- in human terms -- feels like an uncontrollable striving to prevent the broken world from being built up on personal advantages, interests, profits and privileges, but rather on social equality, security and the collective cooperation of the masses of the people. Communism means the partly obscure, partly clear awareness that the countries and nations which bore the responsibility for the leadership and organization of the world order until 1938 are neither morally nor politically able to master the enormous international tasks after the war.

Marxist-Leninist Communism was, for Hromadka, not primarily an ideology but a historical movement carried by disciplined, dedicated believers, with a systematic well-balanced philosophy guiding its policies, empowered by the will and the hope of masses of people "for a social system in which all class differences would fade away, the demonic, tyrannical power of money and private property would be crushed, and all men and women would be united on the same ground of human dignity, freedom and love." This evaluation defined the context of his ministry and determined his analysis of events, in Czechoslovakia and Eastern Europe, in the East/West conflict and tension, and in the radical social and political upheavals in Africa and Asia, right up to the Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia on August 21, 1968. He understood the "socialism with a human face" of the Dubcek government during the 1968 Prague spring to be a natural development from

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8 The Impact of History on Theology, p. 28.

9 Looking History in the Face, pp. 31–32.

10 Amsterdam IV, p. 129.
necessary coercion and control to more participation and freedom, as the members of society became more mature.

After August 21 there was of course a change. Hromadka saw it as a tragic failure by the Soviet Union and other countries of Eastern Europe, to understand and trust this natural development. "What it concerns," he wrote to the working committee of the Christian Peace Conference in October, 1968, "is the question whether socialism is able to develop creatively and whether it will influence the world community, especially the young and the youngest generation by convincing ideas, moral frankness and political wisdom." As he saw it in retrospect, sterile Marxist dogmatism, administrative pressures, and pure power politics were stifling the creativity of the movement. "New socialist orders were created, the socialist house was built. However...we were not able to inhabit it by the socialist man." The struggle as he saw it at the end of his life would be for a democratic socialism. "For us there is no way back to bourgeois society. Our state will remain socialist in the full meaning of that word. But we desire to fill it with all the great spiritual and cultural values of freedom, equality and true humanism. This is what we are determined to do, ready for sacrifice and, if necessary, for suffering."

What in Hromadka's view is the Christian witness in the midst of this history? It takes for him three forms.

First, repentance. The church can bear no credible witness in a Marxist-Leninist society that does not begin by recognizing its failure to perceive and struggle for true humanity, its practical godlessness often proclaimed in the name of God, its identification with the privileged groups in a morally exhausted and divided old society. All of this is set forth eloquently in the opening pages of his tract Gospel for Atheists. The Christian does not draw battle lines, even rhetorical ones, against the atheist, but with him or her hears the word of the living God, shares the service and solidarity of Christ, in the midst of human need and struggle.

Second, a search with the Marxists for an answer to the basic question, what is human and how is humanity to be served and realized? Marxists are radical humanists; one must credit them with deep and real concern for true humanity. "We have no interest in having the Communist give up his goals and plans or his view of the new society. On the contrary, we wish that he may deepen his knowledge of the laws of nature and society and seek appropriate ways to liberate humanity and build relationships without class and race differences in which self interests will no longer have a place but will be replaced by true solidarity among human beings."11 Communism is, in a way, an outgrowth of Christianity.

"With its philosophical and practical work and its all-embracing dynamics [it] is inconceivable in countries which have not heard the gospel of a sovereign God who comes down to the dark vale of human life, or which have no conception of the stormy desire of human beings that the external, social, economic and political structures themselves should reflect something of God's gracious justice."\(^{12}\) In their common concern for humanity, Christian and Marxist meet each other with the question how this humanity is to be understood and served, each learning from the faith and dedication of the other.

Third, in this context, Christian witness to the Marxist occurs. There is also a call to repentance for the Communist. Beware of new wrongs, "because the wrath of the Holy Lord will also fall on you and your children if you trample wantonly and willfully on the eternally valid laws of justice and truth. Do not boast so much about your victory. Do not consider yourself greater than this: that you are the servants of the people. And above all, do not imagine that your revolution is the final stage in human history. The Lord of Hosts is also Lord over Communism and is already preparing new expressions of life, of society so that they can go far beyond even the best that Communism has to offer."\(^{13}\)

This is the crux of Hromadka's transcendence of Communist-dominated history. Marxism, however useful in its analysis of past wrongs and historical powers, is inadequate because it tries to find the meaning of history in history. "It has no answer to the ultimate questions of human life and of the heart. Human sin and the meaning of human life go beyond economic relations. The Marxists' 'philosophical method' was adequate for them to explain the world; but in order to make the world into a new creation, they needed something which they could only find in the living tradition of the faith."\(^{14}\) Socialism needs this dimension; the realization of it therefore goes beyond Marxist-Leninist philosophy.

4. Questions for Tomorrow

Many critical things have been said about this judgment of historical powers and moral forces in the history of the past 70 years. Thirty years ago I wrote about the Hromadka-John Foster Dulles confrontation at Amsterdam the following: "In the last analysis both men, the extremes of Christian pro- and anti-Communism, think in terms of a faith which is less than the Christian faith, a faith in culture, society and politics informed by a unifying

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\(^{12}\) *Looking History in the Face*, p. 45.

\(^{13}\) Ibid., p. 47.

\(^{14}\) Ibid., p. 50.
religion which will meet Communism as friend or enemy on its own level. In both, the Christian remains bound not to Christ in the world but to the world of Communist power and pretension itself.\(^{15}\)

Today I think that I was wrong about both men. Pushed by the tensions of the Cold War, each was tempted to overstate the identification of his faith with a particular set of historical powers, values and ideas, but each finally resisted the temptation. The gospel which they both confessed bore witness to the transcending judgment and grace of God over the society in which they took responsibility as Christ's servants and witnesses.

a. They were both undialectical in their analysis, however, and here remains the problem. How does one throw oneself completely into the service of one's neighbor in the world, into the construction of a more just society informed with compassion and inspired by the hope of true community and freedom, and at the same time bear witness to the judgement of God on the inhumanities and the idolatries of that society? How does one bear faithful witness to and within historical power?

This is the first question with which I think Hromadka has left us. His own answer has been profoundly called in question by the events of the last 20 years. Few in Eastern Europe are satisfied today with his picture of Communism as a mass movement for justice, freedom and community which goes through a period of coercive domination before it emerges into a true democracy. They have learned too much about the suppression of freedom and the abuse of power in the Communist movement itself. Parenthetically, it might be noted that Dulles' view of America giving moral leadership to a democratic world was similarly destroyed by the experience of the Vietnam War. Christian theology needs to make a sharper analysis of historical powers and trends than did either of these men. But most theological leaders have failed in this. Reinhold Niebuhr was more dialectical in his analysis of the power dimensions of human sinfulness in every society but less helpful in discerning the presence of the risen Christ among the secular forces of the world. Karl Barth was clear about the prior and ultimate reality of Christ in the world but never systematic in relating that reality to historical powers. Latin American liberation theologians have discovered a new divine agent in the self-conscious struggle of the poor and oppressed for their liberation. But this, though helpful in empowering the poor, is in the long run more idealistic and less helpful than Hromadka's understanding of the judgment and grace of God behind and in human events.

How do Christians grasp the work of a just and merciful God in the midst of the political, economic and cultural changes which are remaking our societies, among social

\(^{16}\)Communism and the Theologians.
powers that often do not understand themselves? How is power to be diagnosed and made responsible to the welfare of humanity, under the reign of Jesus Christ?

b. A second and related question concerns the Christian vision for society today. For Hromadka and for many others in Eastern Europe and throughout the world, socialism was and remains a relative, secular but real expression of this vision. As an ideal of human participatory community in which all goods are shared, all persons are equally valued and human need has priority over human greed, it seems a normal extension to society of the ethos of the Christian church. But we have watched socialist systems break down during the past few years, failing in the basic task of producing the goods and services which society needs. Meanwhile, capitalists rejoice that their purely secular theory about the laws of the free market seems to be justified by its results. Yet capitalism too, besides its injustice to the poor, faces internal crises. These crises require a degree of social control that would make a mockery of its one claimed virtue: freedom. Neither system, meanwhile, has developed an effective way of living within the limits provided by God's created world. How are justice, freedom and ecological responsibility to be combined in a viable human society tomorrow? What is the relation of the Christian church to the common search of all humanity for such a society in a world where most ideologies have gone bankrupt? What have we to say to each other out of capitalist or socialist experience about this question, keeping the rest of the world also in our focus?

c. A final question. What is our vision of community in a pluralistic world? For the past century at least, answers to this question have assumed one world. This was the message of the free market economists. Karl Marx made it a dogma. Technocratic 20th century science and industry have reinforced it. In this picture, the world is basically composed of scientists and technologists, producers and consumers, managers and workers, all driven primarily by the desire to control the resources of the world for a better material life.

We are learning in the late 20th century that this is only part of human reality. Nations are reasserting themselves around the centers of their languages and cultures. Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union offer vivid examples. Religions, not as faiths but as communities bound together by common practices and dogmas, are both uniting and dividing various parts of the world. There is everywhere a thirst for community in a fuller and deeper sense than any ideology can provide. How does Christian faith understand human community—embodied in the church, in the town, in the culture, in the state, and in the world? We should not be complacent. We have not solved this problem in the United States of America. Perhaps we can learn from as well as contribute to the search of nations like the Soviet Union or Yugoslavia for solutions to it there.

In a word, thanks in no small degree to the ministry of Josef Hromadka in his time, we are now no longer groping for mutual understanding across barriers of ideology and deeply
contrasting experiences with worldly power. We are in each other's neighborhoods, just as we have always been -- by faith and by God's grace in the ecumenical movement -- in each other's churches. The problems of the world which we face together in faith are becoming increasingly common. In Christ we need each other more than ever to face them responsibly and with hope. This, I suggest, is our agenda in the next few years.