

Bishop James K. Mathews

November 19, 1971

First of all, I want to greet you by reminding you that grace is yours and peace, from God our Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ.

A few weeks ago, my wife and I were in Calcutta. It was no great joy, but it was an obligation to visit the refugees near that city. In one of those camps we found 280,000 people who had to flee for their lives, from their homelands in East Pakistan, to what proved to them to be the friendly borders of India. They're only part of some 9-10 million people who have had to make that journey, mostly at night. This very time, some 25-30 thousand of these people come over into India every night. There are something like 2000 of these refugee camps of varying sizes. It is possible to go along roads along the border for as far inland as 20 miles, and under every tree some family is camped. They've made a makeshift shelter; they have perhaps a tent, or they seem to be in these omnipresent cement culverts you've seen pictures of so often, and sometimes these homes are under 3 feet of water.

One could go on and on about that, and you might say, what possibly does that have to do with what I'm supposed to do in a few minutes? But I would say to you that there is everything in the world to do with that sight I have described, and what we are here about. Because, if we are here in the name of the church of Jesus Christ and it's renewal, then this is in behalf of the whole world. I know that there are those who are aroused with deep concern for people who are homeless in the most appalling situations of human need perhaps in modern history. But it is exactly the church of Jesus Christ which continues to sensitize people so that they can be concerned about such human needs as that.

Or, let me refer again in the city of Calcutta to the Caligat, which is the Hindu temple for which Calcutta receives its name. It is one of the few places in the world, and certainly one of the few places in Hinduism in the contemporary scene, where they have living sacrifices of goats. Daily they are beheaded there as an offering to the goddess of destruction, Cali. Now, it is a dismal experience to visit that place as I have many times, but right next door there is a glorious sight. It is called the Home for the Dying and Destitute. You cannot find people too deeply enmeshed in the dregs of society, completely beyond the reach of fellow human beings or anyone caring for them. They find their way there, and under Mother Teresa, who is our representative, with her sisters at that spot, is ministering to that form of human need. I repeat, that situation has everything to do with what we do here, for we are gathered in the name of the church of Jesus Christ and devoted to its renewal.

It might be old hat in a group like this for me to say that the Church of Jesus Christ has already been renewed in our time. There is always a kind of gap between what God is doing and what the rest of us are willing to do on His behalf. To see to it that what He is doing is

conveyed to the understanding of the last and the least person who considers himself in any sense to be a part of the church of Jesus Christ. The fact of the matter is that God has renewed his church! He did it in our time and before our unprepared and surprised eyes, with respect to its unity and with respect also to its doctrine. I mean to say once again that the meaning of our faith has been made available to us, interpreted by minds he has raised up in our midst in our day.

It is also true that He has renewed His church with respect to what it means corporately to worship God. We've experienced something of that as we have become the church all over again in a dynamic sense of the word here today, and have worshipped Him in ways we have already experienced in common. And it is that period also in which He has renewed His church with respect to the laity, so that the whole ministry of Jesus Christ is first of all in the hands of the whole laos, before certain dimensions of it are committed to representative ministers, many of whom we are here today. I say that it may be old hat, but it is worth repeating: that God has already renewed His church, and it is time, of course, over-time, but the meaning of this is felt in every part of His church. It is partly the responsibility of what's sometimes called the Movemental Church; that part of the church that does not necessarily and primarily bear upon it any denominational label, because you cannot tell where people of concern, real concern are going to rise up together. They recognize themselves even though they be separate when they meet, that they are part of the Movemental church, and that is also present here in a real way today. There is also a time and a place, it seems to me, to be becoming increasingly manifested, that the institutional church must affirm that movemental church and acknowledge that we are both engaged in the same fundamental task.

I sometimes think I am the man in the middle, and I feel greatly reinforced from a conversation with Father Hans Kung last Saturday, in which he said he was part of the radical center. He ought not to feel quite so lonely now, because I'm willing to stand there with him. I think a lot of you are too.

Now, along this road of renewal, that renewal that takes renewal of the church seriously. Ecumenical Institute Chicago has enjoyed a certain longevity. I mean to say, it has a 17-year history, nearly 18 now, and along this road that is longevity. I don't need to tell you that this road is strewn with the wreckage of experiments that start here and there and soon come to an end.

There's a little story attached, and very briefly, I'm going to tell that story. I've told it a good many times, all the way from Bishop Hines, the presiding Bishop of the Episcopal Church of this country, to Robert Marshall, who is Bishop and President of the Lutheran Church. I've told it to the Archbishop of York and to the Ethiopian Patriarch, and to the bishop in charge of ecumenism of the Coptic Church of Egypt, and well, where shall I stop? Oh, yes, Cardinal Willebrands at some length, last summer. I've told Joe that if I have to tell this story once more, I'm going to believe it myself. Very quickly, it is this:

Back in 1954, the World Council of Churches started the Ecumenical Institute in Chicago. At the same time, another thrust started in Austin, Texas, with the Christian Faith and Life Community. In 1962, these streams came together as Joe was transferred, as it were, from Austin to Chicago. He surprised the authorities there in Chicago by saying that he would be willing to come if he could bring six of his colleagues with him. They said, "But we only have money for one." And he said, "They'll come." "And for how much?" "A dollar a year." So a whole crowd of them transferred to Chicago in one moving van with all their things, and to make a very long story shorter than it ought to be, that community of seven has grown to more than 700, closer now to 900 people, committed in what can only be called an ecumenical order, committed to the renewal of the church throughout the world in our time. Engaged in immediate responsibility, comprehensive responsibility for every dimension of the life of the people immediately surrounding that Institute in the West Side, a solidly black part of Chicago. Also, another dimension, educational ministry on behalf of the church, and I can say now, of the whole church, for in every part of this globe this is being pursued, and also in a kind of experimental laboratory on behalf of the church, willing to take the risks involved in that process, not for their own glorification, but again, for the church of Jesus Christ in the world. And so this experiment has gone on and spread to some 35 religious houses across this continent and some 30 others in other parts of the world.

It was a great experience in the summer of 1970, to gather together in Chicago with some 400 people, most of them under 30, at least more than half of them under 30, at least half of them laity, and to go at it for 14 hours a day, trying to recover what it means to be the People of God, taking responsibility for the whole oecumene in our time; trying to recover what it means as a Christian to engage in the classic practices of meditation, contemplation, prayer. To be part of a group spending two hours a day in pursuing this in private worship together with other corporate dimensions of worship during the course of 24 hours. And to come back again this past summer to be with not 400 but 1000 people, with much the same distribution, with a good percentage of Roman Catholics, with representatives in the person of 60 people from other parts of the world. They were taking seriously the obligation of the church in regard to the social order. The New Social Vehicle, which is the crying need in our day, and I would argue that point if I thought there was any necessity in such a group to say anything about it. Well, it was a great gathering, both of these times, and perhaps I have said enough, then, by way of background.

I've had more exciting assignments, in a sense, than introducing my brother. I've known him a long time. We have a pact: if I do not tell everything I know about him, he will reciprocate. I only want to remind him of this because he has a little tendency to forget that obligation. We do have the same parents, the same brothers and sisters, a good deal of the same experience along the way. As a matter of fact, I might say that this brother, my brother in Christ here, is also my Father in God, for when he found out what it meant to be a true disciple of Jesus Christ, he came back and shared that vision with me,

and so I walk the same road with him, and do so very proudly. Now, along the way, we've worked a good deal together. We don't always agree with regard to methodology, but we agree precisely as to goal, and I know that I have to play my role as this man in the middle within the institutional church, and that's where I intend to be found standing at this task come what will. And he knows, that although he is a part of that same church, his approach has had to be much different. To be out, if you will, on the growing edge.

I think I can say about Joe that he is essentially an evangelist, and if you have thought of him under any other rubric, you've probably missed the point. Not an evangelist in the conventional sense, although he's been down that road as well. But I've found him at the task of evangelism in the hard cases. All the easy work in this field has been done. And not too many are anxious to get their hands dirty, in the real task that remains ahead. But I think I can say, fairly objectively, about my brother, that that's where I found him at work, and I expect to find him there. I expect to find him there, come what may. So both symbolically and in the real sense that we are blood brothers, we join hands. I feel quite free to criticize him when I want to, and I can assure you that he is quite capable of reciprocating in this regard, but I think that's what collegialship in the kingdom really means. Now, if I say any more, I shall have said too much, but since Boston is more or less my home town, my stamping ground, I do want with you to welcome him here.

I am pleased to present my brother, Joe.

Bishop James K. Mathews

November 19, 1971

First of all, I want to greet you by reminding you that grace is yours and peace, from God our Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ.

A few weeks ago, my wife and I were in Calcutta. It was no great joy, but it was an obligation to visit the refugees near that city. In one of those camps we found 280,000 people who had to flee for their lives, from their homelands in East Pakistan, to what proved to them to be the friendly borders of India. They're only part of some 9-10 million people who have had to make that journey, mostly at night. This very time, some 25-30 thousand of these people come over into India every night. There are something like 2000 of these refugee camps of varying sizes. It is possible to go along roads along the border for as far inland as 20 miles, and under every tree some family is camped. They've made a makeshift shelter; they have perhaps a tent, or they seem to be in these omnipresent cement culverts you've seen pictures of so often, and sometimes these homes are under 3 feet of water.

One could go on and on about that, and you might say, what possibly does that have to do with what I'm supposed to do in a few minutes? But I would say to you that there is everything in the world to do with that sight I have described, and what we are here about. Because, if we are here in the name of the church of Jesus Christ and it's renewal, then this is in behalf of the whole world. I know that there are those who are aroused with deep concern for people who are homeless in the most appalling situations of human need perhaps in modern history. But it is exactly the church of Jesus Christ which continues to sensitize people so that they can be concerned about such human needs as that.

Or, let me refer again in the city of Calcutta to the Caligat, which is the Hindu temple for which Calcutta receives its name. It is one of the few places in the world, and certainly one of the few places in Hinduism in the contemporary scene, where they have living sacrifices of goats. Daily they are beheaded there as an offering to the goddess of destruction, Cali. Now, it is a dismal experience to visit that place as I have many times, but right next door there is a glorious sight. It is called the Home for the Dying and Destitute. You cannot find people too deeply enmeshed in the dregs of society, completely beyond the reach of fellow human beings or anyone caring for them. They find their way there, and under Mother Teresa, who is our representative, with her sisters at that spot, is ministering to that form of human need. I repeat, that situation has everything to do with what we do here, for we are gathered in the name of the church of Jesus Christ and devoted to its renewal.

It might be old hat in a group like this for me to say that the Church of Jesus Christ has already been renewed in our time. There is always a kind of gap between what God is doing and what the rest of us are willing to do on His behalf. To see to it that what He is doing is

conveyed to the understanding of the last and the least person who considers himself in any sense to be a part of the church of Jesus Christ. The fact of the matter is that God has renewed his church! He did it in our time and before our unprepared and surprised eyes, with respect to its unity and with respect also to its doctrine. I mean to say once again that the meaning of our faith has been made available to us, interpreted by minds he has raised up in our midst in our day.

It is also true that He has renewed His church with respect to what it means corporately to worship God. We've experienced something of that as we have become the church all over again in a dynamic sense of the word here today, and have worshipped Him in ways we have already experienced in common. And it is that period also in which He has renewed His church with respect to the laity, so that the whole ministry of Jesus Christ is first of all in the hands of the whole laos, before certain dimensions of it are committed to representative ministers, many of whom we are here today. I say that it may be old hat, but it is worth repeating: that God has already renewed His church, and it is time, of course, over-time, but the meaning of this is felt in every part of His church. It is partly the responsibility of what's sometimes called the Movemental Church; that part of the church that does not necessarily and primarily bear upon it any denominational label, because you cannot tell where people of concern, real concern are going to rise up together. They recognize themselves even though they be separate when they meet, that they are part of the Movemental church, and that is also present here in a real way today. There is also a time and a place, it seems to me, to be becoming increasingly manifested, that the institutional church must affirm that movemental church and acknowledge that we are both engaged in the same fundamental task.

I sometimes think I am the man in the middle, and I feel greatly reinforced from a conversation with Father Hans Kung last Saturday, in which he said he was part of the radical center. He ought not to feel quite so lonely now, because I'm willing to stand there with him. I think a lot of you are too.

Now, along this road of renewal, that renewal that takes renewal of the church seriously. Ecumenical Institute Chicago has enjoyed a certain longevity. I mean to say, it has a 17-year history, nearly 18 now, and along this road that is longevity. I don't need to tell you that this road is strewn with the wreckage of experiments that start here and there and soon come to an end.

There's a little story attached, and very briefly, I'm going to tell that story. I've told it a good many times, all the way from Bishop Hines, the presiding Bishop of the Episcopal Church of this country, to Robert Marshall, who is Bishop and President of the Lutheran Church. I've told it to the Archbishop of York and to the Ethiopian Patriarch, and to the bishop in charge of ecumenism of the Coptic Church of Egypt, and well, where shall I stop? Oh, yes, Cardinal Willebrands at some length, last summer. I've told Joe that if I have to tell this story once more, I'm going to believe it myself. Very quickly, it is this:

Back in 1954, the World Council of Churches started the Ecumenical Institute in Chicago. At the same time, another thrust started in Austin, Texas, with the Christian Faith and Life Community. In 1962, these streams came together as Joe was transferred, as it were, from Austin to Chicago. He surprised the authorities there in Chicago by saying that he would be willing to come if he could bring six of his colleagues with him. They said, "But we only have money for one." And he said, "They'll come." "And for how much?" "A dollar a year." So a whole crowd of them transferred to Chicago in one moving van with all their things, and to make a very long story shorter than it ought to be, that community of seven has grown to more than 700, closer now to 900 people, committed in what can only be called an ecumenical order, committed to the renewal of the church throughout the world in our time. Engaged in immediate responsibility, comprehensive responsibility for every dimension of the life of the people immediately surrounding that Institute in the West Side, a solidly black part of Chicago. Also, another dimension, educational ministry on behalf of the church, and I can say now, of the whole church, for in every part of this globe this is being pursued, and also in a kind of experimental laboratory on behalf of the church, willing to take the risks involved in that process, not for their own glorification, but again, for the church of Jesus Christ in the world. And so this experiment has gone on and spread to some 35 religious houses across this continent and some 30 others in other parts of the world.

It was a great experience in the summer of 1970, to gather together in Chicago with some 400 people, most of them under 30, at least more than half of them under 30, at least half of them laity, and to go at it for 14 hours a day, trying to recover what it means to be the People of God, taking responsibility for the whole oecumenae in our time; trying to recover what it means as a Christian to engage in the classic practices of meditation, contemplation, prayer. To be part of a group spending two hours a day in pursuing this in private worship together with other corporate dimensions of worship during the course of 24 hours. And to come back again this past summer to be with not 400 but 1000 people, with much the same distribution, with a good percentage of Roman Catholics, with representatives in the person of 60 people from other parts of the world. They were taking seriously the obligation of the church in regard to the social order. The New Social Vehicle, which is the crying need in our day, and I would argue that point if I thought there was any necessity in such a group to say anything about it. Well, it was a great gathering, both of these times, and perhaps I have said enough, then, by way of background.

I've had more exciting assignments, in a sense, than introducing my brother. I've known him a long time. We have a pact: if I do not tell everything I know about him, he will reciprocate. I only want to remind him of this because he has a little tendency to forget that obligation. We do have the same parents, the same brothers and sisters, a good deal of the same experience along the way. As a matter of fact, I might say that this brother, my brother in Christ here, is also my Father in God, for when he found out what it meant to be a true disciple of Jesus Christ, he came back and shared that vision with me,

and so I walk the same road with him, and do so very proudly. Now, along the way, we've worked a good deal together. We don't always agree with regard to methodology, but we agree precisely as to goal, and I know that I have to play my role as this man in the middle within the institutional church, and that's where I intend to be found standing at this task come what will. And he knows, that although he is a part of that same church, his approach has had to be much different. To be out, if you will, on the growing edge.

I think I can say about Joe that he is essentially an evangelist, and if you have thought of him under any other rubric, you've probably missed the point. Not an evangelist in the conventional sense, although he's been down that road as well. But I've found him at the task of evangelism in the hard cases. All the easy work in this field has been done. And not too many are anxious to get their hands dirty, in the real task that remains ahead. But I think I can say, fairly objectively, about my brother, that that's where I found him at work, and I expect to find him there. I expect to find him there, come what may. So both symbolically and in the real sense that we are blood brothers, we join hands. I feel quite free to criticize him when I want to, and I can assure you that he is quite capable of reciprocating in this regard, but I think that's what collegueship in the kingdom really means. Now, if I say any more, I shall have said too much, but since Boston is more or less my home town, my stamping ground, I do want with you to welcome him here.

I am pleased to present my brother, Joe.