

## Catholics, Jews And Protestants Unite For Land Reform

A statement on "Man's Relation to the Land," signed by seventy-five Roman Catholics, Jews and Protestants interested in religion and agriculture has been made public by Rt. Rev. Msgr. L. G. Ligutti, executive secretary, National Catholic Rural Life Conference, Des Moines, Iowa; Dr. Benson Y. Landis, executive secretary, Committee on Town and Country of the Home Missions Council, the Federal Council of Churches and the International Council of Religious Education, New York; and Dr. Gabriel Davidson, general manager of the Jewish Agricultural Society, New York.

The first ever issued on this subject, the declaration outlines principles and methods on which the signatories are in general agreement. "All human beings possess a direct natural right to have access to created natural resources," the signers state. "Since the family is the primary institution, access to land and stewardship of land must be planned with the family unit in view . . ." Ownership of land is a stewardship.

The signers say, in listing principles "which shall underlie actions":

"A unique relationship exists between the family and the vocation of agriculture . . .

"The worker on the land and his family possess the first right to the fruits of their toil for a decent standard of living. Second to such right comes the rights of any non-operating owner and of the State.

"At the same time, the land steward has a duty to enrich the soil he tills and to hand it down to future generations as a thank offering to God, the giver, and as a loving inheritance to his children's children."

Among the suggested methods for the practical application of the principles are the following:

Make use of the land an integral part of socio-economic planning and thinking.

Insist that education for land stewardship and the productive home be outstanding features of rural education . . .

Make the family-type farm operated by the owner a major objective of legislation and planning . . .

Revise land sale and rental contracts, mortgage obligations and other debt instruments so that no loss of ownership or insecurity of tenure be possible except through negligence or injustice on the part of the farmer-operator.

Discourage large land holdings as undemocratic and unsocial . . .

At all times encourage cooperatives as a means of intellectual, moral and material advancement.

Urge that wages and housing for the laborer on the small farms be decent and just . . .

Extend social security provisions, particularly health, old age and survivors' insurance to farm people and other rural dwellers. . .

Where and when large-scale industrialized farming exists, and requires employment of seasonal or year-round labor, demand for such labor group a living family

wage, decent housing conditions and collective bargaining.

Make land settlement possible for returned soldiers and displaced war workers through proper financial and educational planning, provided qualified people so desire and sound arrangements can be made.

Among those signing are the Most Rev. Edwin V. O'Hara, Bishop of Kansas City, founder of the National Catholic Rural Life Conference; Dr. Mark A. Dawber, executive secretary of the Home Missions Council of North America; and Rabbi Herbert S. Goldstein, president of the Synagogue Council of America.

The individuals signed the statement in their personal capacities. It is expected that those signing the document will recommend its adoption by organizations with which they are affiliated.