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Chris E. Johnstone M.S. 1962



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Michigan State University
School of Social Work

Study of St. Vincent de Paul Society
by

Chris E. Johnstone

May

1962



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THESIS

A STUDY OF THE DIFFERENCES IN PHILOSOPHY
BETWEEN ST. VINCENT DE PAUL SOCIETY AND
MODERN SOCIAL WORK: AN INVESTIGATION OF
THE DIAGNOSTIC CONCEPTS INVOLVED IN
REFERRAL PROCEDURES AMONG PRIESTS AND
CASEWORKERS

By

Chris E. Johnstone

A THESIS OF REPORT

Submitted to the School of Social Work,
Michigan State University,
in partial fulfillment of the
Requirements for the Degree

of

MASTER OF SOCIAL WORK

May

1962

Approved: Louise K. Barber
Chairman, Research Committee

Robert J. Aldridge
Director of School

6-47187
12-28-67

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PREFACE

This research topic was chosen primarily because of the author's interest in differences between concepts of religion and social work. It is his opinion that much of the discussion, criticism, and argument between social work and religion is the result of basic philosophical assumptions which can neither be proved nor disproved to everyone's satisfaction. It is further felt that most people do not realize, in any full sense of the word, just what these differences are. Some feel that there are no actual differences, for social work is a profession with a set of professional values and concepts, while religion has its own precepts, somehow separate. This is a satisfactory explanation until one group begins practicing the other's function, in this case when a religious group practices social work. Then inevitable conflicts emerge with one pointing to the other making statements that one or the other group is not taking into consideration this or that piece of knowledge. It seems a futile argument until each looks honestly at the other's premises. From this, further discussion is possible. This paper points out some of these basic differences and then shows how they influence practice.

I have chosen professional social work and the work of St. Vincent de Paul Society of the Roman Catholic Church to represent two approaches to social work. It is my intention to clarify their differences in philosophy and practice. Certainly, St. Vincent de Paul or the Roman Catholic Church is not the only segment of society that differs from social work in certain aspects, but for purposes of research, I have limited the project to these distinct groups. The real purpose is to pinpoint differences of thinking with the hope that recognition of differences will serve as a base for further consideration in thinking on both sides.

I owe particular thanks to Monsignor Earl Sheridan and the staff of Catholic Social Service in Flint, Michigan, and to Monsignor John Bloney and the staff of Catholic Social Service in Lansing, Michigan who took out time from their professional duties to be interviewed. In addition, I want to thank the parish priests of Lansing who were very cooperative in scheduling interviews and patient in answering all of my questions. Without these people this research project would not have been possible.

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I. INTRODUCTION

This research project is an investigation of differences between the philosophy of the St. Vincent de Paul Society and modern social work followed by a study of the diagnostic concepts utilized, respectively, by Roman Catholic parish priests and caseworkers in Catholic social service agencies in making referrals to the St. Vincent de Paul Society. This is an attempt to ascertain if these philosophical differences are present in practice, as reflected in referral procedures. Both priests and caseworkers make referrals to the St. Vincent de Paul Society, and parish priests also serve as advisers to the St. Vincent de Paul groups of their parishes.

The St. Vincent de Paul Society is one of the primary social welfare programs of Catholic Charities. Much has been discussed about the techniques employed by this organization in trying to help people. Some feel its operations are often not in accord with modern social work principles. However, most of this discussion is not focused upon the philosophical orientation of the Society. It is the writer's intention to do this, and to compare this thinking with that of modern social work so that the basis of differences can be understood more clearly. This is done through analysis of available literature on modern social work and Roman Catholicism that is pertinent to St. Vincent de Paul Society. The second part of the project, which entails an examination of the presence of these philosophical differences in referrals, is carried out

by individual interviews with caseworkers in Catholic Social Service Bureaus and with parish priests. Interviews are felt to be the most effective way to measure the presence of philosophical difference since complete case records are not kept by all St. Vincent de Paul councils, and those records available are generally only statistical in nature.

As in all research certain assumptions are inevitable and in this project the main ones are as follows:

- 1) It is assumed that parish priests can be utilized since referrals to St. Vincent de Paul programs are largely made by the recipient's parish priest.
- 2) It is assumed that caseworkers in a Catholic Social Service Bureau also can be effectively tested, for referrals are made by them to St. Vincent de Paul, and frequently recipients are referred to the agency by St. Vincent de Paul and/or the parish priest.
- 3) It is assumed that the theological orientation of the priest versus the professional orientation of the caseworker justifies comparing and contrasting their respective views.

While this study is not governed by an explicit hypothesis, there is an implied hypothesis which summarizes the project's focus. This might be stated as follows:

Philosophical differences between priests and professional social workers are present, and these differences are reflected in the diagnostic thinking of priests and caseworkers in making referrals to the St. Vincent de Paul Society.

II. HISTORICAL BACKGROUND AND CURRENT OPINION

Before looking at literature which deals with the issue of principles in social work as compared with Roman Catholicism, a review of the organization of St. Vincent de Paul, per se, seems appropriate, since the Society is the focus of this study.

History of the St. Vincent de Paul Society

Father Vincent de Paul was born of poor parents in the village of Pouy in Gascony, France during the sixteenth century. He was educated by the Franciscan Fathers and in 1596 went to the University of Toulouse for theological studies, where he was ordained a priest in 1600.¹

In 1605, on a voyage by sea from Marseilles to Barbons, he fell into the hands of African pirates and was carried as a slave to Tunis. His captivity lasted about two years, until he was able to escape, whereupon he returned to France.² This experience as a slave led him to devote his life to the improvement of charities, especially for prisoners and their families, orphans, illegitimate children, and the sick and

¹Reverend Hugo Hoover, lives of the saints, (New York: Catholic Book Publishers, 1935), p. 275.

²Ibid.

hunger. He aroused the interest of the aristocracy, and obtained large foundations for the establishment of hospitals, orphanages, and foundling asylums. He even persuaded ladies of the royal court to give personal services for the destitute and sick.⁵

He then organized a lay order, the "Ladies of Charity", whose members visited the poor in their homes, distributing food and clothes. In order to improve the methods of nursing the sick and handicapped, Father Vincent founded another order, the "Daughters of Charity" in 1633, composed of young women of the peasant class who wanted to devote themselves to charitable work.⁶ They were trained in nursing, and in attending to the poor and served as one of the forerunners to the modern social worker.

One of these programs of Father Vincent introduced some important reforms in the charity work, particularly those under Catholic auspices. However, he personally did not found the present St. Vincent de Paul Society of laymen who do charitable work, for this did not come until 1813, under the influence of Frederic Ozanam.

The Society of St. Vincent de Paul sprung from the organization known as the Conference of Charity, founded in April, 1813.

⁵ Walter Friedlander, Introduction to Social Welfare, (London 1928, U.S.: Macmillan Co., 1929), p. 11.

by a few young men and a Catholic publicist, Fredric Ozanam.⁵ When Ozanam arrived in Paris, he found himself among a small group of Catholic students. It was after the famous July revolution and the battles of ideas were high. These students were criticized by civic leaders who said that they praised the church as the benefactor of humanity, but weren't doing anything for the people. This criticism served as an impetus to act. They brought together a small number of Christian members, not for the purpose of discussion, but for action, to set up a Conference of Charity.

These students of 1831 thought neither of founding a big organisation nor of participating in a widespread campaign against misery. They wished to help one another remain faithful and, supported by their mutual friendship, to carry out one of the essential duties of the Christian life, namely, charity.⁶ These ideas were in keeping with the tradition of St. Vincent de Paul, whom the conference chose as their patron saint.

The conference grew rapidly since its ideas seemed to be in harmony with a large section of Catholic youth. It became necessary to set up a "Council of Management" to organize and administer the functions of the conference.

⁵Manual of the Society of St. Vincent de Paul, (Dublin: Superior Council of Ireland, 1950), p. 274.

⁶Ibid., p. 275.

A Rule was drawn up in 1835 with general principles and articles to work within.⁷

Between 1833 and 1860 the growth was rapid. Not only young intellectuals but Christians of every class were eager to improve conditions of people. The working class conditions during this period of history brought the Society increased activity. The Holy See, without accepting the complete lay association into the canonical hierarchy, approved of its aims and methods and at the end of 1845 provided indulgences for its members. Twenty-seven years after its foundation, the society throughout the world, comprised about 2,500 conferences embracing 50,000 members. Its income amounted to about four million francs. At the onset of World War I, there were 8,000 conferences and 133,000 members with fifteen million francs having been distributed to the poor.⁸

During World War I the Brothers of St. Vincent de Paul had the opportunity to expand their work to civil victims as well as to prisoners. Due to the ruin of the war, St. Vincent de Paul Society began to adapt programs in other countries. The United States developed as many conferences as did France. In nearly all countries, Government representatives commemorated the Society's functions. At the present time almost all societies, including the most jealous dictators apart from

⁷Annual of the Society of St. Vincent de Paul, p. 276.

⁸Ibid., p. 277.

Russia, allow the organization to develop freely. Today there are about 20,000 conferences with an active membership of a quarter of a million.⁹

Structure and Functions of the Saint Vincent de Paul Society

When in any town a number of men form themselves into a branch of the Society, this coming to other is called a conference which was the name originally given to the Society itself. If several conferences are established in one community, they are distinguished from one another by the name of the parish in which their members meet. These conferences are united by a Particular Council, which takes the name of the town where it is established, and all the conferences of the Society are united by a Council General. The Council General is considered the nerve-center of the whole society, acting as a connecting link, a source of unity, and devoting itself to the common interests.¹⁰ The provincial conferences assume their part of the common financial debts, and are asked to send their offerings to the Treasurer General. They do this in the way they see as proper and in proportion to their own means. Working finances are collected through donations of its members, through donations of outsiders or parish members, and through particular projects for fund raising.¹¹

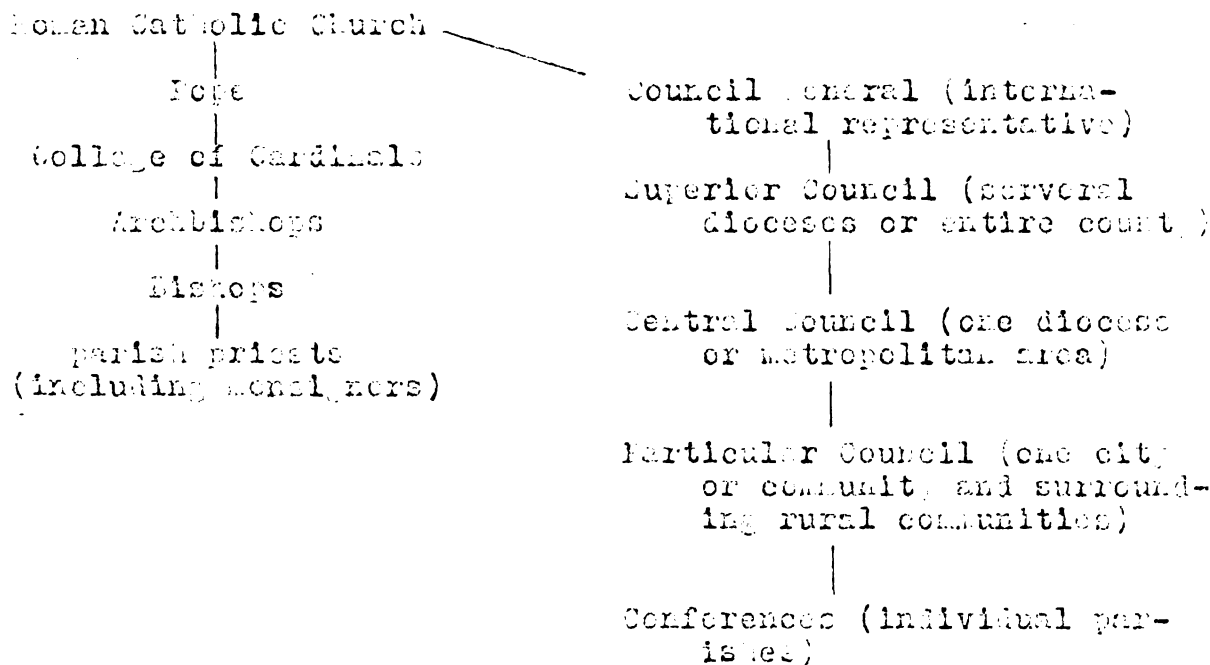
⁹Manual of the Society of St. Vincent de Paul, pp.273-279.

¹⁰Ibid., pp.3-5.

¹¹Ibid., pp. 202-204.

While the Society consists of laymen volunteers, it is endorsed by the Roman Catholic Church. The clergy act as a primary referral source to conferences as well as advisers to the groups. Each conference is organized with officers, workers, a constitution, and meeting procedure.

To help point out the structural hierarchy note the following diagram.



The functions of St. Vincent de Paul Society are varied. To enumerate them all would be an exhaustive undertaking. In fact many of its functions depend on particular situations of need as the Vincentian volunteers see them. They visit the poor and sick, give temporary financial assistance, distribute religious literature, operate relief stores, help people find work, arrange for catechism instruction, baptisms

and validation of marriages, and hand out food and clothing, just to list some of their work.

While a clearer picture of the various programs offered by the Society can be obtained if the composite report of the Particular Council of Mainz, Germany for 1955 is noted.

- 11 confessions affiliated with the Particular Council of Mainz
- 122 active members
- 107 honorary members
- 1,114 total visits to homes, hospitals, and institutions
- 15 cases of medical assistance
- 17 persons assisted to return to their distant homes
- 1,114 food tickets given
- 247,114 letters, papers, books distributed
- 11 letters which had irregular entries entered for rectification
- 11 persons induced to return to their religious duties
- Section on Housing and Services
- 11,114 total received
- 11,114 total of expenditures (for distributing food, clothing, fuel, rent, medicine, tuition, no religious, and transportation for school children, etc., etc., etc.)
- 11,114 balance

It is a common expression of Catholicism and Socialism

There is no available literature on the problem of religious differences between "St. Vincent de Paul's" and modern socialism, at least as far as can be determined. However, religious differences between Catholicism and modern socialism are discussed. Efforts have been made to analyze these differences in the Religious and Social etc. The analysis

11,114 total report of St. Vincent de Paul Society in the Religious and Social, (Germany: Particular Council, 1955, p. 11).

of the philosophy of social work is two-pronged in his writing. The component aspects are examined from the point of view of the profession and in light of significant aspects of American culture. He does not, therefore, confine his comparison to Roman Catholicism but rather compares all significant aspects of American culture, of which Roman Catholicism is one. The theme of Misko's book is that social work and segments of the American culture differ on basic assumptions in many areas.¹³ The concepts around which there are differences include the nature of the individual, the relations between groups, groups and individuals, and between individuals. The author feels social work is not doing an adequate job of selling its concepts to society and suggests that a program of action is needed to do the selling to all segments of the American population.¹⁴

Something should be said of Misko's methodology, since this project uses a similar approach in the first part of the study. He conceded that his study does not reach the point of "disinterested objectivity." He attempts:

- 1) to explicitly state the value premises of the various segments of American culture.
- 2) to explain the reasoning behind these values and to provide adequate data in support of them.
- 3) to generalize regarding the attitudes, concepts,

¹³ Herbert Misko, Philosophy of Social Work, (Washington D.C.: Public Affairs Press, 1952), p. 3.

¹⁴ Ibid., p. 128.

and values of social work based upon statements of the leaders in the social work field.¹⁵

Bisno explains well the position of social work in contrast to the philosophy of other cultural segments, but one can question his lack of objectivity in making a valid representation of these other segments of society. He seems to greatly oversimplify both positions, and tends to point to social work as a triumph over evil and the only crusader for social ills. There is some overlapping in discussing contrasting concepts, mainly for repetition. Also he seems to draw out of context from other authors to verify his own thinking, and to make broad generalizations based on these statements. If anything can be said of Bisno's attempt, it is controversial and for this reason creates the kind of thought which my project hopes to initiate.

Mary Josephine McCormick in Thomistic Philosophy in Social Casework, and Diagnostic Casework in the Thomistic Pattern deals with some of the conceptual differences of social work and Roman Catholicism as is seen by St. Thomas Aquinas. It should be mentioned that St. Thomas provides most of the logical system upon which Catholicism bases its thinking on man and his relationship to God and society. McCormick's attempt is not to create controversy by finding differences, but to find similarities and to explain casework so that many

¹⁵Herbert Bisno, Philosophy of Social Work, p.16.

of the basic social work concepts can fit into St. Thomas's system. She sees the goals of social casework not only in terms of a satisfying and useful life but also of the perfected life which attains its wholeness only through and in God. The result of this analysis is a functional casework in which working with the person's rational ability and free will to look at the emotional configuration in terms of gaining a better perception of his functioning is the emphasis.

The method she employs is the following:

- 1) to explore selected principles of Thomistic teaching.
- 2) to interpret these teachings in relation to certain well defined principles of casework.
- 3) to show generic aspects of casework in relation to how social workers view human beings.
- 4) to point out that the philosophy governing social work in reality recognizes the forces of man's spiritual as well as material environments and in this kind of philosophy will social work, particularly casework, find the strength of purpose.¹⁶

While McCormick's effort to find similarities between casework and Thomistic philosophy is thorough and literate, it seems to avoid the basic issue. In actual practice there is only one segment of social work that utilizes such a functional approach, and the remainder is based on the psychoanalytic process. Between these are very contrasting views re-

¹⁶ Father Peter Dempsey, Faith, Philosophy and Catholicism, (Chicago: Henry Regnery Company, 1964), p. 2.

garding the nature of man, the role of the unconscious, and the influence of the environment.

Father Peter Dempsey deals with this issue more realistically in his book, Fraud, a channeling, Catholicism. The writing attempts to investigate the different approaches of psychology and to find a possible unit, and perspective, followed by a discussion of Freud's attitude toward religion and his analytic theory. Convinced of the truth of Catholicism, Father Dempsey feels the "Catholic mind can benefit from any facts of truths that have been unearthed by analysis and that analysis can profit from the age-old wisdom of the Catholic Church."¹⁶

This study attempts to explore some of the same issues that Dempsey investigates. However, instead of viewing the problem entirely on a theoretical level this paper also is focused on how differences do influence practice.

III. METHODS AND PROCEDURES EMPLOYED IN THIS STUDY

Methods Used in Exploring Literature and Obtaining Empirical Data

The study focus is to discover what are the philosophical differences between modern social work and the St. Vincent de Paul Society, and to test the presence of these differences in referral procedures. The first entails exploring the concepts of the Roman Catholic Church as seen pertinent to the training of the St. Vincent de Paul Society, and to explore the philosophy of social work for comparison and contrast. The latter part of the study is empirical in nature, involving interviews with parish priests who represent the Society's approach and a referral source to the organization, and interviews with caseworkers in Catholic Social Service Bureaus who represent modern social work, and also a referral source to "St. Vincent de Paul's". The definition of philosophy is taken to mean the basic concepts, attitudes, and values which underlie the present theory of social work and St. Vincent de Paul Society. To investigate literature means to read and to extract from any or all available sources those basic concepts regarding the individual and his relationship to society. Modern social work refers to the current or present theories regarding the individual and society that seem evident in its practice.

The conceptual differences are largely taken from Herbert Wisno's, The Philosophy of Social Work, under the basic consideration of the nature of man. This includes such sub-concepts as free will, role of moral principles, good works (church as an institution), concepts of sin and human suffering, etc. Wisno's book is selected primarily because of its preciseness in noting differences. Complete reliance on his approach does not seem valuable for research purposes. To account for consistency of thought, several authors are consulted both in social work and Roman Catholicism. The St. Vincent de Paul Manual which is a guide to organization and philosophy of the Society, is used considerably, especially to illustrate how certain Roman Catholic thinking is evident in this organization's operation. Theology text books are also referred to in order to verify the Church's position on certain assumptions. Social work authors are used in varying degrees, depending on the need.

The framework or methodology which is used in exploring literature follows this pattern:

1. to explicitly state the conceptual differences between St. Vincent de Paul Society and modern social work.
2. to elaborate on the reasoning behind these concepts as seen by various students.
3. to show how this reasoning affects St. Vincent de Paul referrals.
4. to predict responses of priests and caseworkers when interviewed on referral procedure.

In investigating whether these concepts are present in

referral procedures, interviews with the primary referral sources to St. Vincent de Paul Society are utilized. For this reason parish priests and caseworkers in Catholic Social Service Bureaus are selected. Individual interviews took place and usually lasted from twenty to thirty minutes. The interviews were somewhat structured with open-end questions to allow freedom of response. The questions were flexible and were changed as seemed needed to the interviewer in order to initiate responses in areas of philosophical difference. However, the basic interview schedule which was used is found in this paper.

As many interviews were scheduled as time and geography allowed. Though parish priests were available in one city. It was necessary to extend the sample of caseworkers into another community in order to obtain adequate data for drawing conclusions. Reaching into another city does not seem to have a limiting effect on the research, for the purpose is to evaluate referral procedures as are used by individual persons, and a particular agency's or community's structure does not inhibit this purpose. There is no agency or Church administrative policy on who is to be referred or under what circumstances.

The following are the type of questions which were asked of interviewees:

1. What type of considerations are taken into account when a person seeks St. Vincent de Paul assistance?

What kinds of things does the referring person want to know about the potential recipient? This type of question was designed to reveal something of how the interviewee views man and uses his views in deciding who deserves help.

2. What are the functions of "St. Vincent de Paul's"? This was intended to initiate responses around what is important to caseworkers and priests in offering help and why.
3. What religious and/or social work factors are taken into account in offering help? This, too, was designed to obtain a clearer picture of factors considered in making referrals.
4. What are some case examples? This type of question was optional. If adequate data were not obtained in the above questions, case illustrations were sought to clarify just how referrals were treated.
5. Questions about an interviewee's background were asked if deviations appeared from what other respondents were offering. These were centered around social, or educational backgrounds that might account for why referring persons considered a client in certain ways. This was particularly needed when the interviewer saw priests responding with a more social work approach or caseworkers replying in more religious terms.

Evaluation of Methods Used

Probably the most limiting factor in surveying literature is the difficulty in making clear differentiations as to philosophical differences. As has been pointed out, Bisno does an adequate evaluation, but it becomes apparent that he has to stretch the point in order to clarify differences between social work principles and Roman Catholic assumptions. This problem inhibits my project to the extent that it requires the investigator to be somewhat subjective in noting the areas of difference which are implicit in the literature. To control

objectivity many authors and writings are used, but even here a need to find distinctions in thinking may result in reading into the literature more than what is there.

Also, a lack of literature, particularly on the St. Vincent de Paul Society, does not make this type of research completely valid. Michigan State University Library has little information on the organization. It was necessary to go into the community to borrow books from personal libraries. Of course, as the project was well on the way to completion more readings became available, often too late to incorporate into the paper. Writings on social work are readily at hand, but most of these are on techniques and process and not on the philosophy of the profession. Again, this is handled by extracting from what is available on philosophical assumptions that seem evident in discussions on techniques utilized by social workers.

The primary weakness in the empirical part of the investigation was the uncertainty as to whether the interviewees expressed their real thinking on referral procedures or what they thought to be acceptable and appropriate answers. Along with this, consideration was given to the possibility that responses were based on personal prejudices and not on the respective philosophical orientations. Both of these possibilities were taken into account and partially controlled by noting consistency in responses among the total group.

It was felt that if enough of the group answered in similar ways, significance would be beyond mere prejudice or socially acceptable responses.

Universal conclusions are not intended to be made by this research. One can not necessarily expect to get the same results from any single sample. There may be a tendency in this direction, but this sample is not inclusive enough for this.

All those interviewed were very cooperative in giving of their time and my thanks were extended. However, as in any effort needing personal interviews some difficulty was experienced in scheduling appointments. While it did not seem to have decisive effects on the outcome, it did limit the number of contacts that could be fitted into the time interval.

Possibly it would have been more acceptable in research terms, if case records had been used to ascertain referral procedures to "St. Vincent de Paul's". Something could be said about the lack of objectivity and empiricism of the open-end interview schedule that was used. However, this seemed to be the best approach to a study with this focus. Besides, records which would have given the data being sought were not available. Most referrals to "St. Vincent de Paul's" are brief service and records do not give complete thinking behind the referring person's use or lack of use of this organization.

It was not anticipated that interviewees would respond directly or explicitly with answers predicted by the researcher.

The concern of not being judgmental when making referrals might have influenced whether the respondent admitted that in actual practice he has made judgments in referring people. Because of this the interviewer looked for implications in answers and may have at times read into the replies to questions. Self-awareness kept this at a minimum and may have prevented it entirely. Nevertheless, it was a limitation in terms of research criteria that one should use objective tools in obtaining data.

IV. PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS OF DATA

Philosophical Differences Between Modern Social Work and the St. Vincent de Paul Society.

The social worker operates under the proposition that the human being is a "biosocial organism" whose behavior is the result of interaction between the organism and its environment. This is a sophisticated way of saying that the sources of human behavior are natural. "The social worker holds to the concept that human behavior is not made in heaven, nor in hell, but is determined by the pressures of many complex forces upon the biological organism."¹⁷ This points out that behavior is approached in terms of the individual's life experience, rather than being seen as a metaphysical phenomenon. This is made evident when one notes how Gordon Hamilton views the "social case". She feels the social case is not determined by the kind of client, nor by the kind of problem, but rather the social case is a "living event", within which there are economic, physical, mental, emotional, and social factors in varying proportions. She views it as consisting of internal and external influences. Human beings are the products of heredity and environment with environment modifying by adding or subtracting these tendencies while the

¹⁷Gertha Reynolds, "Re-Thinking Social Case Work", Social Work Today, Vol. 1, 1936, p.3.

person progresses through his psycho-sexual development.¹⁸ Texts contain much discussion on psycho-social development, what it is, and its effect upon the personality. For this purpose it is safe to say that these authors instruct us under the basic assumption that all human behavior is natural and can be scientifically, understood and studied.

"St. Vincent de Paul's" and the Roman Catholic Church, speak of behavior as including much of this natural element, but also as consisting of concepts that are beyond the scope of the senses and natural causation. There are in other words, non-organic or spiritual explanations for behavior. Man consists of a rational element which enables him to choose good over evil, to know God, and to react to God's will. However, basic appetites often hinder his choice so that he may desire the bad or evil impulses separate from God's will. Human behavior attempts to coordinate the rational with the instinctual.¹⁹ There is a common element here with social work, for social work also accepts the psychoanalytic theory of instinctual needs and that conflict results when these needs are thwarted by superego or environmental demands.

¹⁸ Gordon Hamilton, Theory and Practice of Social Casework, (2nd Edition, N.Y.: Columbia University Press, 1955), pp. 2-4.

¹⁹ Mary McDermick, Theistic Philosophy in Social Casework, (New York: Columbia Univ. Press, 1955), pp. 5-7.

the basic difference is that social work sees this as natural, organic phenomenon, while Catholicism calls this original sin, an obstruction in relation to God.

The Holy Ghost is an influencing factor which social work does not account for but which St. Vincent de Paul's relies upon heavily. One of the organization's many prayers illustrates this.

Come, Holy Ghost, Creator come,
From Thy bright heavenly throne;
Come take possession of our souls.
And make them all thine own.²⁰

This prayer, as are so many, is a plea for an external force to influence human behavior. This is particularly significant when one attempts to explain a particular behavior, for social work explains it in terms of particular psycho-social factors, while St. Vincent de Paul's acknowledges its cause as the work of the Holy Spirit. Thus, we see one real source of difference in terms of explanation of cause.

There seems to be general agreement in modern social work that man is amoral and asocial at birth.²¹ This is centered around the notion that motives, needs, and patterns of behavior are the result of the interaction of one's innate impulses with his life experiences. No strivings of man are, in themselves, considered immoral. The social worker does

²⁰ Annual of the Society of St. Vincent de Paul, (Dublin: Superior Council of Ireland, 1950), p. 205.

²¹ Herbert Aisno, Philosophy of Social Work, p. 16-17.

not view the individual as being inherently antagonistic to social living. In fact, the full development of the individual is possible only in a social setting. The interrelatedness of the personality with the environment makes for a professional discipline in which "focus is held to the individual who has a problem within a set of specific circumstances. The client's reality and his feelings about his reality become the constellation of social casework effort."²² When talking about change, social work analyzes the client's capacity and environmental opportunities and resources, but nothing is said of limitations resulting from original sin. The concept of sin is not of concern to social work. Largely, the profession notes the social situation that the client operates within and his psychological apparatus.

Roman Catholicism, however, stresses inherited sinfulness in man. In simplified form this means that mankind has fallen away from God by choosing evil and as a result has placed a scar upon the pure nature originally created by God. He is born with this scar and should spend his life seeking to reestablish his relationship to God. This implies acceptance of the premise that man is a free agent, and thus certain undesirable social conditions are the product of personal deficiencies.²³ This is illustrated in the St. Vincent de Paul

²² Gordon Hamilton, Theory and Practice of Social Casework, p. 25.

²³ Herbert Blane, Philosophy of Social Work, p. 17.

Society, manual. In discussing what is involved in visitations to the poor the manual points out that the visitor should use language with the poor suited to their peculiar dispositions. "No good is possible so long as we have not impressed their souls with those fundamental truths which make a Christian; the words of the Church are dead for them, and we must first of all recall to life those minds killed by skepticism..... It is proper...to ask the poor about their first communion... How can we move and reclaim them unless we are aware of their moral misery and ignorance."²⁴ The manual does not suggest the visits be carried out in a cold, rigid fashion as one may interpret from this quotation. On the contrary, suggestions are made throughout the manual regarding acceptance, politeness, understanding, and other forms of support. This quotation does show that deprivation can result from sin and the assumption that lifting people from their materialistic misery may mean lifting them from their moral poverty.

Social work adheres to the ethic that it must operate within the value system of its client, as long as this system is not opposed by society. In the latter case the client is helped to develop values. Generally speaking, however, social work helps the client within his value system in one or several of the following ways: 1) to assist the client in resolving

²⁴ Manual of the Society of St. Vincent de Paul, pp.212-213.

conflicts within his own value system; 2) to assist the client to develop insight into his own values; 3) to assist the client in the development of that degree of flexibility in the application of his values which is necessary for personal and social adequacy; 4) to assist the client in exploring more constructive values; 5) to assist the individual in expression of feelings about his values; 6) and to assist him in recognizing real alternatives among values and consequences of these alternatives.²⁵ Felix Biestek, who is a Jesuit priest but who very much accepts modern social work principles, takes a clear stand on the issue of acceptance of another value system by stating that the caseworker does not judge the guilt or innocence of the client.²⁶ Modern social work appears to evaluate the behavior of the client in order to understand rather than to judge. Causes of the client's behavior are of interest only insofar as this aids in understanding so the worker can further help the client's present and future adjustment.

"St. Vincent de Paul's" does not suggest a strict judgmental attitude in helping people, at least not in theory, but in practice there is the acceptance of judgment of values as a prerequisite for receiving assistance. The previous quota-

²⁵Herbert Ainslie, Philosophy of Social Work, pp.10-11.

²⁶Felix Biestek, The Casework Relationship, (Chicago: Loyola University Press, 1957), p. 92.

tion from the manual points this out in part. Also Vincen-
 tians are often instructed to require of the poor persons
 whom they assist a certificate of marriage, and a certificate
 of baptism of their children.²⁷ Instruction is also given
 to provide spiritual advice to the poor. If first communion
 is either not made or made without preparation, the children
 are not baptised, or a marriage is not valid, the visitor is
 asked to approach them with "prudence and precaution" to at-
 tempt to save a few of them. If this can be done, the visi-
 tors will be well rewarded by God.²⁸ What is really behind
 this is the belief held in Roman Catholicism that there are
 certain unchanging values which must be met, and when these
 are adhered to, each will be taking one more step toward es-
 tablishing a better relationship to God.²⁹ The Church sees
 its faith anchored in God-given facts, real and definite.
 But what is pertinent here is that these truths are consider-
 ed to be for all men and it is the Church's duty to communicate
 them to men.³⁰ We see, then, that "St. Vincent de Paul's" does
 not accept the proposition that it is ethical to work within

²⁷Manual of the St. Vincent de Paul Society, p.212.

²⁸Ibid., p.222.

²⁹Herbert Aisno, Philosophy of Social Work, p.17.

³⁰James Keenan, John Henry, and Thomas Donlan, A Primer
 of Theology, (Dubuque: Trinity Press; 1955), pp. 1-2.

the individual's value system. Instead the organization appears to accept the Roman Catholic assumption that there are certain unchanging truths which are for all and that where these are not practiced the Vincentian has an obligation to encourage their acceptance and implementation.

Basic to both social work and St. Vincent de Paul is the rejection of the doctrine of suffering for sufferings sake. However, this rejection by St. Vincent de Paul does not seem as clear cut as is found in modern social work. The knowledge of human growth and development which is accepted by social work teaches that human suffering is undesirable and should be prevented, or at least alleviated, whenever possible. Nowhere in the St. Vincent de Paul manual are there indications that suffering has positive aspects. In fact the very existence of St. Vincent de Paul is to lessen misery through charitable living. But there are certain theological concepts which are accepted by Roman Catholicism as well as other religious groups with versions of the following:

(1) Suffering may be the result of personal inadequacy or of a lack of will to act in a more appropriate manner; (2) Suffering can have its own reward since it is spiritually enriching, such as being martyred; (3) Suffering is valued insofar as it allows for the expiation of a wrong or sin.³¹ Social

³¹W.E. Arnheim, D.D., Feet of the Poor, New Horizons in Criminology, (N.Y.: Prentice-Hall, 1946), p.122.

workers, as a professional group, seem generally united in opposing any or all variations of the concept that there is an intrinsic value in suffering.

Another difference between social work and St. Vincent de Paul Society lies in their respective concepts of the family. Both hold this institution as being very valuable and worth preserving. The difference doesn't involve the recognition of the value of the family as much as under what circumstances it can function or discontinue functioning. In the main, social workers support the companionship family, the ideal of which is a democratic companionship which allows for each member of the unit the fullest realization of his potentialities.³² With this is the assumption that children have rights and that the family institution can be sacrificed to preserve the child's rights and needs. Also, when the companionship of the married couple deteriorates and has lost its stability, separation and divorce are acceptable alternatives in order to preserve the mental health of those involved. Roman Catholicism also accepts legal divorces if the grounds are "justifiable", but this prohibits either of the couple to marry another. Nevertheless, Catholicism seems to view the family in a fundamentally different way than does modern social work. The well being of the individual members of the unit are considered important as in social work but

³²Gerbert Rizzo, The Philosophy of Social Work, p.22.

they may be subordinated to the welfare of the institution. The marriage and family are held to be created states by God and sanctified by His Will. This simply means that to disband this unity can hinder the members relationship to God. As a result all possible effort must be made under moral obligation to hold the unit together. It is felt that the primary concern must be the marriage and the perpetuation of the institution, which partially represents and end-in-itself concept of the family.³³ St. Vincent de Paul Society as a representative of the Church may implement this thinking. Part of its function may be to give advice on stabilizing a marriage or family in the Church's eye or to see that the children are properly instructed in doctrine and dogma. Since one's relationship to Almighty God is considered the ultimate of life, it remains consistent that marital and family stability may influence who receives help.

It was mentioned earlier that St. Vincent de Paul engages in "charitable giving". This, of course, is not the purpose of modern social work. Rather their efforts are viewed as professional. Many authors defined the criteria necessary to determine a profession, but the following quotation seems to have the essential ingredients:

"Professions involve essentially intellectual operations with large individual responsibility;

³³Ibid., pp. 22-23.

they derive their raw material from science and learning; this material they work up to a practical definitive end; they possess an educationally communicative technique; they tend to self-organization; they become increasingly altruistic in motivation."³⁴

With a body of knowledge, educational process, code of ethics, and a professional organization social work would have to be considered a profession. However, "St. Vincent de Paul's" makes no such claim. They are an extension of the Roman Catholic Church and exist to provide "clarity" and do not operate within the framework of the above professional criteria.

The activities of the Society all converge on extending the Kingdom of God.

"It wishes its members to develop their interior lives. It invites them to become more deeply filled with the love of God and of their fellow-men and to make this love the rule of their relations with their fellow members and with the poor whom they assist."³⁵

What is implied here is the spiritual good that comes to the members for carrying on these good works. The basic theme is that not only are others' relationship to God of concern, but also the individual members improve their relationship through their work. The St. Vincent de Paul Society has two basic aims: (1) to do a great deal of spiritual good to its

³⁴Harry F. McCormick, Diagnostic Case-study in the Psycho-social Pattern, (New York: Columbia University Press, 1954), p.4.

³⁵Manual of St. Vincent de Paul Society, p.IV.

members through the exercise of charity, and (2) to do a little spiritual and temporal good to a few poor families in the name of Jesus Christ.³⁶ "St. Vincent de Paul's", thus, operates through the institution of the Church and its very existence depends upon rewards expressed by the Church. Modern social work, on the other hand, is not subordinate to an external institution. It functions professionally within its own organization. As a profession social work came about out of social problems and was organized to meet these needs. Its goals are generally professional and social but not spiritual.

If there is a basic difference between these two approaches, it centers around the concept of free will. All that has been written presently in this paper has implied this difference. In fact most of the philosophical principles mentioned would not be differences if it weren't for this concept. Free will is central in Roman Catholicism and influences most of the doctrines. Social work, on the other hand, sees it much differently. Professional social work generally accepts the assumption that man does not "naturally" act in a rational manner.³⁷ By "naturally" is meant that man inherently does not act rationally. The ability to act in a rational and constructive manner is largely dependent upon one's life

³⁶ J.C. Donlan, F.I.C. Cunningham, A. Koch, Christ and His Sacraments, (Dubuque: Trinity Press, 1950), p. 230.

³⁷ Herbert Aiken, Philosophy of Social Work, p. 15.

experiences. Psychiatry and psychoanalysis have contributed considerably to social work's understanding of this. The fact that a human being is human, with all the normal attributes, does not mean he will act or even be able to act rationally. Instead there may be a need for him to be irrational, depending of the stress of emotional factors. Social work does not teach that one can arrive at a conscious control of his behavior through the imposition of a moral and physical will to do so. It should be clarified that free will doctrine permeates much of our culture and can be found in programs to which modern social work is attached, such as in public assistance, criminal codes, and other social policies. However, this does not mean social work advocates this thinking. Generally modern social work does not accept the concept of free will in the same way as does Roman Catholicism and St. Vincent de Paul's.

According to St. Thomas Aquinas, whose philosophy is the basis of most Roman Catholic thinking, man is a being who results from the union of body and soul or mind. This produces a single nature which is capable of integrating and directing its own forces.³⁰ A person is rational. He possesses certain endowments that make it possible for him to initiate and to carry on his own activities and to assume

³⁰ Mary McCormick, Theistic Philosophy In Social Casework, I.B.

personal responsibility for them.³⁹ This is a recognition of man's ability to control. Even with varying degrees of stress and strain, he is still able to will and control his destiny. Ideally, this activity consists in the performance of good acts that lead to a good end, which ultimately is God. Nothing is said about ego weaknesses or strengths which might help or hinder this process. The basic assumption is that all men can do this with proper effort (will). When behavior is not in accord with accepted moral principles, prayer, penance, and a resolution not to behave in such a manner a sin is considered necessary for change. Social work feels a person's ability to change and adjust are dependent upon many factors, some of which he cannot control. It follows that "St. Vincent de Paul's" may expect efforts to be made by recipients toward necessary change and control if they are to be assisted by a Church affiliated agency.

Predictions of possible responses based on philosophical differences

Based on these philosophical differences, it is felt that priests and caseworkers make evaluations in reference to their respective orientations when referring people to St. Vincent de Paul Society. It is expected that spiritual factors are used by priests in determining when to refer and the type of help that should be extended by the society. On the

³⁹Ibid. 1.4.

other hand, professional social work factors are expected to be used by caseworkers in Catholic Social Service Bureaus in making referrals. Also, it is felt that where a combination of social work and religious orientation are present there is a mixture of these differing philosophies in one's referral thinking. When these people were interviewed attempts were made to account for this by exploring with them what had influenced their thinking.

When priests were interviewed they were expected to imply that they consider the following factors in making referrals.

1. Referrals are made together with some evaluation of the person's spiritual circumstances. This does not mean that some help is not given to non-Catholics or those fallen away, but that consideration is given to these circumstances. Implied here, is the assumption that while material is important, spiritual need is not to be subordinate.

2. Priests expect follow-through by lay volunteers of the Society in meeting these spiritual needs. This is based on the assumption that one's relationship to God is the ultimate good of man's very existence. Spiritual counseling is considered very important, if often not more important than material assistance.

3. Prolonged reliance upon "St. Vincent de Paul's" help

is considered a sign of weakness and lack of effort among recipients. Judgements are considered valid in determining whether this person is doing all he can toward improving his status. This is based on the proposition that man's plight is often the result of not choosing good over evil.

4. Lack of material opportunities often is considered as being a motivating influence toward wanting or willing to change. This reflects the thinking that human suffering can have value, although it is an evil circumstance.

5. Priests view modern social work as frequently seeking immediate solution in family problems as well as in other problem areas. Social work is considered as not recognizing spiritual needs of people. This is a result of the Church's position that immediate solution to problems often need to be sacrificed for long reaching goals of pleasing God's will by obeying natural and sacramental laws.

6. People are considered responsible for their actions and sin is the result of selecting evil over good alternatives. Judgements of one's behavior can be made to protect one from the consequences. The limitations of people are imperfections due to sin and can be rectified by choices made upon knowing the will of God.

When caseworkers were interviewed they were expected to imply the following factors when they make referrals.

1. Referrals are made entirely on the basis of need of material assistance and professional evaluation of whether this assistance helps the total problem.

Evaluation of spiritual considerations are not made. This thinking reflects the bio-social concept of man and the influence of social-psychological influences on problems.

2. Caseworkers do not follow through with spiritual counseling, since it is not within the function of social work process, and it is not seen as the first line of concern. Social work is grounded in society's need for help with social and personality problems and it has no metaphysical entity to fulfill God's will. To alleviate the expressed need for assistance is the primary concern.

3. Caseworkers consider reliance upon financial assistance more as a sign of environmental circumstances and/or personality difficulties and not necessarily a sign of lacking effort. This is based on the assumption that free will is not the primary determinant of behavior but rather unconscious and environmental factors can be beyond human control.

4. Lack of material opportunities toward use of free will to change is not considered valid by case workers and generally does not influence referral procedure. Material need is considered a limitation and depressing agent rather than a value. Instead, referral is made after evaluation of the total problem and need. Judgments are not to be made as to whether a person has not chosen good or made increased effort. Suggestions are made as to areas for the person to consider further help but direct judgments are not appropriate.

5. Social workers consider solutions to clients problems as needing to be met as economically as possible to improve social functioning. Consideration of fulfilling sacramental laws and God's will are not accepted assumptions. Correction of social problems through helping individuals in their functioning is the primary focus.

6. Case workers do not handle referrals on the basis of holding the individual responsible for his actions to the same degree as do priests. Help is extended with the absence of judgment for one's plight. This is an extension of the concept that man is amoral and asocial b. nature and social work is not concerned about sin in making a diagnosis.

Table 1.

The following is a summary of the conceptual differences between modern social work and Roman Catholicism as is evident in the use of St. Vincent de Paul Society.

Social Work	St. Vincent de Paul
1. Social work views man primarily as a biosocial organism.	1. Society views man in supernatural and metaphysical terms.
2. Man is accepted as moral and asocial.	2. Man has inherited sinfulness (original sin).
3. Social work adheres to the ethic that it must operate within value system of the client.	3. Acceptance of judgment of man's values is considered to.
4. Human suffering has no value and is unacceptable.	4. Human suffering may have spiritual rewards, initiate change, or be the result of personal inadequacy.
5. Social institution need not remain unified under many circumstances.	5. Welfare of the family, institution, per se, may be placed above earthly circumstances, for it is ordained by God.
6. Human behavior is natural and grounded in natural experiences.	6. Ultimate of human behavior is one's relationship to God.
7. Motivation of social work is professional and socially orientated.	7. St. Vincent de Paul is motivated in the enrichment of the volunteers' spiritual lives.
8. Social work operates within its professional criteria.	8. This charity organization is subordinate to the Church.
9. Man does not by nature	9. There is a complete

Table I.--Continued

always have the capacity to act with free will in rational manner.	acceptance of the doctrine of free will which allows all men to choose good over evil.
10. Unconscious motivation, and environment influence behavior.	10. Conscious, rational, and free will are primary ingredients that can be used by man to act.

Table II.

Responses that were to be expected from caseworkers and priests in making referrals to St. Vincent de Paul is given in summary form. These responses were not always anticipated to be given directly but might be implied in answers offered to the interviewer.

Caseworkers	Priests
1. Referrals are not made on the basis of spiritual circumstances.	1. Referrals are made after evaluation of person's spiritual circumstances.
2. Material need is the primary determinant with little consideration given to spiritual need.	2. Material needs are important, but spiritual need will be considered.
3. Follow through of spiritual needs generally are not considered as within social work focus.	3. Priests expect follow through by volunteers as to meet-in these spiritual needs.
4. Case work counseling around personality problems is offered.	4. Spiritual counseling is considered important.
5. Reliance upon financial	5. Unreliance upon

Table II--Continued

assistance is considered more as a sign of environmental circumstances and personality difficulties.	St. Vincent de Paul help is a sign of weakness and lack of effort.
6. Suggestions are made as to areas for person to consider further help, but no direct judgment would be made as to lack of effort.	6. Judgments are made as to person's lack of effort to improve.
7. Material need is not considered as valuable but rather as a humiliating and depressing agent.	7. Lack of material opportunities are considered a motivating influence to change.
8. Work of St. Vincent de Paul is primarily to give material assistance to those in need.	8. Work of St. Vincent de Paul has the primary purpose of spiritually enriching volunteers.
9. Spiritual considerations are not in the realm of casework.	9. Priests view professional social work as not considering spiritual aspects of a person's problems.
10. Clients are given alternatives and if divorce is decided by client then he is not judged.	10. Priests feel caseworkers often look for immediate solutions in family problems, such as divorce, etc.

Results of Interviews with Priests

Nine parish priests were interviewed and they tended to consider the following factors in determining who should receive "St. Vincent de Paul's" assistance. (Each represents a summary of an individual priest's response).

1. Material need for help is the first consideration. Often a problem is deeper involving spiritual weakness. Material help encourages a person to "get on his own feet". Those who have sacrificed most in struggling materially, deserve the most help.

2. Spiritual need is the ultimate concern. Material help encourages people to see God's intentions.
3. Material help should be only concern. St. Vincent de Paul should not give spiritual help, and if spiritual advice is needed the priest should handle this.
4. Everyone should be given this assistance at least once. If they then tend not to do something on their own, they may have to be dropped, so others can receive this.
5. Material and spiritual help cannot be differentiated. One must begin where the person is in deciding what type of help he needs most.
6. The primary concern should be that material assistance is needed. Only if the person asks for spiritual help should it be given.
7. Material need comes first, but in determining who should be helped, a thorough study of the person's moral character and his good intentions should be made.
8. Material need should be given to anyone in need, at least at first. If they do not cooperate, such as seeking a job, etc., then they may be turned down.
9. Help with corporeal needs must be fulfilled. It is a part of God's will and anyone lacking resources should be helped. Together with this should go some awareness of his spiritual needs, and Vincentians must help here.

All the priests made no distinction as to helping only Catholics, but explicitly indicated that they refer regardless of religion, race, or creed.

Table III. Number of priests who take into account spiritual factors.

7	Material need together with spiritual considerations.
2	Material need is only prerequisite and spiritual considerations should not be made.
0	Total

Table IV. Indications of the role first will play in referrals

1	Explicitly expressed that desire for self-improvement is a prerequisite for deserving help.
1	Implied this need for self-improvement.
1	Indicated that this need not be a prerequisite.
0	Total

The two priests who felt that material need should be the only consideration in referrals also saw the desire for self-improvement as not being involved in evaluating a person. These priests' backgrounds were similar to the others, but their experiences were markedly different. One had lived near a deprived neighborhood of a large industrial community when a youngster, as he put it, "he had seen a lot of hungry people and had come to feel that before a person can be brought into the Church he must be fed. He even went so far as to say that in his opinion "St. Vincent de Paul's" should be concerned strictly with material service, and perhaps there would be the long range hope that the recipients would

see the spiritual aspects of their lives, but this need not be within the scope of a charity society. He volunteered that his opinion was quite different from other priests he had talked to about this. The other priest's experience consisted of being exposed to a religious order in Europe where its goal was to clothe and feed the needy. There was no religious factor considered in giving help, and its philosophy was centered around the notion that people in need were the products of deprived environments.

All nine priests implied that when recipients rely unnecessarily upon aid they generally are undeserving of continued St. Vincent de Paul help and should be screened carefully. Judgments as to whether these people intend to use the material assistance toward improving themselves are considered acceptable. There seemed to be a consensus of agreement around the assumption that dependence on assistance may be a sign of character and/or moral weakness.

It was noted that the two priests who at one point of their interviews spoke of not making spiritual considerations or demanding self-improvement later talked of making judgments on character weakness when recipients depend on this external help. This was considered inconsistent and possibly a reflection of some conflict in their thinking on just how they do view people.

Only one priest spoke of lack in material opportunities as having spiritual value. He indicated that persons who have

undergone self-sacrifice but yet have continued in a strong faith should be assisted even more than those who have not held to their faith.

The priests felt that one of the primary purposes of St. Vincent de Paul work is to enrich the spiritual lives of the volunteers. The work was described by all as a "corporal work of mercy". Implied in this description is that the volunteers have mercy on those who are poor, as if they are in some state of sin. No priest spoke of people in need as being in sin but this description of the work done indicated that there may be some thinking of equating poverty with sin, although this was not conclusive.

All of the priests who were interviewed recognized their limitations in counseling work and were agreed that referrals to Catholic Social Service should be made in cases with emotional and personality problems. Most were critical of the profession of social work for not taking spiritual problems into account and so frequently sanctioning divorce, birth control, and other controversial solutions to problems without evaluating spiritual implications. These comments were not directed to Catholic Social Service but to the profession as a whole. Six of the nine priests complained of poor follow-through in referrals made to Catholic Social Service, and three felt that some people are "caseworked" but aren't really helped. By this latter point was meant that often only direct advice is needed when caseworkers attempt

involved therapy. Implied here seemed to be the consideration that many people can change by willing to do so and often only direct advice is needed to precipitate this. One parish has become so discouraged with social workers' handling of cases that it has asked a private psychiatrist to come in periodically and work with parishioners. This discouragement was not with social work therapy as much as in the delay and waiting prisoners have had to go through before they can receive help from social service agencies.

There were two interviews, not originally planned in the research design, with the spiritual directors and advisors of the bonding and limit particular councils of "St. Vincent de Paul's". These were revealing in that recent trends and thinking of the Society were clarified.

In closing, the Catholic Social Service Bureau grew out of the St. Vincent de Paul Society. The charity organization learned after being in operation for some time that all problems referred to them could not be handled by volunteers but required professional caseworkers. The need led to the establishment of Catholic Social Service. This tie has made a close relationship between the organization and Catholic Social Service with a free flow of exchange in referrals and consultation. Another interesting point is that lay volunteers are being exposed to sixteen week training sessions in social work techniques. Also, problem areas are being identified and special committees are being set up to handle these

difficulties. For instance, a real estate committee composed of men who have had experience with this help families with purchasing, selling, or meeting payments on real estate. Another committee operates in helping people find employment. The Lansing Council takes a "total-community" philosophy, expressing the philosophy that their service does not only help Catholics in need but extends into the total community to meet broader social problems. The Council feels it is unique in some of these developments, although these trends seem to be present in other communities.

In contrast to Lansing, the Flint Catholic Social Service Bureau did not grow out of "St. Vincent de Paul" but from the Catholic League of Women. Partly because of this difference of origin there appears not to be as close a tie between the organizations. Nevertheless there is exchange of referrals and a consensus of opinion that "St. Vincent de Paul's" is an important community resource to meet material needs of a temporary nature. Due to lack in finances the greatest concentration of service has been in establishing stores or clothing bureaus. Future hopes are to establish a summer camp for children and other services. Training of volunteers is also considered important in Flint. But due to the shortage of trained social workers to extend their time for such sessions, training programs are infrequent. Particular Council meetings to consist of information periods where a guest speaker talks on some social work techniques that volunteers

may use in their work. Because of this shortage of social workers, there is increasing awareness and respect of the role volunteers can play in social welfare, and hopes are that an even closer relationship between Catholic Social Service and St. Vincent de Paul Society will result.

Results of Interviews with Caseworkers

Of all nine caseworkers interviewed only one spoke of taking into account spiritual factors in determining who should receive help. This caseworker went on to describe persons seeking assistance as often being incapable of improving because of weaknesses in character and moral adequacy. This inadequacy he thought was frequently rooted in an individual's desire not to do better and unwillingness to make effort. He recognized possible emotional or social pathology but was more explicit in describing free will as being involved in his view of man. This caseworker had the least professional training of all those interviewed. He had a B.A. degree in social science and only a few years of social work experience. He felt his opinion came out of experience in working with people. Personal and educational experience seemed to account for, at least, part of his response.

The remaining eight caseworkers indicated that they attempt to ascertain what psycho-social problems are behind the request for assistance. If environmental help seems the primary need or the only expressed need with which the client

wants help, they can make the referral to "St. Vincent de Paul's."

"St. Vincent de Paul's" was seen by all the caseworkers as a source for temporary help. Referral to the organization is usually made only if public assistance is not available or if the client is not eligible for other sources of welfare.

Six of the nine interviewed felt that if spiritual counseling is needed this should be handled by "St. Vincent de Paul's" and is not within the realm of social work function. The interviewer obtained through questioning that these six were Catholics and came from solid Catholic backgrounds. They seemed to have deeply rooted respect for the role of religion in life. The other three of the nine interviewed were not explicit in seeing spiritual counseling as a function of "St. Vincent de Paul's". They recognized the possible need in some cases but were outspoken in maintaining that St. Vincent de Paul Society should be concerned with material assistance. Two of these were non-Catholics and the other, while Catholic, was quite critical of the volunteers' techniques as being more religious than social work oriented. This criticism was based on "poor experiences" the caseworker has had with "St. Vincent de Paul's". Thus, divergence of response among caseworkers seemed to be largely accounted for by educational and/or personal experiences.

Some of the caseworkers felt that closer contacts should

be kept with priests if continued casework were accepted by the client, so the priest might intervene with guidance in spiritual problems. This, however, was considered ideal and not a necessity to improve client functioning. The fact is that the shortage of caseworkers and time makes follow through in such areas as religious need below optimum. Also religious need usually is quite secondary to psycho-social problems, according to the caseworkers. In other words, implied here was the thinking that help does not have to consist of improving one's relationship to God.

Prolonged dependency upon "St. Vincent de Paul's" help was not thought to be based on sin or not choosing good over evil. The only caseworker who implied such a possibility was the one mentioned earlier. The concept of sin was not offered by any caseworker directly, nor was the description "works of mercy" used. Environmental circumstances or personality difficulties were used to explain chronic dependency.

No caseworker stated that lack of material help has any real value toward making people improve. Neither was self-sacrifice seen as virtuous. Again one caseworker implied this, but most saw lack of resources as a limitation to one's ego strength to solve problems.

Of all non-Catholic social workers interviewed, little attitude of religious and professional values was present in their thinking. Among those caseworkers who were Catholic, responses about divorce, birth control, etc. indicated that

they are aware of value differences. When asked how they saw their roles as Catholics and professional caseworkers, all felt these roles must be kept differentiated. If in helping persons, alternatives with which the caseworker doesn't agree are accepted by the client, work must be done within the client's choice. At times there were indications that this role differentiation was not as clear cut as the caseworkers would liked to have them be, but these questions asked did not ascertain any particular conflict in roles.

When asked to evaluate St. Vincent de Paul Society, caseworkers gave further evidence that there are some basic assumptions distinguishing modern social work thinking and St. Vincent de Paul's. The following are the criticisms caseworkers had of the Society.

1. Primitive techniques are sometimes used by volunteers.
2. More training programs are needed to orient volunteers on modern methods of handling people.
3. Religion should not be emphasized as much in giving people assistance.
4. Volunteers often think of charity as giving money and mere material assistance without considering that this may be fostering dependency and not alleviating the basic problem.
5. St. Vincent de Paul Society looks at everyone as being the same and do not consider cultural or personality factors.

It was originally hoped that nuns who were also case-workers might be interviewed as a test for possible conflict in thinking regarding men. However, only one nun was available and responses that were offered indicated a thorough orientation to modern social work and a sensitivity to psycho-social involvement in problems. This seemed partly accounted for by many years of experience. Also having been under close supervision by a trained worker, much of her thinking seemed to reflect what had come out of supervisory conferences. Regardless, her responses did not differ from the other Catholic caseworkers.

Table V. Type of education of priests interviewed.

0	Seminary training.
2	Seminary training and professional social work degrees.
1	Seminary training and exposure to European religious order that carried out charity work.
11	Total priests

Table VI. Type of education of caseworkers interviewed.

7	Professional social work degrees.
1	Undergraduate degree in social science.
1	Convent training and undergraduate degree in social science.
9	Total caseworkers.

V. CONCLUSIONS

Based on this exploration of literature and examination of referral procedures among caseworkers and priests certain conclusions can be made.

1. St. Vincent de Paul Society is an extension of Catholic charities and is partly centered in the parish community. It is composed of volunteer laymen whose purpose is to carry out charitable works of a temporary nature both in the parish and total community. Its organization parallels from the local to international level with allegiance to the Roman Catholic Church and based philosophically in Catholicism.
2. St. Vincent de Paul Society grew out of the charity originally done by Father Vincent de Paul and continued by a small band of students in France under the guidance of Fr. Pierre Caenon during the nineteenth century. The historical setting was one of political chaos and was deeply rooted in religious tradition and thinking. The concept of charity was greatly tinged with religion. In fact, it was spiritual devotion that motivated Caenon and led to the formation of St. Vincent de Paul Society. Modern social work, on the other hand, came much later although influenced

by the charity of Fr. Vincent. With the growth of psychoanalysis, social work took on this approach of dealing with people and still finds this thinking most useful today.

3. The philosophy permeating St. Vincent de Paul Society at the time of its foundation has not changed substantially and contrasts with modern social work on certain basic concepts regarding man. The body of this paper defines these differences in more detail but the basic distinctions are in respect to the nature of man, the concept of sin, free will, judgment of value systems, purpose and goals, role of human suffering, the family as an institution, and the metaphysical reality of the intervention of God.
4. Much of the discussion and criticism of St. Vincent de Paul Society can be accounted for in part, by the different assumptions which are made about man and society. Basic to religion is the assumption of God's intervention in the world. As a result goals and purposes are directed to this organization's interpretation of what this intervention means. This is quite opposite from modern social work whose goals are to alleviate social ills and are not related to metaphysical intervention.

8. The philosophies of modern social work and the St. Vincent de Paul Society are not found to any marked extent in referral procedures to this Society. Both caseworkers and priests refer on the basis of need and differences of philosophy are not present in their handling of clients to a significant degree. However, there are differences on how they view people. Priests make certain spiritual considerations in evaluating need. This seems related to the concept of man as having a metaphysical entity. Also most priests demand some self-improvement from recipients and indicate that free will is at work in their concepts of behavior more than do caseworkers. Generally caseworkers do not make spiritual evaluations which seems to reflect a more bio-social concept of man. Spiritual growth of both volunteer workers and of recipients is the purpose and goal of "St. Vincent de Paul's" according to priests. This view is seen by most caseworkers as helping social ills and as one of the many community resources to refer people. There is some evidence among priests that poverty may be equated with moral or spiritual weakness, whereas, caseworkers see this as lack of personality growth or deprived environmental circumstances. This is thought to reflect, once more, the degree of free

will accepted by priests but not by caseworkers and indications of differences in their concepts of man. Also, there are differences in acceptance of judgments on client behavior, with priests thinking change is possible through greater client effort while caseworkers see therapy more as the need. Priests' criticisms of social work are centered on social work therapy as often not being needed. Some criticize social workers for imposing controversial solutions on clients which often opposes the will of God. Caseworkers on the other hand, criticize St. Vincent de Paul work because of its punitive techniques, lack of social work skills, too much emphasis on religion, lack in recognition of personality weakness, and of looking at all people as having the same ability to improve themselves. The evaluation of social work and St. Vincent de Paul Society made by priests and caseworkers, respectively, pointed out further the differences in emphasis of free will, their concepts of man, and the difference in goals of each's approach in helping people.

6. The responses of caseworkers and priests seemed to fall along a continuum with extreme social work and religious views at each end. The majority tended to group in the middle with differences in degree of

orientation toward their particular conceptual framework, that is, with priests representing a more religious orientation as opposed to caseworkers leaning toward social work concepts. Where extreme responses were given, education and environmental past experience seemed to account for this. There is some indication that when caseworkers and priests are exposed to both religious and social work ways of viewing people there is some lack of certainty within themselves on just how they do see people. In other words, possible conflict in values is evident, although far from conclusive.

7. From interviews with spiritual directors of Particular Councils in two cities there seems to be increased awareness of the need to expose St. Vincent de Paul Society to more modern social work techniques. Training sessions, establishment of committees and programs around broader community problems are examples of this. Also, among priests there tends to be considerable perceptiveness of emotional problems and need to refer people for professional help. All of those priests who were interviewed showed a willingness to make such referrals although there were differences on just what constitute emotional difficulties. The fact that one priest engages the services of a

psychiatrist gives further support to the heightened awareness of psychological factors in behavior.

3. Although the purpose of this project is not to make particular recommendations as to ways philosophical differences can be reconciled, certain suggestions can be made as to the need for further research and closer communication between these helping approaches. Firstly, not only are training sessions important for volunteers but sessions among priests and caseworkers as referral sources may improve understanding. Secondly, courses which are offered on counseling techniques should be utilized more by priests. Thirdly, while psychoanalytic techniques are objectionable in many religious circles much of the disagreement is due to misunderstanding. Further reading and scrutiny of literature may clarify points of difference and similarity. Fourthly, many of the philosophical differences pointed out in this study also hold true in relation to other religious groups and some of the same need to improve communications between them and modern social work would apply. Fifthly, further research as to possible conflict of values within caseworkers and clergy needs to be made. Such a question as how conflicts influence treatment procedures needs answering, hopefully, to help therapists

gain more self-awareness in treatment and a closer understanding of religious and social work concepts. And finally, research in the area of what happens to recipients after a referral is made to the volunteers may answer certain questions. Are people really treated differently because volunteers feel clients are "spiritually weak"? What techniques are used which caseworkers feel are punitive?

The findings of this project do verify the study focus that there are philosophical differences between the St. Vincent de Paul Society and social work. However, the results do not substantiate the contention that these differences are reflected in the handling of referrals. There are differences between priests and caseworkers regarding their concepts of people with problems, but in making referrals both largely refer on the basis of need.

The purpose of this project is to point out in a relatively clear manner some of these philosophical differences. It is not designed to find similarities, but rather to show that some basic assumptions regarding man may account for part of the criticism between St. Vincent de Paul Society and modern social work. If this paper makes the point that before there can be criticism there must be an understanding of each group's assumptions its purpose is fulfilled.

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