



The Holy See

***ADDRESS OF THE HOLY FATHER PAUL VI
TO THE PARTICIPANTS IN THE SPECIAL
WORLD CONFERENCE ON FUTURES RESEARCH****

Thursday, 27 September 1973

It is a pleasure for us to meet today those taking part in the Special World Conference on Futures Research and to thank the President for his kind words. We extend to all of you warm greetings.

We are aware of the general theme of the Conference: the study of man and his future, with special reference to the problems affecting man in his specific nature, problems which for this very reason are difficult and delicate ones. As scholars and qualified sociologists, you are in a position to offer the coming generations authoritative perspectives of development, and to contribute to the improvement of human life. Having previously examined the various aspects of man's future-economic, demographic, cultural, technological and so on, this time you have addressed yourselves to the values which man, as a rational being, bears within himself and which he strives to bring to full realization.

In this field the Church, as the bearer of a transcendent and revealed doctrine, certainly has something to say. She already possesses a science concerning future and final realities, the science of eschatology, and she continually urges her children to study the sublime truths which it embodies, so that they may prepare themselves for the final and decisive meeting with the Creator. Eschatology, however, is concerned with a future that lies beyond space and time. Your own studies are concentrated on the development of this present world. Yet there is no contradiction between the two forms of research, and indeed the Church is herself deeply aware of the problems of the temporal and earthly future. By reason of her experience stretching back two thousand years she too is an expert on mankind, and it is her wish to be present in this branch of research. She cannot of course offer technical solutions to problems, but when it is a question of man as the bearer of spiritual and moral values she willingly encourages those men of science who work for man's development in the future. We praise you, therefore, for your commitment to the search for a future that is better and more human.

This search involves certain sectors of special interest. In the first place, there is the human personality; it would seem essential today to take account of that personality, not in opposition to, but in coordination with technical progress. This will contribute towards a fuller and harmonious development of man, who must be helped to achieve the fullness of his psychological and spiritual potentialities, as an individual, and in the context of the family.

Then there are nations, especially developing nations: they must be respected and given effective aid for their full flowering, and this in order also to safeguard that other transcendental human value-peace. Finally there is the problem of the defence of the human environment, which today is more and more endangered. The earth which the Creator gave in trust to man must be fit to live in, a worthy home for the whole of human society.

We know that these points which we have passed in rapid review are already part of your programme of research. We wish you well in your work, which is both forward-looking and courageous. You are pioneers, blazing a trail for future generations. We do not doubt that your commitment will be fruitful and appreciated, and we invoke upon your labours the abundant favours of Almighty God.

**Insegnamenti di Paolo VI, vol. XI, p.896-897;*

ORa n.41 p.2.