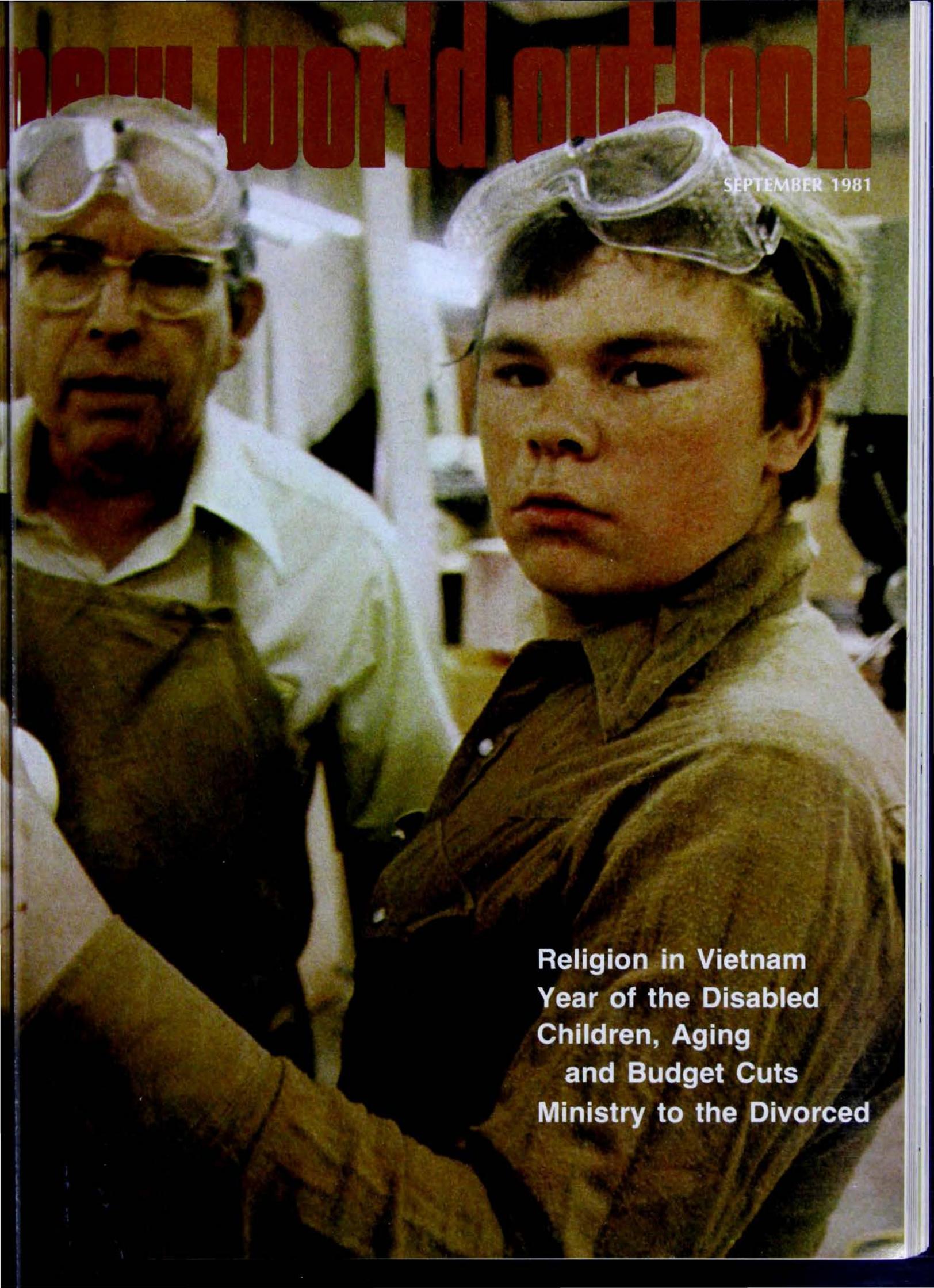


new world outlook

SEPTEMBER 1981



Religion in Vietnam
Year of the Disabled
Children, Aging
and Budget Cuts
Ministry to the Divorced

new world outlook

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COVER

Boy from Intermountain Deaconess Home for Children,
Helena, Montana, in shop class
John C. Goodwin Photograph

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MISSION MEMO

News and Analysis of Developments in Christian Mission

September, 1981

Poland. Material aid assistance to Poland from the World Council of Churches from December 1980 to August 1981 has amounted to one million and ninety-six thousand dollars. It is likely that there will be need for a similar amount in the eight-month period up to and including April 1982 since the food shortages in Poland remain serious....In another development, Church World Service has asked churches and agencies to contribute toward a cash sum for flood relief in China. Since the Chinese government has a policy of not appealing for international relief but accepting aid and since the Chinese churches are not in a position to channel such aid, this contribution will be made through the League of Red Cross Societies and is expected to be made in early September.

British Methodists. During its Conference in Norwich July 3-10, British Methodists moved a step closer to church union by giving approval to a "Covenanting Scheme" with four other denominations--the Church of England, United Reformed Church, Churches of Christ, and Moravian Church. By 1985, if all partners approve, a covenant would be signed providing for each denomination to recognize the others' members and ministers, share fully in Holy Communion, and develop methods for joint decision making. Each denomination is at a different stage of the approval process. The proposals now go to Methodist district synods, circuits and local churches for study and comment, to be reported back in 1982. To make the churches more similar, the Methodist Church is giving thought to establishing an order of bishops, receiving the historic episcopate presumably from the Church of England....In other actions, Conference voted to establish a home mission program to move personnel and finances to the cities and places where the poor live; set aside \$100,000 a year for three years for work in multiracial areas; and installed Rev. John Newton, superintendent of the West London Mission, as president.

Taxes and Budget Cuts. Congressional action to allow taxpayers taking the so-called standard income tax deductions to claim additional credit for charitable contributions should have a positive effect on such giving, according to the Rev. Ewing T. Wayland, general secretary of the UMC General Council on Finance and Administration. "People who use the short form for income tax reporting should have an additional incentive for giving to their church and other charities", he said, and it reverses the recent trend to increase the automatic deduction which lessened incentives for charitable giving....The need for such giving has been highlighted by a recently-completed survey of the effect of budget cuts on UM-related agencies which shows that for some 95 reporting agencies \$18 million worth of local programming will be threatened by Federal budget reductions. Largest impact will be

in Title XX funding (\$7.2 million) with other severe cuts in the school lunch and food nutrition program, Comprehensive Employment and Training Act and Child Care Feeding. National Division staff executive Robert Harman estimates that for the UMC to replace the programs surveyed, it would have to increase World Service Giving to the General Board of Global Ministries by 150%...Church periodicals got an unexpected reprieve when Congress decided not to cancel a second-class postal subsidy for non-profit publications but to continue a scheduled phase-out of the subsidy. The outright cancellation asked for by the Reagan Administration would have doubled mailing costs on October 1 and forced many publications to go out of business. The reprieve is temporary as funds for the subsidy were appropriated only through 1982.

Missionaries. The first UM couple to volunteer for service in Somalia refugee camps are there on short-term assignments. Walter A. Mason, Jr., is working for six months at Ali Matan on water supply, sanitation and construction of pre-fab housing; his wife, Mona Mason, is serving for three months as a nurse. There are about 30,000 refugees at the camp but they continue to stream in from the Ogaden region of Ethiopia. There are no permanent buildings at the camp, where the temperature often reaches 125 degrees and the wind blows the sand everywhere. The Masons were formerly World Division missionaries in Zaire and Nigeria....Twenty-eight young people who will serve in the United States under the US-2 program of the National Division completed their orientation in Washington, D.C., August 13 and have begun a variety of jobs such as social work, communication, teaching, recreation and community in mission programs throughout the country for the next two years....Four Swiss mission workers have been serving in the area around Calvary UM Church in West Philadelphia. Sponsored by an ecumenical consortium in Switzerland, including the Methodist Church, each volunteer pays his own transportation and receives a subsistence payment from the consortium. This is the first group to work in the United States.

Satellite TV. United Methodism will have its first regularly scheduled satellite television program beginning this month as part of an ecumenical series. "Spotlight on Mission", the UM series, will be shown on the second Sunday of each month, beginning Sept. 12. A 30-minute program with a magazine format will be telecast at 9 A.M. EDT over the Satellite Program Network and at 8 P.M. over the Christian Media Network. Executive producer is Beverly J. Chain, ECD staff executive. Programs are not copyrighted and may be recorded for any use in local churches. Other denominations in the satellite consortium are the American Baptist Churches in the U.S.A., the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), the Episcopal Church, the United Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A. and the Association of Regional Religious Communicators.

ERA. As the home stretch nears for ratification of the Equal Rights Amendment, public support is greater than at any time since 1975, according to a Gallup Poll released in August. Backers now number 63 percent of those over 18 who have heard of the E.R.A.; the previous high point was 58 per cent. Most of the increased support came from women, who were earlier less likely than men to back the amendment; the percentages are now about equal. Opponents numbered 32 per cent of those polled.

Deaths. Clara Johnson, a retired UM deaconess with 29 years of active service, died July 15 in Cincinnati, Ohio...Duong Trong Lam, 27, a Vietnamese community worker for Pine UM Church in San Francisco, was shot and killed near his home on July 21. The assassin was reported to be another young Vietnamese man. Lam had graduated from Oberlin College in 1976, worked in several refugee-related programs and served for three years as director of the Vietnam Youth Development Center sponsored by Glide UM Church. Surviving are his father and an older sister...Retired UM Bishop J. Waskom Pickett, 91, died August 17 in Columbus, Ohio. He served for 46 years in India as a missionary and bishop and was a well-known author and student of mass evangelism. Consulted by both Gandhi and Nehru, he advised in the preparation of the Constitution of India; upon partition and the resulting violence, he organized the Christian Relief Committee, saving the lives of thousands of Hindus, Muslims and Sikhs. He organized the United Christian Mission to Nepal. Upon his retirement, he served as evangelism consultant for the Board of Missions of the then Methodist Church and as professor of missions at Boston University. Surviving is his widow, Ruth, and four children: Douglas Robinson, Elizabeth (Mrs. Henry A. Lacy), Margaret (Mrs. John Sagan) and Miriam (Mrs. William E. Gould)...Mario Saffi, 72, president of the Methodist Church in Italy 1958-74 and president of the Federation of Protestant Churches in Italy, 1967-73...Lois H. Stair, 58, the first woman elected moderator of the United Presbyterian General Assembly in 1971 and active in United Presbyterian and ecumenical activities, died July 13 in Deerfield Beach, Fla., of cancer. She is survived by her husband and two sons...Grace Gatewood (Mrs. Charles) Whitehead, a retired UM deaconess with 39 years of active service, died July 16 in Houston, Texas...Hachiro Yuasa, 91, chairman of the board of trustees and first president of International Christian University, Tokyo, Japan, died in Kyoto on August 15. A well-known entomologist, he became president of Doshisha University in Kyoto in 1935 but was forced to resign two years later because of his opposition to militarism. He left Japan and spent World War II in the U.S. Repatriated in 1946, he resumed the presidency of Doshisha until ICU was founded in 1949; served as its president until his retirement in 1961 and as chairman of the board ever since. He is survived by his son, director of the British Leprosy Mission in Asia.

World Methodists. A number of United Methodists were installed in leadership posts as the World Methodist Conference concluded its meeting July 28 in Honolulu. Bishop William R. Cannon, Raleigh, N.C. was elected chairman of the World Methodist Council Executive Committee, succeeding the Rev. Kenneth G. Greet of England; John R. Harper, Philadelphia, Pa., was reelected treasurer and the Rev. Joe Hale, Lake Junaluska, N.C., was reelected general secretary. Included on the eight-member presidium were Marta Jan Burke, Miami, Fla.; Bishop Dwight E. Loder, Columbus, Ohio, and Bishop Herman Sticher, Frankfurt, West Germany. New officers elected by the World Federation of Methodist Women at its earlier meeting in Honolulu were Oknah Kim Lah, former national executive of the Girl Scouts of Korea, president; Priscilla Peters, principal of Lucie Harrison Girls High School, Lahore, Pakistan, vice-president; Vera Dowie, active in church and women's organizations in New Zealand, secretary; and Edith M. Loane, a clinical psychiatrist of County Tipperary, Ireland, treasurer.

YMCA. Five world issues--peace, poverty, human rights, social and political pressures, and the search for community, were a major part of the meeting of the council of the World Alliance of YMCAs in Estes Park, Colorado, July 18-26. Approximately 850 staff and volunteers from 78 countries attended; Scottish teacher and writer James Love was elected alliance president. In an address on the "search for

community", Rev. William Sloane Coffin, Jr., of New York's Riverside Church, called for full equality of men and women and of homosexuals and heterosexuals. "Clearly, it is not Scripture that creates hostility to homosexuals, but rather hostility to homosexuality that prompts certain Christians to retain a few passages from an otherwise largely discarded law code", he declared. Alan Geyer, executive director of the Churches' Center for Theology and Public Policy in Washington said a "word too many Christians never want to hear (is that) a theology of peace must be grounded in theology of politics."

Iran. Nine more Baha'i leaders have been executed in Iran, according to the sect's U.S. headquarters in the U.S. in Wilmette, Ill. Killed by firing squad were seven local Baha'i leaders in Tabriz and two in Kashmer. This brings to over 70 the numbers of Baha'is who have been killed since the Iranian Revolution of October, 1979. They have been charged with various offences but Baha'i leaders charge that there is an organized attempt to wipe out a group regarded as heretical by Iran's ruling Shiite Muslims. The Baha'i movement began in Iran and there is a community there of some 500,000. Baha'is from around the world have appealed to the United Nations for help. "Unless immediate action is taken to alleviate the suffering of Baha'is there (in Iran), according to U.S. Baha'i secretary Glenford E. Mitchell, "the world will belatedly lament one more genocidal campaign."

War of the Mailgrams. No formal debate will take place between Rev. Jerry Falwell, head of Moral Majority, Inc., and Rev. Spurgeon M. Dunnam, III, editor of the United Methodist Reporter. Dunnam, reacting to Falwell's criticism of President Reagan's nomination of Judge Sandra O'Connor to the U.S. Supreme Court, fired off a challenge to debate issues such as abortion and the Human Life Amendment and the appropriate role of religious leaders in government appointments. He stated his conviction "that the Moral Majority has come to epitomize a type of political activity draped in religious terminology which I consider fundamentally at odds in many respects with the gospel of Jesus Christ." Falwell declined the offer, saying he did not feel Dunnam represented "a viable segment of Christendom" and "In spite of the fact that God has spoken to you, He has said nothing to me." Dunnam called the response "ironic but not really surprising" and "a type of victory-by-forfeit for the position I represent." The only clear winner in the exchange was Western Union, since all communications on both sides were sent by Mailgram.

Personalia. A joint task force of the General Boards of Church and Society and Global Ministries has been set up to establish a conciliation service and has begun to seek information on other conciliation services. Sally Curtis AsKew was elected to head the task force...Walter F. and Louise Durst, GBGM World Division missionaries, became the first Peace with Justice coordinators for the UM Southeastern Jurisdiction on September 1...Donald R. McKee will retire as treasurer and chief investment officer of the UM Board of Pensions on Dec. 31 after nearly 30 years of service... Samuel H. Moffett, a well-known United Presbyterian missionary in Korea, has been named professor of ecumenics and mission at Princeton Theological Seminary...Waldron Scott, general secretary of the World Evangelical Fellowship, will become president of American Leprosy Missions on Sept. 1.

EDITORIALS

WHATEVER HAPPENED TO LABOR DAY?

For most Americans, Labor Day has come to mean the end of Summer as Memorial Day has come to symbolize its beginning. This might seem to be the natural fate of holidays, with most of us leaving the parades and ritualistic tributes to interested groups.

And yet, this particular Labor Day one wonders whether this is a sufficient explanation. Not only is this the centennial of the beginnings of the organization of the AFL-CIO (and only one year away from the centennial of the first unofficial celebration of Labor Day) but it comes at a time when labor unions are at a low ebb in popularity.

As this is written, the Federal government seems in the process of not only breaking the strike of air traffic controllers but of firing all its members and dismantling the union itself. What is more, it is doing this to widespread public approval and with only ritualistic protests from organized labor itself.

The question here is not the rights and wrongs of this particular dispute. One can feel that the officers and members of PATCO are giving a textbook demonstration on how not to do things and still see important public questions being ignored. What are the rights of public employees? If strikes are illegal, what economic leverage do such employees have and what mechanisms are needed to resolve intractable disputes? Can the government really function as an interested party and as disinterested law enforcer at the same time?

These questions are hardly being raised. They are certainly not being raised by those churches who have a long history of sympathy to labor.

Methodism, to begin at home, has such a history both in Britain and in the United States. In Britain, indeed, the history of Methodism and the labor movement and the Labor Party are intertwined. Even today, the head of the Labor Party owes many of his social views to coming from a prominent Methodist family.

In the U.S., one need only invoke the names of men like Frank Mason North, Herbert Welch, Francis J. McConnell and G. Bromley Oxnam to recall their strong advocacy of organized labor.

More recently, the churches have been strong supporters of Cesar Chavez and the United Farm Workers Union and of workers at J.P. Stevens seeking to organize.

And yet, the old alliance often seems more pro forma than vital.

As the union movement in this country seemed to grow more successful, much of the moral fervor it used to attract grew attached to the civil rights movement, the anti-Vietnam War movement and to oppression of women and Third World nations.

It is no secret that much of organized labor's leadership grew preoccupied with anti-communism to the extent of working closely with government organizations, including the Central Intelligence Agency, and that they were among the most persistent supporters of U.S. policy in Vietnam. Many are still suspicious of Third World countries as competition for American workers.

To complicate the matter, there has been a move by some church workers to unionize. This raises a completely different set of questions which the church and its employees need to address but it has not helped revive the old church-union alliance.

The new factor in this equation is the Reagan administration. Can Ronald Reagan drive together that which history has caused to drift apart? Not we suspect without some hard rethinking on every side. Are there not significant questions of justice even among the middle class in an affluent society? Has rhetoric about the poor and the oppressed become a new form of romanticism? On the other hand, has concentration on economic issues by labor blunted its social vision so that the only interest it represents is self-interest? Has suspicion of the Third World and of liberation movements as "Communist-inspired" become the higher form of bigotry and self-deception?

These are hard questions but frequently hard questions are the only ones worth asking. Certainly, if we do not ask them of ourselves, other people will be only too glad to ask and answer these and even harder questions in a way that we will find distasteful.

It should be noted that the purpose of any such questioning is not to revive a coalition but to strengthen our own

commitment to moral values and to truth. Nonetheless, both organized labor and the churches might find that the values that drew them together are still operative. Then Labor Day might again be a day to truly celebrate.

INCHING TOWARD ARMAGEDDON

August 6, the anniversary of the bombing of Hiroshima, does not seem to be a very good day for Presidents of the United States to display their sensitivity to world fears about nuclear war. In 1980, on that date, President Carter unveiled his presidential directive 59 or "limited nuclear war doctrine." The resulting outcry can not have made too much of an impression in Washington since on that very date this year President Reagan decided to begin assembling and stockpiling neutron weapons.

The revulsion aroused by those developments is not simply a matter of bad timing. In both cases, the U.S. government seems to be inching closer to regarding nuclear warfare as acceptable. And that is something to cause quite a bit of revulsion indeed.

The Reagan administration seems unable to make any connection between actions like this and the rise in what it labels "neutralist" sentiment in Europe. Indeed, there is a rise in fear and anger about the prospect of the arms race. This is occurring in many nations whose citizens feel trapped between the two superpowers.

Such fear and anger may indeed trigger calls for unilateral disarmament or lead to an imbalance in the deadly balance of arms that we have learned to live with. It will certainly do so if both the U.S. and the USSR are perceived as not caring about the informed opinions of mankind.

This is where the call of people like George Kennan for reductions in nuclear weapons and the criticisms of military analysts such as James Fallows are so useful. The churches should add to them their own informed criticisms. Alan Geyer has said that "There was never a greater opportunity for churches to share in the non-governmental sector's responsibilities for disarmament" while adding that the opportunity has been largely neglected.

Everyone expects the churches to deplore armaments and they must. But they must also go beyond generalizations to informed critiques. Otherwise, we shall simply keep inching toward Armageddon.

"SCARS OF THE HEART" RELIGION IN VIETNAM

CHARLEY LERRIGO

The archbishop's villa in Ho Chi Minh City is a pleasant building, a graceful example of French colonial architecture on a tree-lined street. Inside, the spiritual leader of Roman Catholics in what used to be called Saigon spoke to the visiting group from Canada and the United States.

"There are not many big changes over the past five years," he began in a quiet voice. "The religious community has been able to carry on its normal activities because of the government's respect for freedom of religion."

Archbishop Nguyen Van Binh told his guests that the Catholic church in Ho Chi Minh City was growing. There were 10 new students in the seminary last year, he said. There was no shortage in his diocese of priests, nuns or brothers. The discussion went on for about 45 minutes before he report-

ed—in response to a question from the group—that roughly ten percent of the Catholic priests were still being kept in what the Socialist Republic of Vietnam calls "re-education camps."

If the two sets of facts sound contradictory—that a significant number of Catholic priests are political prisoners and that the church is growing—it is nonetheless an accurate indication of the religious situation in today's Vietnam. Christian and Buddhist leaders there claim that their communities are, at least, holding steady in numbers under the socialist regime. There is freedom of worship. Those religious persons who are politically flexible enough to adapt to the new socialist society have been able to lead productive lives.

At the same time, the article in the Vietnamese constitution which guar-

antees the "freedom to believe" also guarantees the "freedom not to believe." There are limits to what freedom of religion means under the Communist government. There are some similarities between the religious and the political situations, and there are, as one Buddhist put it, "scars on the heart." They are scars of war, of politics, and of a bitter mixing of religion and politics.

One estimate of the number of religious people in Vietnam comes from the Rev. Bui Hoang Thu, general secretary of the Protestant church in northern Vietnam. Pastor Thu says there are 10 million religious persons—that's out of a 52 million population. Sixty percent are Buddhist, 30 percent Catholic, and the rest belong to Protestant and other sects, he said. According to Pastor Thu, there

A Buddhist temple in Hanoi. Buddhist and Christian leaders say their communities are holding steady under socialism.



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are 10,000 Protestants in the north and 300,000 in the south.

Signs of Freedom

The signs of freedom of worship are many. On an impromptu visit to one northern village, the group I was with heard that 700 turned out to the Mass, and that most of the villagers were Christians. Buddhist leaders in the south report packed pagodas and the opportunity to train new monks. The weekday congregation at a Buddhist temple in Hanoi I visited was of respectable size; it included young and old, men and women.

"There are worship services on Sunday mornings, evangelistic services, Bible classes and prayer groups several evenings each week," reported Bill and Peggy Herod of Church World Service. They visited Vietnamese religious leaders in 1980. "Congregations are reported to be quite active and growing in numbers in a number of locations in the south. Observation would suggest that the church in the south continues to include persons of all ages and conditions . . ."

Government tolerance of religion shows in several ways. The government reportedly has helped rebuild some of the war damaged churches, and has now allowed the World Council of Churches to send funds for such reconstruction. In 1980, for the first time in decades, the Catholic bishops of both north and south were able to meet together and create their own organization. While the government did take over the schools, hospitals, orphanages and other social service agencies formerly run by the churches and pagodas, the programs reportedly are running effectively—with the help of some of the same workers.

Signs of Suffering

There are equally clear signs that the religious establishment has suffered. Some of that suffering was generated—no doubt with good intentions—by Western powers. With the defeat of the French and partition of the country in 1954, the Tin Lanh (Good News) Church in the north was stripped of important lay and clergy leadership as American missionaries encouraged the exodus of 20,000 Protestants to the south.

Also in 1954, the Vatican urged many of the one-million-plus Catholics in the north to go south; about 200,000 believers and 800 of the

"Out of 52 million, there are about 10 million religious persons, of whom 60 percent are Buddhist and 30 percent Catholic."



**“Among Protestants
there are perhaps
2000 believers
in the north
and 200,000
in the south.”**

1,100 clergy fled. The Vatican reversed its advice in 1975, encouraging all Vietnamese Catholic leaders to remain. But many southern Christians fled when the “liberation” came; and the southern Protestants were hurt by the departure of clergy and lay leaders. A more brutal toll was exacted by U.S. planes—some 480 churches were bombed in the north alone. The pastor of one of the northern churches to be repaired with the World Council funds still looks hurt and angry when he speaks of the death which rained down on “God’s temple.”

The socialist government also has hurt the churches. “There have been centuries of prejudice between Communism and Christianity,” said Archbishop Binh. “Those prejudices can’t disappear in a short period.” There are those government officials, he says, who “do not understand...” meaning that they do not understand Catholics are “truly Vietnamese who love our country and wish to contribute to its development.”

The manifestation of those old suspicions can be seen in the number of Catholic priests in “re-education camps.” According to the archbishop, 200 of Vietnam’s 2000 Catholic priests were still being detained in April, 1981.

“A number of priests have been detained a little too long,” he said. On the hand, he continued, “there are a number of Catholics who have done things we can call reactionary.” The priests, he indicated, were primarily those who served as chaplains in the old South Vietnamese army.

Those priests, and the rest of the 20,000 persons in Vietnam’s re-education camps, got some outside support from an Amnesty International investigation in 1980. The Amnesty International report, released in June, 1981, reported that since discussions with the government, still more of those being held without trial have been released.

Leadership Training

Another example of Communist limits on religion is found in the restriction on leadership training. Archbishop Binh reported that in 1981, there were 70 seminarians in Ho Chi Minh City diocese; most of them entered the seminary after the 1975 liberation. That’s a positive sign. However, the government limits the number of persons who may enter seminary, and a government investi-



gation is made of seminary candidates. If there is no evidence of “reactionary activities,” the young man may begin his studies. In 1980, said the archbishop, 20 candidates were proposed in his diocese; all were approved. Pointing to Hungary’s lifting of numerical restrictions on seminarians, the archbishop hopes Vietnam will eventually remove its limitations.

The Buddhist leaders in the south say they have “total freedom” in the practice of Buddhism, and that even if the government objects to the background of one of their candidates for the priesthood, there is still a possibility that the candidate can continue if he is vouched for by local Buddhist leadership.

The Protestants lost their seminary when the Communists took over. At the close of the 1975/76 academic year, the Nha Trang Bible School had 120 students, according to one report. The school buildings and grounds went to the government—albeit in exchange for “more modest” facilities. Since that time, there has been no formal training center for Protestant clergy.

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While Bill and Peggy Herod found considerable "vitality" in the southern church during their 1980 visit, they said Protestants in the northern church "clearly represent a remnant of older persons, with few new converts or young leadership for the future." The Herods also believe the Protestant membership is much lower than the figures given by Pastor Thu. The Herods estimate 2,000 believers in the north and "at most" 200,000 in the south.

The Christian and Missionary Alliance, which was the main thrust for the Tin Lanh church when it began in 1911, suggests a still lower number. Robert Reed, a CMA executive in New York, reports that the number of baptized believers in 1973 (before the Communist victory) was 53,425 in the south. The Tin Lanh church does not practice infant baptism, so that represents adult membership. However Mr. Reed said that before 1975, CMA was able to count 483 congregations in the south; when the Thieu regime fell, he estimated, there were 400 congregations.

Political Conflicts

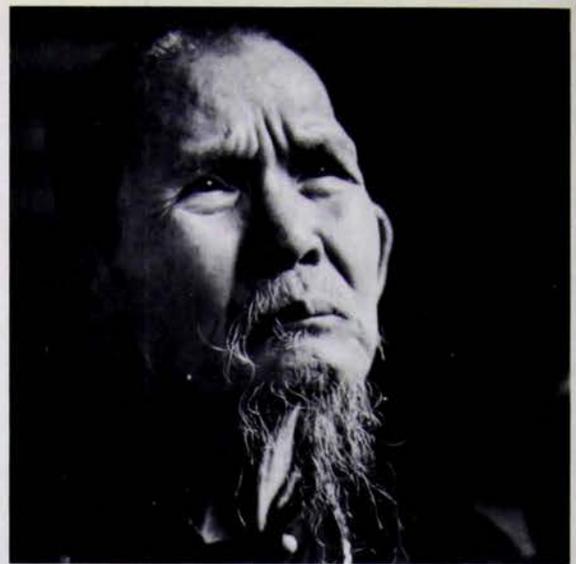
The Vietnamese government (and some independent observers) feel there are objective reasons to be suspicious of the church. The first major French intervention in Vietnam—the one that led to French control in the south—was in 1863, ostensibly for the protection of French Catholic missionaries and their converts.

Nor can there be much question that many Vietnamese Christians have been supporters of a Westernized, capitalist way of life—which as a matter of politics, economics and ideology—is opposed to socialist ways. It didn't help keep religion and politics separate in anybody's eyes when President Nixon chose Christmas 1972 as the time to start bombing Hanoi. Enough tonnage was dropped in North Vietnam during those twelve days of Christmas to equal a Hiroshima every two days.

"I do not know if Christ is good or bad because he lived in Israel and was born 20 centuries ago," wrote a Buddhist student to a Christian friend. "However, I know that Jesus entered Vietnam along with the artillery and bombs of the French. The result of that was the destruction of our homes and gardens, and the defoliation of our land...I cannot accept a kind of love



Top, A Roman Catholic church in Thanh Hoa province, 200 miles south of Hanoi. Kids play in front, a bomb is buried in the back yard. Bottom, the Tin Lanh (Good News) Protestant church in Hai Duong city near Haiphong, was one of the churches damaged by U.S. bombs in 1972 and is receiving funds for reconstruction from the World Council of Churches.



Roman Catholic Archbishop Binh, left, and a local priest in Ba Lang village.

Despite the bitter politics of decades of war, religion has not been wiped out in Vietnam.

which is so destructive and has left such a scar on my heart."

That "scar on the heart" is also felt by some Western Christians working in Vietnam during the U.S. war. Reflecting from a Mennonite tradition, James E. Metzler wrote in 1977 that the Mennonites in Vietnam, despite their historical pacifism, "never took a stance opposing warfare for the Christian...Full fellowship was given to members in the military...We had almost no contact with the Buddhist monks who opposed the war courageously. Nor did we attempt to seek out those who went to prison rather than to the army."

"Somehow," Mr. Metzler observed, "it seemed easier to associate with those who said 'Lord, Lord' while 'praying' for more bombs on Hanoi and to ignore those who may have done God's will without saying the right words." The Christians in Vietnam have a painful colonial legacy to overcome.

Asked what he felt necessary to make the Gospel relevant to his people, Archbishop Binh asserted that "there is no difference in the Gospel we preach here and that preached in any other country." But a number of Catholics are prejudiced against the Communists, he continued. "They believe the Communists to be the enemy. Therefore, we have to tell them that the Communists are not our enemy; they are our brothers and sisters."

The identification of Christianity with capitalism is no excuse for Communist repression of religion. Indeed, the group I was with discovered that some of the Buddhists—who opposed policies of the Thieu regime

and American occupation—also have challenged the present government—and no longer "wish to see Western visitors."

On the other hand, religion has not been wiped out in Vietnam, despite the bitter politics of decades of war. And U.S. citizens who say they believe in the unity of all mankind might do well to question whether current U.S. policies are helpful to those millions of believers still inside Vietnam.

The U.S. still maintains a trade embargo against the victorious Vietnamese and has broken off the normalization talks which started after the war. More telling than that, however, is the remark of John Holdridge, now assistant secretary of state for East Asia and the Pacific. In his confirmation hearing in 1981, Mr. Holdridge stated: "The goal of U.S. policy is to make the Vietnamese feel pain through maximum political and economic pressures." There was, an observer noted, no challenge from the Senators at the hearing to Mr. Holdridge's remark.

The Vietnamese people, religious and non-religious, say they want peace. An end to the bitterness of war. Archbishop Binh has pleaded to American Catholics and to American people "not to forget us." One appropriate question is whether the way to peace and reconciliation can come from U.S. policies calculated "to make the Vietnamese feel pain." ■

Charley Lerrigo, a writer and photographer for the General Board of Global Ministries, was a member of an independent study tour to the Socialist Republic of Vietnam in Spring, 1981.

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*In the February issue we looked at the effect
of federal budget cuts
on church run community centers.
What about residential child care
agencies and retirement homes?*



what happens if the money stops?

(PART II)

Charles E. Brewster

This spring three children were pulled out of the Spofford Home in Kansas City, Missouri, ahead of schedule because the state fears it will not have the money to pay for them if the proposed federal cutbacks go through.

At his annual conference Edwin C. Shumacher asked how much stake the Church still felt it had in providing residential treatment for emotionally disturbed children at his children's home in Binghamton, New York. Some eighty percent of his budget comes from the federal government and several children's agencies have already closed in his area.

At the Inter-Mountain Deaconess Home for Children in Helena, Montana, cottage director Jim Fitzgerald says that with a budget about forty-five percent dependent on the government it is "a little depressing and frustrating" to contemplate the future. "We don't have the money ourselves to do the job."

Directors of children's homes aren't the only ones who are worried. Recently managers of retirement homes and other long-term care facilities held a seminar in Washington called "School for Survival" where the mood reportedly was one of "somber problem solving." The director of the United Methodist-related Otterbein Home in Lebanon, Ohio, appeared before a subcommittee of the U.S. House of Representatives to plead with Congress not to slash federal funds for Medicaid.

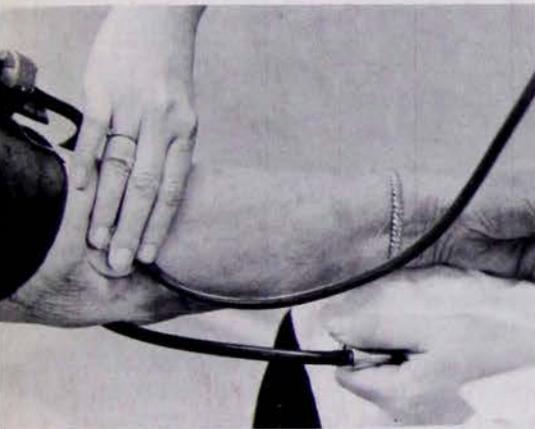
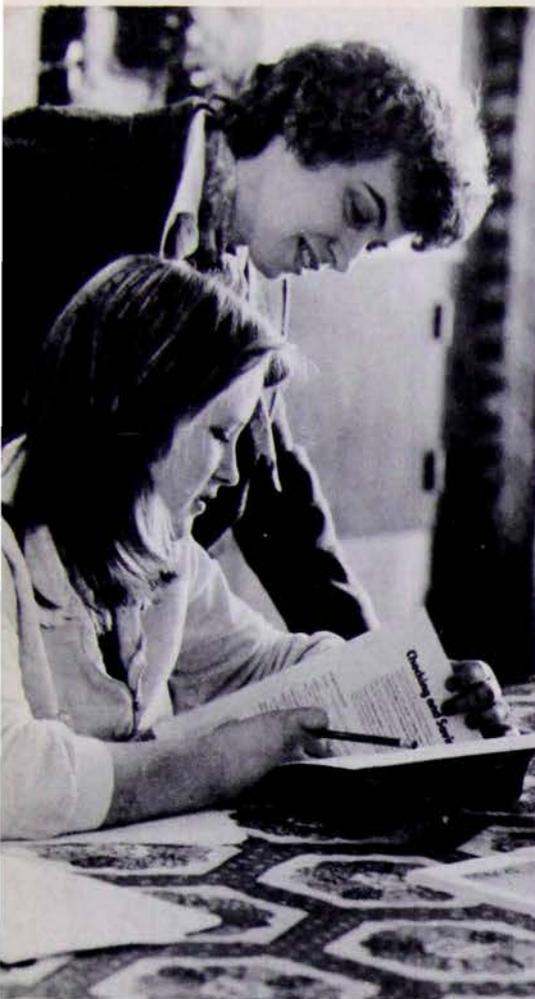
The Reagan Administration has asked Congress to consolidate some twenty six social programs previously administered by the federal government, to cut the total amount for those programs by twenty-five percent, and turn the rest over to the states in block grants. The President also wants a cap on escalating Medicaid expenditures—health services to the poor—and a reduction of \$1 billion in 1982

(out of a total of about \$35 billion) and \$5 billion in 1983.

Richard S. Schweiker, secretary of Health and Human Services in the new administration, charges that federal social programs have "taken off like a jet rocket" in recent years with enormously escalating costs that are a major cause of inflation. He has also cited the Medicaid program as one in which "the problem of fraud is significant."

The Administration believes that by shifting to block grants to the states and consolidating programs federal overhead costs will be slashed and duplication of programs reduced. Monitoring of how the money is spent will depend on reports by the states to the Department of Health and Human Services, not by direct federal oversight.

How much the total amount for social programs will end up being slashed by Congress is not known at this writing. But the basic idea of



Medical care in retirement homes (above) and some funding for child care agencies, such as the Deaconess Home for Children in Helena, Montana, will be affected.



consolidation of programs and block grants to the states appears to be written in stone as far as this Administration is concerned and there will definitely be large cutbacks. Fifty years of increasing federal responsibility for the nation's health appears to have come to an end, at least for now.

Feeling the Pinch

One irony of the plan is that facilities in states which have had a high commitment to group care services will feel the pinch more acutely than those in states which have not had that high a commitment.

In Pennsylvania, according to Kenneth Arthur, director of the UM Home for Children at Mechanicsburg, the proposed cutbacks will have "a devastating effect" because they will come on top of a thirty-five percent cutback last year. His home serves 35-40 children, primarily hyper-active and delinquent teenagers who are mostly referred by the county.

Arthur believes that with the forthcoming cutbacks children will not be referred to his home in the numbers they were before. "They will be out on the street." Already, some agencies in his area have closed.

In New York state, where there are approximately 120 child care agencies (two UM related), many have had to close or else merge in order to stay in existence. A relatively high priority for group care services also means costly certification requirements. Director Edwin Schumacher, who has 45 emotionally disturbed children in his Binghamton home as well as a group home for runaways, foresees a dilemma in which there is not enough money to hire the necessary staff and therefore fewer children will be allowed in under the certification requirements. The Binghamton home has been in operation since 1913 as a residential treatment center, with most children coming from New York city.

On the other hand, Beverly Cochran, Jr., at the United Methodist Children's Home in Decatur, Georgia, says the Reagan program "probably won't be any worse than it has been" because group care services haven't been a very high priority in Georgia. "Private agencies in Georgia have sort of been short-changed anyway even before the Reagan situation." In Georgia, the state ends up paying only about thirty percent of the costs for state-appointed children.

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or buildings," says Mr. Cochran, "the state pays in full the required costs, but not in group care services." In effect, private sources of funds pay twice—once for those who are non-state assigned, and then for the state-assigned who aren't fully paid for.

Kids Don't Vote

No matter how much the state has been concerned for group care services and who will feel the bite the most, directors of children's homes agree that in a block grant system they are going to lose out. "Kids don't vote," says Kenneth Arthur, "they can't lobby, so they will obviously be the ones to get the cuts."

Homes which are in the best position are those which offer a quality service with unique features. The Spofford Home in Missouri receives some sixty percent of its total budget in either state or federal-state money. Director John Steiner foresees fewer children being referred to his home, but because of the quality service offered by Spofford for severely emotionally disturbed children he doesn't expect the drastic effect anticipated by other homes in his area, some of which have already closed. Spofford even turns down some children who by their measurement aren't "disturbed enough" to require the individual one-on-one attention Spofford offers. But generally, says Steiner, "all child care agencies will be facing a severe cutback," no matter how much quality they have.

Part of the Reagan plan of slashing government expenditures is to turn the economy around and permit private philanthropy to regain its place in social welfare programs. It remains to be seen how much this will work, but already private philanthropic agencies have been deluged in some areas with grant applications. According to Steiner, foundations in Kansas City have had a 150 percent increase in requests.

At the Indiana United Methodist Children's Home in Lebanon, Indiana, director James E. Davis says that if the cuts came more slowly there might be a chance to recoup the difference. "But these cuts are coming much faster than we can ever get back," he says.

As for the church taking up the slack, it is very difficult for an agency dependent on government payments for sixty percent or more of the budget to turn to the church, he notes. Currently, about eleven percent of appor-

tionment income for the Lebanon home comes from the UMC. Of his approximately \$1 million budget, Davis figures that if the Administration's twenty-five percent slash goes through he may receive about \$300,000 of the approximately \$425,000 he has been receiving from a variety of government programs, meaning a loss of \$125,000. The Church can't be expected to make that up, especially when everyone else is also hurting.

When Binghamton, New York, director Edwin Schumacher asked his annual conference if the fiscal situation was such that the church should consider "getting out of this business" the answer, he says, was overwhelmingly No. "The church has a testimony to these youth. This is a mission field," they said. But the outlook for continuing is not sanguine.

Homes for the Aging

The situation is not quite as critical but is still serious for homes for the aging and long-term care facilities. According to Laurence F. Lane, director of Public Policy of the American Association of Homes for the Aging (AAHA), most are "rolling up their sleeves and digging in." For the most part the homes "still maintain a positive vision of human worth" and they believe that people will be willing to support that vision when they know the need.

Retirement homes are basically privately supported institutions, but many also have health care facilities or units. In 1965 Congress passed Medicaid to help the country's most destitute families get physical checkups, medical treatment, dental care, and other necessary health care. Forty-five percent of the total Medicaid population are children; but one in five older persons is also eligible for Medicaid.

Congress also passed Medicare for hospital care for everyone over 65. At the time, this was the most controversial subject in Congress. It was attacked as "socialized medicine" by Senator Everett Dirksen and Representative Charles Halleck on their famed "Ev and Charlie Show", as well as by the American Medical Association. But now it is Medicaid that is the target of the Administration's budget axe, while only minor alterations are being suggested for Medicare.

Homes for the aging which have taken on the social mission of serving persons in need have increasingly relied on the public sector, mainly Med-



A resident of the Brooks-Howell Home in Asheville, North Carolina (top) reads a newspaper in a less strenuous time for retirement facilities. (Bottom) Children sing along at the Sarah D. Murphy Home in Cedartown, Georgia. Home director John Johannaber says that there will be no on-campus school next year because of budget cutbacks by the state Board of Education.



Top, a youngster does clay modeling at the David and Margaret Home for Children in La Verne, California. Bottom, working on the school newspaper at the Deaconess Home for Children in Helena, Montana. Some budget cuts may affect funding for programs like this.

icaid, to support that service. However, in most cases Medicaid has not kept pace with the actual costs.

Mr. Joe Helms, who is president of the American Association of Homes for the Aging and director of the United Methodist-related Moody House in Galveston, Texas, says his home was "already hurting by Medicaid" because Texas has a re-imbursement rate which pays for only about half the actual expenses of Medicaid recipients. About 40 percent of the 200 persons in the health unit at Moody are eligible for Medicaid. "As costs go up, the state has not increased its reimbursement" and the result is "we take a licking on everyone to start with."

In the near term Mr. Helms is going to have to reduce the number of people he can serve on Medicaid. But in the long-term he sees the shift back to an emphasis on private philanthropy

as "not entirely a bad thing". Our greatest challenge, he notes, "is to keep our perspective on charitable service. If you are re-imbursed for charitable service then it is not really charity." However, he notes also that current tax laws do not encourage private philanthropy as much as they did in the past.

Until the Church and other private channels can gear up for increased giving, the institutions are going to be caught trying to make up the gap between declining federal dollars for Medicaid and increased costs for services. A recent survey by the UM Division of Health and Welfare Ministries showed that the average budget in long-term care facilities and homes was about twenty percent dependent on Medicaid and federal rent subsidies.

An Example at Otterbein

In March, Charles E. Dilgard, administrator of the UM-related Otterbein Home in Lebanon, Ohio, testified for the AAHA before the House subcommittee on Health and the Environment that a drastic slashing of federal funds for Medicaid might force many institutions to get out of the program entirely. This wouldn't be due to any indifference to the needs of the poor, he said, because many homes have been attempting to provide charity care long before Medicaid, but simply that continued participation in Medicaid would "threaten the financial viability of the home itself."

At Otterbein, of 323 residents in the nursing home areas 128 receive Medicaid assistance. Last year, Otterbein received \$1.2 million from Medicaid to assist these 128 people, which averaged to \$25.83 per person per day, or \$5.40 less than costs. This meant that Otterbein had to make up \$252,100 from benevolent funds to supplement the Medicaid program for these people. Mr. Dilgard calculated that if the Administration's projected cuts go through as planned and are passed on to Otterbein, the institution would be losing money at the rate of \$10.20 per Medicaid recipient per day by 1986, or \$476,600 per year.

Many experts foresee that if there is a "blockage" on placement of persons in nursing facilities because of a shortage of Medicaid funds, the backlog will show up in hospitals with people on Medicare. The costs are far higher in hospitals. In Ohio a patient place-

ment survey found 944 Medicare patients in 123 hospitals awaiting transfer to other facilities.

Apart from the Medicaid cuts, there is also considerable concern about proposed reductions in rent subsidies, construction assistance programs, and other federal housing efforts for the elderly, handicapped and low income people.

The American Association of Homes for the Aging has proposed a 25-point counter plan. In various ways these proposals would modify the reimbursement plan to the providers of services, establish nominal payments by recipients while providing catastrophic health protection for individuals in need, increase incentives for community involvement and private philanthropy, as well as seek a broader spectrum of types of facilities.

At the same time, the Association points out that just as America is "on the brink" of an explosive growth in the need for specialized living arrangements for an ever-increasing number of older people, the government is considering abrogating its promises to help provide those services. The government, says the Association, "must continue to be an active partner of the private sector in helping older Americans."

Who Fights Inflation?

Various polls suggest that the President is right in believing that the first priority for most Americans is curbing inflation. Some government entitlement programs have skyrocketed beyond any original expectations. But the impression is now growing among experts in both child care and care for the aging that the government's proposed cure for inflation is far too hasty and that those who are going to bear the brunt of fighting inflation are such persons as emotionally disturbed youth, teenage runaways, children of broken homes, as well as the needy sick among the nation's senior citizens. More than one observer has noticed that there are not many voters among this block of people.

When the President proposed some changes in Social Security he met a quick and overwhelming defeat in the Senate. It was not hard to figure out why. People on Social Security constitute a huge voting group. Thus far neither the Senate nor the House has shown a similar sensitivity to legislation that would affect child care and nursing facilities. ■

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AN INTERNATIONAL YEAR OF DISABLED PERSONS

Toby Gould

"I am 26 years old and disabled with Cerebral Palsy, which I have had since I was born. I can't walk or care for myself or talk clearly, but I can read, enjoy good food and music, and type a little bit.

"I have been a Christian all my life, and like very much to go to church to worship and hear about God's love. And I enjoy being with people, because most of the time I am by myself, or with my mother.

"But because I live in a wheelchair and there are difficult steps into the church, it is very hard for me to go there for worship.

"Our church had an improvement program this year and a ramp was on the list, to help people like me get into the church. But the ramp was removed from the list because it seemed too expensive where there are only two people in the congregation in wheelchairs. I am very discouraged. I sit home most of the time.

"The church helps many people in need. I hope it can help me feel a part of God's people. Life is hard, and often I feel alone and left out. But being with people who care about me really helps. I hope that more church people will understand how I feel and make me feel at home with them."

Kerry Moede

(Pictured above in wheelchair at meeting of the Consultation on Church Union.)

Kerry's story can cause an angry reaction. How can anyone be barred from hearing the Word of God and partaking of His sacraments? But there is a further tragedy, for that congregation has denied itself the opportunity of being enriched by the presence of Kerry. Unless those folks can change their perception of themselves, their buildings and their mission as a church, then those United Methodists cannot share in the faith that supports and sustains Kerry.

One in Ten

The statistics say *one in ten*. Out of every ten people in the world, one has a condition which is handicapping. NBC television aired a documentary concerning persons who have handicapping conditions and titled it: "The Largest Minority". The Carnegie Foundation's study on children with disabilities is called *The Invisible Minority*.

Statistics have two possible effects on most people. One is to become numbed by facts and to begin to look around for something more entertaining than a speech on injustice to people other than ourselves. The other effect is to become concerned, informed, indignant, angry, militant and empathetic, until the next totally just cause comes along.

The International Year of Disabled Persons gives us a chance to focus and,

at least for twelve months, sustain our concern. When we look at the story of one person our focus can be sharpened, our interest maintained.

The International Year of Disabled Persons is a personal time. It is personal for Kerry. The year will gain in meaning as it becomes personal for each of us. This international event will be measured in the changes that take place in each of us, changes in attitudes and changes in action. Many churches are taking this opportunity to look at themselves to see if they are meeting the needs of persons with handicapping conditions. These churches are becoming aware of the gifts of these persons so long ignored.

Some Church Actions

A congregation in California invited representatives from various community groups concerned with persons with particular impairments to speak to the ways in which that congregation could be more open to these people. In response that church has built ramps to all program areas of the church and added an assist to the sound system so that persons with hearing impairments can take part more fully in the life of the church.

A church in the mid-West has asked First UMC, Topeka, Kansas to help them design a respite care program similar to the once a week program in

Kansas. With volunteers, this congregation invites families of persons who need constant care to leave that family member supervised at the church for an evening so that a family can be released for a few hours from their often consuming responsibilities.

A youth group from the Rocky Mountain Conference is touring churches in the West and presenting an original play concerned with the need for the church to open its door to all persons.

Many annual conferences such as Mississippi, Central Pennsylvania and Northern Illinois are using the International Year as a time to begin conference task forces for Ministries with Persons with Handicapping Conditions. These conferences have seen the need for a conference-wide group to assist local churches in their efforts to be more inclusive. Highlighting Access Sunday as a means to recognize our need to include all persons in ministry, collecting resources for churches who wish to remove barriers which impede worshippers and providing workshops for concerned leadership in local churches are some of the mandates given these task forces.

A Checklist

What can you do? Here is a checklist of actions and attitudes that can make the International Year of Disabled Persons into a personal experience.

1. Watch your language. Have you ever heard hospital personnel refer to a patient as 'The Liver in room 350' or the 'Appendix in room 204'? Don't you want to walk up and say, these are people and not just physical problems. We, often unconsciously, do the same thing. We speak of *the* retarded, *the* blind, *the* deaf. At Salem Oregon Training Center, a group of clients were discussing attitudes, when a young woman said, "We are tired of being seen as the retarded, we are people first." Hence the term: Persons with Handicapping Conditions. I am first Toby Gould, a human being, not ankylosing spondylitis, a disease of the spine. It is difficult enough to live with the pain, the frustration and even the boredom of a condition that you did not choose, it is intolerable to wear that condition as a label so powerful that many people never see the person beyond the label. We are persons who are visually impaired or blind, we are persons who are hearing impaired or deaf, we are persons who are mentally retarded, and we are persons who are

mobility impaired. The phrases are long and awkward, but they remind us that we are people first.

2. Know your congregation. Only a person-by-person survey of a congregation will disclose these persons who have been put-off or pitied or ignored. The keystone to such a survey is the pastor, for through calling and counseling, the pastor knows the membership and friends of a church best. Then you need to talk to your membership.

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Some things
you do because
they are right.
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Only the contact of caring members can create the trust that makes new relationships possible.

3. Show that you are serious. The Health and Welfare Ministries Division has produced an *Accessibility Audit for Churches*. This workbook is designed to enable congregations to discover what barriers exist in their buildings and to establish priorities for removing those barriers. Such an effort in making this audit shows persons with handicapping conditions that a congregation is making an effort to be inclusive.

Many congregations have formed a task force to carry out an audit and to make recommendations to the Administrative Board. It is important that such a task force include persons with handicapping conditions along with any contractors, carpenters or other technically skilled people that might be in your church. Representation of the Board of Trustees would be helpful as well.

4. Encourage participation. It does not take an extraordinary effort to produce the weekly bulletins in large type so that visually impaired people can be included in litanies, corporate prayer and order of worship.

Given that fifty percent of persons over the age of sixty have measurable hearing loss and given the median age of most UM congregations I know, it is incumbent upon most churches to provide an assist to the sound systems

which allow persons with hearing impairments to be part of worship.

Further, it would not harm most Sunday worship services I've been part of to increase the scope of movement and light and color and sound so that persons who are mentally retarded could find more avenues of involvement.

It would not take much effort to recognize the fact that when we say, "Let us stand and sing," that for many that is difficult, for some, it is impossible. For many people with mobility impairments, assistance in transportation to and from church is the major stumbling block to attendance. Such arrangements facilitating transportation if done with sensitivity encourage people to participate.

5. Be consistent. If we wish to be an inclusive church, we must strive for an inclusive community as well. If a social service agency has applied to establish a group home for persons who are mentally retarded or a residence for former patients of a mental hospital within your community, your congregation could go on record as favoring inclusiveness within your community. Robert Perske's book *New Life in the Neighborhood*, published by Abingdon, is a wonderful tool in helping congregations understand and accept the need for these persons to come into the mainstream of American life. We have heard the horror stories of communities burning group homes before they can be occupied or zoning such homes out of existence. The church can be a powerful force in the community to be an advocate for a group of people without many friends.

Why should we be concerned, why should we make the effort? Richard Ferris, Board Chair of United Airlines, explained United's practice of hiring persons with handicapping conditions and also making their newest aircraft fully accessible: "In business, you do some things, not because you're forced by law to do them. You do some things, not because of market studies, and pay back periods and the effect on the bottom line. Some things you do because they are right."

An inclusive church, an inclusive community, are right. Make the International Year of the Disabled Persons a personal experience. ■

Rev. Toby Gould is executive secretary of the Office of Ministries with Persons with Handicapping Conditions, Health and Welfare Ministries Division, GBGOM.

*One day a woman told me,
"When I am asked how I live
with my M.S. I tell them. . .*

Linda Frost

IT'S MY M.S. THAT'S GOT TO LEARN TO LIVE WITH ME"

When I first began work under the former Methodist Board of Missions it was as a Yankee from Massachusetts in Church and Community Ministry in the heart of Georgia. I knew I had Multiple Sclerosis but I intended, at first, to keep the whole matter private. M.S. was My Secret, no need to bother anyone else with my problems. I was able to keep my problems my own. If the left side of me was numb, no need to tell others.

Then I began to limp noticeably. I passed it off by responding to inquiries, "Oh, my husband kicked me," hoping to erase both the question and the answer. It was in Georgia that I organized a "teachers vs. preachers" basketball game which brought in more than \$700 for the Heart Fund. That was just the first of many such drives.

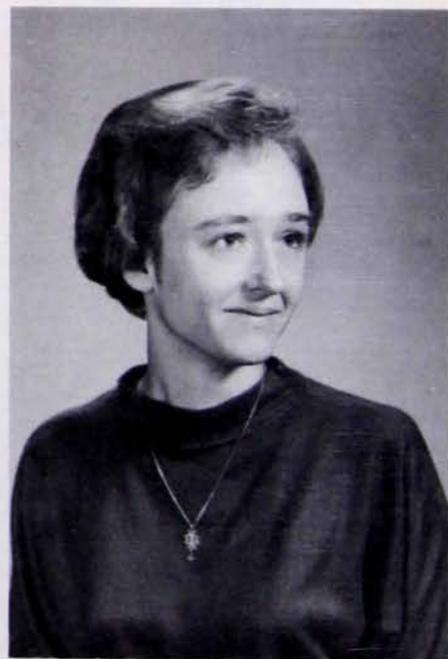
My next assignment was in the coal fields of West Virginia's McDowell County where, through the Parish paper, I let the fact of my health be known. I felt better and it helped those I had come to serve open up with me. But I still sought to keep the truth of my double vision as quiet as possible. When driving it was easy to block off my left eye by blocking the lens of my

sun glasses.

However, my "double or nothing" vision came to the fore when I attended a jurisdiction conference of the Women's Society of Christian Service (WSCS) at Buck Hill Falls, PA. At that time I wore a pink eye patch on which I put the words "Please Don't Ask" with a magic marker. Two kind ladies, short in stature, talked a bit with me, then one of the beautiful souls asked "What does that say up there?" If I could have, I would have disappeared. I simply responded, "I have a tired left eye."

During my service in McDowell County I met a mother who was very concerned about her daughter's health, a combination of M.S. and Muscular Dystrophy, she said. Living in a trailer and separated from her husband, her daughter had a tutor and seldom got up before 11 a.m. My attempts to deal with mother and/or daughter really seemed fruitless and I was overjoyed to hear, close to my departure from the county, that the daughter was getting married.

A man I befriended and admired was an M.S. victim who had little control of his legs, yet patiently climbed the 44 wooden steps to his



Deaconess Linda Frost

home. He lived with his mom, and the day he received his driver's license we all rejoiced. It was not that he had any special place to go, but it gave him independence, something I cherish very much for myself.

I have always prayed that I'll be able to push along, despite double vision or whatever is "in season". I thank God for the "courage, love and common sense" with which I feel my God has blessed me. And even before the Board of Missions and I came into any kind of close relationship, a self-made sign hung in my room, "That I might do Thy will, despite myself."

With one year out of the Board of Missions work, I worked for southern West Virginia Multiple Sclerosis Society, meeting many patients every day. One day a woman told me something I've tried to adopt for myself. "When I am asked how I live with my M.S.," she began "I tell 'em that it's my M.S. that's got to learn to live with me!" Amen to you, sister!

After McDowell County I went to Clay County because I was told that that was where the most need was. I went, praying and reciting a sloppy paraphrase of Hebrews 11: "And Abraham went forth by faith, not

knowing his destination...."

Because I understood that much of what a Church and Community Worker is to do is share with the people things they know not, I offered myself as a piano teacher. I let everyone know they would take me only "at their own risk." I had two years of training in elementary school and an uncooperative left hand! Still, I offered and countless kids plus a few adults dared risk with me. Some of the kids play for the church now.

I worked with Alcoholics Anonymous and the experience was very much a two-way street. I could only pray that my presence at meetings was a reminder of the Christ who freed a man called Legion. A saying that was very much used at our meetings has become a real part of me and my everyday walk: "It's hard by the yard, but a cinch by the inch." Two years ago, when I was doing some work with retarded persons, I told that saying to a lady who had left a counselor's desk looking dismayed and anxious. Suddenly, it seemed as if a ton of bricks had been taken from her shoulders.

I wrote weekly columns in the two newspapers in Clay County at different times. The first was Linda's Cozy

My little writing provided me with a great, loving, ever enlarging appreciation of those with whom I worked.

During this last assignment in West Virginia it was always my burden-joy to go to the big city where I saw a neurologist. One day I continued writing on a skit I was going to need in two days, even after arriving in the cubicle where I'd see the doctor. I was half-aware when a doctor's head appeared and disappeared in one second's time. When the doctor looked toward the nurse the response came through even to me, "She's just doing her thing, doctor."

I mobilized many young people for three different Walk-a-Thons for Multiple Sclerosis which totalled over \$250. This, plus oodles of letters sent out county-wide, meant over \$1,000 for more than one year for M.S.

One type of activity that I liked as my walking became more difficult was visiting with older, often bed-ridden folks. One such person, full of life and humor, was a beautiful lady who had had a heart attack. I visited her in the hospital. Though the attack had been only two days earlier, her face brightened when I came in. We talked about her attack, kidded as we could, until finally I asked if we could have a word of prayer. After the prayer, she said to me, "That's what I like about you, Linda. Your sense of humor." I left the room feeling I understood her remark but also praying, "Lord, forgive me if I said anything funny during the prayer."

Perhaps one of the most long-lasting contributions to the county was my part in seeing three clothing centers begun for the truly poor. For me it was a two-fold joy—the poor receiving an article of need and the faces of those who gave or were on duty at the time. One such lady, a foster-mother with a loving husband and a second pace-maker, which has kept her very much a part of Life, would say to me, "You're better for me than all my pills!" and that feeling was very mutual.

My joy in Church and Community Ministry will never be equalled. And my love for West Virginia and its people, rich and poor, will never die. Paul preached Christ and him crucified despite the thorn in his flesh. I try to walk with my M.S. and despite it, in Jesus' footsteps, God being my helper.

Deaconess Linda Frost makes her home in Vernon, Connecticut.



Linda's Little Nook

by Linda Frost

The logo
for one
of the author's columns

Corner and the second was Linda's Little Nook. I wrote of different country folks whom I'd come to know through the Golden Agers or through any of the churches or the post office or grocery store. It was always so easy to find the best in folks, along with the comical, fun-loving, giving.

One dear soul whose clothing was clean but a combination of left-overs and cast-outs, told me one day, "Now ya jus' be mighty careful if you write on me 'cause I jus' be a-fearin' you might leave out the mos' important things."

At Methodist-related Yonsei University and Medical Center and Severance Hospital in Korea there is a significant ministry of rehabilitation. Left, Mr. Woo, an early polio and tuberculosis patient shares a radiant faith. Despite their own needs, he and his wife help those less fortunate. (Text provided by Missionary Thelma Maw)

Below left, Mrs. Kim, a bilateral leg amputee, shares in her grandson's 100 day old celebration. Right, Mr. Kim Choon Ho has won public acclaim as a mouth painter and has shared his earnings for use in caring for the handicapped.

REHABILITATION IN KOREA



Top to bottom: A child receives therapy in the children's rehabilitation center. Mr. Pyun (left), a leg amputee, and Mr. Kim, a bilateral arm amputee, have graduated to a life of service. Mr. Pyun has been working in the limb shop for 27 years. Mr. Kim has trained amputees for 25 years. Children in the elementary school.



*“God has given each of you some special abilities; be sure you use them to help each other.”
(I Peter 4:7-11)*

Below, Each day begins with a devotional service to seek the awareness of His promise that His strength is sufficient.



THE KOREAN CHURCH IN JAPAN

IN HA LEE

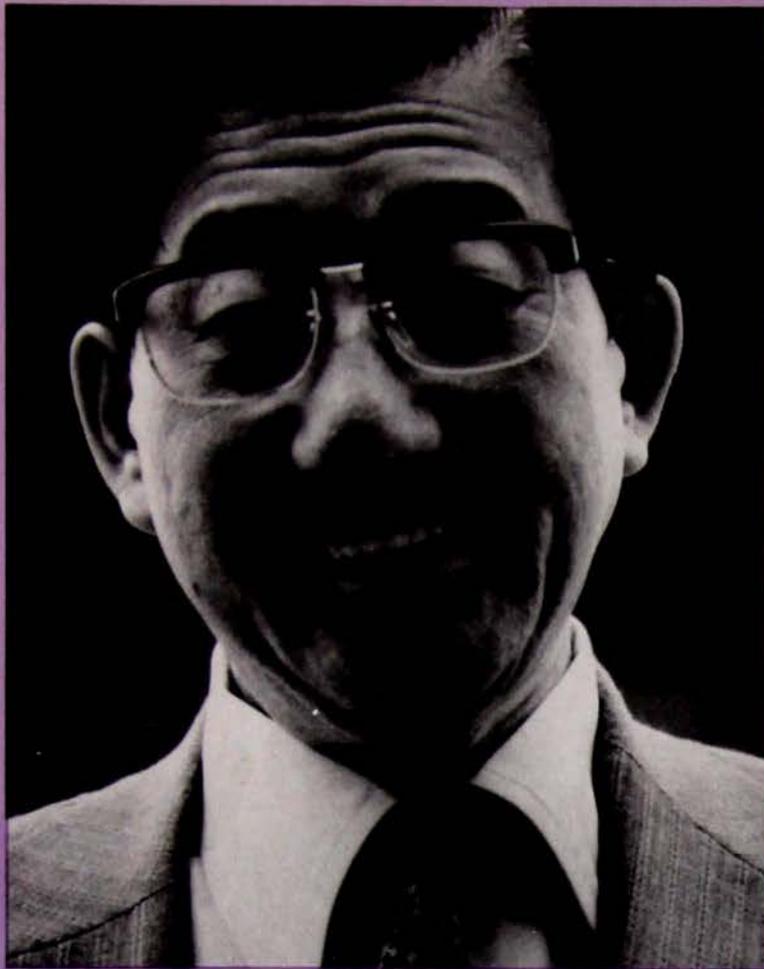


We in the Korean Christian Church in Japan see signs of hope in the situation of the Korean minority in Japan. While the church has a universal nature, each cultural identity has a unique place in God's Kingdom. Therefore, we Koreans can play a special role in God's mission in this land of Japan which is so homogeneous.

One sign of hope is the relationship developing between the United Church of Christ in Japan and the Korean Christian Church in Japan. Seeking to enter into real Christian fellowship, the Japanese Church and the Korean Church are in the process of establishing an official missionary relationship. We want to recognize each other's ministerial orders and sacraments. We want to engage in joint action for Christ's mission in Japan and overseas. Little by little we are breaking down the cultural barriers to become one in Christ.

We have three basic aims in our minds:

1. To renew the church from within and regain the concept of servanthood.
2. To transform Korean society in Japan, that section of people to whom we are particularly called to minister,
3. To share with the world the Christian hope breaking out of our Korean community—reaching out to others in the name of Christ.



“Mr. Park’s victory led to a softening of discrimination in companies.”

These aims were made in order to direct the church to reach beyond its previous narrow ways. In the past, the church’s mission was understood primarily to bring salvation to the individual soul, and such a conservative trend still exists in our church. But our church now is beginning to realize that this is a distortion of the Gospel incarnated in this historical context for the salvation of the whole person.

An Important Event

When we endeavored to fulfill our aims, an important event took place in the 1970’s. I now believe that God gave us an opportunity to raise Korean minority issues throughout Japan and even the world. In 1970 a young Korean named Mr. Park applied for employment to Hitachi Electric, which is the second largest company in Japan in terms of production and the sixth largest in the world. Mr. Park passed all the tests. When he reported for work, he couldn’t provide the required family register which every Japanese has. He told the company he was a Korean. They immediately fired him.

Koreans in Japan are discriminated against by the Japanese majority in this

way, but Mr. Park decided to fight. He took his case to the district court as a case of injustice. I was asked to help him in an action group to support him. The thought flashed through my mind “I can’t do that, as a minister I can’t do that.” But that was almost 12 years ago. I did actually get involved even though I still kept thinking it was impossible. The action group together with Mr. Park struggled on, and four years after he took this case to the Yokohama district court, on June 19th 1974, the court ruled in favour of Mr. Park. This victory has led not only to his re-employment but to a softening in the policies of discrimination in companies.

A Thanksgiving Service

When this victory was announced, the young people of our Korean church who had struggled for so long, suddenly came to realize that God had really been with them in all of their struggles, that God is even on the side of the oppressed. They asked their minister to have a special service of thanksgiving in the church. The church was packed—not only with Koreans but Japanese as well, and not only Christians but non-Christians too—everyone who had joined in the struggle shared in the service of thanksgiving. This was our “exodus.”

Seven years ago on Easter Sunday, young Mr. Park was baptized, confessing Jesus Christ as his liberator from his captivity. Many other young people who had never attended any church become regular attendants in Sunday worship, and some of them have also become volunteer workers in community development.

I must tell you that my church’s membership has doubled in the last 10 years. The same phenomenon is seen in the Osaka church where they are



engaged in community development.

CCA News (The monthly publication of the Christian Conference of Asia) of March 15, 1981 picked up an interesting comment, made by a Korean Catholic bishop. This is about the growth of the church in Korea. In all Korean dioceses, more and more Buddhists are coming to church services and asking for instruction. When asked in a poll what their religion was, 28% of Seoul's workers said they were Christian, though only 10% of the population is Christian. Asked to explain this phenomenon, one Korean bishop said "When we speak and work for justice we touch something deep in the hearts of our people and they are drawn to Christ."

I want you to be very clear about one point. The church has not rendered this service in order to entice these people into the church. Rather we believe that God has exploited this kind of event such as the Park-Hitachi case for His own purposes.

The Ecumenical Network

We have learned something more out of this struggle. This was about the ecumenical network in a concrete situation. We have suddenly discovered Japanese friends who stood with us in the struggle. Not only the Japanese church but other JNAC* member churches also joined in the struggle. You see the ecumenical network really worked out in this event. Five US church leaders made a visit to Hitachi, in New York, demanding basic human rights to be given to this Korean young boy. They said that otherwise they would organize a boycott against Hitachi goods. That was the final blow for Hitachi. The company accepted the fair settlement proposed for Mr. Park. 60% of Hitachi's products used to be exported

to the USA. The company was afraid that the damage would be too great if there were a boycott.

The Korean people in Japan numbering 700,000 to a million people, have been a minority group—always discriminated against in housing, employment, education, welfare benefits as well as other numerous kinds of human rights. In this kind of situation, we cannot preach the Gospel in either abstract or general terms. When we talk about reconciliation as the content of the Gospel between the Japanese and the Koreans, we cannot ignore the huge gap between the powerful majority and the powerless minority. When the Gospel is preached, then repentance must take place between the powerful majority and the powerless minority. When the Gospel is preached, then repentance must take place between these two groups. For the powerful repentance means to stop oppressing the powerless. For the powerless repentance means to regain hope—or in other words to stand apart from apathy and self-pity. Thus the Christian message and Christian action alike take part in the transforming work of God in a given historical context.

I would like to continue by quoting to you a poem written by one of the children in my church. It shows us something of the struggle for identity which is felt even in these early years.

*"I am Korean
Even though I am a Korean
Until now, I have used a Japanese
name.
This is just like telling a lie.
When my mother told us children
That, since we were Koreans,
We must use our Korean names,
I was against it.
Why, even now they are saying,
Koreans, go back to Korea. Go back.*



*If I use a Korean name
More and more, I would be told this.
So I didn't want to change my name.
But, after all, it is better to use your
own country's name—
You have much better feeling.
From now on, even if I don't say "I am a
Korean"
Because my name tag says 'Whang
Kyong-ja,'
You will all know.
Since I have used my Korean name
You all call me 'Whang-san' or 'Kyong
Chan.'
I am so happy.
But there are some of you who call me
Korean, Korean, as if I were a fool.
This hurts me—I will pretend I do not
hear it.
But, after all, I do feel a bit annoyed.
But I am a Korean. From now on
whatever you say
I will not be disheartened."*

This poem was written by a ten-year-old Korean girl in a Japanese elementary school only several years ago. She is one of 100,000 Korean children residing in Japan who attend

*In God's Kingdom,
the value judgment
of human life is
understood upside
down.*

Japanese schools. There are two motifs in her poem, the first being the Japanese anti-foreigner thoughts which are rooted even in a ten year old. The second is her effort for her self-identity, and together with her parents her desire not to lie about herself.

Who Am I?

Let me introduce you to what I have experienced in relation to my own self-identity. I was also educated in the same mold as the Japanese till the end of World War II. Then I was suddenly forced to live as a Korean in Japan. Therefore I had to search for my self-identity. "Who am I" or "What am I" was a constant question I asked. For me establishing my identity was not merely a philosophical matter; it was the recovery of my own ethnic self-identity in the actual life situation. For me, faith was related to this concrete matter of human development. When this fact was clear to me, I had the mysterious experience of becoming a human being at peace. I was delivered from fear and my warped inferiority complex. Then it was that I experienced rising up within me the spirit of a person. Certainly, when my nature as a member of the Korean people becomes clear to me, I not only hold pride and joy in belonging to my own people, but I also feel that my very existence in Japanese

society requires me to bear the role of helping Japan to turn from its closed-society mentality to an openness to the world. Thus I have the self-consciousness and conviction of participating in the work of creating new history. My faith in Christ helped me to see this direction

The Minority Issue

In May 1974, the KCCJ in cooperation with JNAC member churches and other ecumenical organizations (NCC, CCA and WCC) sponsored a consultation on Christian Mission in the minority situation. One of the most penetrating observations was made by a delegate from the Buraku Liberation Movement,* who said: "The minority issue is not the kind of question which pinpoints a problem in a corner of society. Where minority questions are dealt with in a given society, they raise the question of the system of the world itself." We are really dealing with the future of humankind, and in this sense, with eschatology, a city in which all things are made new, as described in Revelation 21. You will remember the words at the end of this chapter: "And I saw no temple in the city, for its temple is the Lord God, the Almighty, and the Lamb...By its light shall the nations walk, and the Kings of the earth shall bring their glory into it, and its gates shall never be shut by day—and there shall be no night there; they shall bring into it the glory and the honour of the nations."

The Letter to the Hebrews says that all of us are travellers. As long as we are on earth, travel ends with going back to our homes. But we are not satisfied with such travel. We are travelling with the Eternal City as our goal. In our travels we always face difficulties, but at the same time we face opportunities. The difficulties make us create new things, and that is the advantage travellers have.

In my own local community, we established a small nursery school for children whose parents have to work in the daytime. There are an equal number of Korean and Japanese children enrolled. In this teaching process I always draw the image of Revelation 21 which points out that each can bring his or her own treasures to God. This is my kind of mission as a member of a minority group in the Japanese context. This nursery school has been a real healing force in the community. The Japanese and Korean mothers come to monthly meetings to discuss

the nurture of their children, food nutrition, and pollution problems as well as discrimination problems. At one graduation time, a few years ago, three Japanese mothers came to me and said, "We don't have anything to say. We just appreciate what you are doing. Our children have learned to care about others. They really have become inter-ethnic minded." One of them was a Soka Gakkai member. (Soka Gakkai is one of the postwar "new sects." Growing out of the Buddhist stream of Nichiren Shoshu, the religion is aggressive success-oriented, and nationalistic. Its 17 million members also support the Komeito or Clean Government Political Party.)

You and I are involved in this eschatological event, and this is why we can courageously deal with these issues. At the same time such vision means that our concerns are a challenge not merely to particular nations, but to the whole world.

The proclamation of the Gospel uttered by Jesus was the promise of the coming of God's kingdom. In it the value judgment of human life is understood upside down. The least, the weakest and the oppressed are considered first. The restoration of the minorities from oppression is promised. All nations and people are allowed to bring their honours and glories into the "new city." The identity of each race and minority is fully recognized and respected. This vision was given to us through the redemptive ministry of our Lord, Jesus Christ. The people of the World are called into this new community. Our struggle for this vision to be realized in the suffering of the people is not in vain, but rather in Hope. ■

Dr. In Ha Lee is director of the Research Action Institute for Koreans in Japan and Pastor of the Kawasaki Korean Church.

*JNAC, The Japan North American Commission on Cooperative Mission, is a forum for joint mission between 2 churches in Japan and 8 in North America. United Methodists through the General Board of Global Ministries are participants.

*This movement represents the struggle against discrimination by the Mikaiho Buraku, people distinguishable neither racially nor by national origin from the majority population in Japan. Discrimination against them goes back to feudal times when they were considered a social outcaste group.

RESEARCH-ACTION INSTITUTE FOR THE KOREANS IN JAPAN (RAIK)

Many centuries ago the history of the Korean people in Japan began. However, the main axis of their destiny was determined during the colonial domination of Japan over the Korean Peninsula. This colonial heritage is still a heavy burden for the Korean people.

Since the defeat of Japan almost three decades have passed and Korea became independent from that time. And yet, the Korean people in Japan still live under the same oppressive conditions of the colonial era without any guarantee of basic civil rights and fundamental human rights.

Although the economic growth of Japan has benefited the general population of Japan as a whole to a degree, it is a far cry from realization of any measure of social equality. In particular, the minorities in Japan are victimized to a great degree.

Moreover, the political organizations in Korean society in Japan are controlled by the governments of South and North Korea; and the fundamental issues of the Koreans in Japan are not dealt with at all.

Under this situation there is an urgent need to clarify the real issues of the Korean people in Japanese society, to take actions to overcome those oppressive conditions, and to create an authentic people's movement. We believe that Christian perspective, genuinely oriented toward the real issues of the Korean people in Japan, will be a creative catalytic force for the struggle of the common Korean people in Japan.

The *purpose* of the Institute is to be actively supportive to the Korean people's movement in Japan to realize justice and humanity as they struggle for basic civil and human rights as well as self-identity and self-determination.

1. To provide information and analysis of specific issues that people are actively dealing with.
2. To aid various groups of Korean people for social conscientization.
3. To provide opportunities and resources to do an active theological-ideological thinking for the definition of a true identity of the Korean people in Japan.

Objectives:

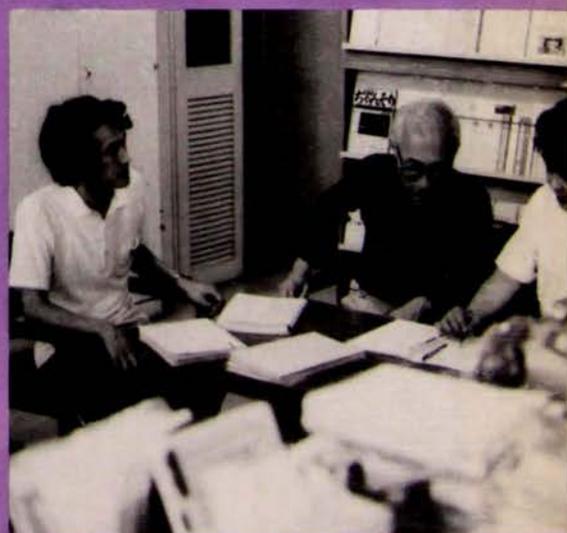
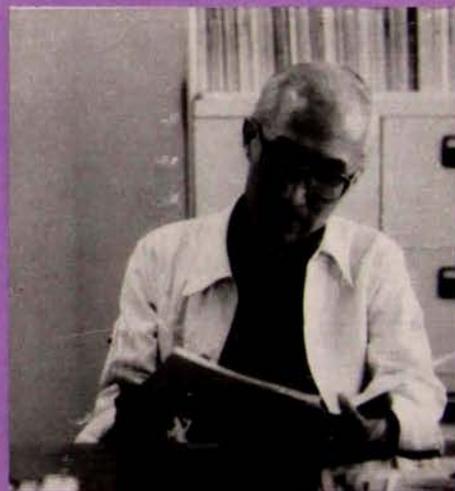
1. To investigate research on cases of injustice and discrimination such as the Park case.
Do documentation to be used by action groups as they take action on particular issues such as the Immigration Bill.
2. Create and help to create social conscientization groups among the Korean people in Japan.
Plans for providing materials for broader social education on issues of the people in various groups such as church groups.
3. Sponsor dialogues and encounters between various ideological and social groups on ideological-theological issues.

Plans for the Institute are that it should be a breeding ground of action groups for their theological and ideological maturity and strategic deliberations. It is to be a supportive base for active struggles of the people in the frontiers of life in the Japanese society. At the same time, however, it can also serve as a library resource center and a research institute where sociology students can utilize it for their studies of the Korean minority in Japan.

The idea for such an institute was strongly urged and encouraged by the National Christian Council of Japan consultation on the Korean Issues In Japan held in June 1972. The October 1973 General assembly of The Korean Christian Church in Japan voted for the proposed plan and authorized a fund raising campaign.



Above, the Kawasaki church nursery school. Below, Dr. In Ha Lee. Bottom, Dr. Lee (center) meets with Lee Kwi-Yang (left) and Bae Jung-Do in a staff meeting.



A curious if not exactly funny thing happened on the way to the presidential election last year: a divorced man became the candidate favored by many of the most conservative religious groups in the nation, including those calling themselves the Moral Majority.

While that may strike some people merely as irony, it also provides evidence that the stigma formerly attached to divorce is now much diminished. And the victory of the divorced candidate will doubtless serve to obliterate further whatever social disrepute the divorced may still endure. For the election of Ronald Reagan has for the first time placed in the nation's office of highest honor not only a divorced man but one who had, from a certain point of view, compounded the felony by marrying again.

And though some will blast his politics, who will deny him entrance to the circles of politest society?

United Methodists have not been among those taking the most rigorous view on divorce, by and large. The Social Principles call divorce "regrettable," a term mild enough, and "recognize the right of divorced persons to remarry."

How well United Methodists carry out the call of the Social Principles for a ministry to the divorced is, however, another question. "We encourage an active, accepting and enabling commitment of the church and our society to minister to the members of divorced families," the statement declares.

Many divorced people report that they have not found this in their churches, but sometimes quite the opposite, says Peggy Halsey, executive secretary of the Office of Ministries with Women in Crisis, a program of the National Division, General Board of Global Ministries.

"There's a lot of embarrassment on the part of church members about the

person who's been divorced," she says. "They don't know what to say, and some people will tell the person they disapprove."

She took a survey of women attending the schools of Christian mission in the summer of 1980, and found that nearly as many had lost husbands by divorce as by death. Out of 600 taking part in the survey, 73 were widowed and 62 divorced.

"People who lose a spouse through death get a lot of support from the church," Ms. Halsey says. "But in the case of divorce, it is not as supportive as it should be. And the trauma may be just as great in the sense of a blow to one's self-esteem and image of who they are. We get a lot of stories about people who move away from the church during the time they are going through this experience, and many never get back."

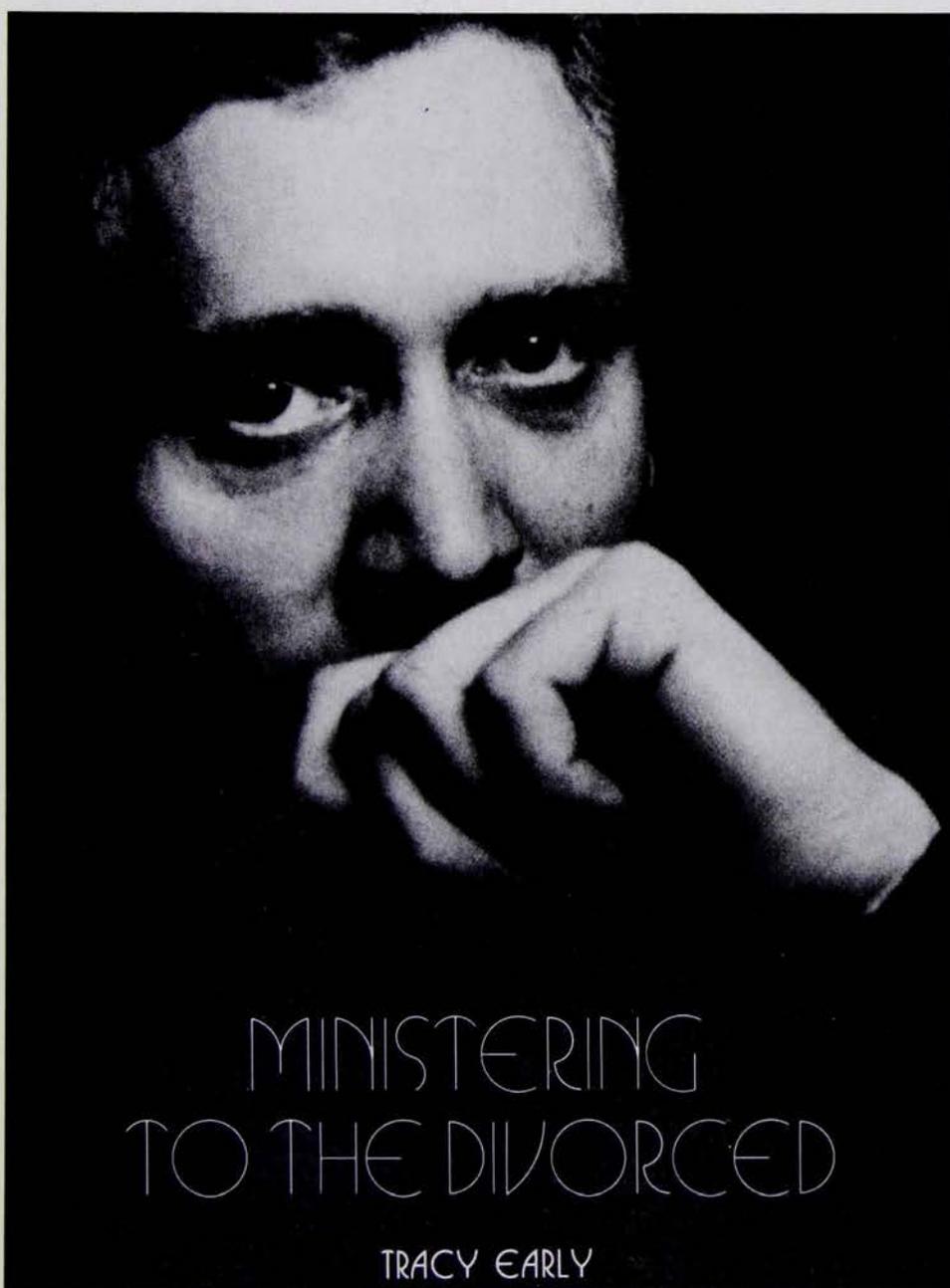
Though her own office, created in 1980, is charged with helping women in a broad range of crisis situations, she said, evidence coming in about the extent of the need for ministry to divorced women may lead to a greater concentration of effort in this area than originally planned. Already she is advocating more attention to helping the divorced in pastoral counseling courses for seminarians and continuing education programs for pastors.

But though ministries to the divorced may remain far fewer than are needed, she has found that in many places and in a variety of ways United Methodists are making an effort.

An example of a pastor who has sought to meet the special needs of the divorced is Arthur Bloom of the Patchogue (Long Island, N.Y.) United Methodist Church. "I was counseling divorced women individually at first, but then there got to be eight of them and I found they were following definite patterns," he says. "So I formed them into a group, and now they have developed a sense of community among themselves.

"They meet every Wednesday night, and I usually meet with them, but they can go on their own. They help each other with many practical things such as baby sitting. All the members of this group have dependent children, and three have handicapped children. The programs usually include something like hearing one of the tapes from *The Single Life*, a series I learned about from an advertisement.

"Our church here has been very supportive. We had a church retreat recently, and some women from the



MINISTERING TO THE DIVORCED

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"CHURCH EXPERIENCE FOR THE DIVORCED CAN BE VERY POSITIVE."

group took part in that. They are accepted, and they don't take a back seat.

"I also counsel some divorced men, some of them former husbands of members of the women's group. But I haven't been able to get the men organized into a group. Part of the reason is that their travel schedules are more difficult, but there is also a difference in the group dynamics."

An example of a United Methodist lay woman who has taken the initiative to organize a ministry for herself and others is Sue Nelson of Milwaukee, an elementary school teacher who is a divorced mother of a seven-year-old son.

"A year or so ago, several of us decided we needed a group for single parents," she says. "There were some groups in existence already, but they were very social in nature, with a lot of the hustling that goes on at a singles bar, and we didn't consider that appropriate for us.

"So we contacted the pastors here about single parents in their churches, and sent out a mailing and got a good response. We have from thirty to fifty at our meetings. Most of them are women, but we have five to ten men. The majority of members are divorced, but we also have widows and widowers, and people who never married but adopted children or had children out of wedlock.

"We are church-related, and rotate our meetings among three churches—Albright United Methodist, Elm Grove Community United Methodist and First United Methodist of West Allis. And we get funding from United Methodists. But about half the group come from other denominations, or they're unchurched.

"The usual format of a meeting is to start with a speaker, who talks about some topic such as coping with holidays or money management. Then we have a coffee time, and often we break into small groups for discussion.

There's lots of conversation.

"There's still a stigma about divorce. Sometimes people at church will say, 'It's a sinful thing you've done.' And there's a need to sensitize pastors and others. After the children's sermon, when they're called down to the front, the pastor may say, 'Now go back and sit with your moms and dads.' That hurts. He could say, 'Go back to your families.'"

Another way United Methodists minister to the divorced is by supporting private agencies, such as the Village Family Service Center in Fargo, North Dakota, which is an Advance Special of the North Dakota Annual Conference. Among the programs offered by the Center is a course called "Living Divorced."

"Each course includes ten weekly sessions, and we offer it four or five times a year," says Mary Ann Donaldson, who serves with a male colleague, Tom Stevens, as co-facilitator.

"It is a sort of combination class and group therapy program.

"In each session we present material on such topics as emotional reactions to divorce, children's reactions, learning to know yourself again or forming new relationships. But we also have a lot of time for discussion.

"Generally we find that church experience for the divorced can be very positive. Some from rigid church backgrounds might feel very guilty, however, and want to separate themselves. Those who have found the church supportive in other times will normally look to it even more after a divorce.

"In our community we have a lot of churches with groups for the divorced, for single parents and so on. They usually have more women than men because women in our culture have always been given more permission to receive help, and they feel freer to share their feelings. The emotional reaction is not more or less, but men are just not allowed to share the way

that is acceptable for women.

"I would suggest that every church provide a time and space for a support group for the divorced. And there should be a general awareness expressed in sermons and programs, to take account of their needs. Churches tend to be couple oriented."

An agency operating independently but started by United Methodists is the Bexar County Women's Center in San Antonio. It was begun by Rosemary Stauber, who became aware of the need through her own experience of divorce, and got initial funding from United Methodist Women's Assembly funds. Support now comes from local churches of several denominations and other sources.

"One of our programs is to meet the needs of the displaced homemaker," says Frances Opitz, community liaison officer for the Center and president of United Methodist Women for the Southwest Texas Annual Conference. "This is the woman who has focused her life on the home, and has been supported by a spouse or by the public, but now is no longer in that situation. A lot are divorced, but others became displaced homemakers through death.

"If she hasn't worked in five years or more, having to pick up the new role of wage earner can be frightening. You have no concept of your own value, and your self-confidence fades away. So we do assertiveness training and job counseling, and help find jobs, such as at a hospital that has employed some of our women in a staff role like foster grandparents.

"The Center sponsors one support group for the divorced in a local church, and that is at St. Stephen's United Methodist Church, where Rosemary and I are both members. I am a displaced homemaker, too. What we need is non-judgmental support." ■

Tracy Early is a frequent contributor.

ONE MINISTRY TO DIVORCED PERSONS



A worried mother I had never met called me on the phone and asked, "How can I help my daughter? She just sits immobile and stares into space. She won't go out of the house, even to the grocery, and she cries all the time. I don't know what to do. Her husband has left her for someone else and she has two little girls...I saw a notice about your divorced persons' group in the church newsletter..."

"I'll visit her," I said. "What's her phone number?"

"Oh, don't call first; she won't let you in. Just go!"

My husband and I did go, and she opened the door only because she recognized him as her former Sunday school teacher. She cried quietly all the time I talked to her, but she was listening intently when I asked her to come to our next meeting. "I'll cry all through it," she said. I assured her she'd meet a group where tears are part of a healing process.

Sara* was a similar story. Over 50 when she went job-hunting, with little funds and no experience, she, too, cried a lot and had severe misgivings about attending a meeting. She confided in me later, "At the first one, I wondered, 'What am I doing here?' I vowed I'd never go back, but I'm glad I did.

She later enrolled in a business course, studied hard, and finally became self-supporting as well as being able to take care of her daughter.

"Christ became real to me through caring Christians," she said. "They 'made' it, and I saw I could too—with God's help."

Jack also came alive after dropping in on a meeting and saying with tear-filled eyes, "I'm here to find out what I did wrong." He had been for counseling with his minister; he had talked to a priest; he had consulted friends and neighbors as to why his wife of 20 years had left him.

Several visits later, he told us about daily studying what he called his "divorce Bible" and underlining passages on love, forgiveness, and how the Holy Spirit can comfort and lead us.

Another person seeking help from our group confessed her feelings of loneliness, rejection, and a low self-image before I even met her. A schoolteacher, she said she had attempted suicide. "May I come to your group?" she asked.

I hesitated for the first time since I

*All names have been changed.

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had felt God's calling to this ministry. Would I be doing a disservice to others by bringing her to the next meeting? But, my hesitancy was only momentary. "We meet every other Sunday night in our homes," I said. "I'll give you directions on how to find our hostess' house next Sunday."

When I called the hostess, she said, "Honey, don't worry about it. We always start with prayer and scripture. Let Him take it from there."

Our new friend came. After many sessions of sharing experiences through tears and laughter, she returned with renewed hope and joy to her faith (Catholic) and, as I write this two years later, I'm thinking about her quiet wedding that took place with only family members in attendance at the beginning of 1981. God gave her a new lease on life.

Her story had a happy ending. Some have not. Three persons who came to our group eventually found themselves part of the statistic that says 52% of second marriages break up. However, two couples who met within the group are still together after three years of marriage.

Some move ahead in a new direction, still single. Others stay to help newcomers adjust to all the changes divorce brings into their lives. Some bring friends. Others recommend us to new groups starting in other churches, and we've had representa-

"SINGLE OR MARRIED, ALL OF US NEED TO KNOW THAT GOD HAS A PLAN FOR OUR LIFE AND THAT IT IS GOOD. . . ."

tives from various denominations visit us to see what we do, for according to Cliff Albritton, editor of *Christian Single* magazine, "The singles explosion is here. There are 53 million of them in our land, 4 out of 10 adults. By 1990 the U.S. Census Bureau predicts that half of the adults in the United States will be single."

I keep a scrapbook of our family, even including pictures of weddings that failed, a constant reminder to others to get their lives straightened out so that they won't take their old mistakes, fears, and hangups into a second marriage. Pictures are a reminder, too, that being single is O.K. Some prefer to keep that status.

To get this involved in others' lives without being "preachy" or attempting to counsel on a deeper level, you have to recognize the ones who need professional help and see that they get it, and you have to love your "Family of God." Sometimes we argue. Sometimes we hug. But always we

close the 9 o'clock part of our meeting with prayer, often holding hands in a circle and asking God's leading until we meet again.

That's why I feel we have no "failures" even though some persons come once and never return. We've prayed for their guidance, and aware of it or not, they're going to get it.

The cornerstone of our ministry is 2 *Corinthians* 1:3-4:

"What a wonderful god we have—he is the Father of Our Lord Jesus Christ, who so wonderfully comforts and strengthens us in our hardships and trials. And why does he do this? So that when others are troubled, needing our sympathy and encouragement, we can pass on to them this same help and comfort God has given us." (*The Living Bible*)

In passing on that help and comfort, we rely heavily on *Jeremiah* 29:11: "For I know the plans I have for you, says the Lord. They are plans for good and not for evil, to give you a future and a hope."

Single or married, all of us need to know that God does have a plan for our life, that it is good, and that we can confidently hope for a future that is better than today. ■

Emalene Shepherd, a free-lance writer, leads the Divorced Persons' Ministry at Groesbeck United Methodist Church, Cincinnati, Ohio.

If you would like to enter this special ministry, here are some suggestions...

(1) Get the support of your pastor. No church-related activity can succeed without it. Having been divorced many years ago and happily remarried over twenty years, I offered to help mine if he needed someone to listen to persons in crisis situations. He, his wife, and I met with six men and women in the parsonage at the outset. Although he attended some subsequent meetings, the success of the group depended primarily upon our ministering to each other.

(2) Meet regularly. We chose Sunday evenings, every two weeks, 7:30-10:00, in homes—a more relaxed, informal atmosphere than the church.

(3) Periodically, give each member an updated list of names, addresses, telephone numbers, and birthdates. (No year, just the month and day.) Divorced persons need a sense of identity and worth. We help them achieve that with a

birthday cake if the special day coincides with a meeting day; otherwise, we send cards to each other, as well as maintain a close telephone connection in-between meetings. Those who have been through divorce recognize others' need to "talk things out," often late at night when sleep won't come.

(4) Start each meeting with Bible reading and prayer. One young man always came late in order to miss this until I asked him to lead in prayer. He responded with a touching, heartfelt plea seeking guidance for each one present. Know your group. Don't embarrass anyone. I handled the opening myself until I knew persons well enough to ask them to share what scripture had helped them most through troubled times. As rapport developed among members, some were eager to do this. Others brought in mimeographed material to pass around on topics like "what it means to take risks" and other pertinent information to inspire divorced persons.

(5) Be prompt in cutting off discussion time. Promptly at 9:00, the host or hostess provides coffee and cake or other light refreshments. This gets people on their feet to stretch and to become better acquainted on a one-to-one basis when they might talk on subjects they're reluctant to reveal to the group. And, it provides an unobtrusive way out for someone who has to leave because of a babysitter.

(6) Provide a lending library. At first, I bought a few books. Others donated some when they moved on out. Have the borrower sign as a reminder to return the book at least a month later.

(7) Take up a freewill offering. We put a small container on the book table. This money goes for wedding gifts, books, flowers, or small mementoes for those hospitalized, and flowers or charitable donations for those who lose someone through death. We're a family, and we rejoice together in the good times and sympathize in the bad ones. E.S.

A SERVICE OF ENDING AND BEGINNING

As part of attempts to minister to divorced persons, some churches and ministers have devised rituals to recognize divorce. Some of these rituals appear, together with a discussion on the subject in Ritual in a New Day, An Invitation (Abingdon, 1976), a volume prepared by the Alternate Rituals Committee of the Section of Worship. The following ritual, not from that book, was prepared by Professor Robert E. Elliott of the Perkins School of Theology together with the people involved and performed at a church near Dallas in 1976. The names have been changed; the children involved were at that time 12 and 11 years old.

Minister: Let us pray: Let the words of our mouths and the meditations of our hearts be acceptable in thy sight, O Lord our strength and our redeemer. Amen.

We have gathered here in the presence of God and in the company of these friends to attend to a very special time in the lives of Art and Beth and Carl and Dave and Esther. It is a time of an ending and a beginning, the ending of the marriage between Art and Beth and the beginning of new lives for them for their children.

Will you join me in reading responsively these words from Ecclesiastes:

Minister: To everything there is a season, and a time for every matter under Heaven;

All: a time to be born, and a time to die;
a time to plant, and a time to pluck up what is planted;

Minister: a time to kill, and a time to heal;
a time to break down, and a time to build up;

All: a time to weep, and a time to laugh;
a time to mourn, and a time to dance;

Minister: a time to cast away stones, and time to gather stones together;
a time to embrace, and a time to refrain from embracing;

All: a time to seek, and a time to lose;
a time to keep, and a time to cast away;

Minister: a time to rend, and a time to sew;
a time to keep silence, and a time to speak;

All: a time to love, and a time to hate;
a time for war, and a time for peace.

Minister: This is at once a time to mourn, and a time to dance. It is a time of sorrow and of joy, of remembering and of hoping, of looking back with thanks for what has been given and with sorrow for what has been taken away, and looking ahead in hope and faith to what is not yet.

Art and Beth, will you join me here.

The two of you once stood in a place like this, before God and friends and exchanged vows of commitment in marriage. Those vows were made in good faith and earnest commitment. But sometimes the most earnest vows cannot be kept; sometimes a marriage cannot endure, in spite of the greatest effort of the partners to save it. You have struggled hard and long to keep your marriage and have borne grief and pain on the long path to this difficult decision. It is time now to accept and affirm that decision and to be accepted and affirmed in it. In doing so it is fitting that you stand again before God and friends and declare to each other release from your vows of marriage.

Beth: Art, I release you as my husband and ask you to be my friend. I cannot be your wife, but I affirm again my love and respect for you. I thank you for the good things you have brought into my life. I ask your forgiveness and offer you mine for the hurts that we have done one another. Your life will always be important to me and I pray that your new life will be filled with joy.

Art: Beth, I release you as my wife and ask you to be my friend. I cannot be your husband, but I affirm again my love and respect for you. I thank you for the good things you have brought into my life. I ask your forgiveness and offer you mine for the hurts that we have done one another. Your life will always be important to me and I pray that your new life will be filled with joy.

Minister: I declare that you are, before God, released from your bonds of marriage and are no longer husband and wife. You are set free to face new futures

as separate persons. Carry no burden of guilt or recrimination for what is past. Accept grief as it may come, but release that past into the past and receive the future as God's gift of new possibility.

Though Art and Beth are no longer husband and wife, they do remain father and mother. What began as a marriage became a family, as Carl and Dave and Esther came into the life that Art and Beth made together and into the marriage that they have now brought to an end. As they do that, it is important to know that the bonds between parents and children do not end with the ending of a marriage.

Carl and Dave and Esther, will you join us here.

It is fitting for you to stand here now between your mother and father and hear them speak to each other and to you.

Beth: Art, I cherish you as the father of our children, and I call on you to continue to be faithful to that trust. I charge you to love them always and to the utmost of your ability, to protect, guide and care for them as long as they shall need that from you.

Carl, Dave, Esther, I cherish you as my children and give thanks for your being. I pledge you my love always, and to the utmost of my ability, my protection, guidance and care for you as long as you shall need that from me.

Art: Beth, I cherish you as the mother of our children, and I call on you to continue to be faithful to that trust. I charge you to love them always and to the utmost of your ability, to protect, guide and care for them as long as they shall need that from you.

Carl, Dave, Esther, I cherish you as my children and give thanks for your being. I pledge you my love always, and to the utmost of my ability, my protection, guidance and care for you as long as you shall need that from me.

Art & Beth: Carl and Dave and Esther, we are sad for the pain that this divorce has caused you. We ask you not to blame yourselves or to feel guilty about this divorce, because you are not its cause. We pray that you too will be able to find the gift of new life, even in the midst of your loss.

To you, our friends, we give thanks for your love and faithful support and we ask that you will continue to care for each of us, to remember us in your prayers, and to give us your blessing in our new lives.

Friends: We affirm our love and care for each of you. We too have been touched by the grief and pain that has come to you at the ending of your marriage. We pledge our support to you in your keeping of the vows of parenthood you have reaffirmed this day. We rejoice in your offering of friendship to each other. To you, Carl and Dave and Esther, we pledge our loyalty and friendship and we join in asking God's blessing on all of you.

All: Our Father in heaven

 holy be your Name,
 your kingdom come,
 your will be done,
 on earth as in heaven.
Give us today the bread we need.
Forgive us our sins
 as we forgive those who sin against us.
Save us in the time of trial,
 and deliver us from evil.
For the kingdom, the power, and the glory
 are yours now and forever. Amen.

Friends: May your lives be filled with joy, and the grace of God surround you.

Family: May your lives be filled with joy, and the grace of God surround you.

Minister: Now depart in peace. May the love of God, and the God of love be with you always. Amen.

Below, Bishop Kao Jih Chung, in suit at right, leads a dedication service of a new apartment for a minister of the Telok Aye Methodist Church, a Chinese congregation. Right, Trinity theological College in Singapore has been training Chinese and Indian pastors for 33 years. Seminary senior Mark Ding (left) from West Malaysia talks to the seminary Dean, Yeow Choo Lak, in front of the chapel. The Methodist Church is one of the participating denominations at the inter-denominational seminary.



Two Island Republics — Pho





Photos from Singapore and Fiji — John Goodwin



Two island republics of mixed populations, one on the southernmost tip of the Asian mainland and the other in the southern Pacific, are the scene of new developments for Methodism.

Singapore, only 85 miles north of the equator, is some 75 percent ethnic Chinese, 14 percent Malay, and 8 percent Indian and Pakistani. Recent years have seen rapid economic expansion and industrialization and an increasing role as a crossroads of Asia and a trade center. The church has responded with imaginative and farsighted plans for growth and church expansion.



Top, the choir at the English-speaking Wesley Church in Singapore. Middle, a preaching service in the Tamil language at the Hingwa Church. Left, a new church is built near high rise apartments.

Fiji, situated in the southern Pacific between New Caledonia and Western Samoa, consists of some 322 principal islands, only about one-third of them inhabited. There are actually more Indians (about 50 percent) than Fijians (about 43 percent) among the population. Others include Europeans, other Pacific islanders, and Chinese.

Right, at the University of the South Pacific in Suva, Fiji, one of the newest developments is increased communication between the many islands by use of satellite. Here, the Pacific Conference of Churches uses the satellite center for a conference on theology. Below, another transformation is in piggery. Young people come to a lay training center at the Navuso school in Fiji to learn agriculture skills, along with Bible training. For graduation after six months each student receives a small pig to take back with them to his or her village.



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Panama's Fellowship of the Concerned

Marjorie Vandervelde

Alviro, a 12-year-old, hobbled around on one leg with a stick for a cane. Sometimes, another stick was tied to the stub of a leg. He had only a mother to care, and she was too poor even to furnish adequate food in that fringe area of Panama City.

Alviro's future? A beggar on the street?

Imagine the boy's surprise to discover others do care! Srta. America Tulipana, librarian at the United Methodist-related school, Pan American Institute, stopped Alviro to say, "I am concerned about you."

America enlisted the Fellowship of the Concerned, to help.

"For lack of a better name, we could call this group The Fellowship of the Concerned," suggested the pastor of Balboa Union Church in 1961.

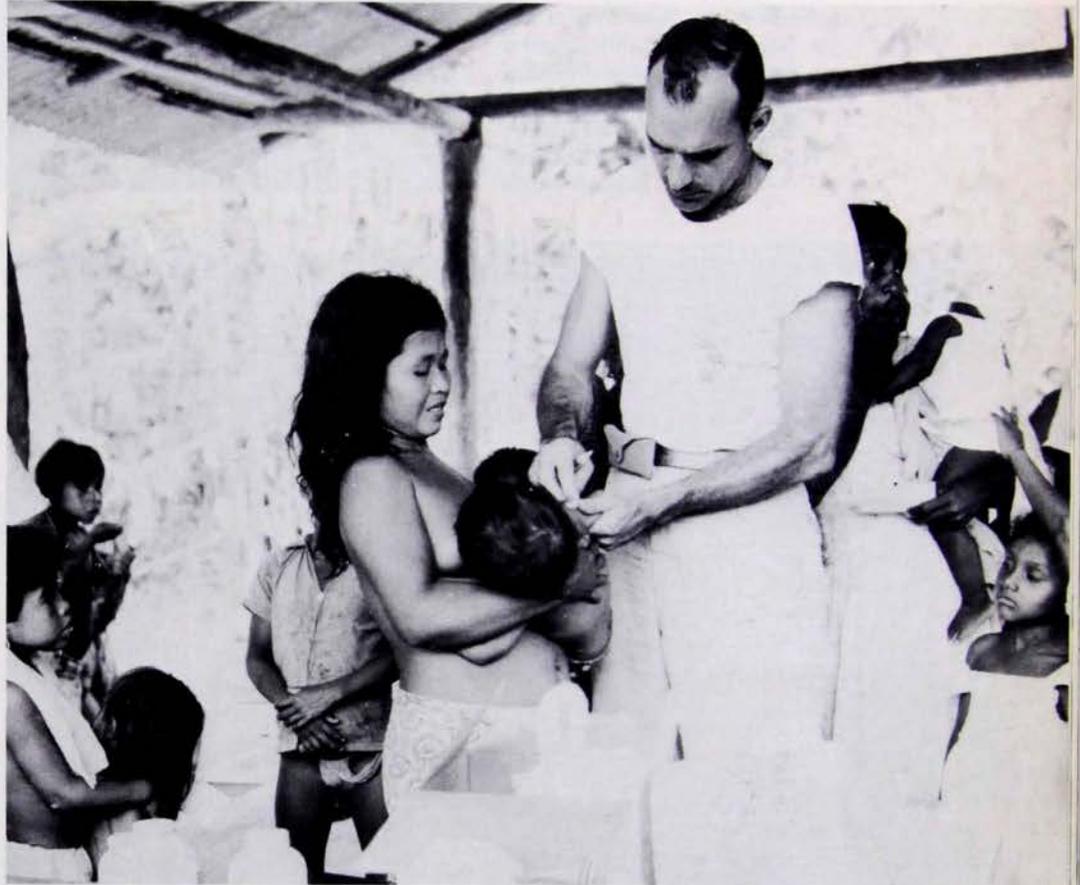
That name holds today. Through shifts in populations and membership, the Fellowship continues to pool its concerns and innovative resources for solutions. Originally in the Panama Canal Zone, it is headquartered now in the Panama Canal Area since the treaty transferring Canal ownership to Panama.

There has been no change in the deep feelings for people with problems. The group remains a clearing house for conditions that need changing, working together toward solutions.

This is no government program, it is individuals helping other individuals.

Bill Miller (Michigan) now presides as co-chairman with his wife Muriel. Take a look at Fellowship membership: Panamanians, including some indigenous Indians; Europeans, such as the Mike Boersmas from Holland; U.S. citizens on assignment in Panama; missionaries, including Rev. and Mrs. Harold Ens (Mennonite) and Rev. and Mrs. Walter Reitz (United Methodist). Altogether, fifty or sixty members with concern-power.

Walter Reitz joins the circle carrying a bundle under his arm. He tosses on a table some tote bags made of sturdy



One of the Fellowship members helps with a jungle clinic. Left, the author negotiates notched-log steps as she reaches for a pig.

Right, a member of the Fellowship, Hombria, at the boat motor, hauls supplies upriver for jungle clinics. Below, a Kuna shows the *mola* fabric of her tribe. Fellowship of the Concerned helps market molas



cord by the blind. Several members buy the bags. This has been going on every since Reitz met a blind boy weaving the bags on Central Avenue, with no buyers.

Panama has three tribes of developing Indians, as well as other remote rural people who are excellent craftsmen with a marginal economy. Fellowship members take it upon themselves to help market the craft products. Betty Wiggins is the person for the Kuna Indians and their *molos* (fabric art) and the Guaymi Indians' crafts. Walter Reitz has three rooms full of unique baskets woven by Choco Indians, to aid them.

He suggested to one, "Take your baskets to market-day at this nearby village, and try to sell them. I'll lend you bus fare." The man returned only half-successful. But neither he, nor his backer, was discouraged. They'll try again.

On the other hand Kuna members of the Fellowship, Rev. Peter Miller (whose tribal name is loiklippilele) and Dr. Alicia Rivera, involve themselves in many of the Fellowship efforts toward solutions.

Sr. Fernando Manfredo, Deputy Administrator of the Panama Canal Commission, helped solve a difficult problem. Srta. Saray Veagra, social worker, knows what children need shoes or special mothering. Srta. Christina McGrimson spearheads Fellowship aid to a home for the aged in Rio Abajo. Rebecca Clayton serves the same purpose for the Salvation Army Home for the Blind.

Dr. Sam Frazier assumes responsibility for daily contact by two-way radio with the isolated Marvel Iglesias Hospital at Isle Ailigandi, San Blas, for



A Panamanian missionary, Deusdedith Escobar, greets Chocos of the Darien jungle in Panama and, below, baptizes one in Rio Mogue.

emergency needs. Mrs. Frazier, the former Gladys Arena, is involved in Fellowship of the Concerned in vital ways.

Now that you have met the above, all with deep concern for others, come with me to a short meeting of the Fellowship, where there are many others like them.

Opening devotions are by Major Leslie Anderson of the Salvation Army. A few guests are present, including an attractive 20-year-old we'll call Rose, who grew up in Africa but now live in Oregon.

The meeting proceeds to consideration of concerns:

Concern: It is reported that two missionary nurses in Panama's Guaymi region need medicine bottles to refill. The tribe is among the most destitute, and suffers high incidence of tuberculosis.

Solution: Bill Miller, coordinator of San Blas Medical Mission, with others of the Fellowship drove a van with supplies up the Inter-American Highway to deliver to the Guaymi clinic. Such supplies are contributed continually to Balboa Union Church.

Concern: Because of a violent crime within the family, six small children are left without parents. They are needy in all respects. One has a health problem undiagnosed.

Solution in progress: The Fellowship keeps in touch with the children, regularly, taking supplies and oversight. And love! The Mike Boersmas take special interest in this need. Srta. America Tulipana reports that the sick child, Salia, is making improvement and will have x-rays at Social Security

Hospital. Marvella is doing better in school; her report card is passed around. The family gets along much better; probably an adult relative will take over.

Concern: Harold Ens is concerned about the tuberculosis program among the Chocos, for which they have built a temporary clinic but are short of medicines. He wonders if air support might still be furnished by military bases in Panama, to bring in materials and doctors.

Solution in progress: Assisting with a Choco concern previously presented, two representatives of the Fellowship deliver a check in support of two Choco boys learning agriculture to upgrade tribal production. The same has been done for Kunas.

Concern: A friend in Guatemala has terminal cancer. Supportive prayers are offered.

Concern: A poor family has managed to put up a house for themselves, but are badly in need of a door.

Concern: At Isle Ailigandi there is a crippled Kuna named Walterio, who has musical talent and plays the mission piano. If he had an accordion, he could play it at Kuna youth meetings where the piano can't go.

Solution: Rose, the 20-year-old visitor at this meeting, was moved to offer her own accordion, although there would be no immediate chance of her getting another. So when she returned to Oregon, she boxed it up. Now the gifted fingers of the Kuna Walterio plays that instrument. He is, he declares, a musician for the Lord.

At Gorgas Hospital near the Panama



Walterio and his mother, who had encouraged him to stay with accordion playing. Below, Agustin, though blind, weaves sturdy tote bags on Central Avenue in Panama City. UM missionary Walter Reitz discovered his marketing problem and helps him through the Fellowship of the Concerned.



Canal, there have always been some members of the Christian Medical Association. They have joined with the Fellowship to hold traveling clinics, through the years, among the Indian tribes. The government now recognizes the great need of tuberculosis control, and attacks that problem in some areas.

The overall preventative-medicine program started by the Fellowship has included:

1. Immunization against diphtheria, tetanus, pertussus, polio, measles and smallpox.
2. Treatment for existing health problems.
3. Education to improve hygiene and nutrition.

One child's immediate problem was helped in this manner, recently. Mrs. Karen Russell was unexpectedly stranded overnight at Ailigandi—separated from her small, nursing baby who was at her home on a U.S. Military base in Panama. The delayed plane could come to get her the next day.

Karen asked, at the Kuna clinic, "Do you know of a baby that is hungry?" Very soon Karen Russell was nursing

the hungry newborn of Anayansi. And, until the plane dropped down for her, Karen did what she could do to relieve world hunger, at least for that Kuna baby.

In such myriad and sundry ways does the Fellowship of the Concerned work.

But you may be wondering what happened to Alvirio, of the opening paragraph. We left him hobbling around on one leg with the help of a couple of sticks.

Solution: An order for an artificial limb was a Rica. The boy and his mother were flown there for the fitting. An airline contributed the fares. Sr. Fernando Manfredo, Deputy Administrator of Panama Canal Commission, arranged and paid for passports. The medical bill was shared by Fellowship of the Concerned, San Blas Medical Mission, and the mother (who was able to pay \$20).

The Lord can accomplish great things through the hands of concerned persons who don't care who gets the credit. ■

Marjorie Vandervelde is a free-lance writer.

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Creighton Lacy

The second possible church had shifted its midweek service from Wednesday to Thursday.

The remaining option was to drive "down in the valley" where long-defunct gold mining was beginning to look profitable once again—where various international corporations and embassies and the President himself occupy luxurious mansions surrounded by squalid huts and steep, rocky roads. Up one such rutted path, too steep for any vehicle without four-wheel drive, we came to a precarious halt. Nothing looked like a church; in fact, there was little evidence of human life behind the dilapidated walls of a slum area.

Finally, a narrow gate opened, and a buxom woman peered out, clutching a colorful shawl around her shoulders. Yes, there would be a service there that evening, she finally admitted with some hesitation. At what time? Whenever the people come.

My host decided we could spend a half hour in caling on his niece a few minutes' drive away. It was a brief but lovely visit. The home was gracious and elegant, furnished with exquisite taste. The family was as handsome as one could find anywhere in the world, the cosmopolitan conversation in flawless English.

Back at the rickety gate in the crumbling wall we could hear the sound of music, a low and somehow poignant chant. This time the woman escorted us across an open courtyard and up an irregular series of flagstone steps to an open door. We slid onto the nearest bench—at the very front—and tried unsuccessfully to be inconspicuous. I had brought my pocket New Testament to follow the Scripture, but the elderly man in front was reading from Genesis in a hybrid of Aymara and Spanish which even my host could not translate.

At least that gave me time to look around. The one room was about fifteen feet wide and fifty feet long, with an uneven dirt floor literally sliced into the hillside, and walls of handmade cinder-block "papered" or lined with sacking to keep out the wind. The "Methodist" communion rail was also made of two rows of cinder-block. A score of rough benches stretched to the back of the hall, but only the first few were occupied by perhaps a dozen men and women—though they claimed their sixty members plus visitors crowded the place on Sundays.

Because everything else was of the

earth earthy, three pieces of manufactured furniture struck a jarring, almost discordant note. One was a neat, smooth, varnished pulpit, presumably discarded from some more affluent church. Another was a tiny, foot-pedal organ (ditto!), played by the youngest man present. The third was a row of brightly-colored plastic coatrack pegs—on several of which hung the stiff round derby hats worn universally by Aymara Indian women.

According to my dictionary, "primitive" means "characterized by simplicity or crudity, unsophisticated." From all my years in Asia and Africa I would recall only two other worship settings as primitive: a village rockpile in central India and a Batak chapel in the Sumatran jungle. In each case, it was the simplicity of genuineness, of elemental humanity, of truly sacrificial faith.

After another hymn, my escort explained our presence. Though he was a well-known layman in the district, the people had not recognized him "all dressed up" and had suspected we were Catholic intruders. Then they called on me, to be translated from English into Spanish and then into the unique local brand of Aymara. What does one say at a time like that, to a people like that? God loves you; I love you? What does one say where life is a daily struggle? "Take no thought for the morrow"? What does one say to those who have lost all faith in government, in society, in a better human existence? "He has anointed me to preach good news to the poor...to set at liberty those who are oppressed"? What does one say when he knows that his hotel bill for one night would have fed those people for a month? "He has filled the hungry with good things, and the rich he has sent empty away"?

I stammered a few clumsy words about faith and hope and love, about how they understood and personified those realities of the Gospel better than most of us. I spoke of the worldwide fellowship of Christians—and Methodists! I assured them that people in my country would be praying for them—and that we desperately need their prayers. One man stood up to say that in heaven we will all be one without the barriers of language, race, and culture—and I could not help adding to myself: "and class." Then that congregation sent greetings to their "hermanos" (brothers and sisters) in the United States, not with a militant

(Continued on p. 45)

Special Report: WORLD METHODISM'S HAWAIIAN PUNCH

When the World Methodism Council announced that its Fourteenth World Conference (celebrating the Centennial of such meetings) would be held in Honolulu, Hawaii, at the Sheraton-Waikiki Hotel, no less, many people shook their heads and assumed that the Council was succumbing to all the sins of which it has been frequently accused. Those critics who tend to regard the Council (and the once every five year Conferences) as simply a form of old-boy network triumphalism where the problems of the real world and the real church can be avoided assumed that their suspicions had been vindicated. Even those more open may well have felt the Conference was simply a thinly-veiled way to give those Methodists with the money an excuse for a Hawaiian vacation. Even some of those who attended may have started out with the guilty question, "Is this trip necessary?"

The interesting thing about the Fourteenth World Methodist Conference, held in Honolulu July 21-28, is that it proved all such skeptics wrong. As one who has been covering these meetings since 1956, I do not hesitate to say that this was by far the most interesting, the most involved in the life of the church and of the world of any in the last 25 years.

Such a sweeping statement is obviously subjective and can easily

overlook past achievements. After all, no less a paper than the *New York Times* thought the fact of the Conference's integrated meeting in North Carolina in 1956 and its condemnation of racism worthy of an approving editorial and the 1976 Peace March in Dublin (originally initiated by the World Federation of Methodist Women) captured the imagination of citizens in both Northern Ireland and the Republic. The list of distinguished speakers is long and so are the topics covered.

Nonetheless, the impressions remain of many, many speeches (often five or six a day) on the history of Methodism in various parts of the world. Such interest as the Council itself stirred (and it was often a great deal) was in such non-controversial fields as the restoration of Wesley monuments and the Oxford theological institutes.

Recently, of course, the Council has tried to broaden out with institution of a Methodist peace prize and the activities of its evangelism committee's "Mission to the Eighties" as well as by the continuation of bilateral conversations with the Roman Catholics and Lutherans and its program of pastoral exchanges.

Still, it was clear from the opening communion service that this Conference had a style and attack to it that was both new and welcome. Even the somewhat garish surroundings of the ballroom of a Waikiki resort hotel could not overcome the Christian symbolism of more than three thousand persons receiving communion at



United Methodist Bishop James Ault carries the U.S. flag in the procession at the opening worship service.

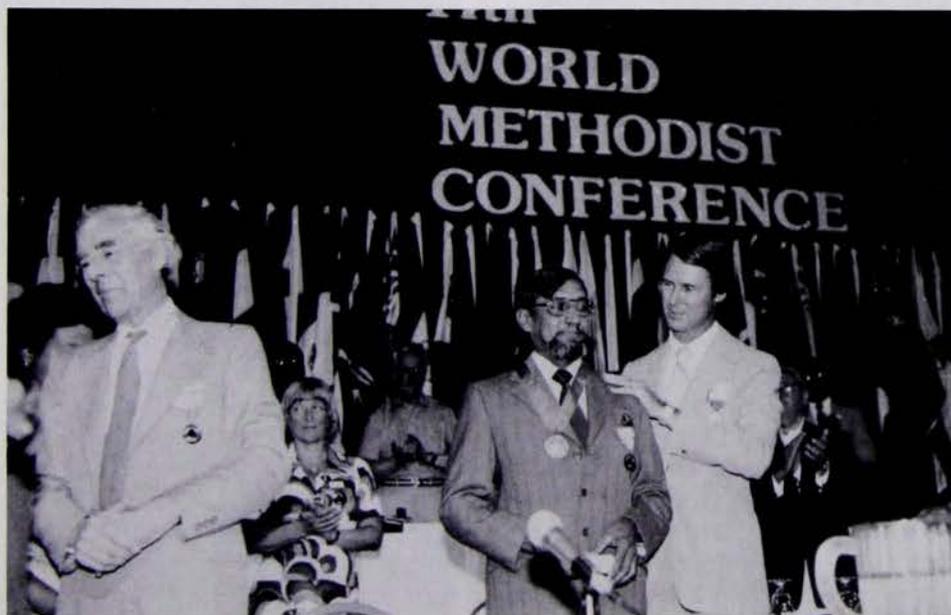
some twenty altars and Dr. Kenneth Greet, chairman of the Council's executive committee, set the Conference theme in a fine sermon in which he declared that "The issue now is stark and clear. We learn to live together or we die."

Delivered in those chiseled tones which explain why British actors and preachers are still the envy of the English-speaking world, Dr. Greet's words echoed the rising anxiety about the nuclear arms race which is growing in Europe and among the churches in the U.S. and which so bothers the Reagan administration.

Even more than the arms race, the meeting's speakers were preoccupied with the gap between the world's rich and poor and the Christian's responsibility in this situation. "The poverty line that separates the 'have-not' nations of the South from the 'have' nations of the North is the fault line that threatens the stability of the world order," said Leticia R. Shahani, United Nations Assistant General Secretary for Social Development and Humanitarian Affairs and a Methodist from the Philippines.

Black Theology spokesman James H. Cone put the issue more strongly for Christians. "How can we read the Bible honestly and not conclude that the Jesus of the Bible stands with the poor and against the rich, with the weak and against the strong, with the exploited and against the oppressors?" he asked.

Argentine theologian Jose Miguez Bonino pressed the point by declaring



South African Rev. Abel Hendricks is awarded the World Methodist Peace Prize by General Secretary Joe Hale (right). Looking on (left) is Executive Committee Chairman Kenneth Greet.

that "We have no right to speak about mission if we do not begin with repentance and conversion—our repentance and our conversion."

Strong talk for over 3,000, largely prosperous, a majority white although with large Black representation, sitting in a resort hotel. One wondered how they would react.

Finally, of course, each person must answer for him or her self. All a reporter can note is that they were faithful in attendance, seemed attentive and responded warmly. Cone, for example, got a standing ovation.

And yet many of these people are those who question this kind of emphasis in their own denomination. Did the blue skies and balmy weather of Hawaii lull them into an easy acceptance or is something really going on here?

It is tempting to hope that Methodists are finally beginning to believe some of our rhetoric about reconciling the evangelism—social action split that has bedeviled the churches. Tempting, and probably romantic. The World Methodist Conference, after all, is a get together rather than a body which has to plan the life of the church. And the accord, such as it was, was no doubt superficial. There are hard questions that must be addressed to liberation theology unless it become as lopsided as what it aims to replace and these questions were barely voiced in Honolulu.

Still, this was a most refreshing meeting which gives renewed hope both in the vitality of the World Methodist Council and of Methodism itself. Let us hope that it is a foretaste of things to come. ■

Arthur J. Moore



LETTERS

Not The First

I noticed in the *New World Outlook*, July-August, 1981 issue, that your News Summary you indicate that Dr. Roberto Escamilla was listed as the first Hispanic ever appointed to a church in the Southwest Texas Conference. This is not true. The Rev. Alberto Merubia, who has been a member of this conference at least 25 years, is serving St. John's Church in San Antonio. The Rev. Chris Rodriguez served at Los Fresnos and later as Associate in Austin and who is now on a leave of absence, has been in this conference some ten years and we've had others along the way. So this is not a first, indeed it is good appointment and it is primarily an Anglo congregation, but so is St. John's where Alberto Merubia serves.

This is a minor thing, but we are ahead of the news cast in respect to having integrated one or two of our churches.

Ted Richardson
San Antonio, Texas

A Little Staggered

I am a little staggered by an article in the June issue of the magazine. The NCC and Bishop Ault expressed "fundamental disagreement" with policies of President Reagan. The policies of President Reagan are an attempt to get us off the Merry-go-Round which has brought us poverty and crime. I suspect that the editors and Bishop Ault should climb down from their Ivory Towers and do a little welfare work at Grass Roots.

Mrs. F. L. Livingston, Sr.
Chatsworth, Illinois

Immigration Quotas

I just finished reading Pat Taran's article on immigration. In general I think it was well-written and thoughtful. One error and one omission, however, weakened its potential impact.

The article stated that the 1965 Immigration Act abolished per country quotas and substituted hemispheric quotas. In fact, per country quotas are still a part of the law and are causing serious problems, notably the backlogs of applicants in certain countries. The 1965 Act only substituted a flat limit of 20,000 per country for the prior system of limits varying according to the percentage of people from each country in the U.S. as of the 1910 census. By conveying the mistak-

en impression that discrimination by national origin was abolished in 1965, the article makes our reform efforts more difficult.

Omitted from the article was the work of the churches in public policy advocacy. The Washington Interreligious Staff Council's Immigration Working Group has been lobbying on immigration for almost two years, and it is important that church people be aware of these efforts. I think this exemplifies the need for more coordination of the information floating around church offices in New York and Washington, and I hope efforts for cooperation will increase in the future. As a United Methodist working for the Church of the Brethren, I am anxious to have my own denomination put its best foot forward in ecumenical circles.

Thanks for the article, and for considering my concerns.

Ralph Watkins
Washington, D.C.

Appreciation

Congratulations on the last two issues of *New World Outlook*. I especially appreciate the "religious" news items of the first few pages. I get good editorials in *the Christian Century* and other publications but your copy alone gives me the latest news about social and religious events of importance. All Power to you.

Tracey K. Jones (Sr.)
Claremont, CA

"Blithe Dismissal"

The April (Annual Report issue) contains a blithe dismissal of recent criticism of the Board of Global Ministries in the article authored by Jesse DeWitt and Betsy Ewing. One of the problems which plagues local pastors is that charges of Marxist leanings and philosophy which are made against the GBGM are never squarely countered, much less addressed by the board. So long as high officials continue to ignore the root causes of these concerns for the legitimacy of the Board of Global Ministries' programs, there will continue to fester those elements of distrust and dissatisfaction with the work of the Board which has become so evident within the last decade.

I would prefer to see a recognition that the fear of church funds being used to encourage Marxist causes is a genuine fear, and that the answers which have been forthcoming from GBGM are doing little to alleviate that fear. The fact that your April issue carries not so much as a single Scriptural verse quotation is even more evidence for those who charge the GBGM is following some agenda other than one arrived at through strict adherence to Biblical principles and Godly admonitions.

(Rev.) James W. French
Leland, Illinois

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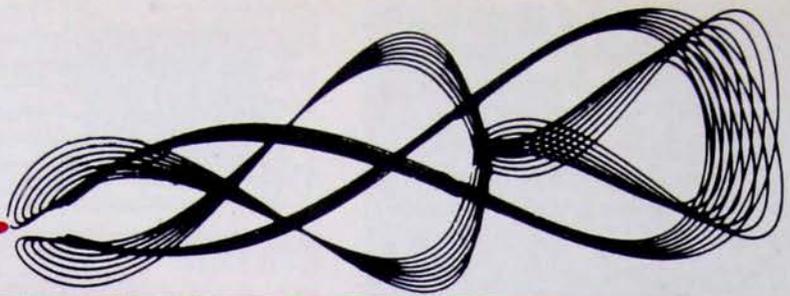


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THE MOVING FINGER WRITES



MISSIONARY BISHOP WALSH, ONCE PRISONER IN CHINA, DIES AT THE AGE OF 90

Bishop James E. Walsh, the last Christian missionary to serve in the People's Republic of China and the second superior general of the Maryknoll Fathers, died on July 29.

Bishop Walsh, who was 90, had developed an infection following surgery in June. He had lived at Maryknoll headquarters in Maryknoll, N.Y., since his release from a Chinese Communist prison in 1970.

His release was seen as an important signal from Peking that led to a thawing of relations with the United States and then to the visit of President Richard Nixon to China in 1972.

Bishop Walsh is believed to have been the last of the 7,000 foreign Catholic and Protestant missionaries to be expelled by the Communists.

He had remained behind after the Mao government came to power in 1949, despite harassment and pressure to leave. His offices were closed in 1951 and he was placed under surveillance.

Then in 1958, he was arrested and sentenced to 20 years imprisonment on charges of counter-revolutionary activities that included spying for the Vatican and for the United States.

When he was freed from Shanghai's Ward Road Prison Hospital and walked across the Lo Wu bridge to Hong Kong, the tall gaunt missionary denied that he had ever been a spy.

He explained that after being subjected to interrogation "morning, noon and night" for a year and a half, he had signed a confession to being a spy "in the Chinese Communist legal sense."

The bishop also said he had "no bitterness toward those who tried and condemned me. I love the Chinese people," he added simply.

In all, the Maryknoll missionary spend 40 years in China. Born the son of a lawyer in Cumberland, Md., on April 30, 1891, he was graduated from



James E. Walsh

Mount St. Mary's College in 1910. After working in a steel foundry for two years, he joined the newly-founded Foreign Mission Society which became popularly known as Maryknoll from the name of its headquarters.

Bishop Walsh was the author of six books, but his most quoted writing was his description of a missionary (missioner), written in 1933, in Jiangment. It begins:

"It is better to be a saint than a good missionary, but is it harder? This is a scandalizing question but it has an edifying answer that magnifies the missionary without belittling the saint. And the missionary has need of a little magnifying, for a low view of his calling is his greatest danger."

On another occasion he described the task of a missionary as "to go to a place where he is not wanted but needed, and to remain until he is not needed but wanted."

During a pastoral visit to Japan in 1940, Japanese officials asked him to act as a secret mediator between Japan

and the United States. He was briefed by the foreign minister and carried a message from Prime Minister Yosuke Matsuoka to President Roosevelt in a futile effort to avoid war.

After war broke out, Bishop Walsh protested the forced internment of Japanese Americans.

He returned to China in 1946 and two years later became executive secretary of the Central Catholic Bureau of Religious Organization in Shanghai. He coordinated all educational, cultural, welfare and missionary activities on behalf of China's 3.3 million Catholics.

In a letter written shortly before his arrest, the bishop referred to Shanghai as "our good city, which—to me at least—has the worst climate, the worst plumbing, the best cooking, the kindest spirit and the nicest people in the whole world."

When his superiors hinted that he should leave China and escape what was almost certain imprisonment, the American asked if the reasons were

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grave enough "to set aside the established principle that a priest ignores adversity and remains at his post?" He was allowed to make his own decision.

After his release from China, Bishop Walsh returned to the United States by way of Rome where he was received by Pope Paul VI. Back at Maryknoll, he settled into a life of prayer and retirement.

WOMEN/MEN MEETING RELEASES OPEN LETTER

A ten-day international consultation on the community of women and men in the church has issued an open letter to Christians. The letter speaks of a "world so largely controlled by men" in which women "suffer war, violence, poverty, exploitation and disparagement."

It adds that "lives of men have been trapped by the effects of their having power and a supposed superiority."

The consultation met under the auspices of the World Council of Churches and included some 150 delegates from more than 50 countries. The letter says those gathered at the meeting, which took place in Sheffield, England, in mid-July, "received a foretaste of global community of women and men vulnerable to the pain of all forms of oppression and united in struggle against them."

In addition, it goes on, "for many women and men there is a real pain in the frustrations of a church life con-

Viewpoint (cont'd from p. 41)

fist or even a confident stiff-armed vote, but with a half-lifted open palm, a gentle wave of salutation.

As we crossed the open courtyard under the stars (so exceptionally brilliant at that 11,000 foot altitude) we were shown the piles of building supplies where a new church is under construction, on the very homesite of Senora Hortense, who has given all that she has, her lifetime security, her steep hillside lot. At the gate my host told me that this church is named Bella Vista, Beautiful View. Beautiful View it was that evening, as thousands of lights sparkled across the valley--before the eleven o'clock military curfew. Hideous View when the morning sun exposed the ugliness, cruelty, hardship and pain of those destitute slums. Sacramental View it will remain for me, as I remember it with soul

vision, with eyes of faith and hope.

As we drove past the presidential mansion, my heart was churning with guilt and theological puzzlement. Evidently my cousin shared the same thoughts. "We middle-class people (he said in effect) are five to ten percent of the population; those people are 75 to 80 percent—and urban poverty is more acute, more inhuman than rural poverty. How can we be real Christians in a world of such agonizing contrasts? We are Bolivians; we are their neighbors; we share the blame for such a situation." My acknowledgment that we in North America had not been very responsible neighbors either did not lessen his own self-accusation.

"Stop in for a cup of tea before I take you to the hostel," he invited a few moments later. "The family will be watching television; you will see." They were. ■

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answer
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Children in Moradabad, India include daily prayers in their routine at the Titus Elementary School. Certainly the prayers must include hope that scholarship aid will continue to be available. At Titus the children are from homes so poor enough food is often a problem--and there is little money for education. Yet the parents know their children's future depends upon both a basic education and an understanding of Christian love. Your gift could be the answer to prayer; helping these children get both an education and the Christian love and understanding will give hope for a better future.



The October issue will be a special issue on Europe, which will be particularly useful for all churches studying the mission theme this year. Articles discuss United Methodist churches and work in Switzerland, Norway, Estonia, and East Germany. Also, Protestant children in Northern Ireland, the situation of Eastern Orthodoxy in Europe, and the ironies of church growth and apathy in many places. In addition, NWO will carry an exclusive (to American magazines) article describing the recent visit of a team from the World Council of Churches to the Aborigines of Australia. All part of our monthly worldwide coverage of the church in mission



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trolled by male leadership, where, for instance, women feel called to the ministry of word and sacraments and ordination is not open to them or where the church has not responded to creative developments in society."

A strong statement midway through the program from some participants from the Third World spoke of a "growing feeling of frustration among a large number of Third World delegates that the concerns and issues expressed so far in the plenaries have had little relevance to where we are and where we come from."

They urged discussion of the consultation subject within the "global context of desperate struggle against

exploitation and poverty, hopelessness and despair."

In the consultation's report, the section on freedom and justice stresses the interrelationship of all freedom struggles. It calls racism, sexism, classism, and all other forms of domination "one demonic symphony of oppression."

Focusing as one example on international tourism and prostitution, the report urges the World Council of Churches and member churches to set up programs to eliminate in the areas concerned organized prostitution by international tourist firms.

A section of marriage, family and life-style underlines the importance of the Christian family as a dynamic social force that can influence the power exercised by political and cultural agencies and through the media. The WCC is urged to recommend to member churches and the United Nations that a decade be set aside for special emphasis on the family. The section sees alternative life styles as a label to marginalize people who don't live in nuclear families. The report prefers awareness of the single person in churches and the needs of single-parent families.

A portion of the report faults "the old economic order" which has "brought about mass poverty, glaring inequalities, social injustices, militarization, ignorance and fear among the people in every country." Affirming solidarity with victims of personal and institutional violence, it also allows that "there are certain occasions on which women and men can be called to action with the oppressed or in solidarity with them" and urges continued Christian involvement in "liberation struggles."

The section on ministry and worship deals with women's ordination but begins with a call to strengthen lay ministry by giving better training and

wider responsibility.

A personal report on the meeting by Betty Thompson will appear in the December issue of *response*.

ADVANCE "BORN TO GIVE" FILM TIMELY FOR COMMUNITY CENTER

The newly-released 28 minute film on the Advance, United Methodism's program of second mile giving, turns out to be timely for the project featured in it.

As a result of federal budget cut-backs and the termination of the CETA worker training program, the Robeson County Church and Community Center in Lumberton, N.C. has lost all 13 of its CETA workers, trimming the total staff to six.

The Rev. James Cummings, director of the Lumberton Center says that all the programs will continue but "will not be as widespread" as before. Among the lost CETA workers were two engaged in literacy, one in senior citizens outreach, two in housing and after school care, one in casework, one in a clothing room, plus two carpenters engaged in rehabilitation of housing. Much of this work will now have to be done by volunteers, who need more direction and supervision than did the workers paid by the government.

Seven of the CETA workers were actually lost to the project last April 17 when the state's Department of Human Resources saw the federal handwriting on the wall and began to terminate or reassign workers. The remaining six went shortly after that. Some of the slack was taken up this summer by youth workers.

Cummings and Church and Community worker Dora Pearce now find themselves doing many things they weren't doing before, such as handling the telephone switchboard (a call from someone needing help with a housing

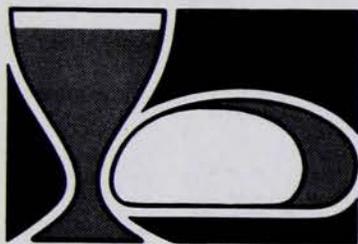


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The Executive Committee of the Consultation on Church Union is seeking an Associate General Secretary to work with the General Secretary and other staff in collegial style to achieve the goals set by the ten participating denominations through the Consultation. This is a continuing effort of churches with differing traditions and policies to form one church truly catholic, truly evangelical and truly reformed.

The Associate General Secretary will join in developing and maintaining communication links with participating churches; in providing staff services to committees, commissions and task forces; in assisting in planning and serving

the Executive Committee and the plenary meetings; in interpreting through speaking and writing the goals of the Consultation; and in sharing the administrative workload of the secretariat. The Executive Committee prefers a person with theological competence but does not require ordination. The salary range is \$25,000 to \$28,000 including housing. The offices of the Consultation are in Princeton, N.J.

Interested persons are invited to send resume or dossier to Search Committee, Consultation on Church Union, 228 Alexander St., Princeton, N.J. 08540, not later than Sept. 30, 1981. Equal Opportunity Employer.

problem came while Mr. Cummings was talking with New World Outlook), and operating the van which takes senior citizens and handicapped people to food centers and medical checkups.

The Robeson County project was chosen to represent the more than 2000 projects of the Advance. The church in Park City, Kentucky, which is called "Parkville" in the film, represents the many churches which join United Methodism's program of second-mile giving. The film explores the question, "Why do Christians give?"

Mr. Cummings told New World Outlook that he has always thought of the Robeson County center as a church-sponsored agency. "We appreciated the contributions of the government (the CETA workers), but I always stood on the church and the church alone. This is the church in ministry," he said.

In a story by Barbara Wilkinson for United Methodist Communications, a former VISTA worker, Patsy Pipkin, is quoted saying: "This center has given the people of this county so much to look forward to. You have to see the look on the faces (of the people helped). You just can't explain it."

(C.E.B.)

ADMINISTRATION PLAN TO DEAL WITH ALIENS

Following conclusion of a cabinet-level study on immigration and refugee policy, the Reagan administration has announced what it calls a "realistic" approach to the task of gaining "control of our borders."

Features of the plan include

—a law imposing penalties against employers who knowingly hire illegal aliens;

—a new experimental "temporary worker program" for up to 50,000 Mexican nationals annually;

—a way to confer legal status on qualifying aliens now living illegally in the United States (whose number is estimated to be between 3.5 million and 6 million);

—efforts to negotiate with other countries in the Western Hemisphere to discourage illegal immigration.

Attorney General William French Smith outlined the administration's proposals before a joint hearing with members of both the Senate and House subcommittees which deal with refugee and immigration issues. He told the congressmen, "the over-

riding purpose of the president's proposals is to make our laws and policies more realistic—and then to enforce those laws effectively."

To fulfill those goals, the United States must "modestly expand the opportunities for legal employment to reflect the reality of America's attractiveness to much of the world.—must squarely recognize the existence of a hidden class of illegal aliens who work and live within our society but are beyond its sanctions and protections and must develop new enforcement techniques that would allow us to

enforce fully laws and policies that reflect those realities."

An earlier Select Commission on Immigration and Refugee Policy chaired by the Rev. Theodore M. Hesburgh, president of the University of Notre Dame, had recommended the use of worker identity cards to curb the illegal hiring of aliens. Attorney General Smith said the administration had rejected the idea, favoring instead the use of two forms of identification (a driver's license and a Social Security card or birth certificate) because of cost and practicality. (RNS)

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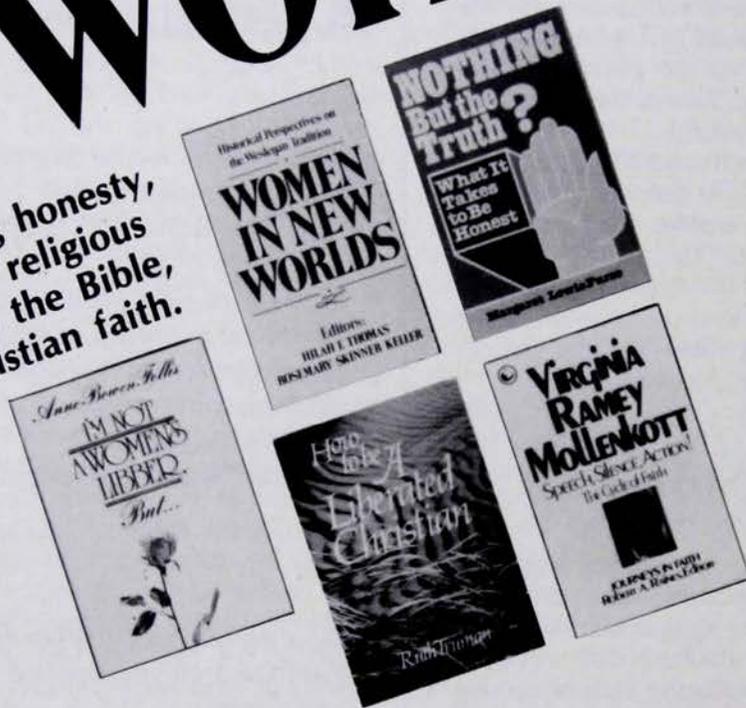
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Ms. Mollenkott is also the author of the popular book: *Women, Men, and the Bible*, published by Abingdon. Paper, \$4.95

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