

# Religion in the News

## Why some are leaving church

When people drop out of church it is not due to the institution's involvement in social issues or similar dissatisfaction, but because the church has ceased to be important to them, a survey in the United States and Canada shows.

Many people, as an excuse for no longer attending services, say the church is "too activist," or "too involved," or is taking on interests at variance with the gospel. But these people often are rationalizing - digging for an excuse to cover up a general lag in interest in spiritual matters - the survey suggests.

This and other information was elicited from 3500 in-depth interviews at 21 denominations in the United States and Canada over a two-year period. The results were summarized by the National Council of Churches, which, however, did not conduct or sponsor the survey.

Despite the findings about why people drift away from the church, pastors and laymen interviewed expressed faith in the future of organized religion.

Rated least important in reasons why people leave organized religion were "social involvement of the church, doctrinal differences, and inadequate church facilities."

Rather, they drift away, according to most pastors queried, because of a feeling that "the church is not important in modern life," or lack of time, or a compensating interest in other organizations in the community - in other words, they do not feel that what the church offers them today has much meaning.

Most of those questioned said they believed the major function of the local church is winning others to Christ and providing worship for members. Modern churches often forget these basic responsibilities, they said.



## St. Martin's has party

Children at St. Martin's Day Nursery presented a Christmas program for their parents and teachers. The day nursery for 3, 4 and 5 year olds is sponsored by the St. Vincent de Paul Society.



## AME delegates to attend Conference

Mrs. Corrine (Lewis) Winchester and Rev. A. Lee Henderson will attend a planning conference in Denver on January 18 - 22.



Corrine Winchester

The conference will make plans for the General Conference of the African Methodist Episcopal Church to be held in Dallas, Texas on June 7, 1972. The General Conference is held every four years.

Mrs. Winchester is one of five lay delegates elected to represent the Puget Sound Conference of the Fifth Episcopal District. She was a delegate to the 1968 Conference held in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.

Rev. Henderson is one of five ministerial delegates elected to the Puget Sound Conference.

You are better informed because you read it in the Observer!

## U.S. business in S.A. supports racism

The operations of U.S. owned companies doing business in South Africa generally "strengthen and buttress" racial separation in that country, two officials of the American Baptist Convention charged.

A sixteen man delegation of American churchmen visited South Africa in November to investigate the racial policies of American firms there and to make recommendations on how those firms can help to end apartheid.

Rev. Richard Ice, deputy executive secretary of the American Baptist Home Mission Societies, said it is possible for U.S. companies to do more than they are to overcome apartheid. He said 16 million blacks and 2 million colored (mixed) are dominated by 4 million whites.

The average salary for a black is \$67, a month while the average white earns \$382. The statement released by the delegation said that U.S. firms in South Africa should make an "immediate, total withdrawal from the implicit support of the Apartheid policy" or must undertake "studied, deliberate, strategic use of corporate resources . . . to bring about a more just society".

## Aztec religion revived

A Mexican religious sect is quietly plotting the overthrow of the Mexican government. It is part of a revival of the ancient Aztec religion and a new racial consciousness among Mexican Indians. The Indians feel they have been pushed aside by the Mexicans, Spanish or Spanish-Indian ancestry.

The modern Aztecs, who are several hundred in number, consider the present government of Mexico to be the successor of Cortez, who conquered the Aztec Empire in 1521. They accuse the Mexican government of doing nothing for the Indians who live in rural areas in poverty.

## Courses offered

Rodney Page, Associate Director of the Greater Portland Council of Churches, announced today the beginning of a teacher education program for church school teachers.

Various age group courses are offered to give support to teachers in the church by providing them with opportunities to define or refine their purposes, to improve their teaching skills and for sharing with other teachers.

In addition to these courses, two Bible enrichment courses will be offered:

- 1.) "The Gospel in the Gospels", taught by Dr. John Anderson, of Lewis and Clark College.
- 2.) "Bonehead Bible", taught by the Rev. Richard Rohrbaugh, of St. Mark Presbyterian Church.

Each course will run six consecutive Monday evenings from 7:30 to 9:30 at Westminster Presbyterian Church. Those interested in attending should call the Greater Portland Council of Churches, at 223-6101.

## Alabama to reapportion

The State of Alabama was ordered by a federal court to reapportion the State Legislature.

Representative Fred Gray, one of two blacks in the legislature, said the decision will allow blacks in Alabama to be represented for the first time "in proportion to our strength."

The decision, to go into effect in 1974, creates 105 single-member districts in the House and 35 in the Senate. Senate districts are composed of three house districts.

The plan gives blacks a better chance of being elected because they will run in predominantly black districts that were previously combined with districts with white majorities.

Charles Morgan, southeastern director of the American Civil Liberties Union, said the case can require the single member district across the South. He was a plaintiff in a suit in 1964 in which the U.S. Supreme Court required five Southern states, including Alabama, to be apportioned on a population basis.

The Israeli Supreme Court issued an order staying the deportation of twenty American "Black Israelites". The blacks arrived in Israel in October to visit relatives who were among the "Black Israelites" who began migrating to Israel from Chicago two years ago. The tourist visas expired in November and they were ordered to leave the country. They claim to be descendants of the ancient Israelites.

Presbyterians and Congregationalists in England will combine into a single church with a membership of about 200,000. The new organization will be called the United Reformed Church.

An Army private was sentenced to four months confinement to four months confinement for wearing a silver cross outside his uniform. The soldier said upon hearing the verdict, "If some men receive medals for performing numerous bombing runs while another man is punished for wearing a cross, we must ask what are the values we hold."

## Church investment in war revealed

The National Council of Churches criticized 10 major Protestant denominations on ethical and moral grounds for investing \$203 million in companies that hold military contracts. Spokesman for several of the churches said they were concerned about their investment policies and were reviewing them.

The Council itself admitted to having \$332,831 invested in five corporations doing war business. The study showed that some of the churches that have been in the forefront of opposition to the war are most guilty of holding investments "placing themselves in complicity with the irresponsible, immoral and socially injurious acts" of 29 corporations. The report said the church has a tradition of being a moral leader and therefore "has a special obligation to question complicity" with corporations

manufacturing armaments. Instead "the churches are providing important amounts of economic support for the military-industrial complex and the war in Southeast Asia and "assisting the manufacture and use of weapons of mass human and environmental destruction."

The denominations and the amount invested with defense contractors are: United Methodist, \$59.7 million; Christian Church, \$8.6 million; United Presbyterian, \$57.8 million; American Baptist Convention, \$30.5 million; Protestant Episcopal Church, \$29.8 million; Lutheran Church in America, \$7.7 million; United Church of Christ, \$2.9 million; Church of the Brethren, \$801,199; Presbyterian Church in the United States, \$1.4 million; Unitarian Universalist Association, \$2.8 million.

## Common cause — Protect the environment

Don't be misled by the success some citizens have had in halting environmentally harmful actions by government and industry. Power relationships between polluters and the polluted have not been realigned. Far from it. The average citizen still is at a staggering disadvantage when he undertakes to fight pollution.

This imbalance - particularly as it applies to law suits - must be corrected, and Common Cause has joined the fight. The Environmental Protection Act (S1032), a bill we are supporting, would establish the right of every member of the public to the protection, preservation, and enhancement of the environment. Moreover, the bill would establish an adequate remedy to protect that right. It may surprise you that this right has not yet been clearly established by Congress or that remedies are hard to come by. But it explains why effective anti-pollution action by citizens is so difficult.

The legislation is needed to correct the present imbalance of power among citizens, established economic interests, and government bureaucracies on management of the environment.

The Environmental Protection Act (S 1032) is being considered by the Environment Subcommittee of the Senate Commerce Committee. Members of the Subcommittee should be urged to act favorably on the bill. The Senators: Mich.-Philip Hart, sponsor of the bill; Utah - Frank Moss, R.I. - John Pators, Tenn. - Howard Baker, La. - Russell Long, Ky. - Marlow Cook, Kan. James Pearson, Ore. - Mark Hatfield, Va. - William Spong.

The legislation now being studied by a Senate subcommittee deals with citizen environment suits. This would make clear that citizens, on their own or in behalf of citizen organizations, have the right to bring law suits against polluters or government agencies.

Existing law presents many roadblocks to legal action by an average citizen unless he can show he has a real stake in the environmental damage caused by agencies or businesses. Legally, it is hard to establish this real interest which gives a citizen "standing" to sue; the merits of the issue are never discussed. For example, the Sierra Club has encountered extraordinary problems in establishing its right to challenge government authorization of a large resort, electric power lines and highways in Sequoia National Park in California. The bill we are working for would enable individuals and groups such as the Sierra Club to take their cases into court with assurance that the merits will be argued.

But the bill would do more. Presently, citizens may not challenge the merits of "discretionary" acts on the part of regulatory agencies, particularly those agencies managing our natural resources.

Bureaucrats are shielded from the scrutiny of the courts and the public because of the ill-founded notion that only administrative specialists have the ability (1) to judge the effects of a proposed action that might harm the environment and (2) to judge the public interest in the matter. The Senate bill (S 1032) would open

up the agencies' "discretionary" acts to public challenge and evaluation by an independent arbiter - the courts.

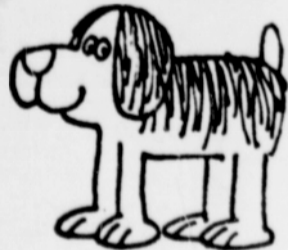
As things stand now, citizens are without power to challenge, on their merits, such agency actions as granting oil leases in the Santa Barbara Channel, decisions to authorize the SST, and government extension of time for automobile manufacturers to meet air pollution emission standards. The importance of providing this power to citizens is emphasized when it is recalled that most government regulatory agencies are single - interest organizations, e.g., the Atomic Energy Commission, the Federal Power Commission, the Department of Transportation.

Common Cause has now begun to lobby for passage of the Environmental Protection Act. In September, we testified before the Senate subcommittee considering the bill. Appearing on our behalf were Charles R. Halpern and Robert Hallman who have considerable experience in environmental protection efforts and in public interest law work. They told the subcommittee that the time has come to grant citizens and citizen organizations the unqualified right to challenge such things as air quality standards, water pol-

lution abatement schedules, mineral leases, radiation standards, waste disposal practices, expansion of electric power facilities, on their merits and before the unbiased forum of the courts.

On January 29, Mrs. Geraldine Hammond, better known as "Miss Geri", the beloved T.V. personality, will show how to make and entertain with simple puppets at the Multnomah County Library, 512 N. Killingsworth.

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