

RELIGION

Local Church "Makes A Difference" In Northeast Portland

In celebration of the national Make A Difference Day, the Church of Scientology Celebrity Centre presented the Northeast Emergency Food Program, and outreach activity of the Ecumenical Ministries of Oregon, with a donation of more than \$330 for their Infant Nutrition Program this week. The church also delivered several bags of men's clothing the Portland Police Department's Sunshine Division for distribution to men needing sturdy work clothes.

Created and run nationally by USA Weekend and the Points of Light Foundation, Make A Difference Day is an annual event where citizens are challenged to join hundreds of thousands of others across the nation who will "make life better for others."

Cynthia Hall, a six-year employee of the NE Emergency Food Program (NEFP), said the Program provides packages to an average of 30 families with infants every month. Packages contain baby formula, fresh milk, and other food specifically designed to meet the nutritional

needs of children under the age of six. "We help a lot of large or combined families here," Cynthia stated. "We once had a family of 17 people—two parents and 15 kids—come in."

Contrary to the majority-held opinion, clients who come to NEFP looking for assistance are full-time working people, whose wages are simply not enough to cover basic living expenses, but are too much to qualify for food stamps. "One of the most common things we hear is I make \$5.00 per month too much for food stamps," Cynthia replied. They've also observed many families moving in together to reduce rent and utility bills.

While it was acknowledged that there is an element of drug use in the lives of families NEFP services, Cynthia felt strongly that low wages and high living expenses are the main causes of people not being able to come up with basic expenses. "I don't think most people know how expensive it is to maintain a household these days," Cynthia commented. "Both parents working means day care costs, which are extremely

MAKE A DIFFERENCE DAY
NATIONAL DAY OF DOING GOOD
ANNUAL CHALLENGE



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high. Two or three kids in full time day care pretty much wipes out these peoples' monthly income, before

winter utility bills and rent are even considered.
 Church spokesperson, Angie

Mann, pointed to the decay of education standards as a major factor in the increased need for programs such as NEFP today from 10 years ago. "Current education systems are no longer the 'halls of learning' they once were," Mann stated. "Instead, bizarre psychiatric theories, such as those described in the infamous book, *The Bell Curve*, have made their way into our schools, forcing on our children absurd ideas that skin color has something to do with IQ, that you cannot change your environment and that what "feels good" determines the difference between right and wrong."

"If we are truly going to revert the downward spiral our society is rapidly descending, we need to root out the psycho-babble from our schools and return to the actual education of the next generation." Mann challenged NEFP that the Church, through the restoration of moral standards in our society, would put them out of a job by the year 2005.

Sponsored by other strong community organizations such as the Albina Ministerial Alliance, the Ur-

ban League and the NE Neighborhood Association, NEFP also participates with the Martin Luther King Safeway in "Supermarket Saturday," an annual event run by Safeway stores where a percentage of the day's sales are donated to a designated non-profit service agency. This year's Supermarket Saturday is for November 18.

NEFP is mostly in need of fresh produce and milk, pastas and sauces, tuna, stews, dry beans and cheese. Several donations of green beans and rice have come in already, making other vegetables or canned meal items in greater need. Cash donations are also welcome.

Being a supporter of programs that provide solutions for those in need, the Celebrity Centre has been running a men's clothing drive for the Portland Police Department's Sunshine Division in North Portland. Being the rarest of donations, Division representative Lynn Taylor said the clothes would be given to homeless men looking for or beginning manual labor jobs or trying to get off the streets.

Mother Teresa Publishes Spiritual Guide

After decades of helping the poor in India, Mother Teresa is sending spiritual relief to the materialistic West in a new book spelling out her creed.

In "A Simple Path," the 85-year-old Albanian-born nun explains her simple, undoubting faith and offers a five-point guide to getting closer to God.

The book, written by Canadian Lucinda Vardey, is based on a series of taped interviews with Mother Teresa and quotes nuns and helpers working for her global charity organization. It is divided into chapters on prayer, faith, love, service and peace.

Mother Teresa gives advice on how to achieve each, giving examples from the work of her charities,

which include children's homes and AIDS hospices as well as the famous home for the dying in Calcutta.

She talks with compassion and sympathy of her work with the poor: "They are hungry not only for food, they are hungry to be recognized as human beings. They are hungry for dignity and to be treated as we are treated. They are hungry for our love."

But she is clear that while the poor may be human beings, they are also the embodiment of Jesus Christ and her purpose in serving them is to serve God.

"We are not social workers, not nurses or doctors, we are religious sisters. We serve Jesus in the poor. We nurse Him, feed Him, clothe Him, comfort Him in the poor, the

abandoned, the sick, the orphans," explains one of her workers.

Mother Teresa also blames want of love for the ills of the West.

"The greatest disease in the West today is...being unwanted, unloved and uncared for. We can cure physical diseases with medicine but the only cure for loneliness, despair and hopelessness is love," she says.

Random House, publisher of "A Simple Path," hopes it will match the success of Pope John Paul II's "Crossing the Threshold of Hope," which sold two million copies within a week of publication in October 1994. It said the book will answer critics who say she should try to change the world rather than just heal its wounds.

Newest Thrillers Cast Spiritual Twist

Wildlife biologist Steve Benson is alone and unarmed on a moonlit mountainside. He is being hunted. A lizardlike beast the size of a whale lurks nearby. It eats people. Something new from Michael Crichton?

Not quite. Here is what Dr. Benson does next: He prays. "Now, Lord, You've helped me so far," the frightened scientist begins.

The scene is from "The Oath," a novel by Frank E. Peretti, a former Pentecostal minister. It is part of a new, lucrative genre loosely called Christian thrillers, in which potboiling adventure is combined with a distinctly conservative theology.

This literary trend is the latest example of the skill entrepreneurial believers have shown in taking secular ideas and giving them a spiritual twist for a religious marketplace. T-shirts with evangelical slogans, children's videos with cartoon Bible stories and many other products have found consumers who want their entertainment leavened with inspiration.

While the Christian thrillers

may mention soul and spirit more often than, say, those by Dean Koontz, they tap deep into the current stream of American anxieties, telling stories of righteous individuals confronted by corrupt institutions like the government, the news media or law enforcement. Often, the books offer a conservative critique of abortion rights or Main Street clergy members who would shy away from denouncing personal sin; all feature major characters who publicly embrace a born-again faith in Jesus Christ.

Since August, two evangelical Protestant luminaries better known for their other works have published action novels: Charles Colson, the Watergate figure who now runs a prison ministry, and Pat Robertson, founder of the Christian Broadcasting Network.

Colson's book, "Gideon's Torch," written with Ellen Vaughn, tells the story of a harsh federal crackdown on anti-abortion groups, the response of a ruthless and opportunistic president to anti-abortion violence. A peaceful pastor is caught up in the government's sweep; a secu-

larly inclined attorney general has a crisis of faith.

Robertson, in "The End of the Age," writes of nothing less than events leading to the Second Coming of Christ. After a meteor strikes Los Angeles, a wealthy couple flees to the desert, joins a Bible study group and converts; the Antichrist slips into the White House.

Colson's book has had a first printing of 175,000 copies and Robertson's 275,000 copies by Word Publishing, a subsidiary of Nashville-based Thomas Nelson Inc., which has priced each book at \$22. But those numbers pale beside the 530,000 copies Word has printed since September of "The Oath."

"When you're writing Christian thrillers, you have to be very mindful of your readership," said Peretti, considered the dean of the genre. "I never put any swearing in my books."

Explicit sex is definitely out, too, and gory violence is kept to a minimum. But a character's spiritual transformation is essential. "Conversion is always in there," Peretti said, "if only by implication."

John Paul Addresses U.S. Race Divide

Pope John Paul, speaking in Rome after the Million Man March in Washington underscored racial problems in the United States, saying he hoped the country would never be torn apart by race, class and religion.

The Pope dedicated the address at his weekly general audience to his trip to the United States earlier this month, during which he urged America to live up to its calling as a multicultural nation of freedom and opportunity for all.

"I admire this impressive mosaic of cultures and I pray that it will never be torn apart by conflicts caused by differences of class, race and religion," he told thousands of people in St. Peter's Square for the audience.

"The United States is being challenged to strengthen those truths and values on which the country was

founded and without which a genuine democracy cannot prevail," he said.

The march of nearly 1 million black men near the U.S. Capitol was organized by Nation of Islam leader Louis Farrakhan who preached a thunderous sermon portraying America as a white supremacist society torn by racial hatreds.

The Pope made no specific mention of the march but aides said during the Oct. 4-8 trip to New York, New Jersey and Baltimore that the Pontiff was concerned about American race relations.

Heavy racial strains in the United States have been highlighted by the march and by the trial of football legend O.J. Simpson, a black hero acquitted two weeks ago of murdering his former wife, a white woman,

and her male friend.

Following the march a bipartisan group of Congressmen urged President Bill Clinton to appoint a commission on race relations.

During his trip, the Pope said equality was as much an issue in the United States today as it was during the Civil War fought more than a century ago over states' rights and slavery.

The 75-year-old Pope told his audience he was praying "so that the United States remain faithful to its vocation as a nation founded on the pillars of freedom, virtue, hospitality and the defence of life..."

Obituary - Charles B. Fox Sr.

A service was held at 2 p.m. Tuesday, Nov. 7, 1995, in Willamette National Cemetery for Charles B. Fox Sr., a floor covering contractor.

Mr. Fox died Nov. 2 at age 73.

He was born June 12, 1922, in Washougal, Wash.

A veteran of the U.S. Army during World War II, he received three Bronze Stars, a Silver Star and a Purple Heart. A resident of Oregon for 30 years, he retired in 1980.

Surviving are his wife, Minnie; sons, Earl A. Sr. of Portland and Dennis L. of Clackamas; daughters, Patricia L. Clark and Susan J. Fox, both of Ilwaco, Wash., and Karen M. Winkler of Milwaukie; brother, Earl A. of Sacramento, Calif.; 12 grandchildren; and 11 great-grandchildren.

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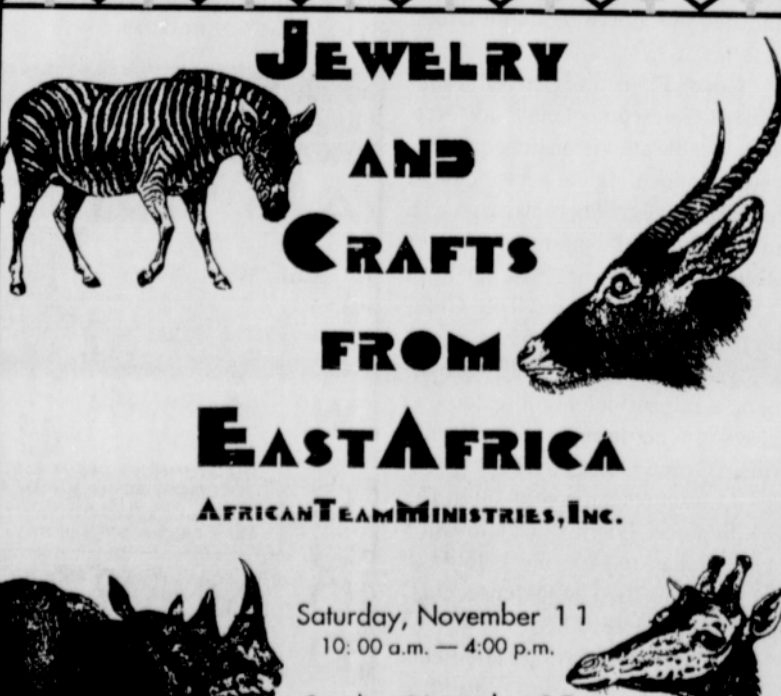
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