



Bishop Arthurs reported to Pope John about mission progress in Tanzania, an outpost of the faith in eastern Africa.

## New Methods In Missions

One of those "it's a small world" episodes occurred at the Courier last Thursday morning.

Just as the presses began rolling off the Courier with its editorial page story by a Peace Corps worker in Tanzania, in walked Bishop Eugene Arthurs, Irish-born missionary bishop from that east Africa nation, formerly called Tanganyika.

When he read the credit-line for the pictures with the story, he exclaimed, "George Dunbar, I know him well."

The mission prelate is making the rounds in the United States to muster funds to expand his catechist programs in his 13,000 square mile diocese. "We have to have well-educated catechists these days to appeal to the younger generation and we have to give them what you Americans call 'status' in their communities — a house, a bit of land and a salary equal to any other teacher."

He said the "old style" catechists helped the missionaries lay solid foundations for the faith but "they had to rely on rote memory" and, he emphasized, "that doesn't go over with the youngsters today." He said it used to cost him \$21 a month to hire a catechist — who usually had other means of support — but now it's going to cost him \$43 a month plus house and supplies.

Bishop Arthurs, still with a bit of a brogue despite a lifetime in missionary work, said the Church's hopes in Africa are rooted in the development of a strong catechist organization. "It takes 12 years to make a priest but only two to make a catechist — and the catechists are always much closer to the people, without them we priests would be just about helpless." He said a complete catechist training center with residences for the catechist families, priests and nuns, chapel and classrooms would total \$41,700.

He's obviously anxious to receive contributions small or large which can be sent to him through Father John Duffy, Diocesan Propagation of the Faith director, at 50 Chestnut St., Rochester.

We asked Bishop Arthurs how the ecumenical movement was progressing in Africa. Ireland, understandably, has not been in the vanguard of this movement and he reflects his homeland's general attitude — obedient to the wishes of the Vatican Council but a bit cautious in actual practice.

He described an era before ecumenism when churchmen of different denominations half a century ago resorted at times in Africa to rigorous methods.

Anglicans from Australia, he said, moved into east Africa with strong financial backing to build schools, churches, mission outposts, recreation centers. The Catholic bishop at that time — he was known as "The Tiger of Africa" — knew he couldn't cope with such a massive invasion with the meager means at his disposal.

Then night after night, the skyline was dotted with glowing flames as one after another an Anglican structure burned to the ground. No one, of course, would admit nor accuse anybody of anything, but many of the local residents soon sported colorful new blankets — their clothes and bed — and a knowing smile.

The Anglicans soon decided to make their mission beachheads elsewhere.

The battle today is no longer of one denomination against another but in a mutual struggle to survive in an area bursting with energy and sceptical of religions still identified with past colonial overlords.

This fact was illustrated by a meeting last month in Lausanne, Switzerland, where 20 Protestant, Orthodox and Catholic mission experts met privately to discuss practical issues facing all churches in missionary work.

The discussions — something that would hardly have been dreamed of a decade ago — were arranged by the World Council of Churches and the Vatican's Secretariat for Promoting Christian Unity. Details have not as yet been made public other than a communique at the close of the meeting which stated the participants were "conscious that the divisions between the churches and the resulting rivalry stand in the way of the proclamation of the Gospel and make it difficult for men to come to Christ."

It's good, therefore, to meet men like Bishop Arthurs and to see that the emphasis shifted from burning down your rival's church to building up more of your own.

—Father Henry A. Atwell

### The Catholic COURIER

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# DANTE—Seventh Centenary

Are you looking for a book that will help you survive a chaotic world?

Reach for a volume by Dante Alighieri, who is "The central man of all the world," according to John Ruskin. "The most universal of poets in the modern languages," as T. S. Eliot said. "The most incomparable story-teller who ever set pen to paper, a great comic writer," as a celebrated detective-story writer has dubbed him.

The 700th anniversary of his birth occurs this year — on an uncertain day at the end of May.

New and old Danterians will like to keep handy "The Portable Dante" (Viking Press). No one should skip the youthful "New Life" (Vita Nuova), the first intimately personal narrative of modern times, a slim book he wrote as a 28-year old cavalryman to tell the world that his beloved had died: "A wonderful vision appeared to me, in which I saw things that made me resolve to speak no more of this blessed one, until I could more worthily treat of her. I hope to say of her what has never been said of any woman" (XLIII).

His "Convivio" (Banquet), although unfinished, "is the earliest monumental work of Italian prose," according to Father Edmund Gardner (Catholic Encyclopedia VII, 2474). It has been translated into English and other languages. His "De Monarchia" (World Government) and "De Eloquentia Vulgaris" (The Italian Vernacular) are also available. You can find his "Odes," "Elegues," and some of his "Letters."

But the one you can not miss, even if you have been backing away from it for years, is the greatest autobiographical love-story ever written: "The Comedy Of Dante Alighieri, A Florentine By Birth, But Not By Character."

(A comedy, according to the Greek origin of the word, is a story with a happy ending.)

"I call it a comedy," he said, "because with regard to its content, at the beginning it is horrible and foid, for it is Hell; but in the end it is prosperous, desirable and gracious, for it is Paradise." About 250 years after he died of malaria in Ravenna at the age of 56, his admirers renamed it: "The Divine Comedy."

Norman-Bel Geddes, the theatrical designer-director, has shown that the poem is not as formidable as it may look at a distance. "At a period in my life when I was most discouraged," he writes, "I took up the subject of 'The Divine Comedy.' All through my life there have been times of great discouragement. For hours I sat at my desk and make every effort to work at something, anything... I grabbed a book without reading the title. I opened anywhere, and read... I looked for the title. It was Norton's translation of 'The Divine Comedy.' Before the night was over I had read it from beginning to end."

For the next 12 months, he devoted one-third of all his working hours to a dramatic visualization of the poem, which he published as "A Project For A Theatrical Presentation Of The Divine Comedy" (Theatre Arts Inc., N.Y., 1924).

Dorothy L. Sayers, famous mystery writer, admits she reached Dante late in life, and had no intention of reading very far. But she was enthralled by his storytelling. "I bolted my meals," she says, "neglected my sleep, work and correspondence, until I had panted through the Three Realms of the Dead, Inferno, Purgatory and Heaven" (Further Papers On Dante, Harper & Bros., N.Y., 1957).

Miss Sayers spent the rest of her life translating, annotating and promoting "The Divine Comedy." A friend she persuaded to try it said: "It wasn't at all what I expected. I thought it would be all grand and solemn. But it's like someone sitting in an armchair telling you a story."

Everyone forgets, however, Dante might have become a professional politician, instead of a philosophizing poet; and the grace caused him bitter suffering.

In 1965, after Pope John and three sessions of the second Vatican Council, nothing could be more natural than a meeting of the International Catholic Press Union in New York. It was not so when it first became involved in its activities in 1952, the year that its secretary general, Jean-Pierre Dubois-Dumée, visited the United States.

Two years earlier, six Catholic journals had decided in Rome to renew contacts interrupted by World War II. They reconstituted the Union for its old pur-

## Seven hundred years ago, the Florentine poet Dante wrote the first and still the greatest European novel, an autobiographical love story. This article by Franciscan Father Pacificus Kennedy is reprinted from the March, 1965, Columbia magazine.

From his early years it was clear that he possessed the gift of song. "Since I had already seen in myself the art of discoursing in rhyme, I resolved to make a sonnet in which I would salute all the liegemen of Love" (New Life II). The loneliness that engulfed him when he became a motherless child at 5 years, and then at the age of 12 lost his father, blossomed into the tearful verse he wrote under the tutelage of Brunetto Latini. "You taught me how man makes himself eternal," he said of this sexagenarian he revered as a father — and was afterwards impelled to picture in Hell!

The never-failing source of his inspiration, however, was Bice, daughter of Folco Portinari, who melted his heart when he was nine. He called her Beatrice (Bringer of Beatitude). "Although still a child, he received her image in his heart with such affection," says Boccaccio, his earliest biographer, "that from that day forward never so long as he lived did it depart therefrom."

He did not meet her again until he was 18; but he worshipped from afar and never became familiar with her. She married someone else and died three years later, only 24. Dante then married Gemma di Manetto Donati, who had mourned with him the death of Beatrice.

But Gemma and everyone else knew where his heart was.

Etienne Gilson answers those who suspect that Beatrice was a figment of the poet's imagination: "If Beatrice is only a symbol, she is a symbol whose body, after death, was brought to earth, where it resides at the time when Dante is writing 'Purgatory.' We are assuredly yielding to the most urgent suggestions of Dante himself in seeing in Beatrice a human being composed like us of a soul and a body, her soul being in heaven and her body on earth; a being, who, since she is actually dead, has actually lived" ("Dante The Philosopher," Sheed & Ward, N.Y., 1949).

After Beatrice died, Dante began studying philosophy, and almost forsook poetry. Dominican Friar Remigio Girolami expounded the theses he had heard young Brother Thomas Aquinas deliver in Paris. The Thomistic-Aristotelian synthesis had not yet become official, and had a revolutionary appeal. Dante saw in its clearest principles rational weapons that might be used to bring peace to the warring factions of his fatherland.

He also came under the influence of the Franciscans. He did not, as is sometimes asserted, enter their novitiate. "That Dante did join the Franciscans in the looser bonds of the Third Order," says Anne Macdonell in "Sons of Francis," "I think any one who so desires may take for granted. Whatever value may be attached to the assertion of the famous Franciscan chronicler, Fra Maria no, it means distinctly that Dante became a Tertiary."

Exile made Dante a citizen of Italy. As he wandered from one castle to the next, he met outcasts like himself. Everywhere he saw despotism, oppression, usurpation. Nowhere did he find orderly government. He lamented the lack of a supreme ruler, such as Charlemagne had been, to bring the wills of men into unity.

He listened to the lectures of two Franciscans, Pier Giovanni Olivieri and Ubertino de Casale, pious teachers of the Scriptures, who unfortunately had become infatuated with the ideas of the reforming Abbot Joachim of Flora (even then suspected of heresy). These two friars encouraged Dante's prophetic tendencies. "Dante could not be a true and complete Joachimist," says Giovanni Papini in "Dante Vivo." "Usually his thought moves in the ordinary enclosures of Scholasticism."

His philosophic studies qualified Dante for the Guild of Apothecaries and Physicians, and this enrollment enabled him to enter public life. He spoke before the General Council of Florence, July 6, 1295 (when he was 30), in favor of modifying the city's Ordinances of Justice. At least once (possibly twice) he was elected to a 2-month term as Prior. He was sent on embassies to several cities.

It is not certain that he was sent to Rome and had a confrontation with Pope Boniface VIII — whom he considered for various reasons, his personal and political enemy. Father Thomas Oestreich, O.S.B., says, "Many scholars question Dante's famous embassy to Boniface VIII" (Catholic Encyclopedia II, 663). It is true, however, that Dante and his colleagues on the Council of the Hundred offered such opposition to the Pope's demands on questions of jurisdiction that the City of Florence was interdicted.

When the Papal Defender, Charles of Valois, entered the city and restored the Papal Party to power, Dante became one of its first victims. He and four others were fined 5000 florins, on January 27, 1302, and were perpetually barred from public office. Two months later, since he had not appeared to pay the fine, he was condemned to die at the stake whenever he might be found within the city.

Then began the twenty years of exile that sharpened his features, concluded his life, and also restored him to the service of his Muse. He never saw his wife again. She remained in Florence and did a great service to the world and to her husband: she found and saved some verses in honor of Beatrice which probably constitute the first 7 cantos of the "Inferno."

Dante's sons, Pietro and Jacopo, and his daughter, Antonia, joined him in exile. The girl entered a convent in Ravenna and became known as Sister Beatrice.

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In "De Monarchia" (World Government) he expounded his doctrine of the Two Suns: The Emperor who derives his temporal authority from no one but God, and The Pope who is not subject to the Emperor.

After Dante's death, Bertrand Cardinal Del Pogetto had the three books of "De Monarchia" burned. But, in defense of Dante's doctrine, Father Edmund Gardner cites his forerunner Hartmann Grisar who says that "the doctrine of two powers to govern the world, one spiritual and the other temporal, each independent within its own limits, is as old as Christianity and is based on the divine command to render unto Caesar the things that are Caesar's, and to God the things that are God's" (Catholic Encyclopedia VII, 564).

For dreaming of the political unity of the civilized world Dante was considered to be Utopian. Papini says: "We are discovering that Europe, or rather all the human race, is destined to disasters always more and more terrible, if it does not achieve the reconstruction of a great political union, which may not be precisely the Roman Empire, but which shall, at any rate, be a multifarm organism governed by a single body of laws and by one supreme authority" (Dante Vivo, Macmillan, N.Y., 1935).

Why did he fail to finish "De Monarchia"?

He thought he saw a way to get his ideas on government to the simple, uneducated masses by means of the poem he had always hoped to write in honor of Beatrice. He would portray the havoc wrought among men when the Two Guides appointed by God are wanting. He himself would be the sinner, inspired and led by a woman, who turns to a genuinely religious life.

As the framework of his story he used a "vision" vouchsafed him during the Jubilee Year (1300) when, for seven days beginning on Good Friday, he was led through Hell, Purgatory and Heaven, that he might see what God had in store for himself and others. He composed a canticle for each of the three realms.

Each canticle consists of 33 cantos — preceded by an introductory canto — making a total of 100 cantos. The entire poem is 14,000 verses long, written in 3-line stanzas, and in rhyme. Each of the three canticles ends with the same word: stars.

Twenty-four circles lead down into the "Inferno," with three main divisions: sins of lust, violence, fraud. "Dante's purpose," says Coleridge, "is not so much to elevate our thoughts as to send them down deeper." Yet there is no charnel-house atmosphere, no stench of decay, no bleached skeletons. The Roman poet, Virgil, representing Reason and Philosophy, leads Dante (Mankind) down into Hell.

"Purgatory" is a tower of 10 winding circles or terraces, each of the seven capital vices forming a terrace. Virgil leads the way to the gate of the Earthly Paradise at the top of the tower; but can go no further. Beatrice, who represents Revelation and Theology, then appears.

She leads Dante up through the nine moving suns or circles to the "True Paradise," where she is replaced by St. Bernard, representing heavenly contemplation. The saint commends the soul of the poet to Our Lady, who obtains for him, by her intercession, a foretaste of the Beatific Vision.

Not all the commentators have observed that the Blessed Virgin Mary is the one who initiates the process of leading Dante from sin to salvation. Beatrice is Mary's delegate or emissary. Mary is not named in the "Inferno," because her name never sounds in Hell. On the terraces of "Purgatory" the poet speaks of an example from Our Lady's life to counteract each of the seven capital vices. In "Paradise," St. Bern-

ard's prayer to Mary is some times considered the greatest thing Dante ever wrote.

"The Divine Comedy is nothing other than a miracle performed by the Blessed Virgin Mary to save the soul of Dante, a miracle glorified in verse by the sinner devoted to Mary. Who first was moved to pity Dante's lot? Who averted the danger of the harsh judgment hanging over him? The gentle Lady of Heaven? The Divine Comedy may be called a miracle of the love of Mary." (Miracolo del glorioso Vergine Maria, edit. Piero Masciatelli, Milan, Treves, 1929).

Only Danteologists of the Strict Observance, as Papini calls them, claim that Dante was entirely free from sin and error. Some of his judgments are harsh. Some of his ideas are indefensible (for example, the Veltro or Hound, "Inferno" I, 61 ff).

Bonaventure Cardinal Cerretti gets around Dante's harshness by saying: "Leaving to the poet the responsibility of his judgment in regard to his victims, I am led to think—that even the highest offices in the Church avail little against the judgment of contemporaries, still less against the verdict of history, and not at all against the infallible judgment of God." ("My Favorite Passage From Dante," Battery, Devin-Adair, N.Y., 1928).

Peter Cardinal Fumasoni-Biondi observes that, even though Dante was inimical to Pope Boniface VIII, nevertheless he refers to him as "Christ's Vicar. Christ made captive, renewed a second time" ("Purgatory" XX, 86-90).

George Bernard Shaw refused to reveal his favorite lines from the "Comedy" because the puding means more to me than the plums. But all Dante's works are replete with some of the most memorable lines ever written.

"Love and the gentle heart are one and the same thing" ("Vita Nuova" XX, 10). "God did not wish us to be religious, if not with the heart" ("Convivio" IV). "If thou follow thy star, thou canst not miss the glorious port" ("Inferno" XV, 55-56). "A mighty flame may follow a tiny spark" ("Paradise" I, 34). "Many a time, ere now, have children wailed for a father's fault" ("Paradise" VI, 109). "In time of misery, there is no greater pain than to recall the hours of happiness" ("Inferno" V, 121). "And in His Will is our peace" ("Paradise" III, 85). "In that Light one becomes such that it is impossible he should ever consent to turn himself from it for other sight" ("Paradise" XXXIII, 100).

It would be comical without reverence, as he shows in The Parol Man's "Our Father," which concludes: "This last prayer, dear Lord, is not indeed made for ourselves, for it is not for ourselves, but for those who have remained behind us" ("Purgatory" XI, 1-36).

At the dawn of the 20th century there was a grand total of 1300 commentaries on Dante's opera (Catholic Encyclopedia IV, 157c). If that number has not been doubled since then, it should be before the end of this 7th centenary.

"Put aside your commentaries!" says Francesco de Sanctis, founder of modern Italian literary criticism. "Read Dante without any commentary, with no company but his own, and disregard any meaning but the literal."

## Justice, Goal For Lawyers

Vatican City — (RNS) — Pope Paul VI told a group of noted attorneys that it was the duty of every lawyer "to make justice triumph — not only the justice contemplated by law, but that engrained by God in the human heart."

The occasion was an audience given by the pontiff to members of the Council of the International Lawyers Union.

Addressing them in the Consistory Hall of the Vatican Palace, the Pope, who spoke in French, went on to say that "the final judgment of consciences is not for the lawyer to decide, nor is it up to him to make any evaluation of supreme responsibility."

By this time, J. P. Dubois-Dumée became president of the World Lay Apostolate, and a former editor of "La Croix," Father Emile Gabel, had replaced him as secretary general of the International Catholic Press Union. Jean-Marie, editor of "Informations Catholiques Internationales," remains active in the Union, was here (this week).

With Father Gabel's encouragement, the Catholic Press Association formed a committee to develop ways of helping the Catholic press in Latin America. Groups of experts were sent to consult and give seminars in various countries. Catholic publications here in the United States have welcomed trainees from overseas.

Undoubtedly many further initiatives will soon be developed. I grow daily more confident that my long-time dream will soon come true: it is to see successful Catholic publications in this country form a partnership of mutual help with needy brothers in other lands.

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## World Convention of Catholic Press in N. Y.

By GARY MacBOIN

New York—Catholic press history is in the making. This week, invited by the Catholic Press Association of the United States and Canada, the International Catholic Press Union has held the seventh World Congress of the Catholic Press here in conjunction with the Catholic Press Association's 55th annual convention. It is the first World Congress in America, and it affords me the opportunity to insert a page in the record.

In 1965, after Pope John and three sessions of the second Vatican Council, nothing could be more natural than a meeting of the International Catholic Press Union in New York. It was not so when it first became involved in its activities in 1952, the year that its secretary general, Jean-Pierre Dubois-Dumée, visited the United States.

Two years earlier, six Catholic journals had decided in Rome to renew contacts interrupted by World War II. They reconstituted the Union for its old pur-

pose of mutual help and solidarity among Catholic newsmen of the world, and for the additional important purpose of expressing the viewpoints of the Catholic press at the United Nations.

The American Catholic press was not represented at the Rome meeting, and it showed little desire to join an international body. "We have nothing to learn from Catholic newsmen elsewhere," the common reaction ran, "and we definitely want no form of association with the United Nations."

Charles McNeill, formerly with the Denver "Register" and then with Elmum of Dayton, Ohio, refused to believe that this was the true voice of his Catholic fellow-newsmen. He himself undertook to act as representative of the International Union and made many trips to New York to participate in UN meetings. When Dubois-Dumée came here in 1953, Charlie and he met me through the good offices of Catherine Scheffer, head of the NOWCO Office for UN Affairs. They convinced me that I should join him as representa-

tive at the U.N. Charlie was then president of the Catholic Press Association of the U.S., and before his term expired, he persuaded the Association to affiliate to the International Catholic Press Union.

They may not have gotten much out of it, at least not in accounting terms, but they have since found it in their hearts to put a lot into it. A strong delegation attended the World Congress in 1960, in Spain. Its contributions included an excellent presentation on public opinion in the Church, a subject subsequently highlighted by the Council.

When Father Hugh Morley, O.F.M., Cap., founder and editor of "View," became in 1962 full-time representative of the International Catholic Press Union at the U.N., he was given a desk and other facilities at the New York office of the Catholic Press Association, on whose board of directors he had served for many years. There he and James Doyle, the Association's executive secretary, have together worked out the many problems of planning the joint meeting for this week.

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