

Conversions Slowdown May Be Blessing

By Fr. Ivar McGrath, S.S.C.
(NC News Service)

Tainan, Taiwan — Has there been too rapid an increase of Catholics in Taiwan in the past 20 years?

Bishop Paul Cheng of Tainan, in south Taiwan, looking back over two decades of exceptionally quick growth in numbers and organizations, thinks that the slowdown in conversions in the past few years is perhaps a blessing in disguise.

In 1948 all Taiwan was one apostolic prefecture with about 13,000 Catholics, 18 priests and 10 Sisters. Today, 20 years later, Taiwan comprises one archdiocese and six dioceses, with some 300,000 Catholics, nearly 800 priests and over 900 Sisters.

The number of conversions to Catholicism was on the upswing during the early 1950s, and a peak was reached in 1957, when there were more than 25,000 adult Baptisms, an average of 56 converts per priest. Since then the numbers have slowly fallen off, and last year there were less than 8,000 adult Baptisms.

Too Many, Too Soon

"In the beginning many were baptized too soon, without really adequate instruction and preparation," Bishop Cheng said. "It is apparent now that many of those baptized have never lived a truly Christian life; it is not easy for them. Priests in the early years were so happy to see so many entering the

Church that they were ready to baptize without a satisfactory preparation and follow-up. To baptize is one thing, but to form new Christians is another.

"Today we find that fewer people are being baptized, and it is not altogether a cause for regret. Those who are baptized today are better prepared, those seeking instruction are more thoughtful about what they undertake. They are not just seeking an immediate solace for loneliness or distress of mind, or grateful for some alleviation of poverty. Now one can say that most people in Taiwan have a sound standard of living, so that when anyone comes to hear doctrine it is with a true desire to know God."

Bishop Cheng, before being named bishop of Taiwan in June, 1966 was auxiliary-bishop to the late Thomas Cardinal Tien when he was apostolic administrator of Taipei. Referring to the difficulties encountered in converting the local Chinese of Taiwan, Bishop Cheng pointed out that the Taiwanese are descendants of Chinese settlers from the coastal provinces of Fukien and Kwangtung, who migrated here mostly during the last 300 years.

"The local, Taiwan-born, unlike those coming from the mainland, are in their homes, towns and villages, and they have not felt the same need for a fresh approach to religion," the bishop said. "Further, nearly all the priests active here during the last 20

electorate as a separate question.

"Personally," he said, "I'm still for repealing Blaine. But I think it would create more animosities — do more harm than good — by repealing that battle so soon."

(Because of the legal procedures required for altering the present state constitution, if action is taken during the upcoming Legislature, the earliest the Blaine question could again come before the voters would be 1969. If the Legislature does not act, the earliest submission would be in 1971.)

US Could Learn From Brazil

Washington — Dom Eugenio Sales, Archbishop of Salvador, Bahia, Brazil, has praised the recent suggestion of Bishop M. Breitenbeck, Auxiliary Bishop of Detroit that the U.S. might benefit from studying Brazil's racial harmony which is of a particular nature in Bahia.

The state of Bahia has almost 7 million inhabitants of whom one million are full-blooded Negroes, two million are white and the remaining three and one-half million are "mestizo" (mixed blood). Seven out of ten residents of the capital of Bahia are colored and enjoy absolute equality before the law and in public accommodations, schools, churches and medical facilities. Several of the judges in the Court of Justice are of Negro descent.

"The suggestion made by Bishop Breitenbeck, chairman of the Sub-Committee for Inter-American Cooperation, is an example of the willingness of members of the U.S. Church to expand their vision in search of solutions to racial inequities," Archbishop Sales said.

"Bahia does not presume to be able to supply a ready-made solution for the recent violence which caused extensive damage in cities such as Detroit. We fully realize that cultural patterns cannot be exported. However, there may be elements in Brazilian racial integration which could possibly be adopted and modified to conform to conditions in the United States. It is definitely worthy of further study."

Bishop Sales stated that this idea could stimulate meaningful dialogue at the Catholic Inter-American Cooperation Program (CICOP) Conference to be held Jan. 29-31 in St. Louis, Mo., at the Chase-Park Plaza Hotel. The theme of the Fifth Annual CICOP Conference will be: "Cultural Factors in Inter-American Relationships: Bond or Barrier."

Catholic Paper Confiscated
Vienna — (RNS) — According to reports here, Yugoslav authorities have ordered the confiscation of the latest issue of a Roman Catholic newspaper, the St. Anthony Messenger. The newspaper's 40,000 copies were confiscated, according to the reports, because of an article discussing relations between the Church and atheism.

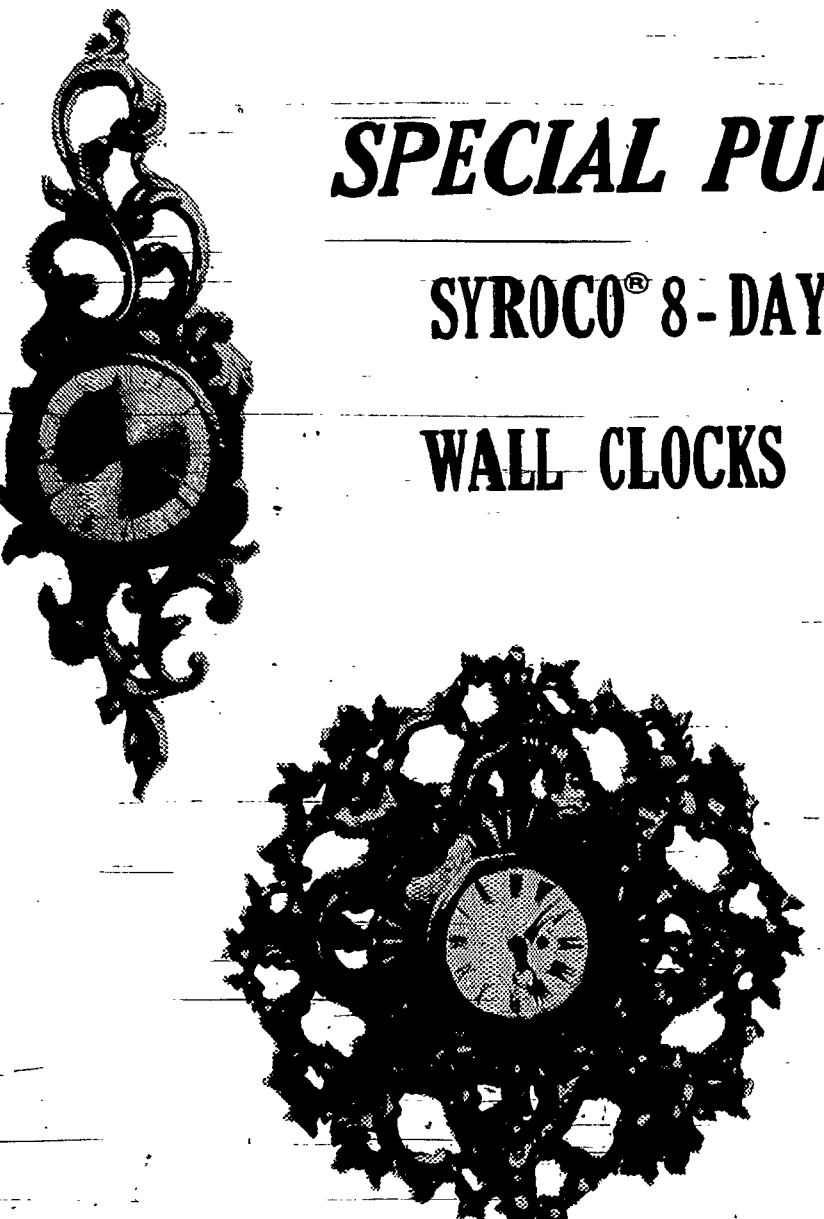
Travia Would Defer Further Blaine Debate

New York — (RNS) — The New York Legislature's top-ranking Democrat said, in a surprise move here, that he is opposed to using the upcoming legislative session to seek repeal of the state's controversial "Blaine amendment."

Last November, when New York voters rejected a new constitution which would have abolished the amendment prohibiting direct or indirect aid to church-related schools, Assembly Speaker Anthony Travia said he would ask the Assembly to resubmit the issue to the

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Take your choice of two beautiful colors—silver or antique gold. The lustrous fibres of this distinguished fabric will be an admirable addition to your living room. The style of the sofa is a modified lawson with a gently sloping arm. Gold ball castor feet make it easy to move. Button back with geometric pleated design. A fine value in unusual furniture **\$211**
- Reg. \$319 Rowe Traditional Cap-Arm Sofa**
We have this handsome, brightly colored sofa in your choice of 3 colors. Dark blue on white, copper on white or Woodrose on white. The arms are thickly upholstered with 2 1/2" of foam. The unusually plump seat cushions are a unique combination of urethane foam and Dacron fibers. In your choice of 3 colors, buy this handsome Rowe sofa for only **\$186**
- Reg. \$539 Traditional Bolster-Arm Sofa by Globe**
Each arm is protected and cushioned by a welted edge bolster. The low back is hand tufted and deftly diamond pleated. Dacron and foam seat cushions, back and bolsters. The fabric is a lovely orange sherbet color in a slub weave chosen for its distinctive character and style. We have reduced the price of this sofa because the kick pleat is slightly soiled **\$266**
- Reg. \$659 Henredon Divided Back Sofa**
Soft shades of blue, green and rose on oyster beige. 86" long, with a fully divided foam filled back which curves gently for an unusually gracious appearance. Twin "T" cushions are filled with feathers. Down and Henredon's famous foam and spring units. Short, rather slender arms with a modified wing. Kick pleat skirt. An exquisite sofa **\$397**
- Reg. \$399 Royal Lounge Sofa, 96" long**
A handsome beauty in varying shades of emerald green, blue and grey. Stripes — hundreds of them — enliven the rich, warm fabric. Extra long twin cushions are filled with latex foam rubber. Slender arms dip gently from the outside back and curve forward with extreme grace. Walnut base rail and legs. Fully upholstered platform **\$187**
- Reg. \$169 Quilted Lawson Divided Back Loveseat**
An optimistic manufacturer thought that these would sell the week before Christmas. We agreed with him. Alas! We are closing out twelve loveseats in your choice of gold or olive-green quilted damask. The price for each, a mere **\$97**
- Reg. \$399 54" Loveseat by Globe**
A delightful blend of marine and aqua threads in this lovely woven damask fabric. Distinguished roll-back, diamond tufted, button back. Pleated, recessed roll arms. Full length "T" cushion. Unusual dressmaker style, box pleated skirt. Dacron and foam cushion filling. A very lovely piece **\$242**
- Reg. \$349 High-Arm Modern Sofa by Royal Lounge**
Both arms and the back are the same height, lending a geometric appearance to this handsome modern sofa. Self-decked like all fine furniture. 3 Dacron and foam filled seat cushions. Solid Pecan base rail and Solid Pecan legs. Upholstered in a lively, glittering modern tangerine fabric **\$150**
- Reg. \$289 84" Contemporary Kick Pleat Sofa**
A fine piece of furniture which has been marred by a slight, almost imperceptible flaw in the fabric. Heavy beige background leaf design in predominating shades of green, olive and dull gold. Kick pleat skirt. "T" cushions. Foam supported seat cushions. A loose pillow back style which is extremely comfortable **\$197**
- Reg. \$379 French Provincial Loveseat**
We've often wondered why this beautifully styled loveseat has not sold. Perhaps it has just too much color and flair for the average living room. The carved and gracefully contoured frame is fashioned of avocado-finished fruitwood. The fabric is a vibrantly colorful leaf and floral print. We've had more expensive loveseats in our store. However, we don't recollect anything more striking than this perfectly lovely floor sample **\$168**
- Reg. \$299 Henredon Curved Back Occasional Chair**
Fluted mahogany legs, posts and handgrips. A curved pillow insert makes this chair even more comfortable than you might expect. The fabric is a medallion-printed damask in predominant shades of blue and green. The style—similar to but not exactly like a tub chair, is very attractive. If you wish — we have a pair of these chairs — each **\$197**
- Reg. \$299 High Back French Provincial Wing Chair**
A delightful chair trimmed with dark walnut which carries around the arms, wings and back. Delicately carved legs and knuckles with a light fluting on the wing trim. Dacron and foam "T" cushion. Self-decked. Daintily padded arms **\$197**
- Reg. \$549 French Provincial 3 Piece Sectional**
Two 48" end sections and a curved center section add up to 176" of charming style and comfort. Foam-rubber seat cushions, gold damask upholstery. Lightly carved handgrips and legs in dark fruitwood finish. Diamond tufted, button back. Slightly soiled this floor sample is reduced to **\$297**
- Reg. \$299 Henredon Lawson Lounge Chair**
The damask fabric presents a distinctive and highly interesting diamond-patterned design composed of blue, gold and marine colors. The Lawson arms are recessed to allow greater leg room. Feathers and down make the seat cushion superbly comfortable. Kick pleat skirt adds style to this splendid chair **\$197**
- Reg. \$539 Sheraton Traditional Sofa by Globe**
Beautifully framed in solid mahogany with contrasting old world mahogany panels. The upholstery fabric is an exquisite woven tapestry with a striped effect and extremely detailed Grecian urn and leaf and floral design. This is a formal sofa for a formal living room. Tapered, fluted legs. Fluted arms, gracefully curved out and down for a particularly high style effect. A rare value we are closing out for **\$244**
- Reg. \$289 Divided Arm "T" Cushion Sofa**
Beautifully tufted back. Kick pleat skirt. A rather dark blue, slub weave-type fabric. Fully upholstered platform. Low priced because there is a slight rub mark on the right facing arm **\$123**
- Reg. \$289 Conventional Button Tufted Arm Sofa**
A handsome brute of a sofa! Choose either silver and gold quilted floral fabric or the identical pattern in dull green and bronze-gold. Loose pillow back, 3 cushion style. Kick pleat skirt. A beautiful sofa and an outstanding sale price value at **\$197**
- Reg. \$299 Laverne Gold French Provincial Sofa**
This handsome sofa was purchased for an ad we had scheduled for early December. Unfortunately the truckload shipment arrived too late for pre-holiday advertising. We are closing out the piece we describe as well as several others of the same quality and general style. The sofa listed is yours in a rather pale Laverne Gold quilt or an unusual silver and avocado quilt. Lightly scaled, with comfortable attached pillow backs. Gracefully curved wing and roll arms. Foam cushions **\$197**

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