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**'Never Afraid to Go Out on Limb'**  
Korea's Next Stop for Inner City Minister

By JOHN DEL MONTE

The Catholic half of a successful ecumenical team paid tribute last week to his Protestant counterpart, who is leaving for overseas service in Korea.

"Herb White is a creative thinker, a real leader — and we're going to miss him greatly," said Father P. David Finks as he gazed out the storefront window of the Joint Urban Ministry office at 657 W. Main St. He was speaking of the Rev. Mr. Herbert White, Presbyterian minister, and his partner in a pioneering venture in Christian action.



**FLOW OF COMMUNICATIONS** between Protestant and Catholic Urban Ministry offices is helped by the joint office setup shared by the Rev. Herbert D. White, left, and Father P. David Finks. The Rev. Mr. White is leaving on July 1 to take up a new post in Seoul, Korea.

The Rev. Mr. White, 36, director of the Board of Urban Ministry of the Rochester Area Council of Churches (RACC), will leave Rochester on July 1 for Seoul, Korea. He will serve as an urban specialist there on an appointment from the United Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A.

Father Finks, Catholic vicar for Urban Ministry, has shared work closely with Mr. White from their W. Main St. base, now called the Joint Urban Ministry office.

"Herb helped channel my idealistic theories about the Church's role in urban life into some realistic plans," Father Finks went on.

The Church and the city have been the two poles which have guided the Rev. Mr. White's progress ever since his seminary days. As a student at Union Theological Seminary in New York City, the tall sandy-haired cleric did his field work in one of Brooklyn's polyglot neighborhoods. Ordained a Presbyterian minister in 1958, he served two years as curate in a downtown Baltimore church, then three years as pastor of a ghetto church in Buffalo.

With that background, he was an apt choice for a new post opening in Rochester in 1964. The RACC needed a full time director for its growing urban ministry; Herb White applied for the new job — and got it.

His task was to coordinate the various Protestant congregations comprising the RACC in their attempt to shape a new apostolate to the city.

"I'm always challenged by new things that I'm not sure I can do, but which seem to need doing," reminisced Mr. White recently.

For those who underestimated the urban crisis, Rochester's riots of 1964 were a sobering lesson. They also set the stage for Herb White's toughest task—selling Rochesterians on the vital need for a Negro community organization.

"Herb has never been afraid to go out on the end of a limb," Father Finks said last week.

"The end of the limb" was where Herb White was when the RACC decided to invite Saul Alinsky's Industrial Areas Foundation to organize Rochester's Negro community.

It was a gamble from the start: Alinsky was a controversial figure; many people felt that community organiza-

tion spelled only trouble, and it would be expensive.

"The Negro community felt disorganized, helpless and frustrated," Herb White recalled. The RACC's answer was to provide the expertise — via Alinsky's IAF group — with which Rochester's Negroes could build a united front.

The RACC's decision was followed by a heated, often bitter, public debate on the whole idea. The pros and cons were aired in public meetings, in the daily papers and over the radio and TV channels. From today's calmer atmosphere, Herb White can say that the debate was helpful, even if painful for those backing the proposal.

"When the smoke had cleared, the public was better informed about the issues and the IAF was in a better position to start its work," he explained recently.

The FIGHT organization, which emerged from the two-year organizing effort (backed by the RACC to the tune of \$135,000) is now a fact of life in Rochester. FIGHT can point to a number of achievements, most recent of which is the plan to set up a local Black industry, to be called FIGHTON. The industry, which will make transformers and metal stampings, is being supported by federal funds, loans and support from Rochester Business Opportunities Incorporated, and joint training from the Xerox Company.

FIGHT still has its critics, but today it is hard to quarrel with the New York Times' assessment:

"Just how many people FIGHT speaks for is debatable, but even its critics admit that it represents the Negro community to a degree never before achieved by any organization."

While Herb White is best known for his part in establishing FIGHT and its white auxiliary, Friends of FIGHT, he pioneered in other directions, too.

The very shape which the new Board for Urban Ministry took has made it model for other cities. From the start, it was characterized by its ecumenical spirit, and by its denominational support. The latter meant that the Board would be funded by the major Protestant denominations (Methodists, Presbyterians, Baptists, etc.) rather than from the many individual congregations which compose the RACC.

When Father Finks was named by Bishop to head a

Catholic urban ministry in January 1967, it was natural that he and Herb White should ask "how can we cooperate most effectively."

After consulting their respective superiors, the two clerics decided that a joint office would not only symbolize their cooperation, but make it easier. So they rented a vacant storefront at 657 W. Main St. last September and have operated from there since then.

Since the "Herb and Dave" team got rolling, their joint efforts have helped develop the STIR program for seminarians from St. Bernard's and Colgate-Rochester Divinity School; a summer seminar for collegians interested in urban problems; and a nine-month Public Issues seminar designed to orient Protestant, Catholic and Jewish laymen on urban problems.

Such ventures, they believe, will provide a body of knowledgeable people, both clerics and laymen, "who will know what makes a city move," as Father Finks puts it.

Their joint efforts have also helped in neighborhood or ecumenical action. Through these, ecumenical church schools, block neighborhood associations and area youth programs have developed.

"This is ecumenism by joint action," Father Finks noted, adding that in his view, "the future belongs to this kind of cooperation."

Both men are anxious to see Rochester's religious groups reassess their priorities. "The problems of the poor — whether in the city or in rural areas — call for more use of our resources," Father Finks suggested.

Both are hopeful that the recently established Interfaith Commission may be a step in their direction. This body is made up of 12 representatives from each of the major faith groups, was formed to coordinate overall planning and action on urban problems.

And now, the Rev. Mr. White will transfer his field of operation to far off Korea, which

also has urban problems. He'll help set up an institute for the study of urbanization at Yonsei University in Seoul, and will teach in seminars of that city. His wife, Margaret, who recently completed studies for her Ph.D. in English at the University of Rochester, will teach English Literature at Yonsei. The Whites have two children, Eric, 9, and Susan, 6.

Asked why he accepted the overseas offer, Herb White cocked his head, then said, "you have to decide what you'd rather do, and I prefer to initiate things rather than implement them."

"Herb is not only creative, but also a tremendous worker. He'll do a great job over there," Father Finks concluded.

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**Expe**

The Community of John XXIII in Oklahoma City, an experimental parish, was featured in last week's NBCTV program "The New American Catholic." Reprinted here, with permission of THE NATIONAL OBSERVER, is a full account of the origin and development of this unique parish group.

By TERENCE SHEA

Oklahoma City—The "Community of John XXIII" is smarting a little from the pains of growth. The closure of 20 laymen who formed a parish without buildings or boundaries here nearly two years ago knew even then that their experimental community would have to endure some hard self-examination if it wanted to lead a compassionate revolution in American Catholic parish life. John XXIII, named after the pope who died in 1963, is now entering that introspective stage.

The John XXIII community pioneered in the formation of experimental parishes, at least 10 of which have sprung up across the United States in the past 18 months.

Now the community here is becoming one of the first to demonstrate how and why such plans, born of imaginative religious enthusiasm, sometimes become altered and slowed realities that range from simple human indifference to the highest cost of living.

Petitioning the Bishop

In August, 1966, a group of laymen led by Paul Sprehe, a 37-year-old president of consulting-engineering company, petitioned their bishop, the Most Rev. Victor Reed, for permission to start an experimental parish. They had great ideas of traditional parish structures and had been moving to the experience of Mass offered in informal surroundings among small groups their friends.

They told Bishop Reed that they would like to form a city-wide group of families and individuals who would rent a room big enough for Mass on Sunday mornings, would pay the priest's expenses, and would avoid incurring building debt so that their funds and energy would remain free for social action programs.

The detail of who the priest might be, like every other detail, had been carefully considered, decided, and rehearsed.

Their choice was the Rev. William Nerin, now 42, assistant pastor of a suburban parish north of here. Father Nerin had conducted discus-

**Ecumenical**

**WCC Heads**

Detroit—(NC)—The general secretary of the World Council of Churches has urged massive Protestant-Catholic thodox thrust to establish worldwide economic justice equal opportunity.

Speaking to the fifth National workshop for Christian Union here, Dr. Eugene Carson Blake said that the combined churches must plunge into political field if nuclear war is to be avoided and peace established in the world.

He told more than 2,000 ecumenists gathered for the

**Protestant**

Detroit—(RNS)—A prominent Catholic theologian told interreligious and international audience here that Protestants potentially have the sacramental validity of man-Catholic priests.

Addressing the Fifth National Workshop for Christian Union here, Father George H. Tavard, however, said that it is not the Catholic Church to determine this priestly significance, but the Protestant Church themselves.

Father Tavard based his conclusions, not on the formal or historical succession of a Protestant minister's ordination, on his function.

"There are, in the Catholic Church," he said, "two complementary ways of ascertaining that a man has valid ordination. The one investigates his ordination; the other examines his way he functions."

**'Some Renewal'**

Detroit—(NC)—Roman Catholic renewal has been beset by fickle theology, simplistic thinking, thoughtlessness and quiet compulsion to abandon rocking ship, a Lutheran theologian told a national interfaith gathering.

Speaking to the fifth national workshop for Christian Union here, Dr. Martin E. Marty suggested "some Catholic renewal has been renewal of the Church but the manic babble on part of people with per problems."

The University of Chicago professor gave a "Protestant critique of extremism in Catholic renewal," and said Catholic renewal has to learn more about what he called the "Protestant principle."