

# Year-Long Spotlight Focused on Biafra

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racism, all to be carried out in full cooperation with Protestants and Jews.

The Southern Baptist Convention, largest U.S. Protestant denomination, took an historic step in June by endorsing the principle of racial integration. In mid-November, the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod announced a \$1 million campaign to provide improved housing to the underprivileged regardless of race or religion.

A year-long spotlight was focused on Biafra, where hundreds of thousands died of starvation. The World Council of Churches and Caritas, international Catholic relief agency, organized massive welfare programs for the Biafran sufferers. Large-scale relief efforts also were conducted by Church World



Assassin's bullet claimed Sen. Robert F. Kennedy.

Service, welfare arm of the National Council of Churches, and Catholic Relief Services, an agency of the American bishops. In early August, 21 national Jewish organizations set up a Jewish Emergency Effort for Biafran Relief.

Protestant, Catholic and Jewish leaders lent support to the March on Washington in May on behalf of the Poor People's Campaign. The last project of the late Dr. Martin Luther King. The most spectacular gesture came from the United Methodist Church: it announced a \$20 million fund for Reconciliation — the largest ever approved by an American Church to help resolve social and economic problems.

The spectre of poverty in Latin America loomed large when Pope Paul paid his visit to Bogota. Addressing 35,000 workers, he called upon the governments and wealthy classes of Latin America to help mitigate poverty in their countries by backing agrarian reform and instituting more equitable taxes.

At Medellin, Colombia, in late August, the Second General Conference of Latin American Bishops warned that Latin America was "faced with the temptation to violence" unless there was a change in the economic status quo.

In their November pastoral, the U.S. Catholic bishops also urged a change in Selective Service laws to permit selective conscientious objection to the right of individuals to decline to participate in some wars on the grounds of conscience.

This came after the World Council of Churches and leading Protestant bodies in the U.S. affirmed support of selective conscientious objection. The Catholic bishops encouraged political leaders to consider making "a total review of the draft system and the establishment of voluntary military service in a professional army, with democratic safeguards and for clear purposes of adequate defense."

A variety of developments had served to underscore the importance of the bishops' action in July. Dr. Benjamin Spock, author and pediatrician, and three other defendants — one of them the Rev. William Sloane Coffin, Jr., Protestant chaplain at Yale University, were sentenced to two years in prison for conspiring to counsel draft evasion.

In November, a federal judge imposed sentences ranging from 2 to 3½ years on a group of nine Catholics, including two priests, who in the Spring marched into a Catsville, Md., draft board office, removed 800 records from the files and burned

them with napalm. The heaviest sentences were given Father Philip Berrigan and Thomas Lewis, an artist, who were serving six-year terms for pouring blood on Selective Service files the year before.

Father Daniel Berrigan, S.J., brother of Philip, was among those convicted. In September, five Catholic priests and a teaching Brother were arrested in Milwaukee after breaking into a Selective Service office and burning records.

The year also saw the ancient tradition of sanctuary invoked as groups and individuals defying the draft sought asylum in Protestant churches and university cathedrals. In some instances arrests were made.

Another significant feature of the American hierarchy's pastoral was its approval of responsible dissent from the Catholic Church's non-infallible teachings by competent scholars in the interest of "legitimate theological speculation and research."

In January, the bishops, in a 25,000-word pastoral, had deplored a tendency to employ theology "almost as a therapy," ridicule the Church and, under the claim of being contemporary, seem hostile to everything except their own views. Dogmas that had come under questioning included the virgin birth, the divinity of Christ, the indissolubility of marriage, and papal infallibility.

A strongly liberal weekly, The National Catholic Reporter, was denounced in October by Bishop Charles H. Helmsing of Kansas City-St. Joseph, Mo., for "disrespect and denial of the most sacred values of our Catholic faith."

Formed during the year was the National Federation of Priests Councils (NFPC), designed to focus on issues closely related to reform in both the Church and society. Meetings of regional priests' councils throughout the country approved suggestions for Canon Law changes on due process, reform of marriage courts, and the democratic election of bishops.

A long drawn-out dispute arose in the San Antonio archdiocese when 68 priests joined in demanding the resignation of Archbishop Robert E. Lucey on the ground that he had failed to initiate needed church reform.

Impressive ecumenical exchanges were frequent during the year. But sharp attention was turned to factors that remained ecumenical stumbling blocks — the Roman Catholic stands on divorce, mixed marriage and intercommunion.

The divorce issue got wide

public airing with the marriage of the former Mrs. John Kennedy to Greek magnate Aristotle S. Onassis, a divorced man. One significant outcome was the revelation of a growing emphasis in Catholic quarters on charity toward divorced persons despite the Church's opposition to divorce.

Much more significant was the fact that among the most vocal critics of the Catholic Church's stand on divorce men long connected with diocesan marriage tribunals. Among them was Msgr. Stephen J. Keller of the New York archdiocese chancery who was relegated to a parish after publishing an article in which he favored replacing the marriage courts by consultation commissions. He said these commissions would conscientiously decide before God if they were free to abandon one marriage and enter another.

The issue of Catholic-Protestant intercommunion came to the fore at the meeting of the Latin American bishops in Medellin, where five Protestant delegate-observers took Communion at a Mass, reportedly with the bishops' approval. A month before, a number of Catholics took Communion during a Protestant service at the WCC's Assembly.

However, subsequently both Pope Paul and Cardinal Bea publicly affirmed that intercommunion between Catholics and Protestants was not permitted by the Catholic Church. The Pope deplored "untimely initiatives . . . taken . . . in different parts of the world."

Reform of the Roman Curia advanced rapidly in early 1968. Alfredo Cardinal Ottaviani and other influential department heads retired from their key positions. Office working hours were shortened to give Vatican priests more time for pastoral work. Laymen and women, for the first time, became consultants to the Con-

gregation for the Evangelization of the Peoples.

In subsequent months, the Pope abolished many hereditary papal titles and functions dating back to the Middle Ages and eliminated much of the traditional pomp in Church ceremonies. July saw the U.C. Conference of Bishops announce a plan to give laymen as well as priests a greater voice in the Church and direct contact with bishops.

Among noteworthy Catholic developments were: In June Pope Paul promulgated a new Credo, a restatement of traditional Catholic belief, to mark the conclusion of the Year of Faith begun in 1967. . . . Four optional Canons published in November marked the first changes in the essential part of the Mass since the early 7th Century. . . . A commission of cardinals named by Pope Paul ordered changes made in a controversial Dutch catechism to eliminate certain interpretations at variance with strict Catholic teaching. . . .

Catholics of several dioceses joined Los Angeles coreligionists in petitioning the Pope on behalf of the Sisters of the Immaculate Heart of Mary who became involved in a dispute with James Cardinal McIntyre, Archbishop of Los Angeles, over educational and modernization programs. . . . Catholic authorities joined the Interreligious Foundation for Community Organization in supporting a national boycott of California grapes intended to secure union recognition for striking California grape workers. . . . In April, Archbishop Terence J. Cooke was formally installed as successor to the late Francis Cardinal Spellman as head of the New York archdiocese. . . . In December came news of the death in Bangkok of Trappist Father M. Louis, 53, known universally as Thomas Merton and author, among other well-known works, of The Seven Storey Mountain.

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## Tripled Population Foreseen

Santo Domingo — (RNS) — The population of the Dominican Republic may be expected to rise to 12 million, three times its present figure, by the year 2000, according to figures presented at a seminar on Development, Population and the Family.

Addressing the seminar, President Joaquin Balaguer of the Dominican Republic said that the nation could support such a population increase if its natural resources are properly developed.

One of the conclusions approved was that an integrated development "must be based on responsible parenthood freely exercised by the human couple."

The seminar was sponsored jointly by the Archdiocese of Santo Domingo and the Latin American Family and Population Center of Chile. Bishop Hugo Polanco Brito, Apostolic Administrator of Santo Domingo.

## Latin American Lay Council Forming

Lima — (NC) — An agreement to coordinate the efforts of the lay apostolate throughout Latin America was worked out here at a meeting of bishops, priests and lay leaders representing the Latin American Bishops' Council (CELAM) and the Inter-American Catholic Action Secretariat.

A Latin American Lay Council, under CELAM, will coordinate the service of student, worker, farmer and professional groups and will act as a liaison with the Vatican Council of the Laity.

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