

Black Militancy on Campus

Newman Chaplains

Briefed by Negroes

By REV. JOHN T. McDONOUGH
(Father McDonough is director of the National Newman Apostolate)

They said: "It's your problem, whitey. We've solved our problem. Now you have to go and solve yours. It's up to you to tell the white community about white racism."

Black Militancy and the University was the name of the conference at Shaw University, in Raleigh, N.C., last month. The National Newman Apostolate sponsored it and invited Catholic and Protestant chaplains from private and public colleges and universities across the country. The audience was evenly divided between Newman chaplains, priests and sisters, chaplains from Catholic colleges and Protestant ministers who served as campus chaplains.

The announced purpose of this historical conference was to provide information about the real mood of the black college community and the occasion for an understanding of the basic causes which have produced this mood; and secondly, to indicate the appropriate response of the Church in partnership with the university to this vital issue.

All of the speakers were black. A willowy young student, Debra Newman, of Howard University, probably described it best when she said: "The black man is getting himself together and it's happening on campus. The beautiful black minds are meeting on campus."

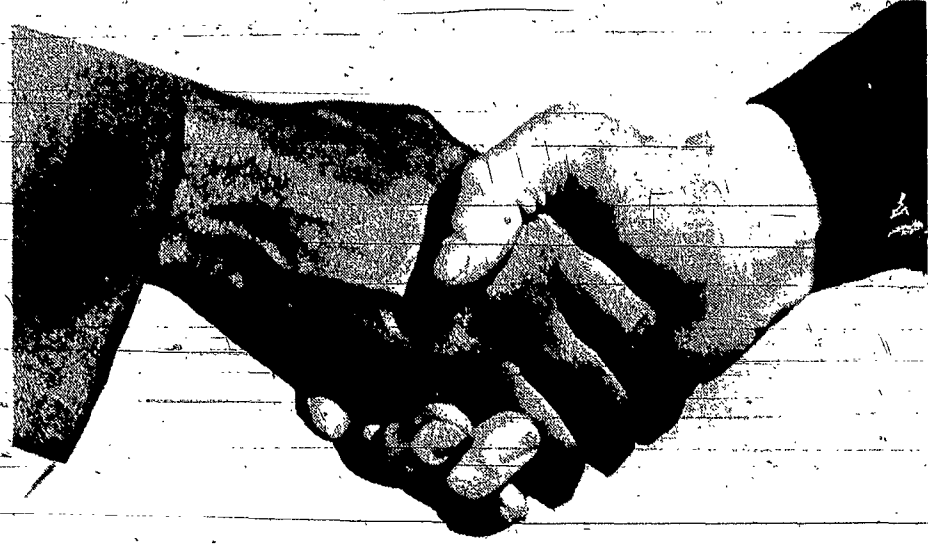
If one could be encouraged by the taking up of the question, there was little encouragement to be found in the problem itself or in the lack of solutions that came from this examination of it. The problem of the oppression of the blacks for hundreds of years was expressed in a variety of ways and with varying degrees of vehemence. Professor John Fleming's presentation put it this way:

"For 300 years and more, black Americans have been the victims of oppression and racism, indeed of a deliberate dehumanization effort sustained by institutionalized, political and economic inequality. This effort has shown itself in a system of slavery designed to undergird a cotton economy, to make the black man a tool, a commodity, a thing to be used, and in second class citizenship designed to foster the feeling of white supremacy.

"From the very beginning of the black man's sojourn in this country, the white man has acted in every way possible to force upon him a sense of nothingness, facelessness, invisibility, and of being a stranger in the land."

Next came some of the students. Militants underlined their message was the same but the tempo had increased. One Shaw University student put it this way:

"The Black Mood is an angry cry, the angry cry of millions of black souls rising from the dank, dark,



BROTHERHOOD — FACT OR FICTION?

deplorable dungeon of despair, throwing off the chains of their slavery and vowing that they too shall have their place in the sun or the sun will never again rise on the shame that is America."

Dr. Melvern P. Sikes, a clinical psychologist in the community relations service of the United States Department of Justice, put the plight of the black man in a context of what it means to be black.

He gave examples of how members of one nationality can easily change their names and be accepted by society but blacks can't change their color. Some of those with a definite accent in their speech can adjust their speech patterns but black man can't adjust his color. To be black is to be a victim of racism that hurts with a hurt that no one can understand or perceive unless it is experienced.

"To be black," Dr. Sikes said, "is to suffer great psychological pain, to be relegated to non-being, to just not exist." Because of a system of constant oppression that begets a degrading and demoralizing way of life, black men have lost their manhood. They have been systematically brainwashed to believe that they were worthless.

The young Afro-Americans glory in the deeds and exploits of their ancestors. Deliberately and earnestly they identify with black heroes. No longer are they ashamed of their spirituals, their jazz, their dress, their dance.

As a panelist put it:

Soul was the creative force that made America what it is today. It was I in the form of Benjamin Banneker who laid out the plans of our nation's capital. It was I in the form of Crispus Attucks who was the first to fall at the Boston Massacre. It was I in the form of Frederick Douglass who gave my people something to hope for. It was I in the form of Nat Turner who shed the beast's blood in the tobacco fields of Virginia. It was I in the form of Daniel Hale Williams who accomplished the first open-heart surgery. It was I in the form of Charles Rhee who conceived the blood bank and made it a practicality."

The young black militants were eloquent in their presentation of the black mood on campus today. At the university, there is a psychological

revolution taking place. Black students appreciate their ancestry and heritage. "You are black and you are beautiful and it's time to be proud," they say.

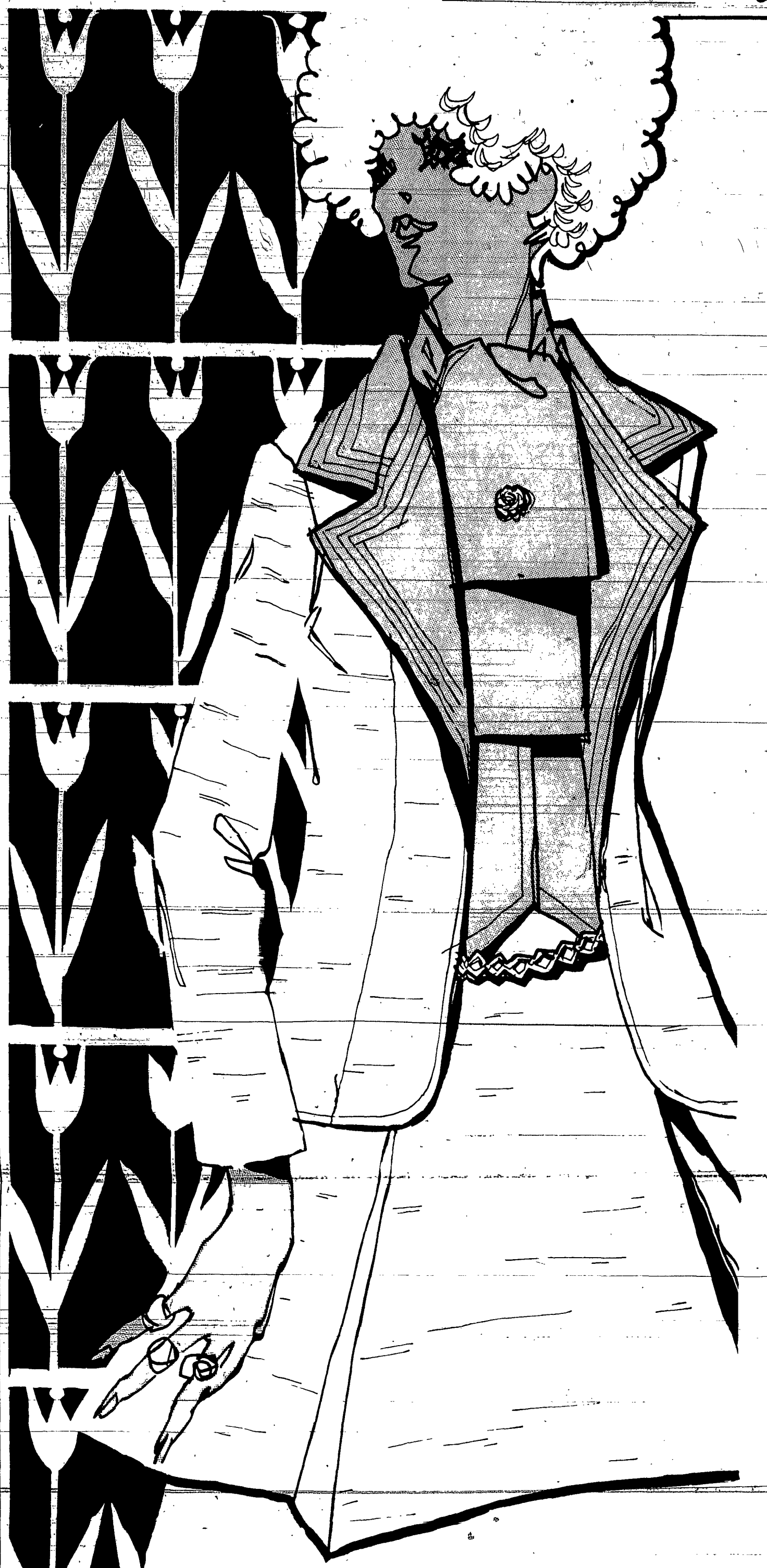
"We are concerned more about loving our black brothers and sisters than hating whitey." However, they all agreed, if the racist system stands in the way it must be eliminated. As one militant said "You won't be able to paint 'soul brother' on the Newman Center, cause when the revolution comes the Church will be one of the first white institutions we'll confront."

The panel of students addressing themselves to the Church was of special interest to the priests and ministers. One student said that militancy was the activity on the part of the blacks to attain equality and that the Church should be a group of Christians equal under the eyes of God but in fact the black man sees the Church as a white racist institution. Another student said when he sees the Church, he sees three things. He sees an institution that perpetuates racism, perpetuates hypocrisy, and makes the black realize where his enemy really is.

If the Church is love, then those who are in the Church should love one another; and if they loved one another, then they would take care of each other's human needs. It is because they don't see this happening in Christianity, in the Catholic Church, that they are rejecting the white man's Church.

One of the students from Howard was asked by a Chaplain what could the Church do to confront the racist problem; she replied: "True Christians just live Christianity. It's as simple as that!"

Repeatedly the chaplains were confronted with the charge that the Church in general and individual Christians in particular had spoken and believed one thing and acted just the opposite. The role of the chaplain now is to persuade the white community to be truly Christian — to be true human beings — to be real persons; to make genuine and open efforts to know and understand the black man and the black student; to witness by our work and our love a true involvement in the lives of others; to be true servants by helping the black man find his own identity and assist him with every means of expertise available.



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Negro Churchmen

Hopes Described as 'Dim' To Early End to Prejudice

Chicago — (RNS) — Neither blacks nor whites in the U.S. are psychologically prepared to eliminate racial prejudice, a Christian Methodist Episcopal bishop told a national conference of Christian educators here under sponsorship of the National Council of Churches.

Bishop Joseph Johnson, Jr., of Shreveport, La., said that the chance for early integration in the country "is dim indeed."

The Negro churchman said integration lies far in the future because "white racism" pervades U.S. society. Because of historical conditioning, the black man has no right that white man is compelled to respect, he said, and because of this attitude, many Negroes have lost faith in integration as a means of achieving racial equality.

The bishop termed Black Power a movement expressing a determination to achieve racial equality through

a rapid acquisition of political power. The Black Power advocates will accept whites in the struggle if they are willing to work under black leadership.

The Louisiana churchman outlined three reactions which he said white people have in the current situation:

- Poor whites in the North and South are struck with fear and are arming themselves against an invasion from black ghettos.
- White moderates and the affluent middle class have turned to the government to maintain law and order. The government responds with increasingly repressive measures.
- The liberal whites are baffled and confused by what seems to them to be a decisive separation by the blacks. Some have quit the fight for equality and some have begun to realize that blacks need to attain political power.

IRELAND

Cardinal Issues Strike Warning

Dundalk, Ireland — (NC) — The strikes that have put tens of thousands of employees out of work were called a serious threat to Ireland's economic life and to its trade union movement by William Cardinal Conway of Armagh.

Speaking to couples attending a marriage guidance course, the cardinal asked for prayers "that the great industrial strike, which threatens to cause great suffering and hardship, particularly to working-class families," be terminated.

Members of 18 different trade unions are involved in the strike and more than 200 factories in Ireland have been closed.

Efforts had been made to get the trade unions to postpone the strike until the end of February while negotiations with employers were being resumed, but four unions rejected this idea. Their strike action and their picketing of other industrial concerns put Ireland in one of its most serious situations in the past 50 years, because members of other unions have refused to cross the picket lines.

In addition to the trade union strike, there has also been a secondary school teachers' strike. The principal issue is wages.

In calling for an end to the strikes, Cardinal Conway said:

"It is the teaching of the Catholic Church that industrial relations are not just a power game — they are matters of conscience for each individual involved.

"First, employers are bound in conscience to pay a just living wage, having regard to the state of the national economy as a whole.

"Second, strike action can only be morally justified after all reasonable means of negotiation have been tried, and when the harm which strike action would cause is not out of proportion to what is being sought."

Dr. Hensley, president of Universal Life Church, was quoted as saying: "We're gonna bust the country wide open, know what I mean? We'll ordain you without question of your faith, for life and without a price. You can preach, organize churches, marry and do anything that any ordained preacher can do anywhere."

California law does not cover church practices or ministerial qualifications. According to the newspaper's report, the Modesto Sheriff's Department ruled Dr. Hensley's instant ordination program "as legal as mother's milk . . . We've been asked to check him out by a number of agencies, including the Attorney General's office. Nothing. So long as he doesn't sell tickets through the Pearly Gate or otherwise break the law, he's in business."

Three hundred to five hundred "ordinations" go into the mail daily and the goal of the organization, according to Dr. Hensley, is "one million within the next five years." The Church's only source of income other than voluntary contributions comes from a course leading to an honorary doctor of divinity degree, accompanied by a church charter. The course can be taken at a cost of \$20, or \$2 per lesson.

'Instant Ministers'?

San Jose, Calif. — (RNS) — Some reporters will do anything for a story. But it was left to Richard Carroll of the San Jose Mercury-News to develop an "item on how to become an instant minister."

It was quite simple. The Universal Life Church, Inc., of Modesto, Calif., the paper said in a feature, issues ordination certificates upon request. All one need to do is write a letter to Dr. Kirby Hensley, president of the church, requesting ordination. The cash outlay is slim — 6 cents for a U.S. stamp.

According to the newspaper's report, Universal Life Church has ordained 17,000 persons since 1962. It added that the practice could cause chaos for Selective Service Boards handling applications for clergy deferments.

Said "ordained" reporter Carroll: "I can marry young lovers; bury the dead, save sinners, convert the willing, take up a collection and bless all. I also may pay special income tax rates, take advantage of cheaper hospital and hotel rates, ride half-fare on trains and planes and, in case I'm drafted, can hide behind the cloth and say, 'Heck no, I won't go.'"

COURIER-JOURNAL

Vol. 86 No. 21 — February 21, 1969
Published Weekly by the Rochester Catholic Press Association. SUBSCRIPTION RATES: Single Copy 15¢; 1 year Subscription in U.S., \$4.00; Canada and South America, \$5.00; other foreign countries, \$5.15. Main Office, 225 Erie Street, Rochester, N.Y. 14601. Second Class Postage Paid at Rochester, N.Y.