

AFRICA:

On Eve of Pope Paul's Visit, A Land of Startling Contrasts

The startling contrasts presented by Africa are strikingly illustrated in two incidents which have drawn international attention to the vast, complex continent: the first visit of a reigning Pope to Africa and the murder, in Nairobi, of the Kenya statesman Tom Mboya.

Pope Paul's trip next week to a religious shrine in the jungle near Kampala, Uganda, points to an Africa peacefully developing and moving from a past of violent religious and political antagonisms into a future with hopes for unity and cooperation.

The assassination of the popular Christian political leader — who had been widely expected to succeed President Jomo Kenyatta — points to an Africa where modern, Western political antagonisms are linked to and complicated by a historic heritage of tribal animosities.

Some parts of Africa still suffer from a problem solved in Kenya and Uganda — domination of the black Apartheid (racial segregation) holds people by a small white minority. Firm in South Africa and moves toward greater rigor in Rhodesia.

Nigeria, once a major source of hope to Western observers concerned to see Africans work out a solution to their problems, has been deeply, perhaps irreparably, divided by a civil war of enormous bitterness whose toll of civilian casualties is enormous.

Tribal rivalry is an element in the Nigeria-Biafra struggle as it was in the Mboya assassination and the riots which followed it. Also notable in Biafra are the political continuation of old colonial boundary lines and the perennial hunger of industrial nations for Africa's raw material. According to some authorities, the real stake in the Nigerian struggle is the large oil deposits in Biafra.

Politically and culturally, Africa can be compared with an enormous sandwich: Islam in the North and apartheid (with Portuguese colonial rule) in the South; between these outer layers is a large and increasingly autonomous group of former colonies now ruled by native Africans.

While they are no longer the dominant force, they were in colonial times, Europeans remain a significant element in the population of some countries, particularly in the larger cities where their services are sought as educators, engineers and doctors.

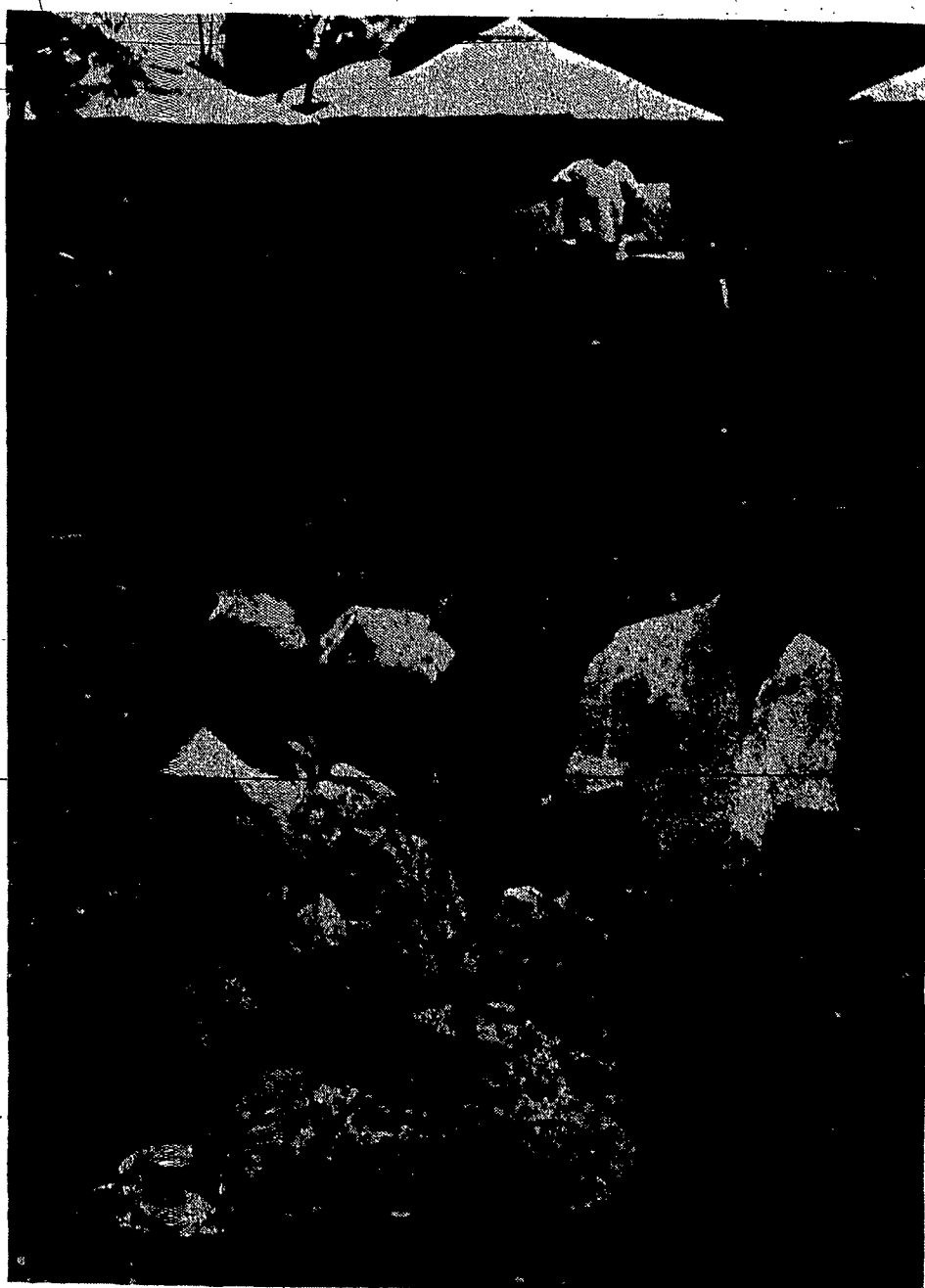
Religiously, the continent is diverse; Protestantism, Catholicism and Islam are mingled in varying proportions, with a strong remnant of the original, animist African religions in many countries.

For the Christians, a prevalent theme has been the gradual transfer of religious leadership from European and American missionaries to native Africans — a process which, in many cases, is still far from complete. About one third of the continent's Catholic bishops are native.

Islam, the dominant religion throughout the North of the continent, is a significant force almost all the way down to the equator on Africa's West coast and even farther down on the East coast. Dar es Salaam, the capital of Tanzania and a city well below the equator, reflects Islamic influence not only in its name but in the affiliation of many of its citizens.

In countries as far apart as Senegal and Somalia, Islam is the dominant religion. Tension between Islam and Christianity has often been mentioned, along with cultural, tribal and political differences, as an element in the Nigeria-Biafra conflict.

Rapprochement is taking place, to some extent, among Christians of various denominations in some parts of Africa. This is partly in response to the growing ecumenical atmosphere of recent years, partly a reac-



A Catholic family prays beside a marker at the exact spot where the martyr Charles Lwanga was burned to death at Namugongo, Uganda, in 1886. Pope Paul VI, during his visit in late July, will consecrate a shrine at this site in honor of the martyrdom of Lwanga and 21 other Ugandans. (Religious News Service)

tion to the recognition — widespread among missionaries — that the fragmentation of Christianity places it at a severe disadvantage in mission territories.

In the central part of Africa, where freedom from colonialism and from the apartheid-style rule of a white minority has been most fully achieved, mission schools have been given a large share of the credit for training the leaders who brought their countries to independence.

This process is still taking place in the Southern part of the continent, according to Methodist Bishop Ralph E. Dodge, who was expelled from Rhodesia by the government of Ian Smith. The Christian Church is producing Africa's "leaders of the liberation parties," the potential George Washingtons of tomorrow," he said.

Opposition to apartheid governments has probably done more to enhance the image of Christian Churches in the view of politically alert black Africans than any other single activity.

During the past year, however, the Churches in Africa have become identified on a broad, interfaith basis with an activity that has drawn even more worldwide attention: the flying in and distribution of relief supplies to the encircled people of Biafra.

Courteously, publicly expressed reactions to the religiously-sponsored Biafra airlift have been less frequent and less enthusiastic in much of Africa than might be expected.

Nigeria has consistently accused the Churches of aiding the Biafran war effort, not simply feeding and caring for the health of civilians.

While these charges have been denied repeatedly by Church spokesmen and the Churches have offered to let neutral parties inspect their entire relief operation, Nigeria's charges may have had some influence on opinion elsewhere in Africa.

Even more crucial, perhaps, is the impact of Biafra as an example of one of the key problems Africa has yet to solve, that of tribalism. To the educated African who thinks in terms of national interests, the secession of Biafra can easily represent a danger widespread throughout the continent — that of tribal identity superseding the larger loyalties which hold a nation together.

Tribalism cropped up after the assassination of Mr. Mboya in the worst rioting Kenya has seen since it achieved independence. Members of Mr. Mboya's tribe, the Luo, were inclined to blame the larger Kikuyu tribe, which holds most of the political power in Kenya, for the murder. Violence by Luos against Kikuyus was widespread. The government has apparently weathered the outbreaks of violence, but observers believe that one effect of the killing has been to solidify Luo support for the leader of the opposition party, Oginga Odinga.

Some of the larger tribes of Africa, numbered in the millions and transcending national borders, supported by ageless traditions and intensely cultivated feelings of loyalty, appear stronger than many formal governments. Their relations among themselves, with the governments and with the still embryonic ideal of overall African-unity may be the key question faced in the near future by this enormous, highly pluralistic and still turbulent continent.

Bishop McNulty Reinstates Buffalo Priests' Senate

Buffalo — (RNS) — Bishop James A. McNulty of Buffalo, who suspended the diocesan Priests' Senate last May, has ordered it reactivated and approved a more extensive representation for the body.

Father Francis S. McCormick, Senate president and pastor of Holy Family Parish, said that Bishop McNulty had approved expansion of the Senate from 21 to 24 members and reduced the number of bishop appoints from six to three.

As a result, Father McCormick said, the new Senate, which will be elected during the Summer, will have a greater local representation than its predecessor.

In his letter reactivating the Senate, Bishop McNulty said he had received 217 letters from diocesan priests in favor of continuing its operation.

In his letter to Father McCormick the bishop stressed that the Senate was a consultative and not a legislative body. "The mind of the Church is crystal clear with reference to a Senate of Priests as a consultative group who, by their advice, would assist the bishop in the government of the diocese," Bishop McNulty said.

3 Parishes Join in Housing Plan

Denver — (NC) — Three Denver parishes have formed the Tri-Parish Development Corporation, a non-profit housing corporation to rehabilitate 30 low cost houses for low income families.

The corporation is the largest of 18 similar housing corporations with in the Denver area, most of which have undertaken renewal of from five to eight units at a time. The Federal Housing Authority has approved plans for the \$420,000 undertaking.

The project is part of the federal program which authorizes non-profit organizations to buy and rehabilitate run down homes, and then to locate low income families who qualify to buy the houses at low interest rates. The federal government pays the difference between the going interest rate and the low rate charged poverty families.

The reasons for participating in the program are two-fold. Not only will some families have better housing, but the rehabilitation of older homes within the neighborhoods will tend to upgrade the entire area, making it a better place to live.

The three parishes, St. Joseph, Annunciation and Presentation of Our Lady, began preliminary work on the project several months ago, coordinating it with the Denver Fair Housing Center's program which began in January, 1968.

\$30 Million Spent for Poor

Baltimore — (RNS) — One of the Catholic agencies with programs in the U.S. black community, the Commission for the Catholic Missions Among the Colored People and the Indians, has spent more than \$30 million since its foundation in 1887, Lawrence Cardinal Shehan revealed here.

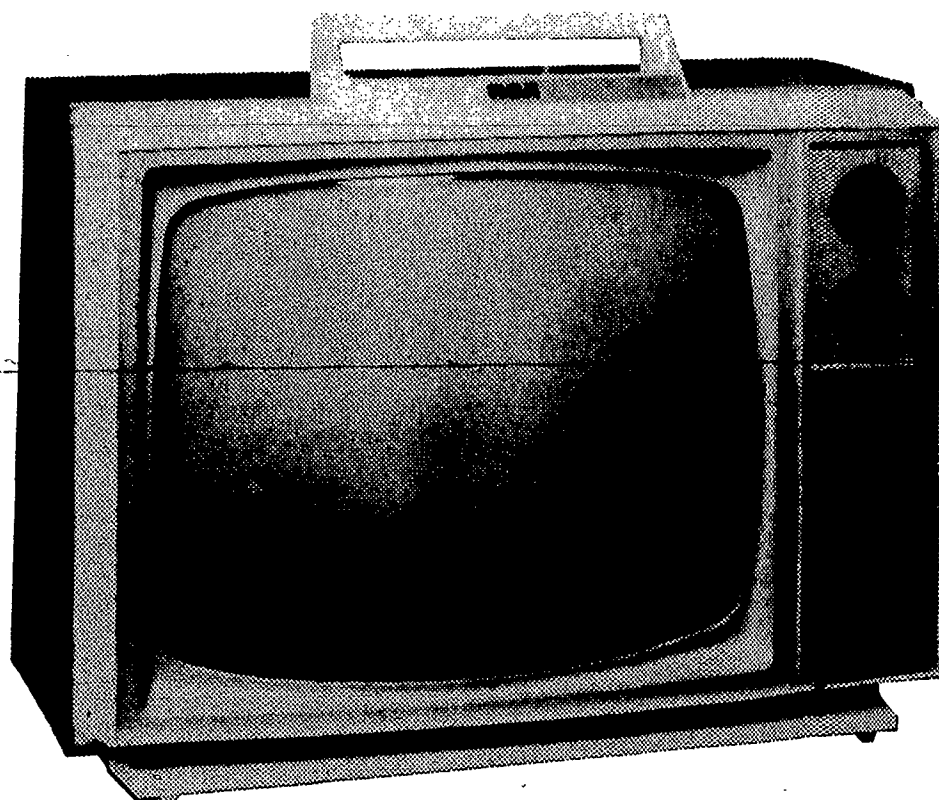
The commission obtains its funds from an annual nationwide collection, usually taken on the first Sunday in Lent.

The \$30 million figure represents only part of the money spent by the Catholic Church on health, educational and religious programs for black Americans, the treasurer said.

Additional funds — estimated in millions of dollars — are provided through the American Board of Catholic Missions, diocesan programs and the work of religious orders.

Since 1956, the annual collection has passed the million dollar mark and it has been over \$15 million every year since 1965. The 1968 figure, \$1,646,000, was the largest in history.

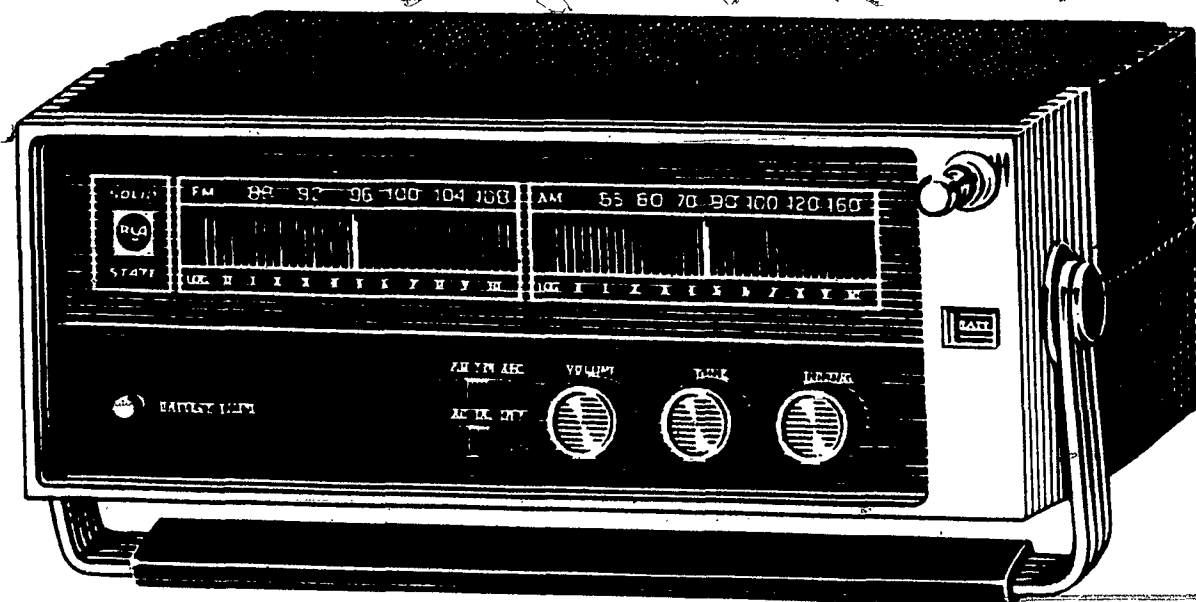
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