

Brody: Zaniness Turns Sour

Idealism blended with nuttiness seemed to shine in the early days of the saga of Michael James Brody Jr. last weekend. When the name and gestures of the self-described millionaire landed on the front pages the young man's actions spoke rather virtuously. The long-haired young idealist seemed to be saying: "Money piled up in millions is meaningless — wealth is only good when it is shared with those in need."

The image of a rich man feverishly pressing checks and large cash gifts into the hands of everyone who told him a story of need was a pointed satire against the wealthy who sit on their millions until they spend it sensuously on themselves for parties, jewels and endless vacations.

Then every successive news-report enlarged the unpleasant image of a sick-minded man gripped by a fantasy, exhilarated by drugs and flushed by publicity. The story that had seemed ludicrous and made us smile with its incongruity became a bit nasty. Brody was put down as a mixed-up rich kid, flying the skies in chartered jets, posing and declaiming like an idiot.

Most people pitied his mental processes and regretted that the full glare of the news-media had turned a kooky story into an ugly travesty. Because not just Brody was being turned inside out. Hundreds of poor people who waited for him in the bitter cold or tried to speak to him by phone were being abused. However unrealistic or irrational or even dishonest the beggars may have been, Brody was tampering with their lives.

Reporters said hundreds lined up in freezing weather at Brody's home and office. They were described as the shabby and sad, tenement-dwellers and under-privileged, but all people with well-rehearsed words of desperation. Observers who questioned them discovered a common strain in their stories: they believed that something miraculous was going to happen to sweeten the bitterness of their hopeless lives. They were convinced that if the money held out until their turn came to meet the rich man they would be blessed with sheer charity. Too many other times when they needed help before, they said, they had been humiliated by questions and confused by welfare forms and browbeaten by social workers.

Only a few made it to Brody's hand before he started to abuse the defenseless strangers. He accused the crowds of greed, allegedly shouted obscenities at them and ran away from their clutches, as one New York City reporter described it, "because he began to see these begging people as a rabble instead of a convention of the lost."

It could be argued that Brody did no lasting harm by arousing hopes and presumptions that a \$500 bill could turn a man's life around. Men long for many things in a lifetime and no matter what they acquire or achieve the ache of wanting more is never completely eased. Psychologists say that men do not really hurt themselves deeply when they face the disillusionment of grasping at mirages which float across their entire journey through life.

But for the poor man, as for the crippled and the incurable sick and the victim of deep prejudice and the endless non-achiever, the disappointment of never getting all that he thought necessary for happiness makes a man feel that he is never quite all there either. Even if he grasps at the shadows of superficial values never-ending disappointments erode spirit and smother hope.

It is a paradox of our Christian faith that we have so little to say to the disappointed poor man and the hopelessly sick and the brutally discouraged. Our Lord told us that he who loses his life shall find it and that in doing without we shall find lasting possession. But selfishness and being ready to "suffer" without the material things we long for are not popular virtues today: our flight toward fulfillment is in the other direction from pain and poverty and want. The flight becomes more disastrous when hopes are raised by the unattainable promises of a Michael Brody-type.

—Father Richard Tormey



PRESIDENT LINCOLN



GEN. GOWON

Needed: A Lincoln

It might be foolhardy to draw the comparison too fine, still there are enough similarities between the just-ended Nigerian war and our own War between the States to supply an historical lesson.

Both were civil wars with neighbors battling neighbors, both involved a secessionist area, both had undertones of bigotry, both were won by the status quo governments and both were settled largely by the enforcement of economic blockades which drew contrary European reactions.

Despite enduring a great deal of unpopularity in his own time, Abraham Lincoln proved himself a humane man by trying to set the stage for amnesty and restoration of dignity to the reeling South. Had it not been for his assassination, Lincoln might have been able to bring his ideals to fruition, thus avoiding the division that still exists in this country 100 years later.

Gen. Yakuba Gowon, commander of the victorious Nigerian army, has promised humane treatment for the secessionists. On Page 1 today, John Sullivan says this is not all necessarily altruistic because Nigeria will need the skill and intelligence of the Ibo tribesmen of Biafra.

All ulterior motives aside, here's hoping that Gen. Gowon will espouse the Lincoln-esque attitude and then follow through not only to protect the helpless Biafrans but also so that his nation may not suffer the protracted enmity that has tortured the United States for a century.

—Carmen Viglucci

Be Uncompromising

Compromise is the essence of politics but when it involves two disparate issues then the public had better be alert.

Though there is no evidence of any agreement, still the groundwork is laid for those state legislators seeking a way out on two thorny issues — abortion reform and public aid for private schools.

Gov. Rockefeller provided the premise in his State of the State message when he endorsed parochial and also called for abortion reform.

Not to be cynical, but isn't it conceivable that a state legislator feeling the enormous pressure on both sides on these two problems may, for instance, vote for abortion reform and then to assuage his Catholic constituents, wage a strong battle for private school aid?

Compromise must be built on common grounds; there is none in these two issues, unless it be morality and there is little room for adjustment with that.

—Carmen Viglucci

Mideast: An Abuse of Scripture

The accompanying article has significance in itself—it is believed to be the first joint editorial to be published in two major religious journals, one Protestant, the other Catholic.

It was written jointly by Father Charles Angell, editor of "The Lamp of Christian Unity Magazine" and the Rev. J. Martin Bailey, editor of "United Church Herald," national publication of the 2-million-member United Church of Christ.

basis for a systematic reign of terror unleashed on Jews stranded in Arab lands.

In the same document, the Rev. Abdallah Sayegh quoted John 1:11 as proof that Jews are no longer the chosen people: "He came to his own home and his own people received him not. But to all who received him, who believed in his name he gave power to become children of God."

This use of Scripture ignores the circumstances in which the Bible was written and the purpose of its original writers. Both Jewish and Christian scholars today agree that the basis for biblical understanding

rests upon its historical context; these scholars are careful not to infer more from the actual text than the context will support.

There is, to be sure, a distinction between Christian conviction and Jewish belief. But no traditional or contemporary distinction can justify religious prejudice, arbitrary punitive actions or anything less than brotherhood at the level of our common humanity. The teachings of the Second Vatican Council and the documents of the World Council of Churches make this clear.

Indeed, there is a unique relationship between Christians and Jews due to our common Old Testament heritage, Christian theology and ethics stand on the foundation of the monotheism of the ancient Hebrews and on the utterances of Old Testament prophets. The message of Jesus adds to, rather than subtracts from, basic Jewish teachings.

As the Sermon on the Mount makes clear, Jesus came not to abolish the law and the prophets but to fulfill them. A characteristic of his preaching was: "You have heard it was said 'You shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy.' But I say to you, Love your enemies . . ."

Similarly we were distressed to hear the Bible quoted as a justification for the modern State of Israel. While we recognize that there is a historic link between the Jews and the land, we cannot accept this fact as the warrant for the unilateral seizure of property by military action or by legislative decree.

Modern Jews in Israel properly affirm their continuing religious relationship to the Lord of history. But few Jewish scholars would assert that the concept of a "chosen people" au-

During a three-week fact-finding mission with ten other Protestant and Roman Catholic editors, we encountered repeated and flagrant abuse of the Holy Scriptures in the Land of the Bible. We regret to report that both in Egypt and in Jordan we heard the most glaring anti-Jewish (as distinct from anti-Israeli) statements from otherwise respected Christian leaders. We felt compelled, at one point, to challenge the theological and sociological prejudice of a ranking prelate who caricatured "all Jews as being by nature acquisitive" to explain his fear of Israeli expansion.

Even more distressing was the use of biblical texts to argue that the Jews had lost all right to the Holy Land since "it was their ancestors who handed Christ to the Roman Ruler and who crucified him."

A document, given to us by approving churchmen, misquoted Jesus as calling all Jews "serpents of the earth . . . a generation of vipers . . . murderous from the beginning . . ." This kind of thinking has become the

Will Earth Be Cesspool of Universe?

Washington — (NC) — The new director of the Department of International Affairs, United States Catholic Conference, is "convinced the Earth might become the cesspool of the universe" if the environmental crisis is not stopped.

Msgr. Marvin Bordon, who assumes his new post while continuing as director of the Division of World Justice and Peace, said the Department of International Affairs will be greatly concerned with such deterioration during the 1970s.

"I don't want to give the impression that we will be dropping all else," he said, "but we will be deeply

involved in studying the environmental crisis."

This crisis, he said, "knows no boundaries," and thus is truly an international problem, affecting his department. As an example, he asked:

"By what right can Cleveland pollute Lake Erie when its other side touches upon Canada?"

Msgr. Bordon also said his department will have to deal with the population question, which will involve extensive study before any conclusions are reached.

He explained that there are new miracle seeds being developed that will be able to produce food to feed the world's growing population. But one of the problems involved is that the fertilizer needed to produce this abundance might cause further pollution and harm the very people who are being fed.

Msgr. Bordon said the United States "is creating a drain on national resources as a result of being a consumer nation."

Selfishness is being expressed, he declared, when no due regard is shown for preserving resources. Msgr. Bordon said there seems to be a lack of concern for future generations on the part of many present day consumers.

A big task facing Msgr. Bordon in his new position is the review of the structure and objectives of the department. The USCC Committee on International Affairs is studying these items.

Objectives of the department are to express concern for the social and economic development of peoples overseas; to expand the outreach of the Church overseas in missionary and relief endeavors; and to minister to the needs of foreign visitors, travelers, and migrants.

"Through the Department of International Affairs," he said, "the Church in the United States is assigning priority to international affairs, as befits the national Church in a world superpower like the United States."

"On a village planet that grows more interdependent by the day, world affairs will undoubtedly accelerate in importance during the decade of the '70s," Msgr. Bordon said.

'Peace Challenge' Explained Further

Editor:

The questions raised by Mr. Lang last week about the "Challenge for Peace" issued by 60 bishops of the diocese merit a response. In fact a continued critical discussion of the issue was raised as one of the main objectives of the statement in the first place. The points raised by Mr. Lang were familiar ones, ones which we had considered before making the statement.

First, how many are aware that, for all our talk of reduction of nuclear armaments at Helsinki and elsewhere, what we are doing is seeking to go ahead with the ABM defense and the MIRV offense, moves which in fact escalate the nuclear arms race.

Second, a look at the long-range effects of our recent Vietnamization policy shows that it ultimately yields the very same tragic consequences that are so quickly attributed to alternate policies. Specifically, the policy of President Nixon as enunciated in his message of Nov. 3, 1969 in fact does not exclude:

- an eventual Communist government in South Vietnam, if that is what the people really want;

- the possible spread of communism in Southeast Asia for those who subscribe to the domino theory;

- violent reprisals against many of those who are crucial supporters of the regime now in power in South Vietnam when it eventually falls and if it begins to fall after we have fully withdrawn our ground-troops, whenever that may be, we are no longer committed to rush in and save the day;

- the loss of American (and South Vietnamese) lives in what may well be, in anybody's book, according to any policy, a losing fight (which does not necessarily mean they were lost in vain). We simply believe that more war will not undo what has been done, cannot turn wrong into right, and is not able to guarantee a permanently stable situation in Vietnam. And yet further war is quite frankly what our present policy is all about; the only difference will be that Vietnamese will be killing each other, not Americans.

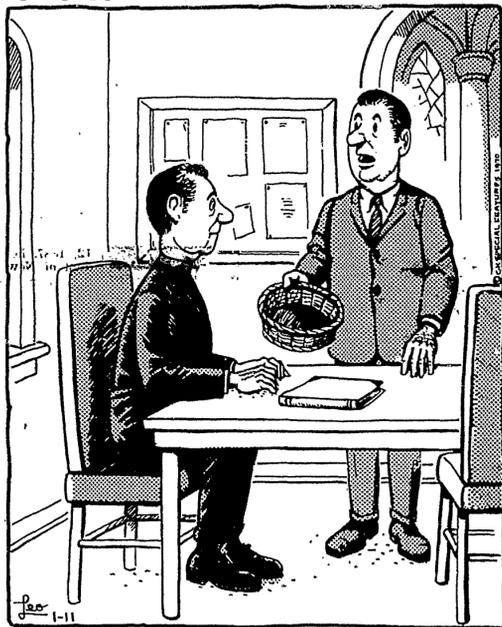
Like so many of our previous "peace" efforts, our basic concern has been for our peace, not the peace of Vietnam. Their peace we believe demands an immediate cessation of hostilities (this is not the same as an immediate withdrawal) and an attempt now to let all parties be represented in a new, even if provisional, government of South Vietnam. This is not an ideal situation, but we believe it is more moral than our present policy.

To conclude, the public release of the "challenge" misrepresented its authority to the extent that at least one local paper termed it a policy statement of Bishop Hogan; this was never our understanding or his; we explicitly requested that any attempt to make it appear such be avoided; the statement did include among the signers, Bishop Hogan as well as Bishops Hickey and McCaffery, but this was in their capacity as individuals.

A further unfortunate error appeared in the ad itself; as Mr. Lang rightly pointed out how could 90 priests claim to be "the priests of the diocese" if we didn't. The ad we submitted read "We priests of the diocese."

—Father Patrick Logan, St. Bernard's Seminary.

CHURCH HUMOR



"It was a 'silent' collection, all right . . . Nobody gave a thing!"

King

In light of Bishop Hogan's proposal last week for "new dimensions" at King's Prep and because of some apparent public misunderstanding on the school's nature and purposes, Franklin L. Kamp, dean of studies, has written the following article on the school and its aims.

Last week at a meeting of Catholic secondary school principals, Bishop Hogan strongly affirmed his belief in the cause of Catholic education in the diocese and suggested that King's Prep "take on new dimensions for pioneering in educational experimentation." In effect, the school might serve as an innovative center for testing new ideas and projects in cooperative ventures with other sectors of the diocesan educational community.

Attention was thus called to an institution with both a short and long-term history.

In May of 1967, Bishop Fulton J. Sheen decided to close St. Andrew's Seminary, which had been the high school department of the diocese's seminary system. The school, on Buffalo Road in Gates, was to be transformed into King's Prep, a co-educational college preparatory school with the goal of training young men and women for dedicated service to God, humanity, and the Church, whether it be in the religious or lay apostolate.

In the past 2½ years — in a

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Bishop Greet

Bishop Hogan greets the Chemung County Family following Mass Jan. 1 Elmira. The Bishop has been preaching in various dioceses the last

Blessed Sacram

Blessed Sacrament of Rochester has elected 12 members of its parish to its first parish council, it was announced by Father John P. Norris, pastor.

Following 8 months of preparation by a steering committee, parishioners received their ballots by mail and returned them at Masses last Sunday. An organizational meeting is scheduled for Feb. 9.

Elected to three-year terms were Dr. John Abbott, Arthur

Moral Aspects Of Social Ills To Be Topic

Moral aspects of social problems are being examined in a 10-week adult education program which began Thursday night, Jan. 22, in Greece Olympia High School, Maider Lane.

Sessions, sponsored by the Greece Central School District, will be held Thursday from 7:30 to 9:30 p.m. through March 26. Assisting in planning the course were Father William Amann, assistant at Our Mother of Sorrows Church.

Teachers are Father Robert O'Halloran, C.S.B., of Aduina Institute; Father Giovanni Montanari of St. Bernard Seminary; and the Rev. Francis Pemberton, professor of social ethics and the sociologist of religion at Colgate-Bexley Divinity School.

A similar series, just completed under the sponsorship of the Greece Pastors' Association, attracted an average attendance of 65 to 75. Participating were Father O'Halloran, the Rev. John Wynn of Colgate-Bexley, Dr. Gerald Guerinet, RIT professor of Thomas O'Brien and attorney Dennis Livadi.

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