

## Seven Blacks Among Future D.C. Deacons

Washington, D.C. —(RNS)— Nineteen future deacons of the Catholic archdiocese here, seven of them black and many of them married, took part in the revival of an ancient religious rite — tonsure — as the bishop snipped hair at five points on each candidate's head, outlining the cross.

The men, ranging in age from 34 to 70, included some high school dropouts and some men who have done post-doctoral studies, and range in occupation from janitor to industrial planner.

Auxiliary Bishop John S. Spence of Washington presided and used the shears on the candidates.

The 19 make up the first group of local candidates for ordination as deacons, an order of the Catholic clergy that has been inoperative for centuries, except as a step to the priesthood. Its revival was in response to pleas at the Second Vatican Council, and was accomplished in the U.S. in 1968 by decree of the bishops.

Deacons will carry out many of the priestly duties, except offering Mass, hearing confession, granting absolution or administering the last rites, confirmation or holy orders.

Primarily, they are expected to preach, distribute Communion, baptize, preside at marriages and funerals and even administer a parish where there is no priest.

## Fight Abortion, Birth Control, Mormons. Told

Salt Lake City — (RNS) — Mormons were challenged here to do everything in their power "to strengthen and safeguard the home and the family."

"Never has the devil been so well organized and never in our day has he had so many powerful emissaries working for him," stated Ezra Taft Benson, a member of the governing body of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (Mormon).

Benson warned delegates of the 2.8-million-member Church against abortion and birth control. The delegates gathered here for the 140th semiannual conference of the Mormon Church.

The home is the first and most effective place for children to learn the lessons of life and the purpose and privilege of life, Benson noted.

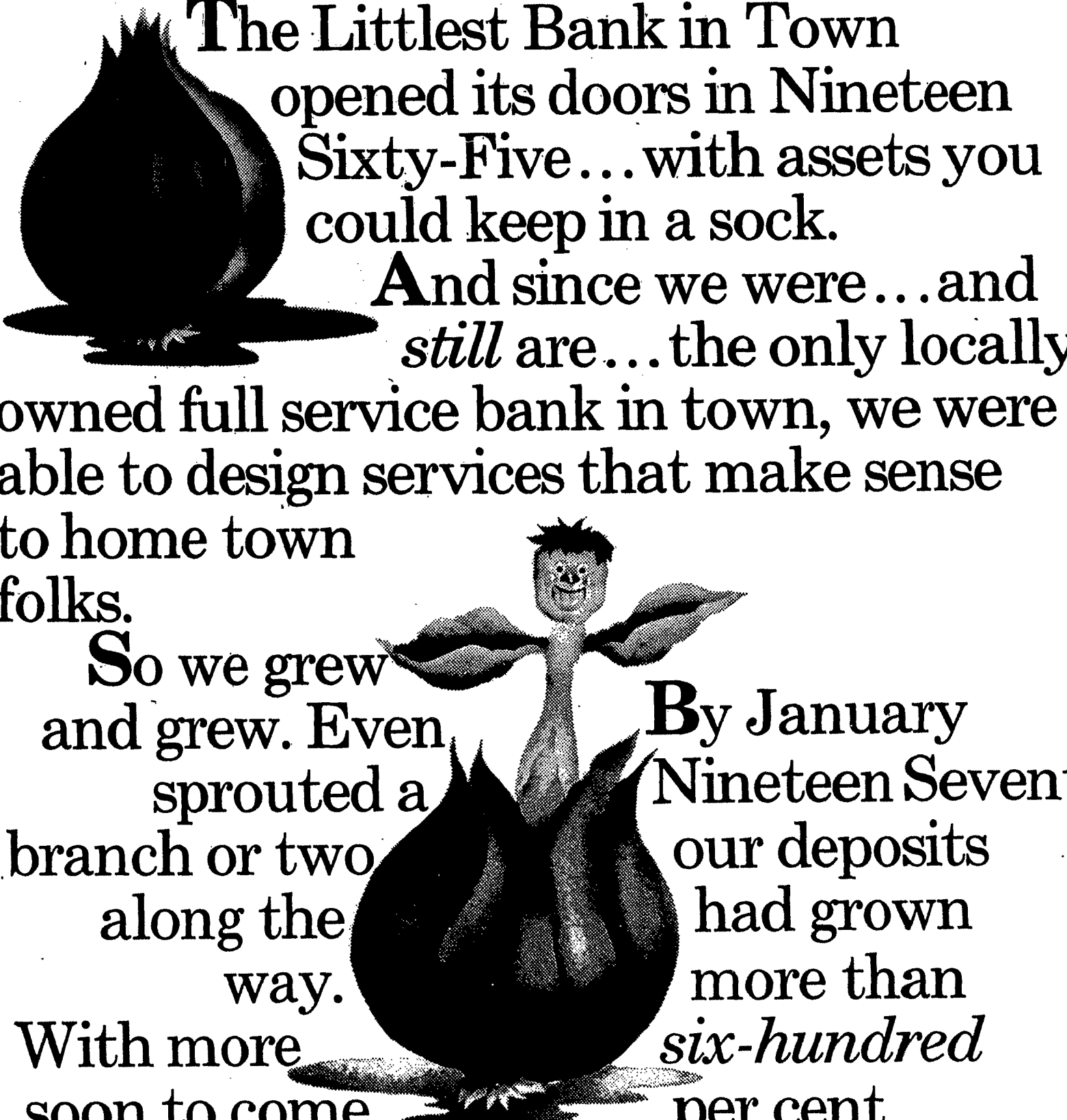
"Nothing can take the place of the home in rearing and teaching children, and no other success can compensate for failure in the home," he declared. "I come to you today with a plea to strengthen our families."

"And consider these words seriously when you think of those political leaders who are promoting birth control and abortion," Benson said. "Oh, my people, they who lead thee cause thee to err and destroy the way of thy paths."

He also warned women members that "in all seriousness . . . you who submit yourselves to an abortion or to an operation that precludes you from safely having additional healthy children are jeopardizing your exaltation and your future membership in the Kingdom of God."

"Parents are directly responsible for the righteous rearing of their children and this responsibility cannot be safely delegated to relatives, friends, neighbors, the school, the church or the state," the Mormon leader emphasized.

Courier-Journal



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branch or two  
along the  
way.  
With more  
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