

Religious Groups Help In South Dakota Disaster

New York (RNS) — Clergymen in Rapid City, S.D., have begun the lengthy task of helping to bury the more than 200 victims of the flash flood that swept through their city on June 9. Volunteers, meanwhile, search for additional bodies and clean-up teams have started the process of restoration.

The Rapid City Ministerial Association reportedly agreed to concentrate on graveside services, with a mass memorial service scheduled for Sunday, June 18.

National relief agencies of Jewish, Catholic and Protestant bodies have moved into action to assist in the emergency operations.

The National Catholic Relief Committee in Washington, D.C., has issued a letter to all Catholic bishops and Catholic Charities directors calling for financial assistance.

"The resources of the Church are being strained during this critical period of emergency care for people," the letter said. "The task of finding and identifying the dead is a particularly difficult one and will take a long time. Still ahead is the huge task of rehabilitation and reconstruction."

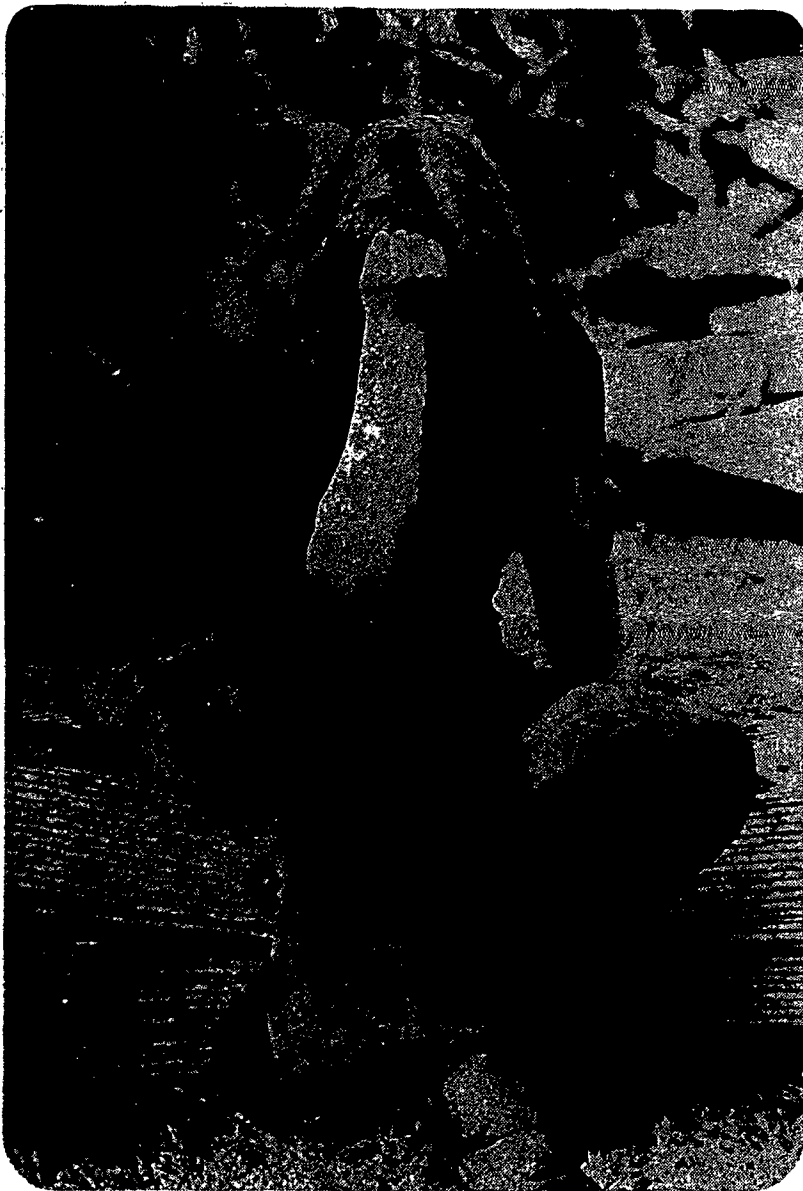
Bishop Harold J. Dimmerling of Rapid City has informed the relief committee that there is no shortage of food or clothing at present — the great need is for financial assistance. Funds may be sent to the Rapid City Diocese Chancery, 520 Cathedral Drive, P.O. Box 752, Rapid City, S.D. 57701.

Magdalene Murphy, a staff member of the relief committee, said that according to Bishop Dimmerling, Catholic churches and church buildings in Rapid City suffered "extensive damage." The Mother Butler Center of the St. Isaac Jogues Parish — where Father Francis Collins, S.J., was found dead — was said to be completely destroyed.

Church World Service, the National Council of Churches' agency, has sent McKinley Coffman of the Church of the Brethren World Ministries to Rapid City as disaster coordinator.

Melvin Myers of the Church World Service said here that \$5,000 has been released by the service to meet immediate needs of the relief operation. Emergency headquarters for church coordination has been established at Canyon Lake Methodist church.

"All material needs are reportedly being met," he said. "All



Tears After a Flood

A girl sits on a mattress outside her wrecked home and weeps after a flash flood swept through Rapid City, S.D. The disaster occurred when a thunderstorm in the nearby Black Hills sent two waves of water through the city. (RNS)

ministers are swamped with their pastoral duties and conducting funeral services."

The United Church of Christ Board for World Ministries has provided an emergency grant of \$5,000.

The Omaha, Neb., chapter of Hadassah, the Women's Zionist Organization of America, has turned over the entire contents of its thrift shop for distribution to flood victims. The goods have been valued at \$5,000.

A Hadassah director, Lenore Kahn, said here that the Jewish women in Omaha worked "around the clock" to get supplies packed and loaded onto

a truck for Rapid City — about 600 miles from Omaha. The truck reportedly was the first allowed into the city after the flood.

The death toll, as of June 14, stood at 203 with only 25 bodies unidentified. The number of injured has not been determined.

An Associated Press report described how Father Francis J. Berning, 76, a Catholic priest in Rapid City, lived through the flood by hanging on to a chandelier for more than five hours. Father Berning told newsmen there was only room for his nose and mouth above water eight feet deep. He said he heard people screaming, but there was nothing he could do.

Women's Role Enlarged By Church

Londonville, N.Y. (RNS) — A tradition dating to early colonial times was broken here when the annual General Synod of the

Reformed Church in America voted to permit women to be deacons and elders — lay officers — in local churches.

The historic action also opened the way for women to be seated as delegates to the Synod — three women were waiting in the wings.

Mrs. Jean Wells of Port Ewen, N.Y., Mrs. Joyce Regier of Oradell, N.J., and Mrs. Harold Rose of Jersey City became the first members of their sex to vote in the policy-making unit of the 350,000-member Church.

The Reformed Church in America traces its beginnings in 1628 from the arrival of Dutch settlers in the colonies. Deacons and elders are the top lay leaders in congregations of the denomination which is Presbyterian in

policy and Calvinistic in theology.

Support for women to hold local church office and be delegates to the Synod was overwhelming among the 280 representatives, meeting at Siena College, a Roman Catholic school.

ALHAMBRA LADIES

The Ladies of the Alhambra will have a picnic lunch at the home of Mrs. Emmett Schnepf, 116 Daley Blvd., Tuesday, June 27, at 12 noon. Mary Schnepf is chairman and Marion Sargent is co-chairman. The Ladies of the Alhambra recently donated the \$150 proceeds from their annual card party, to the School of the Holy Childhood.

All-Female Abortion Unit Target of Mates' Injunction

Harrisburg, Pa. (RNS) — Seventeen Pittsburgh men have filed an injunction against the Pennsylvania Abortion Commission charging that the all-women agency discriminates against men.

The action came as the commission issued a majority recommendation asking liberalization of abortion laws to allow abortion up to the 18th week of pregnancy — upon the decision of a woman and her physician.

A minority group within the commission is expected to file a vigorous objection to the majority paper.

The men's discrimination suit was filed by Dr. John Ward, a pathologist at Mercy Hospital, Pittsburgh. The suit claimed that men were "deprived of their right to participate in the democratic processes due to discrimination on the basis of sex."

The suit said 51.4 per cent of all babies born in Pennsylvania during 1970 were males. It noted that the majority of physicians who specialize in obstetrics and gynecology are men and half of all parents are men.

Southern Baptists Ask U.N. to Take Viet Intervention

Philadelphia (RNS)—A request for United Nations intervention to settle the Vietnam war was made by the 115th annual Southern Baptist Convention here.

At the same time, motions endorsing conscientious objection and calling for a study of various amnesty proposals failed to win the approval of the 13,000 messengers (delegates) from the nation's largest Protestant denomination.

The Vietnam statement was adopted after a debate on three differing motions relating to the war in Southeast Asia.

In the statement that was adopted, the messengers declared that there is "an urgent need for the earliest possible end to the war in Indo-China with all its human suffering and that the war should be ended "by attaining the objective of the United States, namely to preserve the independence and self-government of the people of South Vietnam, and the return of the American prisoners of war."

"Males were, by design, systematically and intentionally, excluded from their right to participate in the democratic processes by participating as members of the Pennsylvania Abortion Commission," the suit said.

Gov. Milton J. Shapp, who appointed the all-women unit, said he is personally opposed to abortions, but will pass on the recommendations of the commission majority to the legislature for consideration.

USCC Aide Criticizes

Anti-Busing Bill

Washington, D.C. (RNS) — The U.S. Catholic Conference has criticized "anti-busing provisions" contained in the Education Amendments of 1972 Act, which has been passed by the Senate and House of Representatives.

The USCC associate general secretary, Father James S. Rausch, in a letter to members of Congress, charged that the anti-busing provisions constitute a retreat from the "moral obligation" and "constitutional duty" to desegregate.

The complex education bill provides for a stay of 18 months on court busing orders to achieve racial balance in public schools while they are being appealed to higher courts. The use of federal funds for busing is also barred, except when voluntarily requested by local school officials.

"We view these provisions as a drastic and unwarranted retreat from the moral obligation and the affirmative constitutional duty to desegregate," Father Rausch said.

He said the "U.S. Catholic Conference is on record as supporting enactment of a new Higher Education Act as well as federal aid for desegregation and for coping with the problem of isolation in the nation's schools." But the USCC is "strongly opposed" to the anti-busing provisions of the new bill, Father Rausch said.

In addition to the anti-busing provisions, the new compromise bill authorizes some \$19 billion for educational programs such as federal scholarships for all needy college students, grants to colleges and universities and funds to help communities desegregate their schools.



Saul Alinsky Dies

Saul Alinsky, the community organizer whose involvement with Churches was as controversial as his criticism of organized religion, died June 12 of a heart attack while walking near a home he maintained in Carmel, Calif. He was 63 years old. The author, social critic and friend of the poor often despaired of genuine religious interest in justice, but he was a frequent speaker at church gatherings and, on occasion, was employed by church groups, including those in Rochester, to lead local community organizing efforts. (RNS)

Scout Group Names Officers

Shortsville — The Catholic Committee on Scouting for the Finger Lakes Boy Scout Council elected officers for 1972-73 at a recent meeting held at St. Dominick's parish house. Elected chairman of the committee was Daniel Quigley of Geneva, a veteran Scouter who has been active in the work of the committee for many years. A past chairman was elected as secretary. He is John Davie, also from Geneva. Howard Burkhardt of Canandaigua was chosen as treasurer for the Committee.