



THE CHURCH 1973
Fr. Andrew Greeley

The last thing in the world we need at this point in time (as they say at Watergate circus) is a battle between Hans Kueng and the Roman Curia. The demand that Kueng "submit" or go to Rome for trial (which of course would be in secret and for which he would not even be given documentation of accusations against him) sounds like the 19th century or possibly the 6th but hardly like the era after the Second Vatican Council. What good can possibly come from such a fight is terribly hard to imagine.

Some of Kueng's friends have had a hard time understanding why he has expended so much energy on what is apparently such a trivial issue. After all, if it took 19 centuries to discover that a doctrine was part of the faith, it could scarcely be all that central a doctrine. Kueng, it is argued, should be concerned about more fundamental issues like God, Jesus, Life and Death.

Or, as someone remarked, if infallibility doesn't apply to something as critical as the birth control encyclical (and no one claimed that it did) it really doesn't seem to be a terribly useful attribute.

There is some point to the argument. I think that Kueng is at his best when he is developing a positive theology for our time, as he did in his speech at the Concilium Congress in Brussels a number of years ago. But those who cannot understand his interest in such a peripheral issue of ecclesiastical structure as infallibility make the same mistakes that his Roman adversaries do. They fail to understand that Hans Kueng is a profoundly conservative thinker. The Curia has him written off as a trouble-some rabble-rouser who could be another Luther.

I cannot imagine anyone more unlike Luther in temperament, training, personality or conviction. Kueng is absolutely loyal to the Church, so loyal that he

Maharaj Ji Back in U.S.

New York [RNS] — A 15-year-old Indian guru, who claims to have 50,000 followers in the U.S., opened a national tour here with an address at the Louis Armstrong Stadium in Flushing Meadows Park.

Police estimates placed the attendance at 4,000, although enthusiasts for Guru Maharaj Ji said twice that number listened to the teenager expound from a red throne.

The tour was to extend into the Fall, ending with an appearance at Houston's Astrodome.

Guru Maharaj Ji was introduced by Rennie Davis, the former political radical who was "converted" to belief in the young man's eclectic views on religion and peace.

The guru is considered the world's only living "perfect master" in his movement. Followers believe he is the incarnation of God. He offers "satisfaction of mind" and "bliss within."

Guru Maharaj Ji purports to have 6 million adherents, with 5 million in India. He has several homes in the U.S., and elsewhere, and is sometimes accused of opulent living. His movement is quite controversial in India.

The address at the Armstrong Stadium received mixed responses. Many persons were described as ecstatic, while others were skeptical.

still cares about the credibility of Church structures, a subject about which the more radical theologians couldn't care less. There are many radical theologians in the Church today. I could name names if the Holy Office were interested. But because these radicals address themselves to questions which did not exist in the theological manuals of a generation ago and to topics which the Curia does not even remotely understand, they will not get in trouble and will never be an object for a Holy Office document.

But Kueng is conservative enough to care about theological traditions, and a churchman enough to be concerned about the Church as an institution. It is the very traditionalism and conservatism of his theological interests that makes him a target.

In addition, the real radicals are writing about things that do not appear to be a threat to anyone's power. Kueng, on the other hand, is easily perceived as a threat to power because he is taking on the ecclesiastical establishment on what it thinks — quite mistakenly — is the basis for its ability to influence the rest of the Church.

I defy anyone to read The Council, Reunion and Reform, Structures of the Church, The Church, and Honesty in the Church and not conclude that here is a man who is trying with all his very considerable talent to make the Church a light shining on the mountaintop to whom all men will come for illumination and warmth. If only the Romans were smart enough to realize it, they would recognize Hans Kueng not as an enemy but as one of their strongest potential allies.

His points about infallibility must be seen not as an effort to destroy the effectiveness of the Church but to enhance it. Any dialogue with him that does not take place in that context misses the whole point of Kueng's entire career as a priest and as a theologian.

I'm all for Hans Kueng being summoned to Rome. But not as a heretic to stand trial. Make him secretary of state. I can think of nothing which would more effectively improve the prestige and influence of the papacy than his presence as a major theological and religious adviser in Rome.

Chavez Expands Strike In San Joaquin Valley

Bakersfield, Calif. [RNS] — Down to his last two contracts in the Delano area, United Farm Workers union leader Cesar Chavez extended the strike against table grape growers across the entire San Joaquin Valley of California.

Citing negotiation stalemates

40 Catholic Religious Nabbed in Grape Pickets

Fresno, Calif. [RNS] — Challenging a court injunction limiting grape strike pickets, some 40 Roman Catholic Sisters, priests and brothers were arrested as they walked with members of the United Farm Workers Union in the San Joaquin Valley of central California.

Many of those arrested came here from a two-week, Jesuit-sponsored symposium on spirituality held at the University of San Francisco. The symposium ended July 31.

Among those arrested was Father Eugene Boyle, director of the Peace and Justice Commission of the National Federation of Priests' Councils (NFPC). Father Boyle has asked the other clergy and religious to join him on the UFWU picket lines.

The UFWU, led by Cesar Chavez, called a general strike after contract negotiations with 29 grape growers broke down July 30. The UFWU has been vying with the Teamsters union for the

right to represent farm workers in California.

Father Boyle said that those accompanying him are "committed to the UFWU" and that Fresno court injunctions to limit picketing are "unconstitutional and unjust."

"Today, I walked the picket line in peaceful assembly," said the priest. "But yet I was arrested for engaging in lawful assembly while petitioning my government under rights granted by the Constitution."

"Could you imagine the United Auto Workers pickets marching in front of General Motors and being arrested like UFWU members?" asked Father Boyle. "I picketed at Coachella, Lamont and Fresno County and my activity has never been outside the limits of the Constitution."

Father Boyle promised that he would be back "on the picket line" upon release from jail.

spokesmen have been predicting they will get the Delano contracts.

(UFW membership has dropped from a peak of 40,000 to some 15,000, and if the Delano contracts are lost will dip to about 6,000.)

In announcing the strike against the Delano growers, slated to start July 30, Chavez said that among the issues where agreement between the growers and UFW was lacking were: use of a union hiring hall, multi-crop contract coverage, better labor camps, pesticide control, and the right to conduct secondary boycotts.

"We were fighting to keep what we got after five years of struggle and they were trying to take away what we had," said Chavez.

Commenting on reports that his union is in deep trouble and unlikely to survive this strike crisis, the UFW leader said "the strike is not going to be lost even though we may not win it."

He added that if the growers do not sign this year or the next, they will eventually sign. "We have our patience."

The labor dispute in the San Joaquin Valley is considered the most crucial of the union's strike campaign. It was widely believed that the UFW members would yield to growers to maintain the contracts in what is considered the union's central California stronghold.

Pope Creates Diplomatic Post

Vatican City [RNS] — Pope Paul, in a move to strengthen and expand Vatican diplomacy, has established a new post of "Apostolic Nuncio for Special Assignments" within the Vatican's Council for Public Affairs of the Church.

Archbishop Luigi Poggi, 56, currently Apostolic Nuncio to Peru, has been named to the post.

According to a Vatican official, Archbishop Poggi will be assigned, as occasions warrant, to "affairs of particular importance, intricacy, or delicacy."

The Council for Public Affairs of the Church handles diplomatic relations with nations, other dealings with civil governments, and matters connected with civil law.

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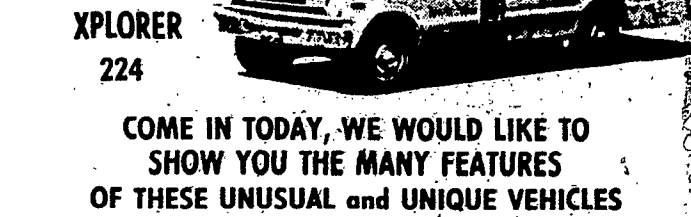


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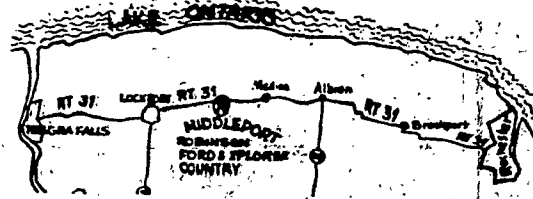


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