

# Life, Liberty and Law

Nancy Murphy

Them what has, forgets

At least Americans tend to forget — or are we perhaps just unaware — that the main preoccupation for most of mankind is to obtain sufficient food to exist. Starvation, disease and uncompromising filth and pain are but four of the contemporary fruits available daily to millions the world over.

Although in global terms the production of cereal grains, which are the primary staples of the world food supply, rose more than 200% from 1951 to 1971, and cereal supplies per person rose accordingly about 40% in those 20 years, the record harvests were not shared equally by the world's population. More than half was consumed and/or wasted by the richest and most powerful 30% of mankind who could afford the prices. The remaining portion was distributed unevenly among the 70% considered poor or underdeveloped — the 70% seen as burdens or unwanted nationals — the 70% among us who are hungry.

1972 and 1973, with poor weather conditions, droughts, rising beef consumption and soaring oil prices in the rich nations, were not good years.

Too, the high petroleum rates, while enhancing the power of control exercised by the oil-rich nations, created a world-wide shortage of nitrogen fertilizers, measurably lessening the ability of farmers in the underdeveloped nations to pump water for irrigation, fertilize their crops, or operate what meager machinery they might own.

Curiously, population experts appeared almost magically just about everywhere (I sometimes think that anyone connected with Planned Parenthood automatically becomes one) but serious demographers not connected with the profitable planning organization have tempered their calls for reduced growth rates with thoughtful and humane suggestions, suggestions that look into the future of humanity in ways not connected with isolated monetary benefits or geographical power or the twisted imbalance of forced human control. Planned Parenthood may still call for human destruction, but thoughtful scientists tend more to speak in terms of new approaches to increased protein availability, international agricultural cooperation and new hybrid grains, and less of the "unwants." That in itself is encouraging.

One demographer, Dr. Roger Revelle of Harvard, stressed in a recent paper that the earth and technology can provide sufficient food for a world population of 40 to 50 billion persons — a most interesting tidbit in light of the fact that the United Nations estimates the total population

now to be 3-1/2 billion. Dr. Revelle further stated that increased world food production can help create conditions which would stabilize the global population at lower rates than now exist.

Dr. Revelle suggests a world food bank, "with stores of wheat and other cereals and soybeans and other legumes; stores of fertilizers to enable crop production to expand quickly; reserves of land that can be put under the plow in emergencies; a store of information and technology that can be used to increase crop yields; and stores of crop genes to make it possible for seeds of new varieties to be quickly multiplied when the old varieties are stricken by pests or plant diseases."

But family planners such as the Rockettellers, and women's lib groups such as NOW, continue to promote the destructive elimination theory, and continue to refer to it as a "right."

In my considered judgement mankind has many paths away from the starvation problems, and the planned destruction of "unwanted" human life is not even an option. A world food bank is. The transfer of agricultural technologies from the richer nations and adapted to the poorer ones is. Reduced waste and increased fish production broadened studies in irrigation, fertilizers, desalinization, thermo-nuclear and tidal energies, more efficient use of the fossil and hydrogen fuels — there are many areas into which we have barely stepped. There are resources we have not yet employed, stores we have not yet tapped, and minds we have not yet listened to.

As we have accepted the comforts and the glories of affluent humanity, so we must accept the accompanying responsibilities. For surely it is our moral duty to explore all the humane paths — not as Americans, not even as Christians — but simply as human beings. We must march to the echo of our heritage and in response to the call for our future generations to feed to clothe and to comfort those among us who are hungry, naked and in painful need. We dare not erase a single innocent human life.

We must not forget.

**Congressman Don Edwards, Chairman of House Subcommittee on Constitutional Amendments, US House of Representatives, Washington, D.C. 20515. Senator Birch Bayh, Chairman of Senate Subcommittee, Washington, D.C. 20510.**

# Hope for Honduras

A somewhat optimistic view of relief efforts in Honduras came this week through Father Robert White, an American Jesuit who considers Honduras his home.

Father White, temporarily at Cornell University, said he talked on the telephone with a leader in the Christian Social Movement and learned of some promising developments. Reports of transportation difficulties, red tape and venality in connection with the delivery of relief supplies have dominated recent news from Honduras.

Caritas of Honduras, the church's emergency relief and welfare organization, has been authorized to administer all refugee operations in the country, Father White reported. Caritas has 300 volunteers working in refugee camps and in the clean up and reconstruction, he said, and has borrowed 250 more workers from other agencies of the Christian Social Movement.

The over-all director of foreign relief assistance is Roberto Galvez, former ambassador to the United States, and his appointment "has improved the situation a great deal," according to Father White's contact, Fernando Montes.

"Some of the 100,000 hurricane and flood refugees are now slowly returning to where their villages once stood," Montes told him, and Caritas "will be organizing the people back in their villages in reconstruction committees. Food and equipment will be channeled to these elected committees and the people encouraged to rebuild their communities, to prevent a sense of helpless dependency from setting in."

During the past five years, Father White has worked in the rural development programs of the Catholic Church in Honduras, and he expects to return to this work. He was training community leaders and designing a new type of agricultural education for small semi-subsistence farmers, he said.

The priest said that all assistance from Catholic Relief Service would go directly to Caritas and its sister agencies, by agreement with the Honduran government. He offered his news as reassurance to Catholics who might wish to contribute. It was confirmed, he said, in a CRS internal communication.

A request for relief funds has been made by Genesee Ecumenical Ministries, in letters to more than 600 area churches, Catholic and Protestant.

In addition, Bishop Dennis W. Hickey has asked diocesan pastors to remind their parishioners of the "staggering need." He wrote to them last week, saying that the Pastoral Office would forward any

contributions to Catholic Relief Services.

The bishop reported that in recent years, without recourse to special collections, the Pastoral Office and the Church relief agency had received very large amounts of money from diocesans responding to the needs of people engulfed in disaster.

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