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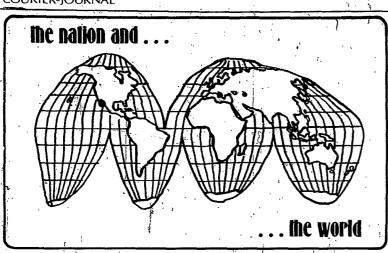
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From Courier-Journal Services

The Texas Conference of Churches has appealed to the state's Christian community to make a definite commitment to eat less and to help feed the hungry in the rest of the world. Texans were urged to "consciously reduce superfluous needs, both as a society and as inand in Washington, D.C., Archbishop William W. Baum has told the D.C. City Council that hunger is an issue of primary concern to the Interfaith Committee of Greater Washington ... Newscript, an ecumenical newsletter, reports that 10,000 members and supporters of the United Farmworkers Union gathered for a rally at the Gallo Winery in Modesto, Calif., belying reports that the Chavez union was in disarray.

Despite a Portuguese Catholic Church ban on clerical participation politics, four priests are running for election as leftist party candidates in the national races. Vote day is April 12 . . . The Vatican has expressed its satisfaction with the "wide coverage" in the Czech press of recent talks in Prague between Vatican and Czech officials. The talks were a continuation of meetings in Rome last September between Archbishop Agostino Casaroli and Czech representatives . . . The lower house of the Swiss Parliament has turned down a government-sponsored bill that would legalize abortions for other than medical reasons. The National Council also rejected a counter-proposal that would have permitted abortions on demand during the first 12 weeks of . A special solemn Mass, featuring 15th Century hymns was celebrated March 6 in the Church of St. Giovanni in the little hill town of Caprese, about 40 miles east of Florence, to mark the 500th anniversary of the birth of Michelangelo. Born March 6, 1475, the great artist-to-be was baptized two days later in St. Giovanni church.

A recent Gallup Poll showed that 78 per cent of U.S. adults opposed the Ford administration's proposal to provide \$522 million in additional military aid to South Vietnam and Cambodia . . . And another survey, sponsored by the National Committee for a Human Life Amendment showed that nearly 75 per cent of some 4,000 persons surveyed in all 50 states felt Congress should do something to change the Supreme Court's January 1973 decision liberalizing abortion . a recent speech in Phoenix, Ariz., Archbishop Fulton J. Sheen, former bishop of Rochester, said, "You can't tell a nun and you can't always tell a priest either" but "you can always tell a member of the Salvation Army in the world today." He praised the "army" for its spiritual and social service "visibility" and also "because it helps everyone" and because of its "spiritual, strong-minded universal approach" to helping

Pinpointing Armageddon Has Witnesses Perplexed

Los Angeles [RNS] - Jehovah's full-time missionary work, Witnesses are having problems with eschatology.

In recent years, a good deal of publicity has centered on the idea that the sect was expecting the end of the world to occur in 1975. But now, leaders of Jehovah's Witnesses are saying that Armageddon may not be imminent.

A report by John Dart in the Los Angeles Times traces the origin of the belief that 1975 would be the end of the world to a book published by the sect in 1966. Dart writes that since that time, "the Watchtower Society has been saying that Autumn, 1975, would mark the point 6,000 years from the creation of Adam in 4026 B.C. — a date derived by the Witnesses from their own Bible chronology, which rejects scientific evidence of mankind's existence on earth for millions of

After mounting expressions of concern, including reports of members selling their property to engage in evangelistic and missionary work, the sect's at titude towards 1975 was modified somewhat. An item in the Watchtower magazine last October said, "The publications of Jehovah's Witnesses have shown that, according to Bible chronology, it appears that 6,000 years of man's existence will be completed in the mid-1970s. But these publications have never said that the world's lend would come then.

There has been some difference in what the publications technically said and how they were generally interpreted. Ken Guindon of Van Nuys, who left the sect in 1973 after 14 years of

declared that "it is the Watchtower publications which are responsible for any and all speculation about the world's end in 1975. They have driven their poor, sincere disciples to a frenzy of futile activity.

An article in the sect's 1975 yearbook noted that the importance of 1975 "was deeply" impressed on our minds back in book. But it quoted F.W. Frenz, vice president of the Watchtower Bible and Tract Society (the sect's official name), as having cautioned a Baltimore gathering not to "be specific in saying anything that is going to happen between now and 1975.

Although Witnesses are not now identifying 1975 as the end of the world, they are continuing to warn against taking a complacent attitude as the "last days" approach. In a recent address to 20,000 Witnesses at the Los Angeles Sports Arena, Frenz urged them to keep preaching "as we approach these crucial years or months — that are ahead."

In the early years of the sect, Jehovah's Witnesses were anticipating Armageddon to occur in 1914. When it did not, the Watchtower Society began teaching that year marked the beginning of the "last days" before the end of the world, ...

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Working for Irish Peace

New York [RNS] - Sean Cooney, a Catholic, took the 'unfashionable'' course of suggesting that Americans use St. Patrick's Day to pray for Northern Ireland, and Anne Sloane, a Protestant, took pains to explain that 98 per cent of the people in Ulster, both Catholic and Protestant, abhor violence.

The two "ordinary people" from Belfast - a construction worker and a housewife - who have devoted their lives, often at some personal risk, to community development there, also took the opportunity to point out that the various churches of Northern Ireland have worked very hard to bring peace to that strife-torn country

"Christianity has never failed in Northern Ireland," declared Cooney, "because it's never been People have compartmentalized their lives and locked much of their Christianity

Both Catholics and Protestants are working together in community groups across Northern Ireland, said Mrs. Sloane, resisting military, 'para-military and political pressures.

Specific steps taken by the community developers Northern Ireland over the past several years include the launching of small industries, the renovation of bombed-out housing, educational and recreational projects for children and aging, and the countering of suspicion and segregation in various parts of the six county nation of 1.5 million people.

The Belfast pair, on a three-week whirlwind tour of the U.S. to "sensitize" Americans to the situation in Northern Ireland and plead support for Colleagues from American Churches, Inc., took part in a news conference at Fordham University's Lincoln Center campus here.

And one of the things they told the press was how badly it was doing in reporting the activities of the 2 per cent in Northern Ireland who stand for violence and in failing to heed the work espoused by the 98 per cent who condemn violence.

In urging more activities like, sponsored those Colleagues from American Churches, ecumenical an organization aimed at backing community development in Ulster, Cooney and Mrs. Sloane advised that Americans "make sure" the truth about Northern Ireland is really coming out. They also urged that contributions be kept away from organizations with "blood on their hands."

The Colleagues organization by Father David Bowman, SJ, involved in liaison between the Catholic Church and the National Council of Churches, and the Rev. Wesley C. Baker, pastor of Wayne Presbyterian Church. Among its advisers are Presiding Bishop John Allin of the Episcopal Church; Auxiliary Bishop John Dougherty of the Catholic Newark archdiocese; United Methodist Bishop James Matthews of Washington, D.C., and William Thompson, stated clerk of the United Presbyterian Church.

During the news conference, Cooney strongly rejected the widespread notion that what is going on in Ulster is "a religious war." He completely disputed the idea that para-military groups like the IRA (Irish Republican Army) or UDL (Ulster Defense League) have popular support, and condemned the buying and supplying of firearms by groups supporting either faction.

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Farringdon Gardens was badly burned out on Aug. 9, 1971, leaving some 200 families homeless in the mixed Catholic and Protestant residential area in the Ardovne section of Northern Belfast (top photo). Today, the homes have been rebuilt due to the efforts of community development groups. Sean Cooney, who is currently on a tour of the U.S., was one of three Catholics who, along with three Profestants, organized the Crumlin Construction Company in 1973. It, with the aid of the Ulster government, rebuilt the burned-out homes. (RNS)

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