

Episcopal Priest:

Diversity in Christian Churches Shouldn't Be Feared

By MARTIN TOOMBS Southern Tier Editor

Elmira—Rev. William Cooper, pastor of St. Matthew's Episcopal Church, Horseheads, noted that he "felt strange" speaking in Our Lady of Lourdes Church.

Homilist for the Ecumenical Service to mark the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity, Rev. Cooper said that he felt uncomfortable because the church was unfamiliar to him.

The problem of strangeness has been a problem when he has worked with Catholics in the Cursillo movement, he said. A particular problem, he noted, is language; he found that each group has its own way of describing things.

But, he pointed out, he also found that "we really could communicate" because of a common faith in God. His experience has been that "to communicate with you strange people is very difficult," he commented, "but I found it terribly worthwhile."

Mr. Cooper said that he has always thought of the Church as a flowerbed, or as a banquet table, with great diversity. Church members also are individuals, he said, with "each one of us precious and unique."

With so many Christian Churches, some ask "who's right and whose is wrong?" he noted, "what is the truth?"

"We all do," he stated. Churches don't get involved with each other more because "it's much easier to ignore each other than to try to relate," he pointed out.

"What are we afraid of?" he asked.

He said that the Churches are afraid of God; afraid of a God who makes no two snowflakes alike; of a God who loves change, novelty and uniqueness. Such a God "scares the daylight out of us," he commented.

Each person is "one of a kind," he noted; "each life will never occur again."

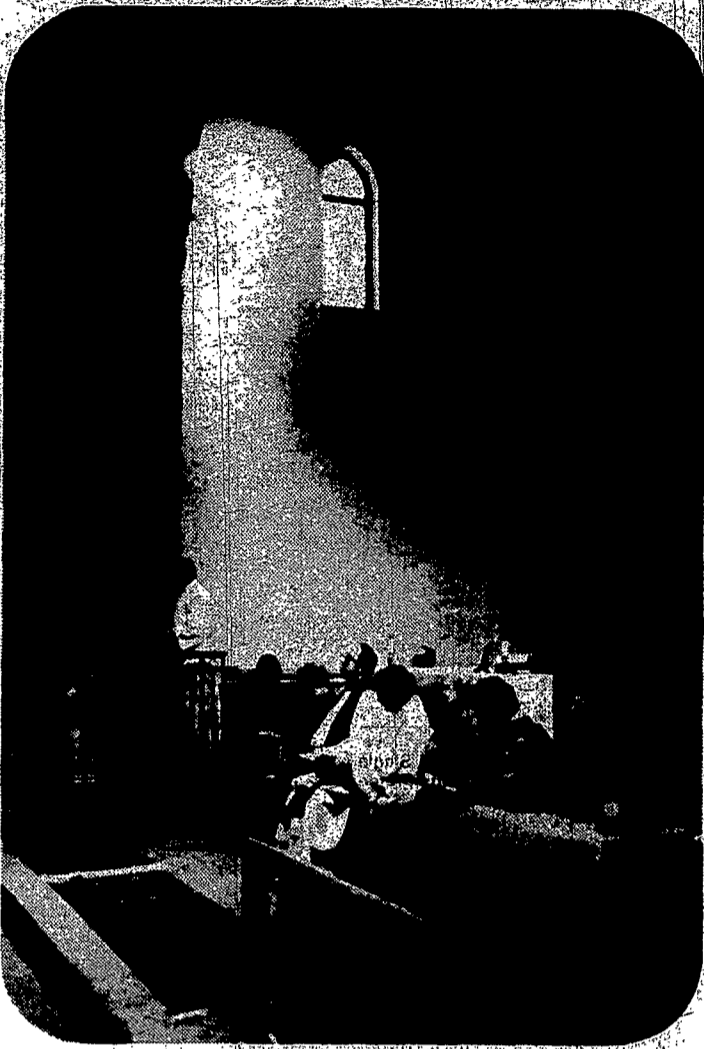
"Our sin is that we are afraid of the banquet, and the flowerbed, and the God who created them," he stated.

The question for the future, he said, is "is love stronger than the walls that separate us?"

He noted that when he was growing up, he and his father would have emotional discussions, without affecting their relationship. It was "all right to be different in my home," he said, "because we were a family and we loved each other."

"I believe" that the same type of relationship "can happen across denominational lines," he concluded.

Approximately 100 persons and many local



Rev. Cooper speaks at ecumenical service.

clergy attended the service. Among those participating were Rev. Peter Courtney of Grace Episcopal, Rev. Jonathan Guest of Park Church, Father Albert Delmonte, St. Anthony's, Rev. Harry Taylor, Central Christian, Margery Nurnberg, St. Patrick's, Father Francis Davis, Our Lady of

Lourdes, and Sister Mary Ann Sliwa, St. Casimir's.

The singing was led by the Our Lady of Lourdes choir, joined by choir members from other churches. Paul Holland directed the choir, and Charles Hickman of Park Church was song leader.

Photo by Martin Toombs

Officers Elected By C-S Assembly

Elmira—The smaller Chemung-Schuyler Assembly met for the first time Jan. 22, heard a review of the recent assembly meetings, and elected new officers.

Successful constitutional amendments reduced the assembly membership, cutting parish delegates from four to two. That and other adjustments resulted in a reduction of 24 assembly members.

Elected without opposition to serve as president of the assembly was Thomas Costello, delegate from Our Lady of Lourdes parish. Costello is a former Diocesan Pastoral Council member, and during the past year he chaired the assembly's discussion of the Call to Action resolutions and the constitutional revision assembly.

Pat Defendorf, a delegate



Thomas Costello addresses assembly.

from St. Mary Our Mother, Horseheads, was elected vice president. She has held the office since September, completing an unexpired term.

The position of secretary-treasurer was left unfilled. Sister Beatrice Curran,

assistant regional coordinator, conducted the election.

Mrs. Defendorf described

Healer Set In Hornell

Hornell—Father Edward McDonough, Boston-based priest who several times has spoken and held healing services in the Diocese of Rochester, will hold a Healing and Restoration Service at St. Ann's Church on Feb. 10 beginning at 8:30 p.m.

The following day he will speak at the first session of a Workshop on Spiritual Healing at Desales Hall of St. James Mercy Hospital. His talk "Thoughts of a Healer" will begin at noon. Earlier that morning the workshop will consider "Imposition of Hands—What Does it Mean?"

the assembly's September meeting, and Robert Rohde of St. Casimir's reviewed the constitutional changes for the new assembly members.

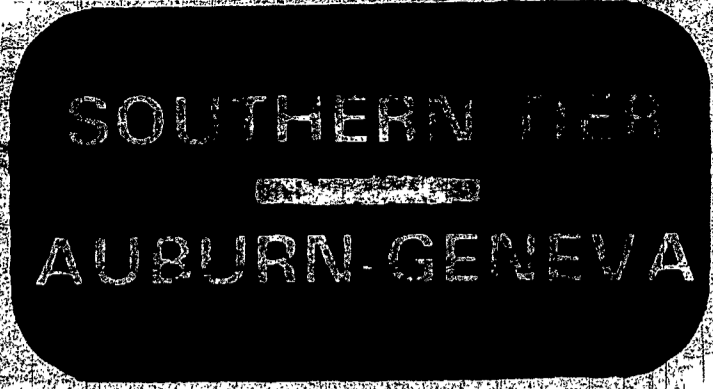
Alumni Present Donation

Hornell—St. Ann's Alumni Association presented a check for \$1,000 to Sister Mary Ambrose, school principal, for the operation of the school, at its meeting Jan. 11.

Mary Jane Price was named chairman of the annual spaghetti dinner Thursday, Feb. 23 at the Knights of Columbus home.

Association officers for the coming year will be: Joe Aini, president, William Brill, vice president, Barbara Bishop, secretary, Betty Cipolla, treasurer, and Roseann O'Connor, membership secretary.

Photo by Martin Toombs



AIM Discusses Sex Education

By MARY ANN GINNERTY

Auburn— "Should the churches be involved in sex education and if so, how?" was the question raised at an Auburn Interfaith Ministries (AIM) forum, January 22 at First United Methodist Church here.

Panelists for the forum were Ms. Esther Orioli, member of the Ostrich Committee and director of CHAD (Confidential Help Alcohol/Drugs); Dr. James Knox, Superintendent of Schools and Dr. Gordon Eadie, Commissioner of Health for Cayuga County.

Rev. Herbert Loomis, Pastor, First United Methodist was moderator.

AIM's interest in youth stemmed from its annual meeting in May when sex educator, Mrs. Oreida Anderson, spoke on need for sex education both in the family and school setting.

The AIM forum comes as a result of a recent family life public hearing which examined the inclusion of several family life topics in the overall health curriculum which had been under review for several months. AIM held the meeting to determine the interests of area churches in sex education programs.

Ms. Orioli explained the Ostrich Committee, was originally called the Task Force on Adolescent Pregnancy, but changed its name as the purpose of the committee is to combat the "ostrich-like" attitude of people burying their heads in the sand denying there is a problem.

The Ostrich Committee seeks to encourage practical and realistic projects by various segments of the community rather than to be in the business of delivering direct service programs.

Ms. Orioli distinguished between sex information which deals only with facts and sex education which is more comprehensive, dealing with facts, attitudes, values and morals. She said "The church has not always done all they can do. We have not always lifted our heads from the sand."

To facilitate parent child communication which often breaks down around helpful sexual information, Ms. Orioli suggested the church work through church sponsored seminars. The church could become involved in crucial com-

munity issues as well. This might include mandatory parenting courses in home economics and expanded health curriculums.

She said adolescent sexuality with all its implications has to be a community concern. We can't expect miracles from other groups, but all must work towards healthy adulthood.

Dr. Gordon Eadie called the teenaged pregnancy problem an epidemic. He said while teenaged pregnancies generally have decreased since 1955, adolescent pregnancies have increased. The shocking thing he said is that the age is going down to about 12. He said Auburn Memorial Hospital recently reported an 11 year old had given birth.

He said the church is a key in this whole matter, because it represents morality. It must find new ways of helping parents and teenagers to communicate and find new means of wisdom and maturity.

Dr. Knox spoke of the recently adopted, but amended, health and family life curriculum. It had raised considerable last minute controversy with some clergy who voiced opposition to some aspects of the program, at the last public hearings. An amended version of the curriculum was approved by a split vote of the school board. He said the most misunderstood term was "value clarification" and suggested the substitution of the term "decision making for this process." The intent of decision making is to teach pupils to think for themselves, use parental and religious values and not give in to peer group pressures.

"It is important that we give our young people accurate information that we establish trusting relationships reflecting our Judeo-Christian heritage," he said.

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Schools Week Marked By Students

Owego—St. Patrick's School students will wind up Catholic Schools Week with activities designed to give their parents an opportunity to participate in school activities.

On Wednesday, Feb. 1, the students will set up a mini-art gallery in the school.

On Thursday, parents are invited to attend their child's classes, with

babysitting provided for pre-schoolers during the day.

A special Mass for the students, parents and other relatives will be celebrated at 11 a.m. on Friday. At 12:45 p.m., there will be a school assembly to conclude the week in the church hall. Each grade will give a presentation depicting growth in the community, parish and world.