

The Shroud

Scientists Find It's Authentic

By Richard C. Dujardin

Woonsocket, R.I. (RNS)— A scientist who led the team which went to Italy last year to investigate the Shroud of Turin, the legendary burial cloth of Jesus, says that all the evidence amassed thus far indicates that the shroud is authentic.

And there is mounting circumstantial evidence, he said, that the image on the cloth is that of Christ and was "projected" on the cloth, perhaps by a burst of radiation emanating from all parts of the body in a one five hundredth of a second flash.

"We all thought that we'd find it was a forgery and would be packing up our bags in a half hour," Thomas D'Muhala told an audience at a breakfast meeting here of the Full Gospel Businessmen's Fellowship.

"Instead, all of us who were there, at least all those I talked to, are convinced that burden of proof has shifted. The burden is now on the skeptic."

D'Muhala, president of Nuclear Technologies Corp. of Amston, Conn., and one of the five directors of the Shroud of Turin Research Project, said he and each of the 40 scientists have first claim on releasing the results of their own experiments in scientific journals.

Thus, he said, until those results are published, project members are bound to confidentiality even though some of the project's major and most startling finds are yet to be made public.

The Holy Shroud, a yellowed strip of linen measuring 14 feet long and 3 feet, 7 inches wide, has been the object of veneration as the burial cloth of Christ since the 1350s when it surfaced in France. It is now kept in a silver casket in a chapel in the city of Turin in northwestern Italy.

While there have been recurring claims that the cloth is a cruel hoax and a forgery, the first major and extensive effort to authenticate the shroud did not take place until last year when scientists were given clearance to examine it for six days, beginning Oct. 8, 1978.

That clearance grew out of a request by a group of scientists who attended what was then called the first American Conference on Research of the Shroud of Turin in 1977, a conference organized by Dr. John P. Jackson and Dr. Eric J. Jumper, both physicists at the U.S. Air Force Academy.

D'Muhala, who is also consultant to more than 50 corporations and research laboratories and an authority on nuclear decontamination, said the scientists had to plan thoroughly for the project since they were required to squeeze "30 days of tests" into the time period.

The scientists included representatives of the U.S. Army, Navy and Air Force, the Canadian government, the National Aeronautics and Space Administration as well as the Los Alamos scientific laboratory and other private companies. The team included "born again" Christians, such as D'Muhala, atheists, agnostics, Protestants, Catholics and Jews.

Experimentation was broken down into four categories: X-ray fluorescence, to estimate quantitatively the elemental content of the shroud at various places by excitation of characteristic X-rays; a

tape experiment, in which a chemically inert pure hydrocarbon adhesive tape was pressed against the cloth to pick up surface samples; photographic computer analysis; and image enhancement, and a carbon-14 committee to use available methods of C-14 analysis to date the time of the shroud.

The experiments took place inside the visiting princes' rooms of the Royal Palace of the House of Savoy, immediately adjacent to the chapel where the shroud is usually kept under armed guard.

D'Muhala said that when they first viewed the shroud, scientists were disappointed because the blood stains were magenta. "We thought they would have been dark brown. And at first we were afraid that some artist had painted over the image, which would have precluded a lot of our experiments. But as we examined it more closely we found traces of cornstarch on the cloth. We understand that cornstarch was used in the making of cloth in Palestine. And because of the chemistry, the blood does not coagulate and turn brown as it would ordinarily."

Interestingly, however, scientists have not yet been able to find evidence of a navel. "Even the computer enhancement boys couldn't find it," D'Muhala said. "I really don't know what that means."

By examining the blood stains, scientists determined that the victim endured some 120 lashes, more than likely from a whip made with three leather straps, each with a dumbbell-shaped iron ball at the tip.

The cloth also depicted deep wounds around the head, possibly not merely from a crown of thorns, but from a "cap" of thorns that produced wounds deep in the head.

In addition to the puncture wounds on the wrists and the feet, the analysis of the blood flow shows the man had to carry a heavy weight. There is evidence of a very deep and bloody wound on the man's side, with indications that both blood and water gushed from the same wound.

Most baffling is the image of the man on the cloth, a seemingly exact reverse negative of a crucified man.

How was the image created?

D'Muhala says that none of the experiments thus far have shown evidence that the image was "painted" on. While some past theories have suggested that the image was brought about by the body, anointed with oils and spices, being pressed against the cloth, he says thus far he is not aware of any traces of spices on the cloth.

Another theory is that the image was created somehow by a burst of energy from the body, which "scorched" the cloth in the process.

All scientific evidence seems to point in that direction, he said.

Using computer technology, the scientists discovered they could create a three-dimensional image of the picture on the cloth. Based on a law of physics that radiation diminishes rapidly as it leaves its source at the rate of the square of the distance, the team was able to construct a statue which was amazingly lifelike.

"The same techniques just wouldn't work with an average photograph," D'Muhala said.

And what does he make of it all? D'Muhala said the evidence seems to support the scripture story in every detail, and that the radiation burst, if proven, could very well be connected to the story of the Resurrection.

"Everyone of the scientists I have talked to believes the cloth is authentic. Some say, maybe this is a love letter, a tool he left behind for the analytical mind."

As a result of the studies, he said, one Jewish participant on the team converted to Christianity.

Mindszenty Report Hits Women's Mags

St. Louis— The major women's magazines in the U.S. are anti-family and promote secular humanism, according to the December issue of the Mindszenty Report.

life style" mentality which looks upon marriage and the raising of children often as inconvenience, the Report says.

Cosmopolitan, Ladies Home Journal, Mademoiselle, Seventeen and other popular magazines regularly condone extra-marital sexual activity, favor abortion-on-demand and promote the "alternate

Most of the women's magazines, the Report says, rarely mention religion, the Ten Commandments or the concept of right or wrong, but, instead, advise their readers to "do your own thing."

House: States Can Refuse Abortion Payments

Washington (RNS)— The House of Representatives has extended the abortion funding controversy to the state level by passing a "states rights" abortion amendment allowing states to avoid paying for abortions if they desire.

Several state courts have interpreted the federal Medicaid law, which requires financing for all "medically necessary" services, to include abortions. These states have been ordered to pay for abortions as a "medically

necessary" service. The new House amendment stipulates that nothing in the federal Medicaid law "shall be construed to require state funds to be used to pay for any abortions."

"My amendment merely makes it plain that states have the right to set their own policies on whether to use their own money for abortions," said Rep. Robert E. Bauman of Maryland, sponsor of the amendment, adopted by a vote of 235-155.



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We invite you to join with us in celebrating the New Year — and accepting the challenge it offers each of us. A good year is built from living life to its fullest — every single day, and that is perhaps the best New Year's resolution any of us can make.

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Government Must Aid Families, Hearing Told

By the State Catholic Conference

Albany— The government should help rather than hinder religion in its effort to stabilize and foster family life in the United States, said a State Catholic Conference spokesman at a public hearing recently in Syracuse.

Government should seek

not only to assure survival for families but also to develop programs to help strengthen and support the family in our society, said Father James T. O'Brien, Syracuse diocesan Catholic schools superintendent. He spoke at a special public hearing seeking to gather facts to feed into the White House Conference on

Families scheduled for the summer of 1980. As spokesman for the State Catholic Conference, action arm of the State Catholic Bishops, Father O'Brien urged government to change laws which endanger the family structure and establish or strengthen programs in four areas where

the needs of families are the greatest — economic, education, support (such as health and child care), and the religious dimension. He was basing his remarks on information from the State Bishops Conference's provincial meeting on the topic of family in 1978, Father O'Brien said.