

NAACP Director Hooks:

Civil Rights Struggle Is Not Over

By Martin Toombs
Southern Tier Editor

Elmira — Benjamin Hooks kept the rapt attention of those attending the Elmira-Corning Branch, NAACP annual banquet March 25 as he leveled measured blasts at the forces opposing his group's goals, and at blacks who have abandoned the struggle.

While criticizing those who refuse blacks their rightful place in society, a place Hooks said has been paid for, he also criticized those blacks who have turned their backs on the NAACP, who don't have money for a \$50 membership, but find money for cigarettes, haircuts, and to wash their cars.

Hooks, executive director of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), pulled the 400,000-member organization out of a deficit two years ago, after assuming his post in 1977. He is now working "on a goal" of one million members by the end of the year, and two million by 1985.

A lawyer, minister and successful businessman in his hometown of Memphis, Tenn., Hooks also was decorated for service with the 92nd Infantry in Italy during World War II.

It was 12 years ago in Memphis, Hooks related, that he heard Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. give what would be his final speech during the garbage workers strike there. Hooks noted that he "had never heard King speak as effectively as he did that night, or with so much emotion. And, he noted, he didn't speak of the hard times that were behind the civil rights movement, but of the hard times ahead.

Many in the movement felt at the time that it had suc-



Photo by Martin Toombs

BENJAMIN HOOKS

ceeded, Hooks recounted, with the passage of the Civil Rights Act and other legal gains. But, he noted, apparently King foresaw the struggles of the years that have passed since.

He also commented that some have looked for a leader to replace King, to unite blacks. But, Hooks stated, King didn't unite blacks when he was alive — that only happened after his death. The United States, he said, is a "nation that loves dead heroes and kills live ones."

In the years since King's death, Hooks related, the civil rights struggle has moved from the small cities in the

South to cities such as Boston, where, he said, people would "go to church and finger their rosaries" and then "walk down the street and spit on little children."

The end to racism will come, he said, when people live what they learn in church on Sunday, the rest of the week.

As for reverse discrimination, "no greater, more damnable lie" has ever been foisted on people, he said.

To illustrate his point, he listed many professional and business fields, and the small numbers of blacks in them.

Less than two percent of the doctors and lawyers are black; he noted, and of the 5,000 members of Fortune 500 company boards of directors, 75 are black. Black unemployment is twice as high as for whites, and 39 percent of black youth are unemployed. He asked where those figures indicate evidence of reverse discrimination.

And when a black enters a profession, the white majority questions his or her qualifications, he noted. Chief Justice Warren Burger of the Supreme Court estimated that 50 percent of the country's lawyers are incapable of representing a client in court, he noted. If you assume that all black lawyers are incompetent, he said, that still leaves 48 percent of the lawyers white and incompetent.

Hooks stated that "I've spent half my useful days upon this earth struggling" for what others can take for granted.

Referring to the abortion controversy, he acknowledged disagreement on the issue, but stated that there can be "no such thing as a right to life" without a "right to live." He criticized lawmakers who vote to end abortions and also vote against programs such as food stamps and public assistance that make it possible for people to live.

"Freedom is not free," he told the 400 persons attending the banquet, challenging them to join the NAACP. "If we're going to have freedom, we're going to have to pay for it," he said. "We may not get all that we pay for, but we'll pay for all we get."

Stella Maris Opens For 54th Year

Camp Stella Maris will open for its 54th year on June 29 with a four week boys encampment, and on July 27 with a four week girls program.

This year's program features an expanded capacity for campers and the continuation of the Counselor in Training program for 15 year olds.

Stella Maris executive director Ray Tette, said he expects another good turnout in 1980 and advises parents to register their children as early as possible. Early registration will also insure the choice of week. Tette said that he had to turn away nearly 200 campers last year.

Camp Stella Maris is located at 3052 East Lake Rd, Livonia, N.Y. 14487. The

phone number is (716) 346-2243.

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Insights in Liturgy

Sacrament: Jesus Christ

By Msgr. William H. Shannon

The Diocese of Rochester is engaged as a community in the rewriting of the sacramental guidelines that will enable us to experience ourselves more fully as Church. These guidelines must not be looked upon as "recipes" for doing sacramental things; they must be indications of how we can effectively express the faith that is in us as God's people.

What is this faith that is ours? It is the Mystery hidden from ages past that has been revealed by God to His holy ones — the Mystery of Christ in us; Christ, God's glory and our glory. (Col. 1:26-27) The man, Jesus Christ, is the threshold Person — on the boundary line where divinity and humanity meet. He is the one with God: the glory of God shines in His face. (II Cor. 4:6) He is the one with us; for He is not ashamed to call us brothers and sisters. (Heb. 2:12)

Jesus Christ is God's celebration of His own presence among His people;

His presence to save, to love, to show mercy. And it IS celebration, for God finds delight in being with the children of men. (Prov. 8:31) Jesus is the deepest and most personal Sign and Expression of that delight.

Jesus Christ is also humanity's celebration of God: His wondrous power, His saving mercy, His forgiving love. Jesus is humanity's reason for rejoicing always in the Lord. (Phil. 4:14) for He is in our midst as THE SIGN of our joy in the salvation. (Ps. 51:14) God gives us through Him.

Jesus is God's delight in us. Jesus is our delight in God.

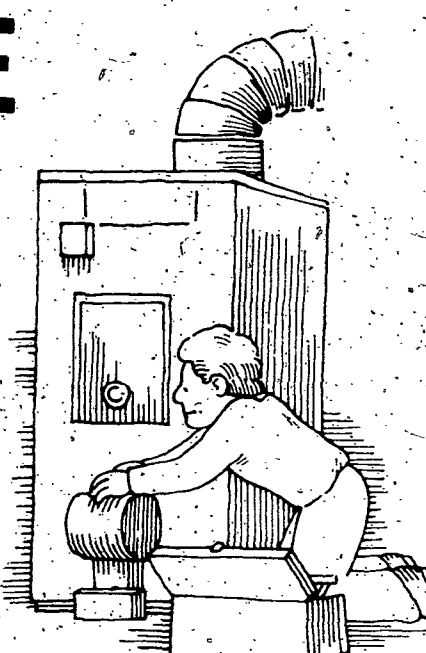
If Jesus Christ is the celebration of God's presence among us and of our experience in Him of that presence, then Jesus is THE SACRAMENT of all sacraments. He is the primordial sacrament. For sacrament means nothing other than the celebration of God's acting to save us and of our responding to Him as Saviour. Jesus, therefore, is the truly liminal Person, in whom uniquely the divine and human intersect: as God's Word and Son, He shows us God's face always turned

toward us; as the firstborn of all creatures. (Col. 1:15) He shows humanity, radically redeemed in Him, in the process of turning back ever more fully to God. He is the primordial Sign of God reconciling the world to Himself. (II Cor. 5:19) He is the Celebration of our Becoming-One with God and with one another.

Any guidelines, therefore, that we draw up for sacramental celebration must begin with a deep intuition that Jesus Christ is THE SACRAMENT. He is the Sign through whom God comes to us (so the Father will it). He is the Sign that we have fellowship with the Father. (I John 1:3) There is no other in whom we can be saved. (Acts 4:12)

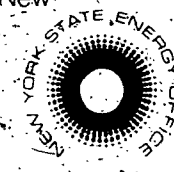
Only when we realize that Jesus Christ is the Sacrament of divine-human encounter can we move to the next level of sacramental perception, namely, that the Church, the community of God's people, is THE SACRAMENT of Christ. Just as Christ is the Sign of God's presence and activity in the world, so the Church is the Sign that the Crucified-Risen One is in our midst and active by His grace among all peoples of the world.

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