

Area Sister Joins Cherokee Mission

Sister Beth McGlynn, SSND, director of religious education for the past four years at Good Shepherd in Henrietta, will join five other School Sisters of Notre Dame in an interprovincial mission project to the Cherokees later this month.

The six women religious are volunteers from the eight North American provinces of the congregation. They include Sister Joyce Engle, St. Louis; Sister Mary Daniel Curtin, Milwaukee, Wisc; Sister Phyllis Bradtke, Chicago, Ill.; Sister Annette Frenholz, Mankato, Minn.; and Sister Linda Ross, Dallas, Tex.

All the Sisters have made a

minimum commitment of three years to the project.

The interprovincial program began as a response to a statement in the congregation's constitutions. "Our ministry demands a Christian vision of what the human person is called to be and what the world is destined to become."

The mission to the Cherokees was developed because the congregation has few sisters ministering to Native Americans and they remain among the poorest of Americans.

According to Sister Ann Habershaw, SSND, "Many among the Cherokees are poor because they do not believe in themselves and

they do not recognize alternatives to their present lives."

Sister Beth has several motives for volunteering for this project. She has always wanted to minister among Native Americans and she feels impelled to serve the poor, an ideal stated in her constitution.

"Perhaps by jumping into a culture which is so different, we will be able to hold on to the ideals expressed in the (congregation's) constitution," she said.

She is particularly touched by the view of Native Americans that all of creation is sacred; creation must not be possessed by individuals but shared by all. She believes that Christianity can draw from that view and add to it new dimensions. Also motivating her decision is the belief that religious in the United States are at a point where they must leave ministries for which the laity are trained and move to where people have few to serve them. "Something strong is driving us to do this — a divine design."

In preparation for the mission, the Sisters attended a symposium at Northeastern University in Tahlequah, Okla., last Spring. In addition the Sisters studied Cherokee culture and language at the university.

The Sisters will live in low-income housing in Tahlequah, earning the trust of the neighborhood before defining their particular



Sister Beth displays an example of Cherokee crafts.

means of service. Availability and flexibility will be priorities as they discern their ministries.

Originally from St. Boniface Parish, Sister Beth has been a member of the retreat team for the Better

World Movement, and has taught at Holy Redeemer and St. Michael schools in Rochester.

Skalny Series Opens Sept. 9

Dr. M.B. Biskupski, book review editor of "East Central Europe," and a member of the history faculty at Millersville University of Pennsylvania, will deliver the opening lecture in this season's Skalny Lecture and

Artist Series, 7:30 p.m., Friday, Sept. 9 in Basil Hall of St. John Fisher College.

Dr. Biskupski's lecture will commemorate the 300th anniversary of the Battle of Vienna, Sept. 12, 1683, in which an invading army of 150,000 Turks and allied troops under Kara Mustafa were defeated by 76,000 European troops under the command of King John III Sobieski.

His presentation will include background information on the European situation, and the role of Poland in the 17th century, the battle itself, and an analysis of its significance to European history. The lecture is free.

HOSPICE VOLUNTEERS

Hospice Volunteers are needed to work as members of a team serving hospice patients and families in their homes. Training sessions will take place two evenings a week at the United Cancer Council, 1441 East ave., for a period of five weeks. Sessions will begin Sept. 19. Anyone wishing further information should contact Anita B. Sears at 473-8230.

THE LURE OF CULTS



Father Bruce Ritter

"Do you need a job, a place to stay, some money, a chance to travel, security, salvation, happiness, acceptance, friendship, love?"

They came, one by one, at ten minute intervals. They came to ask that question of our kids. Ten young men and women, 18 and 19, each carrying knapsacks, infiltrated UNDER 21. They were homeless, they said. They had "problems at home", they said. They needed shelter, they said.

They lied. They were actually members of a vicious cult headquartered in Philadelphia, with centers in Brooklyn, Boston, Baltimore, Washington, DC, and Montreal. They call themselves The Church of Bible Understanding—or, as they like to be known—the "We People".

"Come with us and find the truth," the liars said. "Come with us to Philadelphia!"

An irresistible invitation to vulnerable, hurting kids who needed and wanted all those things instantaneously. No more hard decisions about getting their heads together, about taking responsibility for their own lives. No more hard choices about schools. No more thinking through what it means to be accountable to yourself.

Seventeen of our kids ran upstairs and excitedly packed their bags—money, jobs, travel, security! Philadelphia!

Our counselors pleaded with them, trying vainly to stem the exodus. But it's hard to argue with needy long-suffering kids caught up in the hope of instant fulfillment and instant solutions to tough problems.

The kids piled into three vans the cult had hidden around the corner, and took off—they thought—for the "Young Sheep House" in Philadelphia—a kind of indoctrination center for new recruits—and wound up in Brooklyn!

What our kids found was not happiness, fulfillment, and instant salvation in Philadelphia; but heavy and intense indoctrination sessions lasting until 3 and 4 in the morning in Brooklyn.

"I couldn't go to the bathroom without getting permission, Bruce. They kept chanting the Bible at us, Bruce. It was 3 AM."

"They wouldn't let me go to sleep," Billy was outraged. "Besides they said I was going to Philadelphia and they brought us to Brooklyn! I live in Brooklyn, Bruce."

Father Bruce Ritter, OFM Conv., is the founder and President of Covenant House/UNDER 21, which operates crisis centers for homeless and runaway youth.

"I couldn't leave, Bruce. They said I would go to hell and that awful things would happen to us if we left."

"They wanted us to confess our sins in front of everybody, Bruce. They yelled at some of the kids until they cried."

"Girls are always supposed to serve the men, Bruce. That's why God made us." Mary was indignant, "to cook all their meals and everything."

"There were lots of kids there, Bruce. They wouldn't let us leave. There were locks and guards and bolts."

"They want you to work in their rug cleaning business and give them back all the money you earned. I worked for that money, Bruce!"

The "We People" apparently delighted by their "catch" returned to UNDER 21 the next night and brazenly parked their van right in front of our Center trying once more to lure away some of our young and impressionable youngsters. One terrified 12-year-old fled back inside UNDER 21.

ENOUGH! Our angry—and quick to respond—attorneys immediately drew up the necessary legal documents and by 10:15 that night obtained from Supreme Court Judge Richard W. Wallach a temporary restraining order. The order prohibited members of this cult from entering UNDER 21, or enticing any resident to leave our Center. By 11:30 that same night, our attorneys presented the documents to the cult's headquarters in Brooklyn.

Back at UNDER 21, our Public Relations staff immediately informed the media; our counselors calmed and reassured the kids.

Later that night, two of our kids phoned our staff from Brooklyn, pleading to be rescued from the cult headquarters. Covenant House immediately called the police and explained the situation. The police rushed over and demanded that the two young men be permitted to leave the "Young Sheep House."

One of the boys released—a real street kid and definitely no cream puff—said fervently "I was never so glad to see a bunch of blue uniforms in my life."

What kind of man runs such a crazy outfit? What kind of man would send out legions of brainwashed kids to recruit, with lying promises, other equally fragile kids? The founder and leader of this cult is a man named Stewart Trail, a former vacuum cleaner salesman. Trail founded his cult in 1971 in Allentown, Pennsylvania, and immediately began to attract followers—and establish lucrative businesses for them to work in.

Three months ago some Philadelphia members of his cult were arrested for savagely and repeatedly beating Trail's own 12-year-old son Donald, at Trail's request, to "discipline him". Young Donald was beaten first with a belt, then with boards. "We didn't want to hit him with

the board, but the belt had no effect," said a member of the cult. "We stopped when the board broke. Then he was told to read a verse in the Bible."

For thousands of years, charlatans and deceivers have wrapped themselves in religious garments and exploited the credulity and ignorance of their followers. It's particularly despicable when children are exploited and abused by these evil manipulative men. (I am glad to report that the FBI and the Brooklyn DA have launched a major investigation into the "We People".)

Our greatest weapon against these cults is the truth—the truth about how their lying promises can quickly influence people, how quickly their manipulative techniques can enslave their followers. And, sadly, how difficult it is to break their almost diabolical hold.

Teach your children! Teach them how these cults operate. The techniques they use to recruit and indoctrinate their unwary victims could easily and effectively be taught in a school setting and this same knowledge can protect our children in times of loneliness and doubt and pain when they too seek instant love and acceptance and security, the easy way.

Kids and young people should not be exploited by anybody. Not by pimps, not by people who buy and sell them, not by cults who offer security and love and shelter in coerced exchange for the total devotion—and the hard-earned money—of their followers. Love, not freely given, is not love at all.

A pimp by any other name is still a pimp.

We do need you! Your prayers most of all. Don't ever stop praying for us. We thank God for you all the time.

Here's my gift to help rescue the children from the diabolical hold of the cults. I've enclosed \$_____ please print

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Father Bruce Ritter
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Because the street is NO PLACE FOR A CHILD