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Federal fund cuts spur Charities leaders' debate

By STEPHANIE RUSSELL
Hispanic Affairs Writer
Rochester, N.Y.

MORE THAN HALF of U.S. Catholic Charities' income now comes from government sources, while voluntary dollar contributions decreased for the first time in 1979, it was revealed here last week.

Faced with possible government cuts in human service programs, National Conference of Catholic Charities (NCCC) directors predicted the trend toward increased government dependence has peaked.

Several directors, here for NCCC's annual conference, said they will have to set new priorities to deal with anticipated cuts.

Debate has waged for years about whether Catholic Charities should accept government money. Many conference participants expressed worry that with 51.2 per cent of the budget currently coming from the government, agencies might not be able to retain their autonomy.

Statistics on government input are available only back to 1974. In that year, 64 per cent of the dioceses which answered the NCCC's survey reported 24 per cent of their income came from government sources.

Catholic Charities' income from direct church contributions — local charities appeals and diocesan collections — has decreased. Since 1977, the percentage of church contributions in the budget has decreased from 20 to 13.3 per cent of the total income.

The agencies' dependence on state and federal money has increased steadily since the 1950s — dramatically in 1975 with the passage of Title XX. That act allowed private social service agencies to use public money to assist poor and low-income families, explained NCCC associate director Dorothy Bird Daly.

"It's scary that Catholic Charities (agencies) have become so dependent on government money," said Father
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AIR FORCE police guard entrance to exploded Titan II missile silo site.

Rural Arkansas takes silo explosion in stride

By BILL KENKELEN
West Coast Correspondent
Damascus, Ark.

UP AND DOWN Arkansas Route 65, on which Damascus lies as just another tiny hamlet, churches — most of them Baptist — were packed the Sunday following the nearby Titan II missile silo explosion.

Missile site accidents: One man's story, page 2

Churches are always packed in this Bible-toting, rural hill country. Yet indications were that Sunday was different. Prayers were offered for a dead airman. God was praised that the worst had not happened. For a few hours early Friday morning, Sept. 19, many of these people thought they were about to be blown to kingdom come.
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'People of Praise' charismatics use 'brainwashing,' say ex-members

By ROBERT McCLORY
Special Report Writer
South Bend, Ind.

LEADERS of one of the oldest, largest and most organized charismatic communities in the U.S., the People of Praise in South Bend, use "brainwashing" tactics that are creating a siege mentality, according to disenchanted couples who have left the community. They said the atmosphere could lead to violence in a time of crisis.



CHARISMATICS' leader Ranaghan, and Hotel La Salle property.

They mentioned small instances, such as leaders' orders to cancel a wedding shower and not buy a car, and larger ones, such as the prophecy of an impending San Francisco earthquake, which led 75 northern California families to move to South Bend. Subsequent developments splintered the California community, one said.

Complaints have also been directed to Bishop William McManus of the Fort Wayne-South Bend diocese, who said he intends to discuss them soon with community leaders. "I have asked for an extended conference with Kevin Ranaghan (a chief coordinator) to talk over these issues," he said, "with a couple theologians of his choice and my choice in attendance so we can look at the theological premises on which the community is based." McManus hastened to add that he holds the community in esteem for its zeal and is not accepting rumors as facts.
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Vietnam five years later: Page 7

'People of Praise' criticized

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People of Praise leaders told NCR the charges are "silly," but refused absolutely to discuss controversial matters. "I don't think it would serve any useful purpose," said Paul DeCelles, also a coordinator of the group. DeCelles, Ranaghan and some other People of Praise leaders are permanent deacons in the diocese, and the overwhelming majority of the 1,000 members are Catholics, but it has no official links as a body with the church.

The major concerns center on the complex system of "headship and submission" on which the community is built, the extreme demands on members' time and the alleged fostering of fear and guilt. The People of Praise has developed an elaborate hierarchical structure with a team of five chief coordinators at the top who oversee five branch coordinators who direct the work of the "heads" who guide the lives of individual adult members.

Married women, however, are under the headship of their husbands, although a special group called handmaids directly oversees women with unusual problems. There is also a "word gift group" made up of those officially designated as gifted with prophecy.

Beginners in the community are considered to be "underway" and remain so, taking preparatory courses for a year or two, until ready to become "covenanted" or full-fledged members. The more advanced may eventually enter a discipleship

status, in which they make a "full life submission" to a coordinator, accepting his word totally and even imitating him in every aspect of life.

"The whole thing is weird," said Gary Roberson, a steel worker who was on his way toward headship until he dropped out last year. "Everything comes from above, including all appointments and decisions. The upper echelon has given itself the seal of infallibility."

"I thought the Lord said, 'Follow me!'" declared Dotty DeLuca, who left last year with her husband, James, "but in this community, it's the opposite. Everything is interpreted for our benefit by the elders and heads." She said she was ordered (through her husband's head) on one occasion to cancel a wedding shower for a friend who had already left the community. Because she was having difficulty conforming, she spent 13 months in "servant's school," a kind of boot camp program which involves being on call for cooking, serving and other domestic chores as a means of learning humility.

James DeLuca said headship, as practiced by many heads, is "almost like bondage. It's not that someone says, 'You have to do this.' He says, 'I feel the Lord wants you to do this.' You don't know how powerful those words are for people who entered a community to find the Lord. There's a terrible fear of disobeying, of offending."

The headship system proved an impos-

sible burden to Francis and Therese Raven, parents of seven, who are convinced the People of Praise elevated discipline and structure over Christian love. "The head tells you how to relate to your wife and children," said Francis Raven, "how much money to spend, who to associate with."

He grew especially upset when his head told him Therese should do cleanup work afternoons at the community headquarters. "When I protested that she was not physically up to it," he said, "the head told me God would give her strength. And when I came back later and insisted she was needed at home when our youngest child came in from kindergarten, he said we should hire a babysitter."

Raven also balked when the head disapproved his plan to purchase a station wagon with air conditioning after his old car gave out. He was informed, he said, that such luxuries are out of order, even though the only comparable non-air-conditioned wagon available to him at the time would have cost more money.

After the Ravens departed, their 26-year-old daughter became more attached than ever to the community and is now donating her salary as a computer programmer to the organization while living on a small, weekly allowance. "She's pulled away from us," said Therese. "She's just totally dedicated to this, but I don't think she's really happy."

Michael Miller and his family pulled out after being underway for three years. "Our lives were totally dominated," said Miller. "We're all encouraged to be active in our local parish, but it's impossible with the schedule."

All members are expected to attend the two-hour afternoon meeting every Sunday and may be excused only for serious reasons. Adults are also supposed to attend the men's or women's meeting during the week, put in the four hours of voluntary service required, and confer for an hour or more individually with their head.

In addition, Miller found his spare time taken up hauling his children to community activities and responding to requests from other members to help paint, carry furniture or provide a ride.

"Don't get me wrong," he said. "I love those people, but there's so much direc-



RANAGHAN, at 1977 Kansas City, Mo., charismatic conference.

tion people lose their sense of values and their individuality."

"It's called brainwashing," said Roberson.

Those who left the community and complained about it to NCR left at least six months ago but have kept in touch with community members, in some cases their relatives.

The People of Praise was launched in South Bend in 1971 by 29 founders who had been involved in charismatic prayer groups and the Cursillo movement. As a covenanted community of people seeking mutual support, a deeper relation with Christ, and the development of charismatic gifts such as prophecy and speaking in tongues, it steadily attracted members, reaching its current size of about 1,000 in about 1978. DeCelles admitted turnover is regular, with about one in every three dropping out.

As the community grew in membership and funds (everyone is expected to donate 10 per cent of his or her income to the group), the LaSalle Hotel, a large downtown South Bend structure, was purchased in 1975 as headquarters for the local organiza-

(Continued on next page)

Pope, critics debate Italy's abortion law

By PETER HEBBLETHWAITE
Vatican Affairs Writer

ROME NEWS ANALYSIS

POPE JOHN PAUL II loves a battle. On Sept. 21, he answered critics who had charged that his anti-abortion speeches interfered in Italy's internal affairs.

"The church judges no one," he cried, his voice rising to a crescendo, "but it cannot fail to bear witness to the truth: every attack on the child in its mother's womb is a great blow to conscience. It is a great disgrace. It is a great sorrow." Forty thousand people roared their approval.

But this was only the first round in what is likely to be a long, bruising contest.

Abortion became legal in Italy May 18, 1978. Since, there have been 400,000 abortions, an average of 600 a day. The law has been under attack since it was passed. The small Radical party wanted a still more liberal law, while Catholic groups wanted to restrict or abolish it.

Under Italian law, if 500,000 citizens sign a petition requesting a referendum, the referendum must take place. The Italian Pro-Life Movement, under the energetic sponsorship of Cardinal Giovanni Benelli, archbishop of Florence, has been busily collecting signatures throughout the summer.

Though the campaign is ostensibly directed to "all men of goodwill," Catholics have provided the most signatories. In my parish church Sept. 21, crowds gathered around four notaries who were there to insure that petitioners were on the electoral roll and were not doubling up. It was highly organized and efficient.

On Sept. 14, signatures had been collected outside 55 churches in Florence, Benelli's diocese. But Benelli was in Siena, celebrating mass with John Paul in the square outside the medieval town hall. They were commemorating the 600th anniversary of the death of St. Catherine of Siena, an illiterate Dominican mystic who gave the medieval popes a piece of her mind.

Two pages of the pope's homily were devoted to an attack on abortion: "If life can be destroyed in the womb of the mother, then it will be difficult to defend it in so many other areas of society. How can one speak of

human rights, in fact, if the right to be born is violated?"

Nothing was new in John Paul's unequivocal rejection of abortion. But the application of this teaching to Italy was new. St. Catherine is one of the country's patrons. The pope prayed that Italy "might not dissipate its tradition of great love for the family and children." He urged that this heritage should be strengthened on all levels, "including the juridical." This was a clear declaration of support for Benelli's pro-life movement.

At this point the protest began. The head of the radical group in Florence said: "In Aquila and in Siena the mayors and the civil authorities have had to sit through in silence the most flagrant interference in the internal affairs of the republic."

A socialist member of parliament said the papal crusade was "an attack on the autonomy and sovereignty of the state and parliament." The Communists took a more moderate line. They conceded that the pope had the right to state Catholic moral principles, but thought his support for the referendum "put in jeopardy the correct relationship between church and state."

The situation is particularly delicate because John Paul's Italian predecessors — after Pope Pius XII, at least — avoided direct involvement in Italian politics. They left the Vatican only rarely, and then confined themselves to visits to pilgrimage centers. They acted indirectly through their contacts with the Christian Democratic party. They did not want to revive the specter of the vanished temporal power of the papacy.

The first non-Italian pope for 455 years has none of these inhibitions. He cannot understand why he should be less free to speak his mind in Italy than he was in Poland.

But sooner or later, this frank speaking will bring about a constitutional crisis. The revision of the concordat with Italy — already delayed for a decade — will be threatened. And it is by no means certain that a referendum on abortion would produce the desired results.

In May 1974, the referendum under duress resulted in a 59.1 per cent vote against the church's position. That should be a warning. Perhaps Italy is more secularized than Pope John Paul is prepared to allow.

Charismatics praised

South Bend, Ind.

FOR BRIAN AND KATHLEEN MILLER, both 38, belonging to the People of Praise is a marvelous, stimulating experience which has enriched their lives.

They were among the few members willing to discuss the organization with NCR, and were frank and candid in their views, to all appearances.

Brian, an insurance adjuster, and Kathleen, a school teacher, began attending Catholic pentecostal meetings in 1968, and both were baptized in the spirit in 1973. For Kathleen, this meant an immediate ability to pray in tongues, and for Brian, "a deep, joyful awareness of the presence of Jesus."

"Then when we attended several People of Praise prayer meetings, we knew they had something we didn't have," said Brian. "They were a community of like-minded people working together. We needed that, so we joined."

They dropped out soon after, however, because of the press of local parish activities, then rejoined in 1976.

"You have to choose to be completely involved," said Kathleen, "or it won't work. If you concentrate just on the rules, you won't be happy."

She admitted she "seethed with rage" at first when she heard that women in the community are to be subject to their husbands in all important matters.

"Then I came to see that one who humbles himself will be exalted," she said. "It's not that men are better than women, but our roles are different. Mine is one of nurturing. God made me to be a good wife and mother."

Brian said he has no problems about the absence of democracy in the People of Praise. "We're modeled on the church," he said, "not on a democracy. If the pope took up a vote, he would be giving up his authority."

Sound, traditional religious teaching and the emphasis on family values keep them content with their choice, said the Millers, and they hope their three children will find in the community a similar stability as they grow older.

Brian's parents, as well as three of his siblings and their families, are also members of the People of Praise. Two others, including his brother, Michael (see story above), have left the community.

Although the People of Praise avoids taking any group stand on politics or community affairs, Brian said its members are involved in local moral issues such as the pro-life movement.

"And when you see the support we have," said Kathleen, "the caring for our sick members around the clock when necessary, the babysitting, the helping in homes, the hospitality to guests, even taking in Vietnam refugees, you have to know this is the Lord's doing." — RM

'SURVIVAL MINDSET SELLS'

Profits soar as people store food

By PAM BAUER
Staff Writer
Kansas City, Mo.

SINCE NOAH BUILT his ark, history has recorded stories of people planning ahead for the ultimate catastrophe.

In more recent times some mail-order companies that sell survival goods have catered to people's fears about the future with ads that admonish "protect your family now." Profits from some of these businesses are soaring, according to one spokesperson.

"When we started this company six years ago, we made a couple thousand dollars the first year," said Esther Shuttleworth, who works in Albany, Ind., for Survival Foods Company. "But last year we made hundreds of thousands of dollars, and we've already matched that in the first half of this year."

Food and equipment companies like Survival Foods sell mail-order water purifiers, hand grain grinders and nitrogen-packed cans of dehydrated foods purported to have a shelf life of many years. The foods are packaged in quantities designed to feed an individual or family for three months to a year.

People who say God's judgment and

wrath are imminent order more than any group, according to Shuttleworth. She said she used to receive the most orders from people recovering from natural disasters such as crop failure, hurricanes or tornadoes. Now, she said, she receives Bible-quoting notes on many orders from customers who say Armageddon (the final battle between good and evil) is at hand.

These people may be responding to ar-

Survival Letter for \$125 annually. Tappan says a coming financial crash will end in lawlessness and violence. His newsletter advises people how to defend themselves and what arms to buy.

Bill Pier, whose Survival, Inc. business sells food and equipment by mail order, said his Carson, Calif., company grossed more than \$1 million a recent year, according to a New West article.

"Food and equipment companies sell mail-order water purifiers, hand grain grinders and nitrogen-packed cans of dehydrated foods purported to have a shelf life of many years. The foods are packaged . . . to feed an individual or family for three months or a year."

cles about religious fundamentalists such as Pat Robertson, a television evangelist who has announced that the anti-Christ will soon rise to become a world dictator, or to books like Hal Lindsey's *The Late Great Planet Earth*, which says current events between Israel and the Arab nations will trigger Armageddon.

Other people seem to be preparing for survival for different reasons: some fear a U.S. monetary collapse. More than 17,000 people subscribe to Mel Tappan's *Personal*

Howard Ruff's weekly syndicated television show and tip sheet suggests people stock up on gold and supplies, move to an out of the way town and sit out the financial disaster.

Shuttleworth said other customers for Survival Foods include those who expect a national race riot, communist invasion or nuclear accident. Many are planning for what they say is a future with food and energy scarcities.

In the past year, she recalled, a Vietnam veteran ordered supplies delivered to a false address so he could use an unmarked truck to take the foods home. He was afraid of people knowing what he had, she said. Another customer planned to quit his job and live in the mountains with a friend. Shuttleworth said many prisoners order supplies, and she sometimes wonders if they plan to escape and have the food waiting somewhere.

One group of people who encourage their members to keep a year's supply of

goods and food are the Mormons, but their leaders say that concept is based on self-reliance and includes education, financial and health planning.

"We encourage our members to be prepared, so if, for example, someone wanted to quit work for a year to get an education, they could. It's more a preparation for life," said Shirley Neilsen at the church's welfare services department in Salt Lake City, Utah. Neilsen said inquiries about the food storage plan from people who seemed "a little paranoid" had increased.

John Cates, an associate director of Cross Cultural Studies, headquartered in Kansas City, Mo., said his group's studies verify that many people sense some kind of change ahead.

"Perhaps it's a stage in the world's evolution," he said. "It's the response to that feeling that varies according to each person. Some people say 'I must save myself or my family or church group.'"

The Cross Cultural Studies program is a loosely knit network of people in several cities who research and teach the inter-dynamics of various world traditions. They look for the common denominators in all people.

Dudley Bush, also an associate director in the Kansas City branch, said he hopes people will see beyond their individual fears. "Our hope is that this will lead to a recognition that the way to change things is to solve them together, that interdependence will become a given."

But, he added, "we can't solve the tremendous fears of the future without leaving behind that individual 'me first' attitude. In the end, he said, "survival is a state of mind."

'People of Praise'

(Continued from previous page)

tion and for a national clearinghouse called Charismatic Renewal Services, which supplies books, tapes, courses and speakers all over the United States. Close links with other charismatic communities, especially the Word of God group in Ann Arbor, Mich., were nurtured. One of these links led to a mass migration to South Bend in 1977.

The John the Baptist Community, a Catholic charismatic group in San Francisco, became convinced that God wanted it to join corporately and physically with the People of Praise after members heard the teachings of DeCelles and other South Bend leaders and after a prophecy was circulated indicating the San Francisco area was due for a major earthquake.

Some 75 families sold their homes, quit their jobs and moved, confident that People of Praise members would help them adjust to South Bend. One San Franciscan purchased a home in South Bend sight unseen on the word of a People of Praise member.

"When we got here, we found that doctrine and Scripture were smothered by headship," said James Holford, who moved with his wife and children during the great migration. "We were used to spiritual guidance from our leaders. Here there was none of that, only this blind obedience to the leaders."

"It was a damaging experience spiritually and psychologically," said another San Franciscan, Salvatore Tocci. "Five or six people run this community and everybody else is supposed to be a yes man." Tocci, who has since returned to the coast, said his head persuaded him it was God's will to sell his home to the head at a considerable bargain and move into smaller, cramped quarters.

"Our group was destroyed by the People of Praise," another migrant from the West Coast said. "Here you were constantly nagged and bothered about details, and you didn't dare complain. There was no sharing of the Good News. I think this group had the Holy Spirit once, but they clipped his wings."

More than half the San Francisco contingent has since left the community, although its leader, Kerry Koller, remains a People of Praise coordinator. In recent years, the cooperative relationship and sharing of insights with other charismatic communities has been growing. Strong relationships exist between the People of Praise and groups in Ann Arbor, Min-

neapolis, Augusta, Ga., and Providence, R.I.

According to several dropouts, the charismatic communities have stressed their ecumenical nature so insistently that they are becoming gnostic cults. "We're not under the guidance of the pope and bishops," said one. "We belong to Ranaghan."

Francis Raven claimed he finally left because he felt God telling him, "I want you in my church, not this community."

Most active members of the People of Praise declined to talk with NCR, saying their head would not approve. Several, however, confirmed off-the-record some unrest and dissatisfaction exists within the organization. "A lot depends on the kind of head you have," said one man. "Mine is fine, but some overdo their authority."

During the past year, the People of Praise leadership has been urging members to stockpile a six-months supply of food for the hard times ahead. Also being widely promoted are "survival drills," with families asked to turn off their gas and electricity for a weekend as a method of training for crisis. These moves seem consistent with the gloomy prophecies read at the national charismatic conference held here last spring. "God's holy wrath" has been aroused, declared the prophets, "and many may have to die for their faith."

However, People of Praise members insisted the survival training is not related to an imminent divine intervention, but to the coming age of scarcity. "We want to be a provident, resourceful people," said one, "not a gross, fat, consumer-dominated community."

Nevertheless, the disenchanted declared that mounting tension and fear could be used for a variety of purposes. "People are being manipulated in the name of God," said Roberson. "When you have that kind of domination, there is the potential for violence, even a Jonestown sort of thing."

Several couples said they left soon after the Jonestown mass suicide and murder because that development got them thinking about mind control. And Linda Roberson said one member told her in all seriousness that she would not hesitate to commit suicide if a coordinator ordered her to do so.

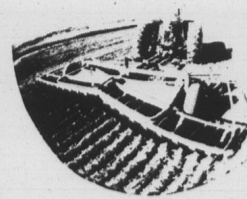
The ultimate direction of the People of Praise depends on the word of the Lord coming through the group's prophecies. And decisions about who is a legitimate prophet and which messages are truly from God remain solely and exclusively in the hands of the high coordinators.

Strangers and Guests Toward Community in the Heartland A Regional Catholic Bishops' Statement on Land Issues



"All the Catholic bishops of the heartland (are involved) in a major effort to build community."

Pope John Paul II
Des Moines, Iowa
October 4, 1979



Land ownership in the U.S. is becoming concentrated into fewer hands. Land is often abused by those who control it. Seventy-two bishops from the forty-four dioceses of twelve states discuss these issues and call for stewardship of the land.

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