



AFRICA in Today's World

By DR. CHARLES I. WEST

AFRICA'S INCREASING IMPORTANCE in the spectrum of world affairs was emphasized recently when the World Council of Churches held its annual meeting at the Hotel Presidential in Enugu, Nigeria. That such an august body should select this "out-of-the-way" locale for its most important conferences of a year must have shocked some of our American churchgoers. We can almost hear some of the less sophisticated whispering, "What next -- Las Vegas?"

From all reports, many of them attributable to the distinguished religion editor of the New York Times, Lloyd Garrison, the Nigerian conclave actually was similar in certain respects to some of the more "interesting" conventions held in Las Vegas during recent years. For instance, consider this scene:

"Now kick your feet!" urged Dr. Eugene Carson Blake, head of the United Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A. "I'm trying, I'm trying," replied the Rev. Leslie Cooke of the Congregational Union of England and Wales as he thrashed about in the shallow end of the Hotel Presidential pool.

Dr. Blake had been coaching his 56-year-old pupil every afternoon during the week-long meeting. His exhortations, delivered in a booming voice, were only moderately successful. As the meeting wound up, the Rev. Mr. Cooke had still failed to master the dog-paddle.

Their daily ritual, watched by scores of churchmen from more than 80 nations, provided a leavening to the World Council's weighty deliberations. It also was one of many small reflections of the World Council's steady advance in bringing together 24 Anglican, Protestant, Orthodox and "old" Catholic churches in a common effort toward unity.

AT THE OPENING night session, a French-speaking West African, the Rev. Jean Kotto noted that the sparkling new \$3.5 million hotel was hardly typical of the "real Africa." Many others commented that the atmosphere was hardly religious.

Interfaith services in the hotel's movie theatre were followed by commercial showings of "Lolita." The Committee on Faith and Order assembled every morning in the musty nightclub. The committee on Evangelism congregated in the bar.

Yet for many delegates this secular setting did not appear incongruous to the main themes of the meeting: How can Christianity meet the challenge of materialism in a 20th century grown skeptical of religion? What can the church do to help bridge the gap between the rich nations and the poor? And how to heal the old theological schisms which divide not only the non-Roman churches from themselves but from the Roman Catholic world as well?

The talk on these questions frequently spilled over from conference rooms. Teetotaling denominations continued their discussions over tea on the terrace. Many theological discussions took place on the tennis courts. After attending the movies every night, the bearded Russian Orthodox delegation invited other church leaders to a late dinner over vodka and gin, followed by a bracing post-midnight swim.

FROM THESE FORMAL and informal gatherings came a near-general agreement on many key issues.

In perhaps the most significant move since (See AFRICA, page 15)

VOICE READERS COMPRISE a \$30,000,000 MARKET

EDITORIAL

Let's Tighten Screws a Little Tighter

THIS NEWSPAPER recently had occasion to defend the use of the boycott against those who discriminate against the Negro. We specifically mentioned the reforms that followed employment of this economic weapon in the Montgomery, Ala., bus boycott and the Scripto case in Atlanta. Last week and the week before, our "AFRICA in Today's World" column called attention to the fact that the Republic of South Africa is feeling the pinch of curtailed trade resulting from a boycott by the Organization of African Unity.

When the NAACP last year initiated a "selective buying" campaign directed at the government of Mississippi and manufacturing concerns in that state, there were those who scoffed at the possibility that such a boycott could be effective. The campaign was greeted with hoots of derision in the state capitol at Jackson. Many advocates of white supremacy among Mississippi businessmen laughed at what they considered an idle threat to their continued welfare.

It now appears that the "doubting Thomases" have changed their tune. Judging from a form letter received by newspaper editors throughout the country, they're really hurting down there.

This plaintive message is being distributed by the Mississippi State Sovereignty Commission, a quasi-public body which, if memory serves correctly, spent huge gobs of money on advertisements in some of the nation's largest and most influential dailies to fight enactment of the federal Civil Rights Act of 1964. The letter reads, in part:

"MISSISSIPPI IS GRADUALLY working out its problems to the best interests of all citizens. Some of these efforts were seriously hampered during the past year by the invasion of outside students and adult volunteers, who created new tensions and accomplished little or nothing except to gain publicity for themselves. During this same period we had to bear the burden of a few deplorable acts committed by some of our own irresponsible citizens.

"We are aware that the bad image caused by a few has inspired some groups to call for a boycott of Mississippi-made products. We want your readers to know we do not believe

More Copies, Please!

"FREEDOM WEEK" was observed by Sertoma clubs throughout North America last week, with the Las Vegas segment of the national service organization presenting copies of the Declaration of Independence to seventh grade students in this area.

George Bondley, president of the local Sertoma Club, said the program was designed to put this history-making manifesto "where it belongs . . . in the hands of the individual and in the home, rather than on display in a public building." He explained that Sertomans believe "each citizen should have a copy of this precious document in his own home where he can study it carefully--and often."

This was a most commendable project and we congratulate the local Sertomans on their patriotic endeavor. However, in view of a shameful resolution introduced in the Nevada Assembly recently--a resolution to inflict upon this state the loathsome apartheid or "separation of the races" policy of South Africa's white supremacy government--we respectfully suggest that the Sertomans send along copies of the Declaration of Independence to certain legislators from Washoe and Churchill counties.

And while they're at it, the Sertomans might do well to direct a copy of this "precious document" to the senator from Storey County, a gentleman who apparently feels that the Declaration of Independence should not apply to ALL citizens of Nevada.

Finally, we would recommend that these copies have the following passage underlined: "We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness."

in the boycott as a solution to any of our problems. It is not only un-American, but a deterrent to the free enterprise system.

"In Mississippi, we have state laws prohibiting restraint of trade with stiff penalties provided . . . we buy and enjoy many products that are made in your area. We will continue to purchase these products. We hope that the people in your area will continue to purchase and enjoy those products that we make in Mississippi. . . .

"During this period when we are being forced to accept change, although reluctantly, we deserve patience and understanding instead of criticism and condemnation. . . ."

LEST WE BE ACCUSED of prejudice by rejecting this drivel with a loud, "Oh, yeah!" we are going to give you the reaction of Paul Coates, a white columnist on the Los Angeles Times who candidly admits he is opposed to boycotts. Paul comments:

"In a way, it is a rather poignant letter. If you can erase from your mind the image of a hulking Sheriff Rainey, of brutal morons in white sheets, of three dead boys, of bombed churches --if you can do that, you can feel a twinge of sympathy, even understanding for the Deep South."

(See EDITORIAL, page 11)

Welcome, Vistadores

WE EXTEND a warm welcome to Mrs. Emma G. Fenton of Columbia, Mo., and Robert W. Adair of Tampa, Fla., the first of a team of Volunteers in Service to America (VISTA) sent here by the Office of Economic Opportunity in Washington, D.C., to assist in the Operation Independence program in West Las Vegas.

Another member of the VISTA team, Miss Rhoda Kluge, was scheduled to arrive here from Michigan during the week and if she already is among us by the time this appears in print, we welcome her also. Five to seven more VISTA members are due here in the near future according to Mrs. Lubertha Johnson, supervisor of Operation Independence, a "self-help" project now operating a child care center and library on the west side of town.

We appreciate the help these specially trained volunteers will be able to accord our community-betterment program in West Las Vegas. They have our whole-hearted thanks and we hope their stay here will be pleasant and rewarding.

And while we're passing out the kudos, we don't want to overlook Robert Van Santen, owner and operator of Diamond Jim's Nevada Club on Fremont St. in downtown Las Vegas.

Mr. Van Santen has come to the aid of the Economic Opportunities Board of Clark County, the agency assigned to dispense federal funds to such local anti-poverty projects as Operation Independence, by donating some 1,000 square feet of office space for administrative functions. The offices are located in the new Paradise Professional Building and have been placed at the disposal of Economic Opportunities Board for one year without cost according to board chairman Harvey Dondero.

Mr. Van Santen's kind donation assures allocation of federal grants amounting to some \$175,000 for anti-poverty programs in Clark County. The grants are contingent upon the availability of offices to administer the programs.

LAS VEGAS Voice

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958 West Owens Ave. (Golden West Shopping Center) Las Vegas, Nevada
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