

ALTAR CALL

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NEGRO PRESS INTERNATIONAL

SOMETHING'S HAPPENING

Under massive oppression, the faithful and committed find a way to survive in order to preserve that in which they believe. The Negro slaves in pre-Civil War days, committed to the hope of freedom, and with the help of abolitionist whites, cooperated in establishing the Underground Railroad.

There were no puffing engines or gleaming steel rails, but there was a route of escape open to the daring and faithful.

For 250 years, the early Christian Church in Rome was virtually an underground movement with its secret ceremonies and assemblies after dark in secluded settings. They were forced underground by the power of an oppressive Roman government.

A QUARTER century ago, the activities of the underground movement in Europe of those trying to escape the wrath of Hitler and his anti-Semitism made thrilling stories of heroism and daring. Again, as in all similar situations, the spirit of freedom WILL find a way to escape oppression--will find a route toward meaningful fulfillment for life.

And now in our time, there is another underground movement, more aptly labeled by a prominent Roman Catholic layman as the "underground church." Donald J. Thorman, publisher, National Catholic Reporter, Kansas City, Mo., has written about this new phenomenon in Overview, published by the Thomas More Association, Chicago.

THORMAN asserts that the "underground church" is growing in Catholicism because the official church has been slow to reform itself. Catholics who have lost faith in the "church as authoritative teacher" and who find no relevance for their faith under the oppressive weight of the institutionalized church, find escape to a more meaningful faith in the underground church.

Such groups include priests, nuns, laymen, Protestants, Jews, other believers, agnostics and atheists brought together in awareness and challenged to serve people and their causes.

Groups are reported to have "Eucharistic happenings" where they read the Bible, hold discussions and try to achieve real communion, man with man. The writer says this kind of celebration is being increasingly regarded as the "true celebration of the Eucharist."

The spirit of freedom under any kind of oppression--racial, religious, political--finds a viable self-preserving escape through underground movements. This is meaningful revolution.

The loud voices in today's Black Revolution would be better silenced and replaced by quiet, man-to-man, secret, underground activity committed to freedom. It's high time for an Underground Altar.

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Spiritual Leaders Pay Tribute To The Bennetts



HONORED--Rev. and Mrs. Marion Bennett, front row left, are pictured with ministerial dignitaries who participated in Zion Methodist Church's recent Seventh Annual Appreciation Service honoring the Church Pastor, Rev. Bennett and his wife... On Mrs. Bennett's right (from left) are Rev. N. W. Tigner, who served as Chairman of the four day spiritual celebration, and Rev. W. M. Walker... From left (2nd row) are Rev. E. C. Kline, Pastor, Pilgrim Rest Baptist Church; Rev. Sanders (a visitor from Louisiana); Rev. Joseph O'Neal, Mrs. Clara Bailey, who served as Mistress of Ceremonies for the final day's program; Rev. M. L. Carroll, Woman Pastor of Calvary Baptist Church; and Rev. James Brown, also a visitor from Louisiana.

Powell Mum On Hearing

WASHINGTON - (NPI)--Rep. Adam Clayton Powell slipped out of this city as quietly as he entered it, after answering a federal grand jury's questions about his finances.

What Powell told the grand jury was not disclosed. He refused to discuss his reason for coming to this country from his Bimini retreat.

The grand jury had subpoenaed records relating to Powell's tenure as chairman of the House Education and Labor Committee. What would come of the grand jury hearing was not known.

Meanwhile, the ousted Congressman's lawyers and his estranged wife's attorneys got together to work out a divorce settlement.

Provisions for the couple's six-year-old son Adamcito have already been agreed upon, according to Arthur Newman, Mrs. Powell's lawyer.

Council Of Churches On World Racial Crisis

HERAKLION, Crete - (NPI)--The World Council of Churches' central committee meeting recently adopted a statement on world racial crisis, which expressed "grave concern over continuing injustice and increasing organized or spontaneous violence, hatred and fear... which result from it." The statement called upon Christians and churches, "to oppose actively perpetuation of the myth of racial superiority, to help change social structures and laws that perpetuate racial injustice, to use the churches' economic pressures toward this end and to stamp out all forms of discrimination evidenced in the church and Christian community."

HOW'S THAT AGAIN?

CHICAGO - (NPI)--A psychiatrist has suggested a way of defusing riots in their early stages. John P. Spiegall, director, Brandeis University's Lemberg Center for the Study of Violence, says violence should be "institutionalized." By that, he means a system of communications should be developed by which the black community can let white officials know that conditions in lower-class areas are reaching the boiling point.

Mahalia Recuperating

CHICAGO - (NPI)--Gospel singer star Mahalia Jackson returned "home" last week from a suspended European concert tour, after being hospitalized for fever, a cold and overwork, a condition which doctors feared might develop into a heart attack if she continued the tour. She will continue her rest and convalescence at home.

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Labor-Race Relations Tie

CHICAGO - (NPI)--"Labor relations means race relations," declared the Most Rev. Aloysius J. Wycislo, auxiliary of the Roman Catholic archdiocese of Chicago, during the 23rd annual Labor Day Pontifical low mass sponsored by the Catholic Council on Working Life. "Unless we get to the very heart of the problem of equal employment opportunity--which obviously goes to the very heart of the overall problem of race relations--this could be the year of no return," he added.