

# REPORTER

VOLUME 11, NUMBER 37

40 CENTS, \$15.00 a YEAR  
United States and Possessions

## Whither charismatics?

*NCR series:  
Will church investigate  
covenanted communities?*

**THE AMAZING** growth of the Catholic pentecostal movement or charismatic renewal with its hundreds of thousands of adherents around the world has been widely reported.

What has not been reported is the seven-year-old movement within the charismatic renewal toward "covenanted communities." These are highly structured attempts to provide environments for members to live "more fully in the Lord" than is believed possible in secular society.

It was alleged abuses at one of these covenanted communities, True House at South Bend, Ind., that led Dr. William Storey to call for an investigation of the movement by the nation's bishops. Storey's criticisms were given weight by his position as a respected Notre Dame theologian and as one of the founding fathers of Catholic pentecostalism, although he has not participated in the movement for several years.

In a series beginning this issue, NCR reporter Rick Casey looks at Storey's charges and the church's response to them. In following articles he will explore the demise of True House and its significance for the movement. He will describe life at the largest and most influential covenanted community now going, the 1,400-member Word of God community in Ann Arbor, Mich. And he will describe practices of "headship," healing, exorcism and prophesy, as well as teachings on male and female roles, courtship and marriage, and submission.

By Rick Casey  
Special to the National Catholic Reporter

**SOUTH BEND, Ind.** — Dr. William Storey, Notre Dame theologian and one of the founders of the Catholic pentecostal movement, is seeking a national investigation of the movement. Storey's efforts have drawn

the endorsement of his local bishop and severe criticism from a European cardinal.

In an April 2 letter to Bishop Leo Pursley of Fort Wayne, Storey recommended that a "top level" theological commission undertake a national investigation of what he called "dangerous tendencies" in the pentecostal movement.

The letter was accompanied by written statements by five former members of True House, a now defunct charismatic community at Notre Dame. The statements (see accompanying story) outlined a series of alleged abuses by True House leaders under the guise of the leadership of the Holy Spirit.

The statements portray a tightly knit community of deeply committed young people submitting unquestioningly to the autocratic leadership of men still in their 20s. Alleged abuses ranged from pressuring students to lower their grade point averages out of "humility," to a "break-through ministry" designed to cure members' personality "problems" through late-night sessions including general confessions of sins and highly emotional exorcisms. These were allegedly performed by the lay leaders, and members were instructed not to talk about the sessions with their priest confessors.

In his letter to Pursley, Storey wrote that the experiences of the five former members were "in many ways typical, not only of the now disbanded True House, but of the movement as a whole and demand the kind of canonical and theological investigation that might bear fruit before more serious harm is accomplished."

Two of the movement leaders who investigated the True House situation, Father Killian McDonnell of St. John's University in Collegeville, Minn., and Bert Ghezzi of Ann Arbor, said that the problems at True

House cited in the Storey dossier did exist and were serious. But they charged that Storey and the five who wrote the statements exaggerated and distorted the situation.

Storey sent copies of the letter and the statements to Pursley's auxiliary bishop, Joseph Crowley, who lives in South Bend; Auxiliary Bishop Joseph McKinney of Grand Rapids, who has served as liaison between Catholic charismatic leaders and the nation's bishops; Archbishop Joseph Bernardin of Cincinnati, president of the National Conference of Catholic Bishops; Apostolic Delegate Archbishop Jean Jadot; Cardinal Giovanni Benelli, Vatican secretary of state; Cardinal Leo Suenens of Brussels, an active member and strong proponent of the charismatic renewal; and several of the movement's leaders.

In all, 12 copies were sent. Storey said he wanted to inform responsible church leaders of what he sees as problems in the movement, and sent copies to movement leaders "as a courtesy."

It was Suenens who, in a statement dated May 1 and given to NCR by charismatic leaders in Ann Arbor, attacked the Storey dossier. Suenens called it "a grave lack of justice and charity to reveal to a large public the weaknesses of some of (the movement's) members, thus creating a general bad impression of the charismatic renewal in the States."

"I deplore also that such attacks have been 'organized' and widely circulated, with the purpose of influencing the pope not to receive the Catholic charismatic world pilgrimage for the Holy Year," Suenens continued. "This sort of plotting does not bear the seal to the Holy Spirit and criticism done in such a way does not construct, but destroys."

Storey, who was not given a copy of the

(Continued on next page)

## Ordained women offer eucharist

Albert de Zutter  
NCR National Affairs Writer

**WOODS HOLE, Mass.** — In spite of a "godly admonition" from their bishop, the people of the Episcopal Church of the Messiah here went ahead with their decision to invite two women priests to celebrate the eucharist in their church.

Their action came after six months of discussions and study among their members of the question of the ordination of women. They instructed their pastor, Father Charles L. Hoffman, to invite the women — the Rev. Carter Heyward and the Rev. Suzanne Hiatt, both on the faculty

(Continued on page 3)



ONE SCHIASS: Celebrating the eucharist for the first time since ordination.

—UPI





JOY TO THE WORLD: No, President Ford hasn't joined the charismatic movement. He was dancing in Romania with President Ceausescu. The other pictures were taken at charismatic gatherings. — President Ford picture, UPI; others NC

...med by the movement so that it might correct the abuses that have led to it."

He added, "The good cardinal must be exceedingly sensitive to criticism of any kind to construe my appeal to the proper and legitimate ecclesiastical authorities as 'plotting.'"

About two years ago, charismatic renewal leaders came to South Bend to investigate the alleged abuses of authority and alleged "moral problems within the group." It was on the basis of this latter allegation that one of the True House leaders was pressured to leave. True House disbanded about a year later.

"It seems that all the action was taken before I knew about it," said Bishop Pursley. "It was never reported to me. How do you stop a horse from running away when you don't know the horse is running away?"

Pursley said he would seek information to see if Storey is correct in his contention that many of the alleged problems of True House continue in the movement. "If there is a continuation of these problems, I will do everything in my power to stop it," Pursley said.

"But this is not simply a diocesan matter," he said. "It's an international thing."

"I endorse Dr. Storey's recommendation for a national investigation," he continued. "I would hope that an appropriate committee of bishops would make a presentation asking the bishops to vote on whether they think Storey's proposal for an investigation is a good one."

Charismatic leaders have said they would welcome an official investigation. In a statement on behalf of the Catholic Charismatic Renewal Service Committee, a group of national leaders, Kevin Ranaghan of South Bend emphasized "our willingness to cooperate fully with competent ecclesiastical investigation of this renewal in general and in particular of those teachings, public statements and events for which we are directly responsible."

Auxiliary Bishop Crowley said, "I am concerned about the so-called breakthrough ministry. I think that was a concerted effort to shape the will. I know there is some of that going on still. That's what ought to be investigated."

Crowley also cited "false ecumenism and

stress, and that the problems were typical of other charismatic communities.

Storey's call for an investigation caught on at a national level. On Washington referred a reporter to Gerard Frey of Lafayette, La., chairman of a newly appointed ad hoc committee of bishops to maintain liaison with diocesan leaders.

Frey, however, stressed that the committee, which has yet to meet, will act as a liaison. "An investigation will be within the competence of the committee," he said.

Frey said he had been sent a copy of the Storey dossier by Archbishop Brennan and would consult members of the committee before responding. He noted, however, that the letter was addressed to Frey and suggested that problems were those outlined in the dossier were the responsibility of local bishops.

### Feminism, singles related, report says

WASHINGTON, D.C. (RNS) — A demographic at the U.S. Bureau of Census suggests that the fact of an increase in marriageable women in the 1970s may have contributed to the growth of the "women's movement" and the ideology of the movement has contributed to the increase in "singleness."

Dr. Paul C. Glick made this observation in commenting on a Census Bureau study which reveals that the percentage of women (ages 20 to 24 years) delaying marriage has increased from 23 per cent in 1960 to 40 per cent in 1974.

The study says nearly three times as many women were enrolled in colleges in 1974 than in 1960 (3.5 million versus 1.2 million) and this has been accompanied by a "sharper increase" in employment opportunities for women than among men.

**No issue**

In keeping with our usual schedule, there will be no issue of *The National Catholic Reporter* next week. Our next issue will be dated August 22, 1975.

The editors.

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© National Catholic Reporter Publishing Co., Inc. 1975. Second class postage paid at Kansas City, Mo. 64111. Published weekly September through May with the exception of the first week in January; biweekly June through August.

Office of Publication: 115 East Armour Boulevard, Kansas City, Mo. 64111. Mailing address: P.O. Box 281, Kansas City, Mo. 64111. Phone: (816) 531-0538.

SUBSCRIPTION RATES: Single copy, 40 cents. One-year subscription, U.S. \$15.00; all other countries \$18.00. BULK RATES: Write for information about special bulk rates for parishes, colleges, schools, discussion clubs, etc., for more than one copy to the same address.

ISSN 0027-8939

NOTE: Unsolicited manuscripts should be sent to the attention of the managing editor, and should be accompanied by a self-addressed envelope with postage.