

Church Father Shows A New Era For Haitians

BY GWEN MCKINNEY AND
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NNPA News Service

WASHINGTON, D.C.—“Our people are hungry for participation; hungry for justice. We have dearly paid the price for both with our blood.”

That passionate message was delivered recently by Father Antoine Adrien, a leader of the Haitian movement which swept into power a new government that, for the first time in more than a century, was chosen by the people.

Adrien, a Catholic priest and close advisor to Haiti's new president, Father Jean-Bertrand Aristede, visited the United States recently. He conducted a series of meetings with U.S. State Department officials and members of Congress to press his nation's desire for assistance in building the fledgling new democracy.

The election last February of Aristede, a popular priest and grassroots activist, ended three decades of brutal dictatorial rule in the world's oldest black republic.

Adrien, who is quick to point out that he is a private citizen, played an active role in the movement which was supported by the poor, grassroots and forgotten sectors of the Haitian society. Adrien returned to his native land in 1986 to help build that movement after spending 16 years in the United States as an activist in the refugee support community.

Haiti is hoping to increase cooperation with the United States on drug interdiction and to curtail the number of Haitian refugees fleeing by boat to the United States.

“Since February 1990 not one boat has left Haitian shores,” Father Adrien told the NNPA during a recent interview. He stressed that a new

hope has replaced the desperation that forced Haitians to flee by the thousands each year.

Haiti is interested in working with the United States to obtain the release of Haitian refugees detained by U.S. Immigration at the Krome Detention Center where they are being held as illegal immigrants. Adrien predicts that the refugee problem will lessen as democracy begins to flourish in Haiti.

“Haitian people have fought for 200 years,” said Adrien. “They are hungry, even more than for food, they are hungry for justice and participation.”

Haiti is ranked as one of the world's poorest nations and its previous rulers—Francois “Papa Doc” Duvalier and his son Jean Claude “Baby Doc” Duvalier—were both cited for widespread human rights abuses and corruption. Much of Haiti's wealth is suspected to have been stolen by officials during the Duvaliers' reign and during the period which followed in the late 1980s.

“The United States has pledged support in helping us to bear down heavily on crooks who have bankrupted our nation, literally emptying our treasury,” said Adrien. “Some say we are preoccupied with corruption. But I say it is a very good preoccupation.”

Currently the U.S. has no extradition treaty with Haiti. Individuals wanted by Haiti can flee to the United States with no fear of prosecution. An extradition treaty would ensure that suspected criminals could be returned to Haiti to stand trial.



PERSONAL BANKER — Ms. Patricia Bule has been named executive personal banker for the North Carolina Central University and Durham Technical Community college, campus communities. She will be responsible for marketing personal banking services to the professional and administrative staffs of both institutions. Ms. Bule graduated from NCCU School of Business in 1973 and received a master's degree in business education.

Bell Files New Calling Plan In Triangle Area

Southern Bell announced last week that it has filed a plan with the N.C. Utilities Commission to provide expanded local calling throughout the Triangle J Region without an increase in basic monthly rates.

If approved by the commission, the Triangle J Regional Calling Plan would reduce area toll call charges by 50 percent, institute seven-digit dialing throughout the participating exchanges and create a regional telephone directory. The plan also includes a “low-use” option called Thrifty Caller that would cut the basic monthly service charge to \$5.50.

Although it was filed by Southern Bell, the plan has been agreed to by the other local exchange companies in the region: General Telephone Co., Central Telephone Co., and Mebane Home Telephone Co. Mark Collins, Southern Bell manager of corporate and external affairs, said the companies continued working on the issue of expanded local calling even after the commission denied a proposal for flat-rate mandatory Extended Area Service last year.

“This plan is the result of a great deal of cooperation and work by the local exchange companies and officials throughout the region to address the needs of our customers,” Collins said. “We are pleased to be able to propose a plan that will help customers who need an expanded calling area but will not burden customers who do not.”

Women's Day

Young Missionary Temple CME Church will observe its annual Women's Day service at the 11 a.m. worship service on Sunday, April 28. Ms. Freddie Murchison, a member of the church, will be the guest speaker.

POSITIVE THOUGHTS

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NEWS

OF EDUCATION

Should Students Have Access To Nation's Leading Scholars?

Surprisingly, America's students could have low-cost access to the nation's leading scholars over existing telephone lines but government restrictions limit their choice. It's technologically—but not legally—possible for Bell companies to bring educators to television screens in remote classrooms via regular phone lines, and have them actually interact with the students.



Through new technology, a remote classroom could be in two-way contact with a leading educator.

With the breakup of the Bell System in 1984, the regional Bell companies were forbidden to manufacture telecommunications equipment, provide information services or offer most long distance services.

Industry experts report that the break-up and its strict rules were supposed to encourage competition. In practice, however, the restrictions have caused costly delays in making new products and services available. Already providing services to most of our homes, the regional Bell companies are well suited to give schools two-way contact with leading educators.

Congress can help to make these services available by lifting outdated restrictions. To find out how your legislator feels about this issue, write to: U.S. Senate, Washington, D.C. 20510 and The U.S. House of Representatives, Washington, D.C. 20515.



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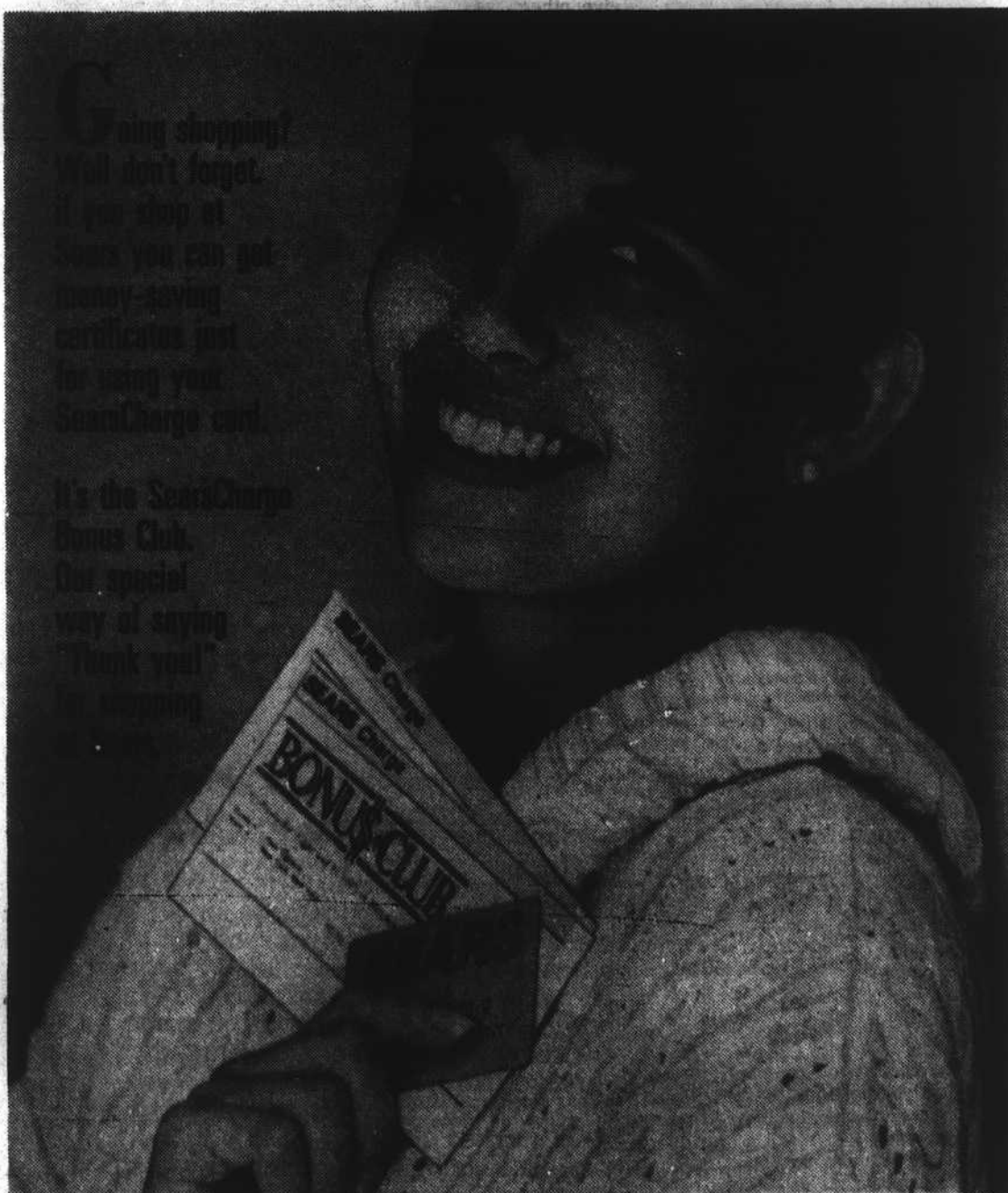
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