

Children's Guardian Home Pupils Find Real Pal In Young Pastor



Handing out softball equipment at the Marion County Children's Guardian Home, the Rev. James Jones is met by these eager participants (left to right, standing) Bill Woodford, 15 years old; Jim

Matlock, 16; Gary Dooley, 13; Ronald Smith, 13, and Eugene Karabon, 15. Kneeling are Frank Reese, 11; John Adams, 10, and Earl Matlock, 12. (Star Photo)

"It's impossible! I can't be a Christian because I hate my daddy and I hate my daddy because he beat my mommy and me so many times!"

Tears streaked the face of the 10-year-old boy as he made this confession in the Marion County Children's Guardian Home. He made the statement to the Rev. James Jones, pastor of the Somerset Methodist Church, who also is spiritual counselor and recreational director of the home.

The statement is typical of the tragic cynicism expressed by under-privileged children whom the Rev. Mr. Jones attempts to bolster spiritually and mentally.

The 22-year-old minister has set up a program geared to individualize the children and bring Christ into their lives.

"It's heart-rending," he said, "the way those boys and girls appreciate the least little thing done for them. However, they have learned to think very materialistically and are in a constant state of apprehension as to the motives behind a helping hand."

"They complain often that society is interested in their welfare only when money is in the offing. Thus, a little affection and personal contact goes a long way."

Formerly the children were permitted to attend the neighborhood church of their choice. But often classmates from private homes looked down on them and their shabby dress.

One tiny child, while visiting an Irvington church recently, crouched in a corner after the others had gone. She was discovered crying hysterically because she had no mother to come after her.

The Rev. Mr. Jones invited all the children to his church. Members of his South Side congregation provided transportation, and at once they were made an integral part of the young people's group.

Numerous families have taken it upon themselves to entertain the newcomers in their homes following the Sunday school lesson.

"This has proved to be very popular for it gives these boys a feeling of belonging," observed the Rev. Mr. Jones.

To stimulate interest during

homes, this is a new experience in learning.

"It's hard for such neglected children to understand and believe in God's existence," stated the Rev. Mr. Jones, "for they fail to see where His mercy comes in." As one 7-year-old remarked, "I don't believe in God because a mean, selfish guy, who sits next to me in school has a family and a new red bike, and I ain't got nothing."

Along recreational lines, the Rev. Mr. Jones began round-robin soft ball, ping pong and baseball tournaments. A swimming program is being established, and special hikes and picnics planned for those who wish to take part.

According to the institution's policy, the 28 girls are segregated from the 54 school-age boys, and are supervised during the summer months by Miss Emma Meurer, Amos school-teacher. However, this rule will be relaxed to allow them to accompany the boys to church.



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