in any creative manner. The Acts of the Apostles tell of a first community of preaching Christians who witnessed this in a manner which neither floggings, plots, nor jail sentences could dampen.

The youths of the ghetto are witnessing the Kingdom, though it is not a kingdom founded on the gospel. It is a renewal we should take note of because of *why* they are able to preach and to repent. Their only source of expression is their poverty, which forces them to express themselves in the way they do. Ways of expression such as dancing, basketball, and even cheaply bought clothes cannot be founded on money or wealth. These are items which are inherent in each individual. This is found by those seeing the beauty of poverty—one's whole expression is one's self.

The church has not yet been free enough to do this because she is still too involved with Sunday collections and donations; she has not achieved the freedom of poverty given to us by the gospel. No wonder the poor have rejected much of our preaching of the gospel since we have not preached this, but rather, superficial liturgies and conventional charity.

I remember a Negro girl who, shortly after her Baptism, fell asleep at a Sunday Mass where there was much singing, because the night before she had let loose at a dance where the music was blurted out by WVON, the radio station most tuned in on an inner city avenue. At this dance, like many others, the kids could actually feel the emotions of each other as they danced. I really do not know how to keep girls like her awake; maybe we should just let her and her community have their Saturday night continue into Sunday morning and call it liturgy. I cannot say if this is the right answer either because I am not a liturgist.

An interesting example of how we have watered down the warmth and relevance which Jesus preached in His Kingdom was brought out in a book by William Stringfellow. Mr. Stringfellow is a lawyer living in East Harlem and is one who is very aware of the church's mission to the poor and writes many articles pertaining to such. In one of his books, he pointed out that when the long awaited "gospel revolution" came with the civil rights movement, the one on which its nonviolent approach was founded was not Jesus, but Gandhi. The scandal of this is not that Gandhi was not a Christian; rather, the scandal is that there was no Christian who would be a Gandhi. This is a bleak blot against Christianity because it testifies to the indifference by which we locked Jesus and the message of His Kingdom in a tabernacle and hid His relevant preaching behind scientific dogmas. This could be so because we have failed to follow the creative preaching of one who could put learned Pharisees in awe with His authority and on the same day heal the sores of a dirty, uneducated leper.

For a church and people who have formed themselves into one, to repent or renew themselves in the spirit of the inner city youth does not mean that they attempt to speak the jargon drawled out in all-night pool halls or outdoor basketball courts trod by sneakers of all sizes; nor even that they adopt the cool attire worn at a Saturday night dance. Rather, if the church is renewed as they — the youths — renew themselves, it becomes a personal event for each member. To renew one's self for the Kingdom is an endeavor which will make one both unique and a Christian.

To be a Christian is to be an artist or a poet. That which makes the poet or artist so unique is that he takes time from the toil of an everyday existence to behold the magnificence of his environment and forms his own creation from this thought. So, too, with the Christian today. The Christian is one who faces a daily death from poverty of being, but one who escapes from all this and takes time to find out where the wounds and sores of his environment are and bends over to heal them. ■

Photo by Jerry Cogbill
from **With Grief Acquainted**
by Stan Williamson (Follett).

American History Textbooks' INVISIBLE MAN

by Kenneth Stampp
and panel

Five historians, members of the history department of the University of California, Berkeley, reviewed American history textbooks widely used in California, from the standpoint of their treatment of Negroes. They found an "unhealthy condition." Excerpts from their report "The Negro in American History Textbooks," published in pamphlet forms by the California State Board of Education, follow.

WE ARE CONCERNED, first of all, *as historians* that the history taught in our schools should accurately reflect the best findings of current scholarship. Professional scholars are aware that historical "truth" is an elusive quality. Well into the twentieth century professional scholars themselves were affected by the emotional aftermath of the Civil War, and there was a "northern" and a "southern' 'interpretation of such sensitive matters as slavery and Reconstruction. In the late nineteenth-century mood of national reconciliation, based on a widespread assumption of racial superiority among whites in both North and South, the "southern" view tended to prevail. Deference of textbook publishers to the special sensitivities of the southern market has caused it to continue by and large to prevail in textbooks until this day.

Meanwhile, several generations of scholars, freer of sectional emotions and racist assumptions, throughout their researches and writings developed a substantially different understanding of many of these matters. Most of the textbooks we have examined reflect views on racial and sectional themes that have been rejected or drastically modified by the best of current historical scholarship.

We are additionally concerned *as citizens* because these historical distortions help perpetuate and intensify the pattern of racial discrimination which is one of our society's most serious problems. We are concerned not only because much of the material in these books is bad history, but additionally because it is a kind of bad history that reinforces notions among whites of their superiority and among Negroes of their inferiority.

Admittedly there is a danger in assessing historical writing in terms

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MR. STAMPP was chairman of the panel made up of: WINTHROP D. JORDAN, LAWRENCE W. LEVINE, ROBERT L. MIDDLEKAUFF, CHARLES G. SELLERS, and GEORGE W. STOCKING, JR.