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54/08/02 Bay Pastor Hits Methods Used in Sheppard Probe

Cleveland Plain Dealer

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MSL

ACADEMIC ENDEAVORS

Bay Pastor Hits Methods Used in Sheppard Probe

Methods used by authorities in the investigation into the death of Marilyn R. Sheppard and reflections cast by her murder on members of the Sheppard family and Bay View Hospital were criticized sharply from the pulpit of Bay Methodist Church yesterday.

Rev. Alfred C. Kreke, pastor of the church, directed a portion of his sermon at the 10 a. m. services directly to the murder case. He conducted the funeral services for Mrs. Sheppard at Knollwood Mausoleum July 7.

"Fickle to God"

Regarding the murder investigation the preacher said:

"We are fickle to God and our American heritage of human rights when without just cause and before a fair trial we condemn any person.

"July 16 our family left for Canada for a week's vacation. We left sensing the deep sorrow and shock that had come to our community.

"While there were a few un-

founded rumors, it seemed the law enforcement officials were conducting their investigation in an intelligent, logical step-by-step manner.

"Then last Sunday evening we returned refreshed in body and soul, clear of mind. For a week we had had no newspapers, no local radio news, even about the Cleveland Indians."

"Miniature McCarthy"

"We returned to find our community the center of an open inquest with a miniature McCarthy at the head and what seemed from all appearances to be a carefully planned persecution of not only one individual but the defamnation of an honored family name, a deliberate attempt by publicity seekers and little professional men to undermine in the eyes of the public the qualifications and efficiency of our hospital staff and personnel.

"I was mortified at the subtle innuendoes and implications suggested in the questioning, which was not conducted as an inquest but as a trial with a prosecutor suggesting most of the questions.

Sadistic Attitude

"There were all the earmarks not of an inquest but of a medieval inquisition.

"The morbid, sadistic attitude of the audience reminded one of the blood-letting arenas of Nero days.

"The publicity seekers with an eye for personal gain and profit seem to be seeking each day a new angle, a new picture to add in a feeble way some semblance of newness to the old story which has been hashed and re-hashed for almost a month. When one says that it is pretty difficult to believe in people any more I think I understand."