

TURDAY, JANUARY 23, 1971

PANEL TO DEFEND BARRIGAN FRIENDS

2 Accused of Aiding Priest Called 'Men of Decency'

By JOHN KIFNER
 More than 50 prominent clergymen, labor officials and writers announced their support yesterday for Dr. William Stringfellow and Anthony Towne of Rhode Island, who are accused of having harbored the Rev. Daniel J. Berrigan last August.
 In announcing the formation

of a defense committee for the two men, the Rev. Howard Moody, pastor of the Judson Memorial Church, said that they were "men of decency, conscience and compassion who have often helped others and who now need help themselves."

Father Berrigan, who had gone "underground" after his conviction last April for destroying draft records in Maryland, was arrested at the Stringfellow-Towne estate on Block Island last Aug. 11.

Key Members Named

The defense committee is headed by Dr. John C. Bennett, former president of the Union Theological Seminary. Other

members of the group, announced at a news conference at the New York Theological Seminary at 235 East 49th Street, include the Rev. Melvin E. Schoonover, dean of continuing education at the seminary; Leon J. Davis, president of Local 1199 of the Drug and Hospital Workers' Union, and the Rev. Andrew Young, the civil rights leader.

Dr. Stringfellow, a 42-year-old Episcopal theologian and author, and Mr. Towne, also 42 and a poet, read a joint statement in which they denied harboring or concealing Father Berrigan, a 49-year-old Jesuit who is serving a three-year sentence in Federal prison at Danbury, Conn.