

The **+ WITNESS**

JANUARY 25, 1968

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Story of the Week

Saigon Observers See Real Rift Between Church and Regime

★ Observers in Saigon believe that leaders of the Roman Catholic Church, once a major source of support for the war effort of the South Vietnamese government, are changing their attitude.

They base this conclusion on study of a statement issued after a three-day meeting of the South Vietnamese Catholic hierarchy. Early reports on the document stressed its interest in peace and its abundant quotation of papal statements. The full text, however, is much less general in its treatment of the war and more critical of the government than first reports indicated.

The bishops, criticizing prevalent "laziness, hypocrisy and corruption," said that "no one" presently "realizes the extreme gravity of the situation in our country."

"How can there be peace," they asked, "if the citizens no longer believe in their just cause and no longer have confidence in each other? . . . How can there be peace when those in responsible places mask their false promises behind rhetoric?"

While it makes no specific reference to individuals and its chief target seems to be general corruption or apathy, the passage evidently includes South Vietnamese officials in its overall criticism.

While it may refer to American and North Vietnamese leaders, the statement on "those in high places" seems to be directed at, or at least to include members of the South Vietnamese government. The bishops' statement does refer directly to the South Vietnamese government elsewhere.

"In the name of God, we cry stop!" it says of the war. "The North and South Vietnamese governments must meet together, begin serious negotiations."

"Right now" is the time for such negotiations, it says, "despite some inconveniences, some disadvantages" because of the "horrible damage and disasters" that the war may lead to.

While Catholics form only about 10 per cent of South Vietnam's population — 1.8 million in a population of 17 million — their influence in public life is highly significant. President Nguyen Van Thieu is a Catholic and so is a large bloc which consistently supports him in the national legislature.

In the past, the bishops have generally avoided criticism of the government, even by implication. A Catholic peace movement does exist, but its membership is believed to be small and unable to exert much influence either in the Church or in society. Efforts to ally Catho-

lic and Buddhist peace movements are being made, but no information is available on how successful such efforts have been.

Anti-American Feeling Rising

Anti-American feeling has increased markedly in Vietnam during the past year, a representative of the American Friends Service Committee reported after a month's tour of Laos and Vietnam.

"I talked with Buddhists, Catholics, representatives of American volunteer agencies, foreign correspondents and many South Vietnamese government officials," said Bronson P. Clark. "Almost all reported total disenchantment with the present American policy."

Most Americans in the country live behind barbed wire and anti-grenade nets, he said. "American personnel working for such agencies as international voluntary service or Vietnamese Christian service can no longer stay out in the villages overnight or travel in areas formerly accessible to them."

Clark, who had previously visited Vietnam in January 1967, claimed the pacification program had also lost headway. In Ba Xuyen province in the Delta, he said, only four of 450 villages are described as "pacified." According to the Quaker executive, at least 85 per cent of the pacification program is now para-military.

A noted Buddhist monk, Thich Tri Quang, according to Clark,

told him that the Americans "are making the people into Communists with their bombing." Other Buddhist leaders, politicians and educators, said the Quaker, all expressed a desire to form a "nationalist" government opposing the present "military" government, which could then enter into negotiations with the National Liberation Front.

The Quaker also said he

learned that the Viet Cong and North Vietnamese military have continued to keep the fighting initiative. "Rather than the end being in sight," claimed Clark, "all evidence indicates security is worse than a year ago and the war is spreading to Laos and Cambodia."

"The reaction of our military people," he continued, "is to talk about the war for Southeast Asia, not for Vietnam alone."

Spain's Religious Liberty Law Studied by American Group

★ Spain's new religious liberty law leaves something to be desired, an American fact-finding team declared, but it added that there are indications of a brighter future for the country's non-Catholic minorities.

The interreligious delegation, sponsored by the Appeal of Conscience Foundation, made the report after visiting Spain for conferences with leaders of the Protestant and Jewish minorities and the Roman Catholic community, and government officials.

Noting that the Spanish Cortes (Parliament) had liberalized the country's religious liberty laws in June 1967, in response to the declaration of the Vatican Council, the American team reported the new law "contained ambiguities and limitations that conflicted with both the letter and the spirit" of the Council.

"Non-Catholics who heretofore were granted toleration," the team said, "were now given the right to their religion, but restrictions were added that non-Catholic groups regarded as discriminatory."

The most troublesome part of the new legislation, continued the report, was the requirement that non-Catholic groups submit a "full list of membership, sources of revenue and a finan-

cial statement" to government agencies. That registration would confer legal status on the groups.

The committee found that the registration requirement raised other problems in that it was not required of Catholic organizations. "The fact that Roman Catholics were exempt led some non-Catholics to conclude that the provision was discriminatory."

Because the administration of the new law was not spelled out, the committee said, the law's effectiveness could be "frustrated . . . abused or vitiated by local authorities."

The American group also found that minority religious leaders complained the new legislation "continued to deny them access to all mass media, forbidding them the right to share their philosophy with the public. It also failed to spell out a liberalized concept of education, religious as well as secular."

But the committee report added: "Given the spirit of cooperation which we found in the ministries visited, we find it difficult to entertain the thought that registration might be used as either a threat or a tool for regulating the life and activities of minority groups."

"We were impressed by the cordiality with which we were received and the openness of the discussions. We found that the men charged with administering the new law are eagerly seeking solutions satisfactory to all parties."

"We are confident that the problems, no matter how difficult, can be resolved by men of goodwill and integrity who, in the months to come, will strive to settle their differences . . ."

Making the report were Rabbi Arthur Schneier of Park East Synagogue and president of the foundation; the Rev. Harold A. Bosley, Christ Church, vice-president; Father Eugene K. Culhane, managing editor of America, national Catholic weekly; and businessman Charles Taubman, a member of the foundation's board, all of New York.

The committee said its "many frank talks with spokesmen on both sides left us with the impression that most have serious reservations and misgivings about the registration clause."

Jose Cordona, executive secretary of the Evangelical defense commission — representing all Protestant Churches in Spain — told the Americans that "the ecumenical spirit of Vatican Council had been so denatured by the Cortes that the law would do little to change age-old discrimination against non-Catholics, not only in their right to worship freely but also in jobs, schools and the army."

Protestant leaders in general, the committee observed, were also disturbed that the Roman Catholic hierarchy had "no strong stand — or any stand" during the debates in the Cortes which would have led to a spirit of Vatican Council.

"On the other hand," the report went on, "Casimiro Morcillo, Archbishop of Madrid and member of the Cortes, explained to us that he and the other

three bishops in Parliament had purposely abstained from engaging in debates since they considered this a piece of civil legislation and therefore best left to lay lawmakers."

The American committeemen noted that during their interview with Archbishop Morcillo, they were accompanied by Cordona. "This was the first face-to-face meeting of the two Church leaders. We were pleased that our presence had been the catalyst that made such a meeting possible."

The team said that Max Mazin, president of the Madrid Jewish community told them the registration requirement had caused "apprehension" among Spain's 7,500 Jews.

"Historically, Jews have an allergic reaction to government registration since persecution usually began by a similar demand for membership lists," the report noted. "While they have complete confidence in the present government and in the ministry of justice officials, they are wary lest in the future, officials lacking the goodwill of present office-holders may use the registration requirement to the detriment of the Jewish community."

Spain's minister of justice, Antonio Oriol, reportedly acknowledged the controversy raised by the registration requirement. "But he emphasized," the Americans reported, "that the intent of the law is to control perhaps, but not to persecute non-Catholics. As an executive of the government, he said he cannot challenge the law but his task is to dictate its implementation."

The group said Alfredo Lopez, ministry of justice undersecretary, told them that the cabinet's inter-ministerial commission had "in recent weeks, met for two days with representatives of the Evangelical commis-

sion to hear their grievances and to try to work out mutually acceptable solutions."

Spain's minister of foreign affairs, Fernando Castiella, whom the group described as "a long-time advocate of the law of religious liberty and original architect of the present legislation," admitted the law offered "far less than he had hoped for"

"But despite its effects," Castiella was quoted as saying, "it marks an historic advance for Spain."

"He reminded us," the report said, "that centuries-old attitudes and prejudices are not set aside simply by a law, nor even by a Vatican Council."

The Americans heard another appeal for patience from Fernando Cardinal Quiroga, president of the Spanish bishops conference. "Give us time," he told the group. "Let us work out the difficulties in the law."

"The most important impression we received from the trip," the report issued stated, "is the conviction that the problems posed for religious minorities by the present law can be resolved with justice for all."

"We found no one who doubted that this could and would be done, whether through application of the present law, or by the possible enactment of a new one."

BISHOP CROWLEY HEADS DETROIT COUNCIL

★ Bishop Archie Crowley, suffragan of Michigan, will be installed as president of the 800-church Detroit Council of Churches on February 2.

Bishop Crowley says that he "tries to see both sides, and then move in whatever direction seems best. The role of the Council of Churches is primarily to coordinate the work of all the churches and do the work which no one church can do, and to

speak as a common voice on special issues."

He will succeed Dr. J. Russell Bright, director of the office for research administration of Wayne State University, in the one-year post.

Bishop Crowley is chairman of the fair campaign practices commission of Michigan, a member of the governor's commission on human resources, and president of the American Indian Foundation. The 61-year-old churchman is also former president of the Michigan Council of Churches.

PARISH SENDS EXCESS TO NATIONAL CHURCH

★ An Episcopal parish of only 130 communicants in Springfield, Mass., sent \$1,313.90 — the entire excess of its 1967 income over expenses — to Presiding Bishop John E. Hines for use by the national Church.

The Rev. Langford Baldwin, rector of All Saints, told Bishop Hines that the vestry of the small, middle-class parish voted unanimously to forward the check.

Baldwin said that one of the reasons the check was sent to national headquarters was that the local church vestry had "deplored information reaching us that some parishes have cut their contributions to the national Church as a protest against our Church's involvement in social action."

Other reasons cited by the rector included a recognition that "we are a worldwide Church," acceptance of the "challenge of the partnership principle," and a hope that "our action might encourage other parishes that hear about it to take similar action."

Baldwin said his parish is in an area where "the percentage of Episcopalians has been declining for some years." He said the parish "operates on a

budget of \$19,000, of which \$15,000 is from parishioners' offerings. We have been overpaying our missionary quota by 5 to 10 per cent for several years."

The contribution to Bishop Hines was made with the knowledge and approval of the Western Massachusetts diocese.

PRIMATE STATES VIEWS ON PARISH CHANGES

★ The parish unit is going to change radically, but it will continue to be one of the major expressions of Church life in a complex society, the Canadian Anglican Primate, Archbishop Howard H. Clark of Rupert's Land, said in Toronto.

He predicted that many clergy "will find they can be servants of the church in secular jobs," because parish priests cannot minister to the whole life of a person who lives in the parish but works elsewhere.

Archbishop Clark believes that one thing gone forever is authoritarianism and continuing ties to past customs. He questioned whether any "reality" was left in referring to a bishop as "My Lord." This is a continuing Canadian custom from the old English title which went with a seat held by many bishops of the Church of England in the House of Lords.

"I think clergy should or should not wear clerical collars according to their judgment as to what would be most useful," the Primate said.

He added that he usually signs his name Howard Rupert's Land — another old English custom of using the bishop's Christian name followed by the name of his diocese — but this simply mystified the majority of people.

"When I was bishop of Edmonton, I used to get letters which started off, 'Dear Mr. Edmonton,'" he said. "It was a lovely custom, with a sound

historical reason, but it should go as soon as it ceases to be helpful or meaningful."

Archbishop Clark said Church finances were another source of concern, not because giving is reduced, but because the Church is wrong to make its first appeal for money. Instead, he said, the appeal should be for the cause and work for which the Church needs funds.

He said the Church must face the fact that it has definitely lost influence in Canada and the U.S., "and the retreat seems to be accelerating."

"Would the Church survive?" an interviewer asked.

"Not because it deserves to! Not because it has shown itself to be alert to the vast changes of our day, but because God clearly wills his gospel to be visibly present in the community of men and women, I believe the Church will survive," the archbishop said.

\$100,000 FORD GRANT TURNED DOWN

★ The rejection of a \$100,000 Ford foundation grant by a black separatist group may have triggered an end to the coalition of black and white leaders formed to rebuild Detroit after last summer's riots.

The Rev. Albert B. Cleage Jr., head of the federation for self-determination, turned down the funds because he claimed conditions put on the grant were a denial of self-determination.

The coalition — the new Detroit committee—which includes as members Henry Ford 2nd and James M. Roche, the chairmen, respectively of the Ford Motor Co. and General Motors Corp., had offered the \$100,000 to the Negro federation with the proviso that the militants coordinate spending with a group of moderate Negroes, who would also receive \$100,000.

Cleage, pastor of the Central

United Church of Christ, pulled his group out of the coalition, and said the new Detroit committee had failed because "whites have tried to absorb blacks paternalistically and then on terms set by whites."

Two of the three black separatist members of the 39-member coalition have resigned and the third is moving from the city. Lorenzo Freeman, one of those resigning, said that without more efforts by the white leaders "I don't think a black man can serve with integrity on such a committee."

Other conditions set on the Ford grant to the federation for self-determination were that both the federation and the Detroit council of organizations — a less militant Negro group — submit to audit procedures and agree not to use the funds for political purposes.

In another development, Floyd B. McKissick, chairman of the Congress of Racial Equality, said at a Detroit news conference that the failure of the Detroit coalition probably means that efforts to build similar alliances elsewhere will also fail.

WOMEN DEMONSTRATE AGAINST WAR

★ Bad weather kept down the number of women demonstrating against the Vietnam war, but there were still 3,000 petitioning Congress to do something about it. It was sparked by Jeannette Rankin, first woman to be elected to Congress, who is now 87 and still able to deliver lively speeches.

Many women of distinction were on hand, including Mrs. John C. Bennett, wife of the president of Union; Mrs. William Sloane Coffin, wife of the indicted Yale chaplain; Mrs. Martin Luther King.

There were a number of Episcopalians, including Mrs. Theodore Wedel and Miss Helen B. Turnbull.

EDITORIAL

"The Church in Our Day"

THE PASTORAL of more than 200 Roman Catholic bishops in the U.S. has prompted varied comments. It was the first collective documents they have ever issued and editorials in the Catholic press have been generally favorable, several adding that "it is a good beginning."

America, the weekly edited by the Jesuits is typical of the reaction when it calls the document "an open, fair, courageous, intelligent and warm communication. It is not intended as a last word, but as a first. We wanted our bishops to say something. They did."

The lengthy document is entitled "The Church in Our Day," and is the U.S. bishops interpretation of the Vatican Council's dogmatic constitution on the Church.

Hailing the pastoral as an "eloquent, eminently quotable document," America said: "The pastoral is fully comprehensible; it is candid and pertinent. No one can say that the document is hesitant or timid or equivocal. The Church has problems, but is not panicked; the Church's structure may be in process of re-examination, but it is not in collapse.

"Nevertheless, one knows straightway the question that will be asked about this pastoral. Are the bishops opening doors or are they slamming them shut?"

The America editorial notes that the pastoral rejects "the voice of the irresponsible layman," calls on priests to "grow up," defends, "with vigor, the teaching authority that resides in Pope and bishops," and derides "the assumption that freedom is a discovery of this century."

The lay-edited Catholic Reporter of Kansas City, in an editorial entitled "Not Reactionary, But Bland; Calm, Clear, But Defensive," says of the pastoral's section on authority: "Its discussion of infallibility is relatively rigid and defensive, reflecting small awareness of events and theological reflections of the recent past which have created a need for new nuances in formulations of the doctrine.

"Where it touches on ecumenical matters, the pastoral seems more concerned to assert the uniqueness of the Roman communion than to celebrate what progress toward Christian unity has occurred or to encourage further movement.

"On the whole . . . the pastoral conveys little sense of urgency about reform and renewal in the Church. In general, it speaks in the abstract about the need for reform; it becomes specific and concrete when it touches on the excesses of critics and reformers."

The editorial concludes with the comment that the decision to issue the pastoral "was a good idea, and we think the results are well worth study." This study, the editorial states, will probably be confined to theologians, pastors, preachers and others with special interest in ecclesiology.

The Pilot, newsweekly of Boston, makes a similar comment by saying it "draws the conclusion that the pastoral was intended to be read by those with some background in theology or other ecclesiastical science, and, perhaps, by them interpreted to those of less academic background."

The pastoral letter's style and length — 35,000 words — were the concern of an editorial in Ave Maria, weekly journal published at Notre Dame.

Maintaining that the document will not be part of most Catholics' reading fare, Ave Maria said that this is "unfortunate because in it the bishops are, for the first time since the Council, aggressively exercising their teaching authority on issues which they think are critical in the life of the American Church at this moment."

Basically, the editorial stated Ave Maria magazine's disappointment of the end effect of the pastoral. It declared: "Instead of an optimistic, outgoing letter that could challenge American Catholics to embrace the service that Christ is calling us to today — a letter that could evoke the American zeal, genius and spiritual vitality — we have, rather an incomplete picture of the Church's mission in the United States."

The editorial expressed the magazine's disappointment over what it called the pastoral's lack of attention to the theme of poverty and those themes particularly appropriate for a spirituality for Americans.

The Rev. Stanley I. Stuber, a guest-observer at Vatican II said that, from an ecumenical point of view, the best to be said for the pastoral is that it will serve for years as the authoritative basis for lively, controversial dialogue. He expressed particular disappointment in the docu-

ment's "failure to support and advance the laity as the People of God, as does the dogmatic constitution on the Church."

He said he hoped the impression which the pastoral gave that "the laity, in the U.S. . . . appear to be second-rate Christians, without vote or authority" would be corrected in later documents.

"Now we know for sure," Stuber said, "where the U.S. Roman Catholic hierarchy stands on the most critical issue today in ecumenical discussion, that of the nature and structure of the Church.

"Just how the Protestant denominations can come to any kind of agreement on such matters dealt with at length . . . is hard to comprehend."

He listed as examples "the supremacy of the people, infallibility, the separation of clergy and laity; the matter of authority and absolute obedience to the hierarchy in matters of faith and morals, the 'one true Church,' and the place of the Virgin Mary within the Church."

The Baptist clergyman and author declared that "all of these points are made much more difficult ecumenically because of the dogmatic stance taken by the document."

His expressed surprise over "the expert use of proof-texts, taken absolutely out of their New Testament context, to prove the divine nature of the Catholic Church."

"I count 24 of these," he said. "I hope these will be corrected by substituting scripture passages acceptable to modern biblical scholarship."

Catholics in any case will be expected to study the document. It is being printed as an 80-page pamphlet on the new presses of Our Sunday Visitor in Huntington, Indiana, with an initial run of 1,350,000 copies. Steps have also been taken to get the pamphlet into every Catholic home throughout the United States.

So the rest of us are sure to hear a good deal about it from our Catholic friends.

The Two Brothers

By Michael Hamilton

Canon of Washington Cathedral

ONCE UPON A TIME there was a man who had two sons. When the first son was born the father gave him love and care, but was not able to dress him in fine clothes or send him to school. When the boy was old enough both

father and son went out into the fields and worked from dawn to dusk.

A second son was born to the man and the whole family rejoiced. The harvests of those years were plentiful and because the father and his first son continued to labor, when it came time there was money enough to send the younger son to school. So the second son went to school, studied with all his might and became wise in the ways of the world. Upon leaving he embarked on a career and, being honest and educated, he acquired riches.

The father was pleased with both sons, the one who toiled in the fields and the other who labored in business. When the father grew old he called them and their families to his house and prepared a meal for them. He said, "My sons, I have nothing to leave you in this world save the knowledge that I have loved you both with all my heart. Keep that memory within you, and love one another as brothers with the same love that I have loved you." And the man died.

The fortunes of the brother who worked in the fields soon fell on bad times. The land no longer produced food and he became poor. He sent his children to the house of his rich brother to ask for food, for they were hungry. But the rich brother was busy and he did not hear their cries.

Then the wife of the poor brother came to the house and she said, "My body is sick, my house is cold, my children are hungry, help me." But the rich brother told his servant to close the door.

Finally the poor brother came himself to the house and said, "My brother, remember the love we learned from our father, and remember that it was my labors which enabled you to study and prosper. Now I am become poor. My wife is sick, our house is cold, the children are hungry and I need work. Help us." The rich brother thought, and he feared that if he were to give help it would cost him money and time and trouble. So he sent him away. The poor brother left the house, and that night as he lay on his bed he dreamed of swords and of fire.

Now what do you think? Which of these two brothers did the will of their father, the rich one or the poor one? And if the father were to come back from the dead, upon which of them would his judgment and wrath fall?

Offense Against God

THIS HAS BEEN a parable about riches and poverty, and of course it is about every one of us and the state of our nation. There is a scandal in our land. In the midst of wealth, children are hungry and ill housed. In the midst of plenty, people are sick who should be well. In the midst of prosperity, men are idle who are willing to work. This is an offense to God.

We put children in overcrowded schools and then we call them stupid. We keep families in slum tenements and then we call them dirty. We destroy mens spirits and then we call them hopeless.

We Americans have not yet acknowledged the great debt we owe to our poor, we have not yet realized the price that we will have to pay for racial prejudice, we have not yet understood how to behave as brothers one to another. Because we love too little, we have become fearful of redressing wrongs and insuring a fair distribution of our nation's wealth.

And is it not the greatest irony that we think that it is the poor, not the rich, who are on trial today? Is it not true we tend to judge the merits of the pleas of the poor by the manner in which they express themselves? "No, that request has not come through the proper channels." "That hungry child must be fed by a different institution." "Most unemployed men are

lazy, therefore idleness is no evidence of need." "That protest demonstration is too noisy and violent, therefore their cause must be wrong." "In times of change law and order must have the first priority."

From the security of our affluence we blame the poor for stealing bread. Riots are evil, but so are the conditions that produce them.

I say to you that God is not so much watching to see if the poor are well mannered, but rather he is scrutinizing those of us who are not poor to see if there is enough charity left in our hearts for our souls to be saved. Affluence is no security in the eyes of God, sympathy is no substitute for justice, and dreams of fire and swords will come true if America does not awaken from its slumber.

We come together to a meal prepared for us by our Father in heaven. His love in Christ extends to each of us, as his body and blood was given for all of us. By drinking and eating together we are reminded again that we are one family in Christ. We are brothers and God himself charges us to look to each others welfare.

As we come to this table, pray to receive such a measure of his love that will enable us to see the world as he sees it, to forgive one another our sins, and grant us fresh resolution and strength in the task of removing poverty from our land.

AID TO THE POOR JOB OF CHURCH

★ Nearly three out of every four Minnesotans interviewed by the Minnesota poll said they are in agreement with the idea that churches ought to spend less on buildings and more to help the poor.

About the same proportion of state residents — 73 per cent — said they feel that the elimination of all racial discrimination should be a goal of organized religion.

Churches should be taking a more active part in seeking world peace, according to 68 per cent of the replies.

Yet public discussion of such social issues by ministers, priests and rabbis is not appropriate, asserted 49 per cent of the people questioned. Many of them said such discussion might violate the principle of separation of Church and state or that clergy are not prepared to speak out on politics.

In disagreement with that point of view are nearly as many Minnesotans — 42 per cent — who feel that their Church leaders are uniquely qualified to lead public discussion of political issues or that they have the same rights as all other Americans to make known their views.

Fifty-nine per cent of those



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interviewed said they agreed that "churches should stick to religion and not concern themselves with social, economic and political questions." Thirty-eight per cent disagreed and 9 per cent gave other opinions.

Sixty-five per cent said they agreed that "churches should be a place of refuge and quiet reflection away from the world." Twenty-seven per cent disagreed and eight per cent had other opinions.

CORE LEADER WARNS OF SUMMER RIOTING

★ A regional official of the Congress of Racial Equality, addressing a Roman Catholic-sponsored conference on racial problems in Kansas City, Mo., warned of increased violence in the Negro civil rights struggle.

Asserting that frustrated Negroes would burst into revolt

if there is no change in the attitude of white people toward racial justice, Larry Wilson, a regional vice-president of CORE, told the meeting: "To change attitudes you must change institutions. The only way it's going to happen is through a revolution, through a war. You're going to have more riots next summer and the summer after that."

Two other Negro speakers at the meeting, held at a Catholic girls school, disagreed with Wilson and stated belief that there would be a change in the whites attitude, thus accelerating advances for minority groups without Negro recourse to riots or other forms of violence.

The speakers were the Rev. Albert L. Johnson, president of the council for united action in Kansas City, Mo. and Rashey G. Moten Jr., vice-president of the Kansas City Catholic interracial council.

Johnson, a Protestant, said "there is hope of a change in attitude" without violence, adding that "the change must come or we all face chaos."

Moten, also expressing optimism that progress would come, observed that the most difficult racial prejudice to combat is found in the white persons who believes he is not viciously bigoted, but says, "I haven't a

thing against Negroes, but why do they want to move out here in my neighborhood."

Other speakers included Sister Mary Peter, director of educational services for the national Catholic conference for interracial justice; Sister Esther Hefernan, chairman of the social science department, Edgewood College, Madison, Wis.; and Sister Roberta Steinbacher, psychology professor at Marillac College, St. Louis, Mo.

Sister Mary Peter said that "race and brotherhood are all implanted in this problem of war," explaining that she meant war in general and not the Vietnamese conflict. "And we have swallowed the big lie that war is moral, that war is an act of self-defense.

"Death has become a statistic and the abstraction of life puts us all in a crucial situation. We have instant brotherhood — we don't murder anybody for 24 hours — then we have instant murder again."

- BACKFIRE -

SPIRITUAL DISCIPLINE IN SEMINARIES

Ivan E. Merrick Jr.

Rector of Trinity, Everett, Wash.

I am a graduate of a law school and of a seminary, but in a different order from the experiences of John Danforth in the January 4th issue of *The Witness*. The University of Washington has produced some able lawyers. The General Theological Seminary has provided the Church with many distinguished clergy. I hold degrees from both.

I take issue with the article. First of all, I can certify that the overwhelming emphasis of

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my seminary experience was spiritual discipline. The discipline was enforced by precept and example by some of the most godly men of my experience who knew both God and the world which he sustains. If that discipline is not evident in the priests who come from seminary, the fault is not in the training.

Secondly, I think that there is a greater use of the "case method" in theological education than the average layman is apt to realize. The theology of the Church has been written in the life-struggles of men embodied in the scriptures and in the ongoing life of the Church.

The flight from Egypt, the unification of Israel, the Babylonian captivity, the birth and resurrection of Jesus, the Jewish-Gentile controversy are cases from which principles were aduced. The principles cannot be understood apart from these cases. They are as important as Shelley's case or the Dartmouth College case or Gideon's case. The doctrine of forgiveness is comprehended in terms of the early Church's response to apostates in the age of persecution. That was a case written in blood. The Arian controversy was not conducted in an ivory tower. The results of the reformation and counter-reformation may be called "abstract;" but they were abstracted out of fantastically complicated cases.

The Church has been able to unify its experience in a consensus which Danforth refers to as "systematic theology." It projects that consensus into personal, interpersonal, and intergroup relationships in an understanding which we refer to as moral theology. In this field doctrine is related to the contemporary world. Past "case" experience is projected into current "case" experiences and standards are developed for "cases" yet to be brought to issue.

We do not expect everyone to be solaced or satisfied with the decisions of the Supreme Court. Somehow or other, the notion has gotten abroad that the product of the Church should be universal harmony and satisfaction. The "deepened spiritual lives" of the clergy should, in some mysterious way, pacify the poverty issues, the prejudice issues, the health issues, the war and peace issues, and the other issues which have been joined as the current case load of mankind expands. This just isn't going to happen. The Church, as it applies its case experience, is going to dissatisfy many people—sometimes most people; but this is the way the cases must be judged by a Church with a great "casebook" experience.

The harsh judgment placed on former theology students who have gone to law school may be justified. I suggest that the blame is not the seminary's—at least not those of our communion. To restate his opinion, perhaps the reason they turned from theology to law was because they were not equipped to think in terms of the hard realities theology presents.

To return to his criticism of the clergy's spiritual life, I think this problem should be attacked

at another level. It appears to me that spiritual vitality is more apparent in smaller jurisdictions where the bishop himself can be oriented to personal involvement with his priests. Someday the Church will have courage enough to reorganize its structure so that bishops with jurisdiction will be able to function without large staffs and be responsible for not more than forty or fifty congregations.

When that time comes, I have a notion that there will be new meaning in the word "Episcopal" and that the spiritual discipline among all our clergy will be mightily enhanced.

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