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■ **Should 1976 Be An
American Jubilee Year?**

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Letters to the Editor

The Witness reserves the right to condense all letters.

Freedom, liberty, exploitation, racism, sexism, imperialism: these key words in Holland's essay are the shibboleths of the left.

The language is appealing to all but the callous or the indifferent. The call for social justice, humanized relationships, and a better world links together Holland, Marx, and the prophets of Israel. The Marxist rhetoric of persuasion in the *Communist Manifesto* excites in me the same energy that carried persons in other times to the barricades and freedom marches.

The Marxist view of the dialectic struggle between the haves and the have-nots does not easily contain the reality of 1976. The left has no good way to explain away the conclusion that the history of reform and struggle for liberty in America shows the essential openness of the system in which laborers are also corporate shareholders and organized labor has as much power (or in Great Britain, more power) than management. Indeed, the struggle for freedom and equality, which liberals applaud strongly, has made matters better. The outcome of the struggle to date is the system in which capitalism and the worker are strongly rooted in American life.

Kent Hackmann, Moscow, Idaho



Re your March Issue of *The Witness*: Isn't it a bit contradictory to criticize bureaucracies which centralize the power at the top, and then suggest that "any one of several bishops holds the key" to ordaining women to the priesthood? (p.3) I thought the reason the Episcopal Church was "immobile" on women's ordination was because the democratically elected representatives of the people (General Convention deputies) declined to vote it through. The problem, therefore, would appear to be with the bottom of the pyramid — with the people who are acting through their representatives. Those at the top of the pyramid, the Bishops, have already spoken out in favor of women's ordination.

On page 16 Henry H. Rightor is quoted as saying: "In neither House of Convention do we have proportional representation of church members which is essential to a 'Democratic form' of government." Pray tell, how would proportional representation in the House of Deputies materially affect a vote by orders where each Diocese only gets *one* vote regardless of the number of deputies actually present? Is Rightor arguing that more representatives from a larger Diocese will substantially affect whether that Diocese votes yes or no as a Diocesan unit?

Rev. Nathaniel W. Pierce, Nampa, Idaho

It will come as no surprise to you when I say that CAM (Coalition for the Apostolic Ministry) will continue to fight with all legitimate and, we trust, charitable means of theological argument and political wisdom to maintain the Episcopacy and Priesthood free of the important change of permitting women to be ordained to these two orders. Believing that a male Episcopate and Priesthood is of the "givenness" of Catholic and Apostolic Order, we would be pressed to the most distasteful act of absenting ourselves from such sacramental ministrations — yes, even in the presence of our own Bishops! — as would include the exercising of the "priesthood" of women. This would be grievous indeed!

Rev. James C. Wattley, New York, New York

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Editorial

An Appeal to Caesar?

Robert L. DeWitt

In this bicentennial year, the foundations of our Republic reveal themselves, sometimes unexpectedly. Take, for example, the principle of the separation of church and state. Two illustrations of the conflict between principle and practice have come to light in recent months, one in the Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Philadelphia, and the other in the Episcopal Church.

Caught in a bind between inflation and diminishing revenues, the large archdiocesan school system faces a severe trial. A number of efforts have been made in recent years to attempt to stay the rising tide of trouble. But financial problems mounted. For a long time the system was carried by nuns providing cheap labor. But with the decline of vocations, the system increasingly had to dip into the community pool of lay teachers--out of the convent into the marketplace. Enter the unions. Organizing for collective bargaining, the unions have called in the National Labor Relations Board to supervise the process.

How does this relate to the separation of church and state? The Archdiocese conducted a vigorous campaign to prevent the N.L.R.B. from taking jurisdiction. Said a recent editorial in the "Standard and Times," the official archdiocesan paper: "The exercise of such jurisdiction involves a violation of religious liberty and the virtual establishment of religion by a governmental agency..."

A parallel situation exists in the Episcopal Church. For example, in the Diocese of Central New York civil recourse has been sought in order to gain relief from an oppressive situation in which women have been denied church employment solely because of their sex. Because they are women, and only for that reason, their ordination to the priesthood has not been regularized, and because of that failure, they are denied employment as priests. The civil actions have been vociferously opposed on the grounds of the same principle of the separation of church and state. This is an internal church matter, it is maintained, and consequently it would be inappropriate for the civil government to take jurisdiction.

Starkly clear, in both the Roman Catholic and Episcopal situations, is the fact that the churches are taking refuge in the constitutional principle of church-state separation in order to conduct their affairs at a moral level below that of the general society.

The right of labor to organize and the prohibition of discrimination against persons on the basis of sex are democratic rights won at great cost over a long period of time. It is specious to justify violations of those rights by appealing to the principle of church-state separation. Certainly, this is one of the more melancholy and ironic ways in which the nation is being reminded, in its bicentennial year, of the foundations upon which this nation rests.

Should 1976 be an American Jubilee Year?

by Arthur I. Waskow

In the wake of the spiritual and political upheavals of the 1960s, many American religious institutions and communities, new and old, have been wrestling with the relationship between the religious traditions and social justice. Some have been wondering whether there is any specifically, uniquely and authentically religious path toward social justice--one that uses categories and forms different from those of modern liberalism, radicalism, or socialism. I want to suggest that the tradition of the Jubilee Year is one such unique, and uniquely valuable, teaching of the Bible on how to pursue social justice--and that Americans might sensibly view the Bicentennial of 1976 as a Jubilee Year.

Many religiously committed Americans have acted as if their traditions were crucial for bringing them into the struggle for social justice, but were not crucial in teaching them how to carry on the struggle. The tendency has been for religious folk to turn to conventional liberal or radical analysis and practice in carrying on their struggles for social justice. To take the case of Clergy and Laity Concerned, for example, the seedbed of much religiously-motivated opposition to the Vietnam War: CALC people felt called into action by their understanding of the Jewish and Christian traditions; they developed traditional Jewish, Christian and sometimes Buddhist symbols in liturgies that expressed their religious commitment; but they rarely or never went beyond liberal or radical analysis or practice in deciding what to do or what to demand that America do.

At least in retrospect, things might have been different. For example, one of the founders of CALC was Rabbi Abraham Joshua Heschel. As Rabbi Max Rickett pointed out in a recent CALC memorial to Heschel, Heschel wrote profoundly of what Jewish tradition meant by "hallowing



time" (as in the Sabbath), rather than space. Yet neither Heschel as a member of CALC nor CALC as a whole struggled to work out what it would mean for CALC to "hallow time," in its own work, or for CALC to urge as part of its program that an American society utterly desacralized and secularized should help renew itself by once again hallowing time.

I have chosen this particular example not wholly by chance, since it seems to me that the American "civil religion" has tried to hallow time through its celebration of the Bicentennial--but has done an abysmally bad job. The official liturgy for this Bicentennial "hallowing" has been to buy and to travel (that is, to buy tickets). But the People's Bicentennial Commission has been able to use 1776 only as a bank of rhetoric--slogans, tea parties, midnight rides--to be applied to our modern corporate oligarchs and embattled workers. No one has felt the Bicentennial had the force of a command to *do* something about our society, let alone what that something might be. No one has felt an organic link between the cycles of his or her own life, and the cycles of nature that create the years which now add up to 200.

Yet the Bible teaches a way of hallowing time

that would have done these things--not only linked us to the past, but transformed our future. This is the tradition of the sabbatical years of "release" and "jubilee."

Briefly, the Torah commands that in every seventh year the land stand fallow, to prove that it is God's; that its natural produce go to feed the poor; that in the year after the forty-ninth year it not only stand fallow but receive back to its bosom each family, each tribe, who had been assigned each portion to live with; and that the rich thus give up their extra holdings and the poor receive back what they had lost.

It should be noted that in this pattern the "big" cycles of seven years and seven-time-seven-years did not stand alone: they were linked to the traditions of the seventh day and the seventh month. Each seventh-of-a-natural-time-unit was to be hallowed. By themselves the big cycles might well have come to feel as alien and awkward as our Bicentennial does; growing from the shorter cycles, they probably made more sense.

Secondly, the hallowing was a linkage of God, the Land, and the People. Nature, not only humankind, was to join in the rest and renewal. In a way this made these longer cycles as much a "natural" event as spring, summer, winter--for the land would be experiencing (and the people watching) a "season" something like a year-long autumn after the harvest.

Third, it seems important that the Jubilee pattern treats social justice as indeed a cycle, a rhythm. Social justice is not seen as something to be achieved, once and for all, forever; but as something to be rhythmically reapproached. The Torah expects some to get rich and some to get poor, and says: That's troublesome but no diaster, *IF* you start over again once a life-time...every 50 years. (Otherwise...famine, war, plague.) This feels appealing--more "human," perhaps, than would a demand for permanent unchanging equality. But it does lead to problems. For instance, some historians believe that the Jubilee was rarely, if indeed ever, proclaimed. Could it be that those who won control of the land during the 49 years of acquisition then prevented the enactment of the

Jubilee? If so, what does it teach us to do in order to make sure the Biblical rhythm of social justice is carried out?

Finally, we should note that the Jubilee process looks toward feeding the poor and redistributing wealth through a remarkably decentralized process--not by increasing the powers of the King, even benevolent powers. The Torah does not teach that Joseph's and Pharaoh's way of solving famine--a highly centralized food distribution system--is the best way. Instead it teaches that family by family, field by field, the poor should be fed and their land restored. How could we learn from this teaching to decentralize the process of social justice and renewal in our own society?

Modern Christianity and Judaism have not done very much to explore these teachings. Rabbinic Judaism decided that the Jubilee applied only in the Land of Israel, and only when there was a self-governing Jewish community there. For centuries this made the Jubilee a dead letter. Now that there is again a self-governing Jewish community in the land of Israel, a very restricted form of the seven-year rhythm is practiced, but no effort has yet been made to carry out the 50-year rhythm of the Jubilee, or even to raise the question. As for Christianity, it has etherealized the Jubilee. Thus the Catholic Church proclaims a periodic Jubilee of renewed spiritual commitment to God and to the church, but does not attach this either to redistribution of wealth or to respect for the world environment. Of course during the past century there have been revolutionary and liberal demands for the redistribution of wealth in general (or land in particular), and there have been demands for paying greater respect to the land. But these claims have been put--and indeed have sometimes been accomplished--with little or no reference to God, the Torah, the Jubilee, a rhythmic process, or decentralization.

Given all this, would it be reasonable to propose that the original Torah command for the Jubilee should act as a model to other peoples and other lands--not for a precise imitation, but for a fruitful learning? If so, is it possible that religious communities in the United States could take 1776

as a starting date and apply the notion of Jubilee to 1976 (which in this sense might be taken as the fourth opportunity for a Jubilee Year of the United States)? And if so, could American religious communities prepare a campaign to demand that the United States government recognize 1976 as a Year of Jubilee? Or that the whole period from 1976 to 1989 (bicentennial of the Constitution) be recognized as a Jubilee Period, in which various aspects of the Jubilee might be carried out?

In regard to the redistribution of wealth, how might we apply the sense of decentralism that pervades the original Jubilee command? Perhaps an American Jubilee might require not the top-down nationalization of property, but its return to the people in their own communities: thus workers' control of factories, neighborhood ownership of land, the strengthening of co-ops and of family-worked businesses and farms, etc.

In regard to renewal of the land, how might we apply the model? Rabbi Everett Gendler has suggested (Summer 1975 CCAR Journal) that a Back-to-the-Land movement, assisted by a Homestead Act, for American families that might like to work on and/or live on a small farm, might be a fulfilling version of the Jubilee. So might the reconstruction of urban neighborhoods so that "the land"--the environment--on which they are built is honored and their sense of community within themselves and communion with others is strengthened.

Part of the point of a Jubilee might well be that groups could develop their own version of it. At one level, the Jewish and Christian religious leadership of the United States, organized in a group like CALC, might sponsor the writing of and a campaign for a federal Jubilee Law. At another level, smaller religious communities like the Peoples Christian Coalition might work with or in their own cities and neighborhoods.

In one set of American religious communities, the process has begun. Three times a year, members of the East Coast *chavurot* (independent Jewish religious fellowships) meet at a retreat in New Jersey to celebrate and talk. At the Columbus Day weekend retreat last fall, one workshop explored the Jubilee, and by its

conclusion the retreat as a whole had decided to focus the next retreat--Washington's Birthday weekend--around the issues of the Jubilee. In the meantime, the participants agreed to raise these issues back home. They agreed to begin with some Jubilee dreaming: What would we really want our neighborhoods, our corporations, our food supply, our farms and villages, to be like--if this were the Year of Jubilee?

From such dreams it may be possible to work out some authentically religious paths toward social justice.

Arthur I. Waskow is a fellow of the Institute for Policy Studies, Washington, D.C. and a member of Tzedek Tzedek.

Reflections on the New Community in Oberlin

by Nicholas Jones

For the last two years, many of us in Christ Church, Oberlin, have been struggling to reform the unjust treatment of women who believe they have a vocation to the priesthood. These years have been a time of growth for us in knowledge, experience, and love; by grace, we have thus long managed to live within the institution of the Episcopal Church.

But the price of living within the church was not small. The conflicts of ideology and manner in this small parish made every action a ground for increasingly open battle. More and more, it seemed that we were trying to operate on two levels; one, the search for the life of the spirit, seemed to directly contravene the other, the fulfilling of the letter of the law. That law took the form of canons, bishops, and ecclesiastical courts; more exhaustingly, it showed itself in the daily expectations of people weighted with the inertia of institutional authority. We learned that we were being defeated by attrition, by the

insistent though passive pressure of those who felt that the church should always be what it used to be, and by the silence of those who refused to involve themselves except by voting against us.

Early this year, as a result primarily of the emotional effects of that attrition, we lost the support of the majority of this parish. To stay on in this parish seemed to involve one of two choices: more and more exhaustion as we continued the double course of witness and appeasement; or abandonment of the cause, of the women priests, of our own community. Since neither of these choices was possible, we created a third: to leave the parish.

Ecclesiastically, we are now a community of exiles, without official or practical affiliation with a recognized church, without a structure of church government, without a clearly-definable existence. For a while longer the future must remain obscure, but there are a number of questions most of us would like to be able to answer, for ourselves and for others. These break down into questions of affiliation (with what larger bodies are we linked?), structure (how will we exist?) and identity (what are we?).

In the grief of losing a hard-fought political battle and in the joy of discovering a vital spiritual community, we have become aware of the existence of two very different concepts of authority working in this experience. Judged by one concept, that of authority as a quality conferred by the action of another human being, we have lost. Such was the authority of the General Conventions authorized by the canons and by the will of the church to decide the fate of the women seeking ordination to the priesthood: by that authority, in 1970 and in 1973, women were categorically denied the chance to be ordained. Such was the authority of the bishops: authorized by election, consecration, and by the very real weight of their incumbency, they had been given the authority to refuse to ordain women, to hinder the ministry of the women once ordained, and to discipline those whose witness to that ordination was insistent. And, unmistakably, such was the authority of the majority of our parish: by maintaining a position within the laws and traditions of the institutional church, they

were given by that church the authority to control the parish.

But through this experience we have learned that there is another authority, one that commands more obedience from us and at the same time nurtures us more. It is an authority that cannot be conferred by human force: it is an authority of grace and vocation, conferred spiritually and manifested not in any official form or act. This authority resides in the involvement of the whole person. The authority of a human being, when it proves fruitful, must be a reflection of the authority of God over the created world. It must stem from the authority of God's complete involvement in creating, redeeming, and sustaining the world. We cannot expect to *imitate* that authority, operating as it does with such complete engagement, without barriers. But we can *respond* when it is given to us to do so, when God by grace allows us to reflect that divine authority in an intense involvement of our mortal person.

In whatever ways we attempt to answer the questions of identity, structure and affiliation--and these may be widely divergent ways--we know that only the authority of involvement, the authority given by God, will have command over us. We have learned that we cannot live in obedience to an authority that hides itself behind legalisms, categories, roles, and institutions. We have seen too much of the unfruitful power of the reliance on conferred authority that characterizes the institutional church's actions against witness. And we have seen at least a little of the energizing involvement of those whom God has called and the church has refused to recognize.

Affiliation. Therefore, when we think about affiliation, we do not immediately think of external sources of authority, of institutions, hierarchies, or official recognition. We will not subject ourselves to any bishop, diocese, or church merely for the sake of the human authority conferred upon that office or institution, just as we would not expect any person to join with us for such a reason. Our primary affiliation must be based on witness. What we seek in the way of authority is the guidance and leadership of those who have involved and will continue to involve

themselves in our spiritual life. We acknowledge and join with all those who are called to be for us what our bishop might have been--a *pastor pastorum*, a "chief pastor." Similarly, reaching out, we will affiliate ourselves with those to whom we can be witnesses, affiliating not by conferring our authority upon them but by rejoicing in their discovery of their own authority. We will obey others as they profoundly and intensely help us and ask help from us.

Structure. The same principles determine our approach to structure. As our community has grown, we joyfully discovered that each individual has particular gifts to give to it and that the community thrives most when those gifts are most fully given--that is, when the particular authority of each person is most completely recognized. Whatever structure we evolve must acknowledge the involvement of each person. We are blessed to recognize the particularly deep involvement of those who are called to the liturgical life of the community: they are the celebrants of the wholeness that God has been pleased to give us.

Identity. For the past year, our community has been living under a particular identity, the missions of justice and reform. At this point we do not abandon those missions, but we acknowledge other identities. We do not need to be only "supporters of the women priests" or "supporters of the Rev. Peter Beebe." We are a community of many people and therefore many missions: social action, contemplative worship, ecumenism, liberation, education, reform. Each person in his or her mission must be for us as authoritative as the involvement of that person in the mission is intense and whole. We will be what we want to be.

Ordination and consecration, the rituals by which Christians seek to give form to the authority already given by God, are too often used not as *recognitions* of authority but as *evidences* of it: they rigidify vocation. In the history of our community we have seen the reality of vocation in the absence of the recognition of it, and we have seen the emptiness of recognized authority in the absence of vocation. Persons whom the church has recognized as being called

to lead have failed to lead. Persons whose vocations the church as a body has failed to recognize have nonetheless manifested a stunning authority of grace. We, as a community, must attempt to recognize, to ordain in all ways, the authority of those persons called to involve themselves wholly in a process, for the function of ordination is to mark what already is the case. But we must also recognize that vocation will always, finally, evade regular forms of recognition: that the authority of grace will always be cropping up where it is least expected.

Nicholas Jones, formerly Assistant Professor of English at Kent State University, is now teaching at Oberlin College.

The Church Apostate and Regenerate

by Howard W. Lull

To accuse the Church in the United States of apostasy — desertion of its principles of faith — is, at first glance, to tread where angels fear, a fool's impulse. But look at the record of the last 30 years: time and again, faced with mass murder, racism, the deadly arms race, wrong-doing in high places, when did the Church protest with passion? Or strongly espouse the cause of world government necessary for world peace? Or work wholeheartedly to feed the hungry millions? Instead, its most notable activity has been sustained, internal bickering.

Further, this appears to be no new stance but simply the continuation of the Church's almost lifelong, unblemished record of wholesale apostasy. In no sense does world history suggest that the Church, over this span of time, to any marked degree carried out of the fullness of Christ's commandment to love God and neighbor. Today's implication of apostasy, however, carries a new threat: the probable extinction of the human race on planet Earth.

Look where we are. The record of apostasy during the lifetime of present-day adult Church

members includes:

The Holocaust: By 1945, in Nazi Germany, six million Jews had been consumed. Hitler had been extolled, by a German Protestant bishop, as "God's man for Germany"; certain Protestant churches proclaimed the "Aryanism" of Jesus, and the Vatican remained silent. "Auschwitz," Elie Weisel tells us, "would not have been possible without Christianity . . . the Christian Church's role . . . was dominant in the fact that it was possible for so many Jews to be killed."

Hiroshima: A committee of distinguished Americans recommended unanimously that the bomb be used without specific warning and against a population center to clearly demonstrate its devastating force. *Nagasaki:* "Big Boy", a still untested bomb, proved successful. Total killed in both cities, 105,000; at the Hiroshima A-bomb hospital 70 to 80 victims still die each year from radiation-induced leukemia. So began the Atomic Age: its inception is not recorded in Kenneth Scott Latourette's monumental *A History of Christianity* (1953).

Vietnam: Coincidentally, we matched the Nazi's six million with a holocaust of our own making — an estimated six million Vietnamese killed, wounded, or made homeless. To a significant degree, the church as a whole has not confessed its implication, supported reparations to help rebuild Vietnam, or called for amnesty for those who refused military service. Happily, there have been exceptions to the general rule.

Arms race: The Church has watched expenditures for armaments double every decade from \$10 billion in 1940 to \$80 billion in 1970 (\$105 billion in 1975), without notable response even though the accompanying spiral of nuclear weapons threatens all humanity. Almost all Christians willingly pay taxes that fuel the ultimate Holocaust.

Racism: It continues, barely diminished. Witness the controversial busing programs and the widening gap in employment and income between blacks and whites.

Hunger: In 1968 a Citizen's Board of Inquiry reported that at least 10 million people in the United States suffered from hunger and malnutrition. Though much public concern was generated, a re-survey in 1972 found the same — the hunger problem had been "officially

acknowledged, described, defined, and left unsolved."

Watergate: Was a moral and spiritual desert roamed by famous men who, according to Leon Jaworski, had forgotten the difference between right and wrong. On tapes, their own words described how they tried to cover up their misdeeds, and their unawareness of spiritual realities. Their coverup was unsuccessful. The Church's silence on Watergate covered up the spiritual abyss.

World government: Spaceship Earth, one-world concepts, and the obvious needs for international authority to discourage world suicide demand strong support from the Church. "Nationalism," writes Milton Mayer, "is not merely fallible; it is unholy . . . because it divides the family of man into *we* and *they*." On this issue the Church has rarely spoken; an exception was Pope John's urgent call in 1963 for establishment of a genuine world community.

Obviously, during the last three decades the pace of man's inhumanity to man or, more specifically, Christians' inhumanity to Christians and other children of God, has accelerated. Not only are the tools of death and destruction more devastating but the great increase in population (from about 2.5 to 4 billion) has provided more victims.



From the time of Constantine, the church has maintained a remarkably consistent record of proclaiming its allegiance to the teachings of Jesus Christ without practising them. Only in the three centuries between Christ and Constantine, before membership became a status symbol, did the Church grow both in numbers and faith.

Today, a well-diluted Christianity confronts a world-destroying technology. Average Sunday morning congregations, involved unwittingly in this life-or-death situation, offer little help. Most still seek respectability instead of life. In no way did they consider the Vietnamese their brothers and sisters; in no way do they understand that all under nuclear peril (including their own children) are children of God. Eleven o'clock Sunday morning, in the last three decades has achieved new distinctions: developing from the most segregated hour of the week to the most self-serving, uncaring and, in Dostoyevsky's criterion, the most ungodly — "He who turns away from mankind is an atheist."

And yet, even now, this sea of troubles does not diminish in any sense the fact that, in God's world without end, God is, God cares, Christ came, and the Holy Spirit comes. Testifying to their power is the continuing presence of a remnant of Christians who act on what they say they believe. Historically they have included the roster of the saints, the ranks of monks and nuns whose lives were living prayers, and the self-sacrificing laity and clergy who quietly have ministered to the Christ in those in need.

The remnant includes modern-day saints, whom God has sanctified, to their bewilderment, joy and suffering: Schweitzer, Dorothy Day, Bonhoeffer, Dolci, King, Merton, Pope John, and all those unsung men and women holy in the eyes of God. And these include the dedicated people who work for peace, and non-violently resist war, racism, and poverty: the Catholic Worker houses, the Peacemaker collective, the Fellowship of Reconciliation, the American Friends' Service Committee, the War Resisters League, War Tax Resistance, and the demoninational peace fellowships.

But what of the Church Apostate? Doubtless, as in these latter days, it will continue to diminish. Yet, reduced in numbers, its influence may increase. Just as in the early Church faith

and practice were diluted by mass conversion, so in these days they may be strengthened by mass defection. Out of its travail may develop the Church Regenerate: the active, creative Body of Christ powered by a reseeding remnant, cultivating a new crop of converts to discover in Christ's teachings their way of life and the medicine for the world.

What would it be like, this Church Regenerate? What else, but to carry the marks of the early Church: One, Holy, Catholic; its people energized by major Sacraments: baptized Christ's faithful soldiers and servants; penitentially cleansed by regular confession of sins; continually renewed and strengthened by frequent Holy Communion.

What would be some of its signs? Perhaps, frequent and short services of worship so fitted to their daily rounds that worshippers could easily, habitually attend; a refurbishing of relevant Saints' Days, old and new; annual requiems to commemorate Hiroshima-Nagasaki, Vietnam, the Holocaust; frequent litanies for peace and for the care of the poor and the sick; Lenten, Advent and Friday fasts to share with the world's hungry their travail and our bounty.

In addition regular study programs would unite prayer and praise to ministry. Basic would be graded and continuing study of the teachings and example of Christ, to guide and discipline life in God and service to others. Coincident study would assess the causes of war and the geography of the poor. Combined worship and study would lead to Christian action through political processes.

The Christian style of life would be marked by simplicity, sharing, and love: a "disentanglement from the world because, being merely good, it is the enemy of the best" (Gale Webbe); an embracing of holy poverty "not because it is good to lack created things but because it is good to possess Christ" (Bruno James); "a quieting and ordering of our whole life by self-denial, prayer, and good works, so that God Himself, who seeks us more than we seek Him, can 'find us' and 'take possession of us'" (Thomas Merton).

Dreams? Why not reality?

Howard W. Lull, a priest presently assisting at St. Cyprian's, New Bern, North Carolina, has been studying and writing on the subjects of war and peace.

Feeding the Hungry: Political Action is no Luxury

by Norman J. Faramelli

The fading headlines on world hunger give the illusion that food scarcity is no longer a problem. Thus, it is time to re-emphasize that the world hunger problem is neither novel nor temporary. Although intensified in 1974-75 by droughts, ill-timed monsoons, and soaring population growth, the problem has existed for generations. World hunger is one result of the inequitable distribution of global resources that has worsened over the last 30 years. Maldistribution is also a tough political and economic problem.

The widespread response in the Episcopal Church to the hunger crisis, although varied, has seldom moved beyond direct aid via the Presiding Bishop's Fund for World Relief, and meatless meals (or modest fasting endeavors). One segment within the Church is convinced that the real problem is the population explosion (see Suthers-Gillett exchange, *THE WITNESS*, February, 1976). Yet there are growing numbers who believe that the problem today is neither too little food nor too many people, but lopsided distribution. They realize that our abstinence from meat in order to liberate grain for the hungry is a futile gesture unless it is accompanied by basic changes in U.S. food policy.

There have been many positive signs throughout the church. Numerous training events on hunger, involving several thousands of people, have taken place nationwide. The P.B. Fund has not only grown, but it has extended its guidelines beyond relief and rehabilitation aid to development and development education projects.

A story is told about teaching people to farm instead of giving them bread. Development projects not only make it possible for people to farm, but often to make their own farm implements. Nevertheless, other issues about

the wider economic and political context need to be faced. People in poor nations, for example, need to be assured that the food produced will not be confiscated by the affluent. Although food aid will be needed in the short run, the real answer to world hunger is increased agricultural production in poor nations. That should take place in a political and economic environment which promotes social justice.

To take political action or development education seriously is to call for new and bold directions. Yet many churchpeople are still not up to the new policies of the P.B. Fund. "When I give money, I want it to feed the poor immediately," many say. In the Christian Church we have often confused acts of charity for genuine Christian love. We have to be reminded repeatedly that authentic Christian love is not possible unless social justice is first established. We can rejoice, however, that many in and out of the church are beginning to realize that solutions to global hunger entail social justice and cannot bypass politics and economics.

Yet the most important task is also the most difficult, i.e., engagement in food policies, trade and aid legislation, regulating agribusiness, etc. Group after group--in the Episcopal Church and other denominations, as well as Bread for the World--all find that political-economic action is the most difficult to initiate and to sustain. That is true even for people who are already intellectually committed to it. The task seems enormous. Also, the customary style of political activity has



rapidly led people to that "burnt out" stage. Hence, a new kind of political style should be developed based on sustaining "support groups" and communities of celebration.

It is encouraging that the national Episcopal hunger program will attempt a careful integration of the spiritual and the political. A political economic action network will need to be built, and because of its urgency and difficulty, the hunger coordinator will give that a special priority. For instance, it is essential that an effective network brings together those who attended the hunger training events, along with Church and Society and other action networks throughout the nation.

Part of the program should be devoted to legislative action. For example, funds for the new foreign aid bill, HR 9005, although authorized, have not yet been appropriated (as of this writing). (This is the first foreign assistance bill, incidentally, that separates military from developmental aid). Other actions are needed on the role of agribusiness in perpetuating or solving the hunger crisis. Furthermore, the American citizenry needs a keen understanding of a New International Economic Order (resulting from the Seventh U.N. Special Session), the trade issues to be dealt with at the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development meeting in May and their impacts at home and abroad.

Will such ventures be successful in a church that has shown little enthusiasm for political-economic engagement? That is difficult to answer, but we do know that our expectation levels need to be altered. It is unrealistic to expect the majority of churchpeople to engage in political action. Therefore, a variety of meaningful programs should be available. But one of our key tasks is to mobilize effectively those who see the necessity of a political response to the Gospel message. Without such engagement we are only playing games with the world hunger issue.

We do not proceed with a naive optimism, but by faith in a living, righteous and loving God, and in hope that God will lift us to respond creatively to the concerns of all people.

Norman J. Faramelli is co-director of the Boston Industrial Mission, and he has served as chairperson of the Inter-Provincial Task Force on Global Hunger.

The Hierarchy Still Reigns

by Roy Larson

I was shocked beyond belief last week when I received my registration blank for the 65th general convention of the Episcopal Church.

I was set up for the present shock in February, 1974, when the Rt. Rev. John M. Allin, who had just been elected the presiding bishop of the Episcopal Church, gave to the denomination's executive council a picture of his understanding of the church's "organization pattern."

"I do not like to talk of levels," Bishop Allin said. "I increasingly feel a word the church needs to get rid of is hierarchy."

Here, I thought, is a prophet ahead of his time. Long before government officials like President Ford and aspiring government officials like former Gov. Jimmy Carter of Georgia began campaigning against government, Bishop Allin was a church bureaucrat railing against bureaucracy, a figure at the top of the hierarchical pyramid criticizing hierarchies.

"I see the church," Bishop Allin declared, "not as a triangle but as a community of circles. The presiding bishop is at the center of the church surrounded by a series of circles. Around him are his deputies, the executive council, the council staff, the general convention, the entire church organization along diocesan and provincial lines, the church world, the entire world."

"How wonderful," I thought. "Nobody is looking down at anybody. Everybody will be meeting each other at the same eye level. We all belong to the company of peers."

My utopian fantasies ended last week.

The general convention registration blank was not a series of circles but a collection of boxes.

Under the words "Official Capacity at

Convention (check one)," there were four boxes. The first, and presumably the greatest of these, was for bishops. They were listed vertically in the order of their importance: diocesan, coadjutor, suffragan, assistant, retired, resigned.

Next was a box for deputies or delegates to the convention. Clerical delegates were listed first, lay delegates last.

The last of the four little boxes was saved for a catch-all category that lumped together "press, volunteer, exhibitor, visitor." Committed as I am to ecclesiastical egalitarianism, I was embarrassed when my group--"press"--was at the top of the fourth box.

The real payoff, however, was in a left-hand column of the form titled "Title." Below the caption, we were asked to identify ourselves by title. Reading from top to bottom, the checklist went like this:

"Rt. Rev., Very Rev., Ven. (as in "venerable"), Rev. Canon, Rev., Chaplain, Deaconess, Rev. Mother, Sister, Brother, Dr., Hon., Mr., Mrs., Miss, Ms., Other."

Prepared for circles but confronted with squares, I called Walter H. Boyd, the church's national press officer, for an explanation.

"Say it isn't so, Walter," I pleaded. "Assure me that the medium is not really the message."

With a kind of straightforward candor rare among middle-level church bureaucrats, Boyd replied, "Frankly, I think we would have to say there is a hierarchy, and we'd better not forget it."

The foregoing is reprinted by permission of the Chicago Sun-Times, where Roy Larson serves as Religion Editor.

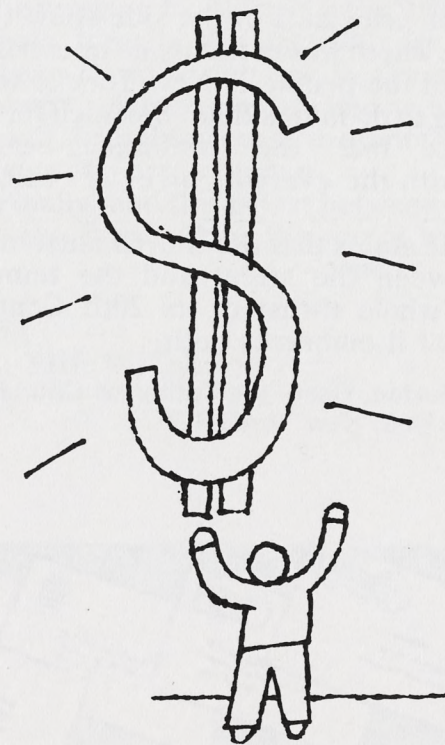
Money Talks

The Executive Council of the Episcopal Church has declined to approve a black community project grant over the objections of the bishop in whose diocese the project is located.

The grant in question was for \$10,000 to the Afro-American Players (AAP), Yakima, Washington, which was approved by the Community Action and Human Development (CAHD) commission last September.

After Bishop John R. Wyatt of the Diocese of Spokane indicated that he "could not approve that grant," the AAP appealed the bishop's veto and was heard by the CAHD in November.

Bishop Wyatt said that while the AAP, in his opinion, is "doing something of value," both Episcopal parishes in Yakima "are almost certain to lose in excess of 10 percent of their income" if the Council approved the grant. This income loss, he said, could in turn affect the diocesan budget and the diocese's pledge to the national church program budget.



Dana Martin

In your March issue you print an attack on the Interfaith Conference held in the Cathedral of St. John the Divine in New York City last October, accusing us of grandstanding to the newspapers, turning our backs on "genuine urban strategy" and in general of cheapening our vocation by an experience in Interfaith spirituality.

The article was so negative that I deem it patently useless to refute it in detail. But I would like to make three points.

1. Ecumenism is the attempt to reach out to the spirituality of mankind beyond the Christian churches. So much for the ludicrous charge that we were "playing polo on a baseball diamond."

2. Our Interfaith Conference filled the Cathedral for six nights and five days with people of all ages, and especially the young. Of course, during such a prolonged agenda there were occasions when criticisms of the side-show type were possible. There was certainly no question of the response of the people of New York to what we were trying to do in this field. So much for the facile remark that the conference never "connected with the everyday lives of ordinary people."

3. The article states that the church must make a choice between the street and the temple, whereas the whole thrust of its 20th Century vocation is that it embraces both.

James Parks Morton, Dean, the Cathedral Church of St. John the Divine, New York, N.Y.

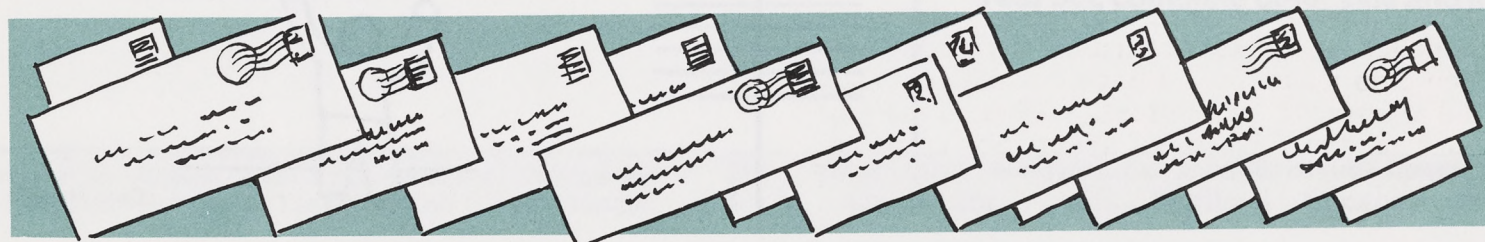
There are three things I ask to be permitted to say as a result of the "Response" by Edward Coolidge in the same issue to my article on ordained ministry concerns in THE WITNESS of November 1975 and the letter to the editor by Ms. Ann Smith in your copy of February 1976.

First, both the response and the letter accuse me of being "incredibly sexist." I cannot judge for myself. I am too close to the situation. And I have yet much to learn. I only know that linguistically it is a bit dangerous to try to make too much out of *ruach* being a feminine form. *Agricola* in Latin is acknowledged to be feminine in form but masculine in meaning - farmer. And I do think it is exquisite bad taste for uninformed readers to stomp on one of the group that came within a hair's breadth of getting the Episcopal Church her first female rector several years ago (until our work was undone by the incompetence of the nylon liberals then in the power seat in our judicatory). To change the metaphor, it is not always wise to shoot from the hip.

Secondly, I must say that I find the criticism of the article *incredibly narrow*. Since Chateaubriand and Sainte Beuve early in the 19th century, it has been a well-accepted canon of western criticism that the major thrust of any critic must be to deal with the *substance* of what the article or book is trying to do. My article deals with a broad array of ordained ministry concerns. I would honestly expect that some of them be squarely dealt with for any criticism to be valid.

And finally, I am impressed that in the February issue, when you publish a critical response to the Gillett article, you publish simultaneously the Californian's rejoinder. I would ask, in keeping with that kind of policy, that you at least print these words.

Rev. James L. Lowery, Jr., Boston, Massachusetts



THE WITNESS will not print letters to the editor which are submitted anonymously. On occasion, however, when a correspondent, for weighty reasons, asks that his name be withheld, THE WITNESS will honor that request. The gravity of the following letter — and the humility implicit in the request — seemed to the Editor to create such an occasion.

Dear Editor:

Please find enclosed a copy of a letter which I have been asked to forward to you. The letter, I think, explains itself. It is my understanding that the writer of the letter would like it to be published in THE WITNESS. If you decide against it please convey that news directly to him.

Faithfully . . .

The Most Rev. John Maury Allin
Presiding Bishop
The Episcopal Church
815 Second Avenue
New York, New York 10017

Most Reverend Sir:

Bishop Pike used to say, "God is not arbitrary, and does not make particular decisions." He was almost right about that. I seldom do make particular decisions, and the few I do make are not arbitrary. Now and then, however, I am compelled to make particular decisions, and when I do make them I have noticed that they tend to attract a lot of attention. That is more or less what the bible is all about. So, I am not surprised that there has been such a fuss about my decision two years ago to call eleven women to

be priests. I regret that my decision has caused you so much inconvenience. The decision was not, however, arbitrary. I had brooded about it for nearly two whole millenia. In July, 1974, it became apparent to me that the ordination of women was an idea whose time had come.

I was delighted to read the other day that you have concluded that I am right about that. I am puzzled, however, by your remark, as it was quoted in *The Episcopalian*, that ". . . if God could make me Presiding Bishop He can make a woman priest." I didn't make you Presiding Bishop, Sir. Your brothers the Episcopal bishops are accountable for that. And those same bishops will also be accountable if they tarry much longer on the question of ordination of women. As you know, I do not lightly suffer mockery. I note that you expect the forthcoming General Convention of the Episcopal Church to vote in favor of women's ordination. Of my own foreknowledge I can tell you that it will not. And *that* is going to present you with some kettle of fish. What in the world, if you will forgive the expression, are you going to do? I am thankful that that will be your problem and not mine.

By the way, I wish you hadn't got yourself cited for contempt by skipping the trial of dear Fr. Wendt. It really was unseemly for a man in your position. And it puts me in the same dilemma Bishop Creighton was in when he had to sentence Wendt. Creighton chose to admonish. I choose to forgive. To err is human.

Finally, and this is just between you and Me, I like the Prayer Book the way it was.

— God

G:hg

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