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**GENERAL
CONVENTION
ISSUE**

THE WITNESS

August, 1976

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Convention
Unless . . .**
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Letters to the Editor

The Witness reserves the right to condense all letters.

Critique from an Old Friend

THE WITNESS both intrigues and irritates me. It is the easiest magazine to read that I know of. It is brief and one can read the articles quickly and understand pretty well what they are trying to say. It has a personal punch. On the other hand it is dogmatic in its assertions about sexuality, capitalism, etc. The net result is that it both makes me mad and makes me think.

Rt. Rev. Anson Phelps Stokes, Jr. — Brookline, Massachusetts

He Didn't Like It

I find your sophomoric attempt at humor ("Letter from God to Presiding Bishop Allin," May 1976) in very poor taste.

At this time the ordination of women to the priesthood is nothing to joke about. To some Episcopalians, it is a question of simple justice. To others, it is a matter of abandoning the treasured apostolic ministry. After September, inevitably there will be many grievously hurt people in our Church. Compassion and charity are needed now, not partisan, self-righteous cleverness.

Rev. David R. King — Elizabeth, New Jersey

Pike Lives On

I thought the tribute to Jim Pike in the April issue was top-flight. He was at General for a year while I was there and was my roommate's tutor, so he spent a lot of time in our quarters. A stimulating, beautiful man.

Rev. Paul Kintzing, Jr. — Providence, Rhode Island

We Agree

THE WITNESS is good. I'm an old Fletcher student-factory workman-priest, slum mission priest and the rest of the 29 years in the priesthood on the left side of things.

I agree with Joe Emrich (the Rt. Rev.) that there should be penetration into the local church problems and less pot-boiling and theorizing by those who seem to be esoterically related to the nitty-gritty of church life.

Rev. Robert Cook — Granville, New York

New Depths

Thank you for the April issue. It reaches greater depths than some of your previous ones. I hope to be able to benefit from more of this type of honest probing.

Mrs. Virginia Gunn — Nottingham, Pennsylvania

A Word to Philip Cato

I simply couldn't let Philip Cato's "Modest Proposal" go by without comment. My concern goes beyond the issue of the age and tenure of bishops to the underlying problem of "ageism" within the church.

Thanks for the piece on Jim Pike. His hearing was a low water mark for the House of Bishops. I thoroughly enjoyed reading it, for my fascination, admiration and feeling for Jim continue.

Rev. Kenneth E. Clarke — Cincinnati, Ohio

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Cover: From woodcut by Robert Hodgell.
Courtesy Episcopal Peace Fellowship.

THE WITNESS

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Robert L. DeWitt, Editor; Mary Lou Suhor, Managing Editor; E. Lawrence Carter, Robert Eckersley, Antoinette Swanger, Lisa K. Whelan, Hugh C. White Jr. Editorial and

On Liberating Prophetic Voices

Robert L. DeWitt

It seems likely that this year's General Convention will not respond as the church should to the social crisis of our era. The church pays for its space, privilege, honor and power in society by muting its prophetic voice. Especially in America, the church has become the chaplain-in-residence to the established order, unable to be other than vaguely uneasy about the human suffering caused by the burgeoning industrial machines and corporate business structures.

Despite this, it needs to be clearly seen and strongly asserted that we are not people without hope. We are not the hapless and hopeless victims of circumstance. We have been commissioned to be co-creators of this world and of its history. To do less is to be less than human. True, we are in danger of not being aware of the pervasive power of the political and economic structures of our world. But perhaps even more we are in danger of being mesmerized and immobilized by them. We are free agents, responsible for the shaping of our human destiny.

What does this entail? St. Paul said, "We wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers..." This is becoming, in this century, increasingly evident. We are beginning to realize that we are subject to a totalitarian world-wide economy, exemplified by the transnational corporations. This totalitarian economy—a world order which dwarfs the empires of the past—is effectively bringing about the alienation of people from their means of livelihood, from their families, from their capacity to determine the quality and direction of their own lives. This is cruelly true of the people who have no jobs, no homes, no food. But it is also true of the middle class whose members find themselves threatened by unemployment, oppressed by inflation. The mission of the church to society, once seen merely as doing good works, giving alms to the poor, is increasingly evident as being a mission to and for everyone, because all are threatened.

Our own Episcopal Church is not unaware of this. The Presiding Bishop and the program on world hunger which he has urged upon the church make it clear that world hunger will not be eased without a fundamental change in the domestic and world political and economic processes which are the fundamental causes of hunger. More recently, the report of a special advisory committee to the Executive Council of the Episcopal Church stated: "It is simply not enough to pray for the poor, or comfort the victims of life. We must also try to change the policies and structures which debase and restrict personhood..." This is a clear calling to analyze, understand and change the political and economic system which presently oppresses this world and the people who inhabit it.

There can be no doubt about the correctness of these urgings. On the other hand, there can be no optimism that the church through its official structures either can or will respond with any adequacy. Like most institutions, the church is too conformed to this world to be able to transform it. One expression of this conformity is the presence of a dogmatic attitude in the dominant culture which has created a climate of repression that make it difficult to criticize or alter "the American system." The well-known "Communist phobia" of the McCarthy era did not die with Senator McCarthy. And this repression of free thought, of open consideration of how our national life can be more human, this insistence that "our system is the best," has powerful support among the present economic and political powers. And a church which has many possessions in this society is in a difficult position to challenge this society. The accommodations involved in the proposed raising of \$100 million for national church programs will scarcely improve that position.

It is true that specific social ills have their peculiar patterns of oppression; but it is clear, though not generally recognized, that the basic dysfunctioning of

General Convention A Ho-Hum Event Unless . . .

By William R. MacKaye

When Episcopalians by the thousands stream into the St. Paul (Minnesota) Civic Center September 11 for the worship service opening their church's 65th General Convention, they will for the first time in recent memory at such a service not be offered the consolation of the holy eucharist. The sacrament of unity, at least in the mind of Presiding Bishop John Maury Allin, has become a sign of division.

Eager to avoid seeming a partisan either of the 1928 Book of Common Prayer or of the rites of the revised prayer book to which the convention will be asked to give preliminary assent in September, the Presiding Bishop in effect conceded that the church is momentarily ritually speechless, canceled the traditional opening eucharist, and penciled in in its place a service of "praise and witness."

The omitted offering of the sacrament points to the two principal factors that will determine the tone and shape of the forthcoming convention: the disarray of the present-day Episcopal Church, which finds it almost impossible to come to a common mind on anything more controversial than the Apostles' Creed; and the conviction of its Presiding Bishop that his proper role is to sidestep issues that divide, seeking instead new programs and visions on which all may agree. Recognition of these two factors may in turn offer help in the discernment of a convention agenda to those Episcopalians who want to see the convention attempt to achieve more than simple peace in the household.

Discussion about the convention, at least up to this point, has centered almost exclusively on two of the issues that will come before it—revision of the Book of Common Prayer and ordination of women to the priesthood. In dioceses all across the country election of General Convention deputies



was politicized as never before, and veteran deputies from many jurisdictions were summarily retired from office because the electors rejected their positions. In the Diocese of Virginia, for example, doughty lay deputy George Humrickhouse's endorsement of women priests was deemed too tepid, while in the Diocese of Long Island the urbane Rev. Robert Capon was seen as too avid a supporter; neither man will represent his diocese this year.

Despite the torrent of talk and pre-convention politicking, however, the two "big" issues of the Minneapolis convention may well prove to be big non-issues. Already a broad spectrum of convention watchers see the Draft Proposed Book of Common Prayer as a shoo-in when it comes before the convention. Dorothy Faber, editor of the conservative Christian Challenge magazine, which has repeatedly attacked the work of the Standing Liturgical Commission, conceded recently that the only hope of the anti-revisionists is to derail the proposed Prayer Book when it comes up for final approval three years hence.

"I'm sure it will pass this time," she said.

The fight over the admission of women to the priesthood and the episcopate is a much closer one. Spokespeople for the National Coalition for Ordination of Women to the Priesthood and the Episcopacy, which has done the most careful nose-counting among the prospective deputies, decline to discuss the Coalition's findings in detail, a tip-off that all is not well in the Coalition's vote-seeking.

"At this point we have something less than fifty-eight domestic dioceses," said the Rev. Patricia Park a few weeks ago and offered no further overall detail. A Virginia deacon, Mrs. Park is co-chairperson of the Coalition.

Fifty-eight is the magic number for the Coalition, a majority of the 114 dioceses represented in the Convention. Owing to the difficulty of communicating with the 21 overseas dioceses, the Coalition has concentrated its efforts entirely on the domestic jurisdictions. In early summer, Mrs. Park said, her group was actively currying support in about 20 marginal dioceses, seeking to convert divided deputations into affirmative votes and to hang on to supporters in deputations where affirmative majority seemed shaky.

The Coalition, whose other co-chairperson is the Rev. George Regas, rector of All Saints' Church, Pasadena, Calif., had raised and spent more than \$30,000 in its organizing efforts by mid-spring, and its leaders thought their campaign might cost as much again by the time convention adjourns.

Early on: Women, Prayer Book

Convention strategists—the Presiding Bishop, the Rev. John B. Coburn, president of the House of Deputies, and the agenda and arrangements committee headed by Bishop Willis Henton of Northwest Texas—decided some time ago that the question of women's ordination should be disposed of as early as possible in the convention. Present plans call for the Draft Proposed Prayer Book to be debated and voted upon during the convention's first two days, with the priesting of women question to follow immediately afterwards.

For the first time, action on women's ordination will be initiated in the House of Bishops, where the proposal's chief sponsors, Bishops William F. Creighton of Washington and John Burt of Ohio, say they have attracted as supporters a majority of the bishops expected to attend the convention. Burt announced a few weeks ago that 67 bishops would sponsor the resolution and would be joined in the vote by 15 other supporters, assuring a total of at least 82 "yes" votes for women priests.

The division of the deputies on the ordination issue at this point is far too close to predict an outcome. Mrs. Park reported that deputations this year appear far more uniform in their viewpoint than was the case in 1973: the Coalition nose-count turned up only about 12 divided deputations in contrast to the 40 divisions recorded three years ago. It appears, in fact, that the deciding votes may be cast by the 21 overseas dioceses, which often do not seat full deputations because of the cost of travel but are still entitled to a full vote in each order if as many as one cleric

and one lay person are present to cast them.

In any event, voted up or down, the Prayer Book and women likely will be disposed of as convention issues by the middle of the convention's first week. At that point it is clearly the Presiding Bishop's hope that the convention's attention will turn primarily to what he sees as the great unifying opportunity for the convention and the church—a decision to launch a national fund drive with a goal of as much as \$100 million.

How to Spend \$100 Million

The plan for the "Partnership Fund," as approved by the Executive Council in April for submission to the convention, does include a dream book of some of the ways \$100 million might be spent—\$13 million for dioceses overseas to make all of them financially independent within fifteen years; \$20 million for other overseas Anglican and ecumenical work; \$15 to \$20 million for black colleges; \$7 million for education and training for ministry and for the Board for Theological Education; \$6.5 million for projects of social intervention under the aegis of an agency to be known as the Coalition for Human Needs.

But the ultimate beneficiaries of the \$100 million seemed almost incidental in Bishop Allin's call for the drive. Citing as his precedent for launching the partnership fund the Apostle Paul's collection for the church in Jerusalem (see the closing verses of First Corinthians), the Presiding Bishop declared:

"Paul's collection of money... was proposed as a task that would let the clear light of giving illuminate the true unity of Christians. It would brush back the clouds of fragmentation. The Apostle felt this unity needed to be seen by the world in general as well as by the Christians themselves. The collection of money was also proposed as a way in which the infant church could meet some pressing needs and responsibilities that had been laid upon it."

The design for the proposed campaign, in which Executive Council Vice President Oscar C. Carr, Jr. has played a key part, calls for the retention of Ward, Dreshman & Reinhardt, Inc., a fund-raising firm that has conducted drives in 50 dioceses. Under the proposal to be submitted to the convention, the firm's president, Harold Treash, will serve as full-time director of the Episcopal Church drive from October of this year until June 30, 1978, at a fee of \$96,000 a year. During the last six months of the campaign, when the most intensive fund-raising would go

on, Treash would be assisted by eight or nine associate directors who would receive \$5000 a month each.

Despite these high-powered salaries, however, Ward, Dreshman has a track record of relatively modest overall fund-raising costs. In the diocesan drives it has conducted, according to Carr, costs averaged four per cent of the funds raised. Several bishops familiar with the firm's work, including two skeptical of the wisdom of launching a major fund drive at this time, acknowledged the good reputation of the fund-raising firm. It is the Ward, Dreshman board chairman, Donald R. Hannum, who supplied the possible goal for the drive by declaring. "There can be no reasonable doubt that a goal of \$100 million is within the potential of the Episcopal Church." But still among many church leaders a sense of skepticism remains. New York's Bishop Paul Moore, Jr., for example, spoke of the massive financial needs that the Diocese of New York has been unable to meet and questioned whether fund-raisers for a national drive can hope to have better results among New York's potential givers.

7 Volume Teaching Series Slated

The Presiding Bishop is also lending his personal support to the preparation and issuance of a new Church's Teaching Series, although it remains to be seen the extent to which the convention will be permitted to review the decision to proceed with the publication of a new series. No money for the books is included in the budget to be presented to the convention. Rather the planners proposed to draw \$125,000 from the funds raised in the Partnership Plan; Seabury Press, which will publish the series, is pledged to provide the other \$125,000 deemed necessary to launch the publishing effort. Under the present schedule the manuscripts of the seven proposed volumes are to be completed in final form in the fall of 1977, with publication set for the following spring. The idea of a new teaching series is likely to stir opposition from those troubled by the cost and confident that books already available meet the need that the new books are intended to fulfill, but there may not be much they can do about it.

In any event whether bishops and deputies favor or oppose the Partnership Fund or the new Church's Teaching Series, neither project is likely to stir the passion that attended, say, the authorization and subsequent carrying out of the General Convention Special Program. Indeed an aura of blandness pervades most of what is currently slated to come before the convention. The House of Bishops and the House of Deputies will be asked by the Joint Committee

on Structure to approve a number of reforms of the convention, most notably a reduction of the representation of each diocese in the House of Deputies from eight deputies to six. The move would at one stroke reduce the swollen membership of the house by one quarter and eliminate the perennial debate over whether to abolish the rule that counts divided votes as negative. The Rev. Carlson Gerdau, a veteran deputy from the Diocese of Northern Michigan, commented briefly of the proposal: "It doesn't have a chance." Whether or not Gerdau's assessment is sound, the average person in the pew (or parson in the pulpit, for that matter) seldom is stirred up by debates over institutional structure.

Not much fire seems likely either in the three-way race for the presidency of the House of Deputies that is likely to get under way with the rap of the opening gavel, since the deputies are required by their rules to fill the vacant vice presidency of the house as their first order of business. Normally the vice president succeeds to the presidency when it becomes vacant, as it will when Dr. Coburn leaves office at the conclusion of the convention to be consecrated Bishop of Massachusetts. Candidates for the Coburn job are Lueta Bailey of Griffin, Ga., the first woman ever to run for the post; Charles Lawrence of New York, a professor of sociology at Brooklyn College; and Walker Taylor, a Wilmington, N. C., insurance man and former member of the Executive Council staff.

Even that old standby as a source of controversy, the Church in Society program proposal is strangely passionless. Bishop Paul Moore, presenting the report of his advisory committee on church in society to the Executive Council, used the strongest possible language, declaring he now has "the most urgent concern I have ever had for the social mission of the church."

City, Moral Bankruptcy Linked

"I really believe that we are at a crisis, not only in American life but in the life of Western culture," he told the council, as he questioned whether free societies would survive the next 15 years. The economic turmoil of New York and other great cities, he went on, may well be the early warning symptoms of the "ultimate destruction of a society which cannot deal with its weakest members."

But despite the urgency of his words, Bishop Moore's own tone and that of his committee's report was calm, almost resigned, and the proposal itself is modest—essentially a continuation of the present grants for minority programs and empowerment, though fueled with even less

money unless outside funding can be located; development of programs responding to the challenge of such issues as domestic and world hunger, housing shortages, economic injustice and sexism; and the creation of a church-wide network concerned about the social mission of the church gathered in an umbrella body called the Coalition for Human Needs.

Bishop Moore spoke to the Executive Council of the weariness he has encountered among those once concerned with social questions—"a strange cessation of energy throughout the world," he called it, that has characterized "the strange quiet '70s"—and some of those who served on his committee said they saw this same weariness in the



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bishop and many of the other veterans of the '60s social action battles. Few committee members seemed to have much hope that the broad reaches of the church or the General Convention could be mobilized this year in support of a bold, dramatic, potent program of social action. "I don't see much enthusiasm for pursuing this in the church as a whole," said one participant, "but you've got to do what you can."

The convention then conceivably could run its course in the spirit of calm and lack of unsettling controversy that many of its leaders seem to hope for. Bishop Henton, who heads the agenda and arrangements committee of the convention for example conversed reluctantly with a reporter about the preliminary scheduling decisions made for the convention. "Sometimes you pre-program issues by giving them too much attention," he said.

Sex, a quietly ticking bomb

There is, however, amidst the surface calm of the pre-convention preparations, one quietly ticking bomb—a series of resolutions to be introduced by the Joint Committee on the Church and Human Affairs, chaired by Bishop George Murray of the Central Gulf Coast. These resolutions would commit the Episcopal Church to a systematic exploration of what a contemporary Christian view of sexuality, including homosexuality, might be; assert that homosexuals, like members of other minorities, should be entitled to the protection of civil rights law; and call for the repeal of all laws regulating non-commercial sexual conduct except those designed to protect minors and "public decorum."

It is no news that contemporary men and women, including church people, are deeply confused about what kinds of sexual activities are morally acceptable and what kinds are not. Views range from countenancing sexual activity solely between husband and wife on one extreme to the precept "If it feels good, do it" on the other. Particularly unsettling for many people is having to acknowledge the existence of homosexual conduct, at least among persons they know, much less endorsing it as acceptable behavior for some people.

Yet the convention is going to be asked to debate the question of homosexuality, and not in a vacuum but under the watchful, visible and interested eyes of Episcopalians, including clergy, who openly acknowledge they are active homosexuals. The two-year-old Integrity organization, an association of gay Episcopalians, plans to operate a booth in the exhibit hall that, in the words of one Integrity leader, will be "staffed at all times by either members of Integrity or other Christians who are gay and happy about it."

The booth's personnel, continued the Rev. Ronald Wesner of Philadelphia, will be a "visible, incarnate presence at the convention. Gay people have been at General Convention all along. I know—I've been there, but this time others will have to acknowledge them."

Homosexuals have been present in the church including the clergy, all along for that matter. A bishop of a Western diocese, for example, estimates that perhaps as many as one-quarter of the clergy of his diocese are homosexual. In one recent episcopal election, two of the four nominees for bishop were homosexuals; according to clergy in that diocese. The House of Bishops has had a committee of bishops for some years now that has been quietly studying the phenomenon of homosexual clergy and what, if anything, to do about it. But Minneapolis 1976 seems likely

to be the first convention that will have to wrestle with the question openly. (Presumably the convention will have to deal, as well, with the report of the Murray committee, and with a memorial from the Diocese of Texas calling upon the convention to prohibit the ordination of homosexuals to the ministry.

Ruth Tiffany Barnhouse and the Very Rev. Urban T. Holmes III, editors of *Male and Female: Christian Approaches to Sexuality*, one of the three study guides* for the convention published by Seabury at the direction of the Presiding Bishop, declare in their preface that "an attitude to homosexuality necessarily involves an attitude to heterosexuality—these are not independent issues. They must both emerge whenever we consider human sexuality generally, since they touch on the fundamental configuration of the human person as he or she attempts, the difficult process of integration of the personality. The day has clearly come when the church must do more than quote or misquote the Bible—depending on one's view—to justify a position."

Father Wesner of Integrity, a priest for 13 years who publicly acknowledged his homosexuality last year, puts it even more strongly: "The liberation of homosexuals will be the liberation of humanity," he said. "I think the two issues of gay people in the church and the ordination of women to the priesthood are deeply interrelated. The distress over these two issues is coming from the general distress over sexuality. When one is comfortable with his own sexuality, he is comfortable with sexual variations."

The topic of sexuality, particularly homosexuality, has the emotional power to unloose the kind of process that made the 1969 special convention at South Bend one of the most dramatic and decisive conclaves of a national church body in modern times. It is often forgotten that the actions taken at South Bend were planned by no agenda and arrangements committee: the convention planners had quite another program in mind. The convention was confronted rather by demands from the real world—Black people calling for power, young people calling for an end of war—and found within its cumbersome procedures the flexibility to respond, at least in part, to the demands.

Many lamentations have been sounded by tidy-minded reformers about the swollen, creaky House of Deputies, and indeed sooner or later the convention may have to reflect further on the bizarre arrangements that permit

* This volume and its companions, *To Be a Priest: Perspectives on Vocation and Ordination*, edited by Robert E. Terwilliger and Urban T. Holmes III, and *Realities and Visions: The Church's Mission Today*, edited by Furman C. Stough and Urban T. Holmes III, are available at \$3.95 each from Seabury Press, 815 2nd Avenue, New York, N.Y. 10017.

60-odd communicants of the Diocese of El Salvador to cast four votes in the House of Deputies, just like the four votes allotted the 80,000-odd communicants in the Diocese of Connecticut. But despite its unwieldiness, the House of Deputies has demonstrated that it is capable of moving when effectively challenged. Perhaps this is true—and truer of the deputies than the theoretically more "liberal" House of Bishops—because of the deputies' openness to the extraordinary profusion of lobbyists who gather round an Episcopal General Convention.

The proliferation of voluntary organizations that are a distinctively Anglican contribution to the church scene invariably gather in force at General Conventions; increasingly they are flanked by delegations from concerned congregations who come to camp on the convention doorstep to see their church at its legislative work and to offer their own comments and criticisms. In recent years a good-sized temporary village has sprung up around each convention, a village in fact served three years ago by the three daily newspapers—the official Convention Daily, the conservative and sometimes contentious ACU News and the breezy and frequently witty Issues, sponsored by a coalition of progressive-minded organizations ranging from Associated Parishes to the Church Society for College Work. And all of these convention visitors are talking to every deputy they can find.

Predictions are dangerous, but it at least seems possible that a wide open debate on sexuality might raise the convention to an energy level at which it would be enabled to act in a more than pro forma manner on the issues raised for it by the Church in Society proposals. Then the convention might find within itself the power to demand the people of the church to really do something about reforming the unjust economic system they collaborate with, and to bind up many more of those wounded by the system's operation.

William R. MacKaye identifies himself as "a veteran Episcopalian" and former religion editor of the *Washington Post*.

COME SEE US !

Representatives from Church and Society Network and THE WITNESS magazine will be in Booth No. 122 at the General Convention. Come chat with us.

Church and Society Network: A Tale Anxious for the Telling

By Alice Dieter

If the Church and Society Network exists in the summer of 1976, then it exists more as an idea than a reality. But ideas have a way of creating reality, and that is what the Network is intended to do. The reality it seeks would be an exuberant, irrepressible and prophetic linking of people who believe there is a Gospel imperative for social concern. People willing to take action, challenging the institutional church right along with the other institutions of our society, to fulfill that Gospel demand.

The reality so far is that the Network has been little more than a series of meetings discussing itself. I attended one of the first such meetings deliberately held in the "hinterland," which can be specifically defined as anywhere in the United States outside of New York City and Washington, D.C. In this case, the hinterland was Seattle, and those of us invited to be grass roots were from parishes throughout the Pacific Northwest. I do not say we "represented" parishes from that region, but rather that we were individuals who claim church identity from its parishes and dioceses.

From Oregon, Washington, Idaho and Alaska we came to hear about the Network, or rather the idea of the Network. It is this: the church, by its very nature, tends to speak to the manifestations of problems rather than to the cause of them. And just now the church is in dire need. It is in danger of ignoring even manifestations. Without too much effort the church can satisfy its institutional conscience by dealing with the hurts of society through the traditional responses of charity and never really face the existence of



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human alienation and oppression or act to eliminate the roots of these evils.

The idea of the Network came from Bishop Robert DeWitt. It took shape as he planned his resignation as diocesan bishop of Pennsylvania. DeWitt resigned because he believes that no diocesan bishop should hold office longer than 10 years. Without diocesan responsibilities he wanted to see what might be done to help people deal with the root causes of the problems of oppression. And he was looking for others with the same concern to be part of the effort.

That day in Seattle came and went in talk as we got to know each other and tried to determine if we were such people. For some of us the idea recalled the sense of purpose of the anti-war effort. The Network sounded almost familiar. We discussed the issues we believed were crucial. Issues we saw causing human pain and disruption. Issues for society that the church seemed to take no real institutional cognizance of. The list is not unpredictable, although our regional perspectives gave it specifics that may have the distinctive mark of time and place.

There were economic issues and issues of human displacement and there were crucial environmental concerns. Alaska's pipeline, Washington's Trident submarine base, Oregon's new aluminum plant, the threats of environmental pollution, the economic disruption of national agricultural policies on the family ranch or farm, the failure of our people to understand the situation of the Indian reservations in our states or the urban poor in our cities. Was there a way the church could help people to understand the *causes* of social disruption? Was there a way the church could lead to less energy-consumption life styles? Was there a way the church could help us shape changes as change rushed upon us? Was there a way we could move the church to consider the issues? Or was the church, weighted with its own institutional agenda, a lost cause?

Will the Real Church Please...

Of course, there was also the issue of ordination for women. For some of us, but by no means all, that subject was a paramount concern. Unless the church could accept

all its people as made fully in the image of God, was it the church?

That first meeting took place more than 18 months ago. And it has had its own results in several diocesan conventions as well as in some new human links across our vast western miles.

Since then, Bob DeWitt and his colleague, Hugh White from Detroit, have held many such meetings; and there have been regional follow-ups, communication letters, national steering committee meetings and all the other tedious manifestations that inevitably accompany the phenomenon of social organization. The scorecard last spring was that contacts have been made in 44 dioceses spread across every region of the country. As a result of this effort, 22 local groups have met more than once, 16 can be fairly counted as sustaining, 10 to 12 are "dormant" but still in contact. The mailing list was counted at 575. Not a multitude, admittedly, but certainly a worthy beginning.

The effort has been powered by the energy of the two organizers and by funds given to Bishop DeWitt for the Network project at the time of his resignation by Trinity Church of New York City, Lilly Endowment, Inc., and a number of caring individuals. Additional financial resources have come from the Episcopal Church Publishing Company, which also publishes THE WITNESS magazine.

All that organizing activity has also resulted in the creation of a national board made up of people attending the local meetings. We have issued a series of policy statements and determined some immediate priorities for action. These priorities include the publication of a study guide by fall and the determination that the Network will be present at the church's national convention in Minneapolis in September to assist in enlarging and enlivening the issues.

In the process of talking to itself about itself, the Network has said some heavy things:

The Church and Society Network is composed of people inside and outside the institutional church who, out of concern for the mission of the church, are committed to work for the liberation of all persons from oppression.

A further comment on that statement of identity is that we intend to be a place for those who refuse to separate prayer from action, or action from prayer. For us, each tests the truth of the other.

The Network recognizes that systemic change is necessary to eliminate the alienation and injustice which are at the root of the religious and social crisis of our day; and in pursuing the task of liberation gives high priority to fundamental social analysis.

This statement recognizes that the structures and institutions of our society cause our nation's seemingly chronic inability to provide domestic justice and freedom for all our citizens or to stand as a reliable ally of justice and freedom internationally. We must accurately diagnose why injustice and social malfunction occur if we are to correct such evils.

The Network understands key forms of oppression to be racism, sexism, classism and imperialism. Informed by this analysis, the Network shall initiate and participate, locally and nationally, in programs of action designed to eliminate these oppressions as they are manifest in society, including the church, to help create a society which meets the needs of its people.

That adds up to saying that we are individually and collectively committed to work for dignity and justice in the social system...to challenge systemic oppression and expose its roots as offensive to the Christian Gospel.

The foregoing represents a considerable amount of hard work and mostly loving argument among those of us who have worked to form the Network. They certainly represent the rhetorical hazards of consensus seeking; but they also offer some degree of progress toward defining a reality that might represent an idea.

The Network can be said to have historical antecedents. History is something dear to us who (although our fellow parishioners may not believe it) treasure tradition as much as the next Episcopalian. We just highlight different, less comfortable, traditions.

The CLID Connection

There are obvious connections between the Network and the Church League for Industrial Democracy. The CLID was born of World War I and provided a vibrant stimulus to the church and the country during the 1920s and '30s. Relishing creative turmoil, the members of the CLID spoke, held seminars, wrote and admonished church and society to the end that the economic problems of the depression and the conditions of an industrial society be attended.

Later there was the Church Society for College Work, formed in the late 1920s to approach the world of the college campus as if it were yet another missionary field. Raising money to augment the salaries of ministers near college and university centers, CSCW fueled a linkage of church leaders and the intellectual youth of that time that shaped lives and thoughts for decades to come.

The 1950s called forth the Episcopal Society for Cultural and Racial Unity; people who saw the upcoming racial turmoil and decried the church's inattention to the crisis which culminated in the civil rights battles of the '60s.

Always of the church, yet always challenging it, these remnant organizations are perhaps the best way, maybe the only way, the church has of responding to the history that presses hard upon her. Never have such groups been counted as numerically powerful. Always they have seen themselves as minorities within the fringes of the institution. Often they have been irritating. But, at their most faithful, they have been prophetic servants of the Gospel and the Church.

There is also a link between the Network and that wrenching time for the institutional church when prophetic action was, briefly, central and official; when the General Convention's Special Program pumped \$7 to \$9 million to political and economic self-determination for minority peoples. After that the winds blew, the pews rattled, and the church closed the window and looked inward toward its spiritual navel, away from risk.

Social concern became a void. That is the reality of the church for the Network in 1976. That is why the meetings, the rhetoric and the yet blurred, unclear definitions requiring articles to explain manifestos. Some understanding of the problem can be found in the organizing experience itself.

DeWitt and White say they have found people around the country with growing concerns about the directions of society, and growing convictions that not much can be done about it. In the midst of the bicentennial of a revolution, we suffer from the collective shrug of the shoulder. People are friendly, but marching to banners or causes is passe. And significant regional differences exist in the common view of what is real or possible in dealing with social issues.

There are some of us convinced of the values of already defined alternative political and economic systems. Others believe that since all systems require continual remodeling there is less point in arguing the brand-name rhetoric of competing social and economic theories than in dealing with specifics. The "how to" manual for doing social analysis on such a diverse and dispersed scale hasn't been written.

And large numbers of vital people live on the boundaries of the church, not quite in exile, not quite enrolled, disquieted at what the church should be but isn't, yet not willing to call for Pontius Pilate's basin for a handwashing scene. Of such diversity the Network seeks to create a new reality. From where will the unity evolve? That question is so difficult it may measure the importance of the task.

Alice Dieter is an Editorial Associate with Boise Cascade Corporation and a national board member of Church and Society.

Invitation to Action

Church and Society, the alter ego of THE WITNESS, is:

- A network of Episcopalians and others, inside and outside the institutional church.
- Who, out of concern for the social mission of the church are committed to work for the liberation of all persons from oppression.

Church and Society invites you to join along with others at the local, regional and national level to reflect on those structures of society which are oppressing many and threatening all. Further, it is a call to risk taking specific actions which will stand up to the principalities and powers.

THE LOCAL CHAPTER is the basic organizing unit of the Church and Society Network. It is the center for the development, celebration, and practice of Christian faith in the construction of a new society. Theology and bible study, social analysis, joint action, celebration and support of members' life work, and political and social struggles are hallmarks of this level.

THE REGION consists at present of nine areas across the country encompassing several local groups. The regional level provides a means of communication between chapters and between the national executive committee. Conveners are:

Northwest—Cabell Tennis, 1245 Tenth Ave. East, Seattle, Wash. 98102; Midwest—Henri Stines, 125 E. 26th St., Chicago, Ill. 60616; Appalachia—Richard Gressle, 315 Shady Ave., Pittsburgh, Pa. 15206; Central South—Harcourt Waller, 1737 Queens Road, Charlotte, N.C. 28207; New York-Connecticut—Joseph A. Pelham, 235 Crosman Terrace, Rochester, N.Y. 14620; Mid-Atlantic—Cynthia Bourgeault, Good Hope Road, Landenberg, Pa. 19350; California—Richard Gillett, 132 N. Euclid, P., Pasadena, Cal. 91101; Texas and New England regions—conveners to be selected.

THE NATIONAL EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE responsibilities include shaping national policy and programs from initiatives received from regions and local chapters and developing relationships with Christian movements and organizations at the national and international level.

For further information on the C&S Network, write the regional convener nearest you or Church and Society, P.O. Box 359, Ambler, Pa. 19002.



Jimmy Carter is an evangelical Protestant and a politician. This combination bothers some people. Starched Episcopalians are disturbed because they are snobs. Non-believers are incredulous. Still others are alarmed because they fear the use of religion to cloak and justify illegitimate power. None of these responses, however, strikes me as being particularly pertinent in penetrating the mystery of the political phenomenon called Jimmy Carter.

Nor is it a matter of accepting or rejecting Carter's piety as if it could be separated out, judged and ultimately contained. Unlike John F. Kennedy, whose faith apparently was minimal and at any rate extraneous to his politics, Carter's faith is entwined with politics. Let us take him at his word: his politics expresses his faith. It is possible then, that Carter's evangelical Protestantism provides the clue to understanding his seemingly odd, vague and contradictory mishmash of ideals and policies.

I believe Carter's political approach stands in contrast to three dominant political modes: formalistic politics, issue or interest politics and eschatological politics. Moreover, Carter's campaign, by no means a purely negative one, is based on a very traditional religio-political understanding

Carter's Politics of Nostalgia

By William R. Coats

of society. Indeed I suggest that Carter's campaign is dominated by nostalgia for pioneer America.

I will begin by using ecclesiastical imagery to explain what I mean by Carter's contrast with or, perhaps, revolt against, formalistic politics. Most mainline churchpeople wear their religion on their sleeves. Ecclesiastically and politically they focus on ritual and formal behavior. Historically, leading sectors of the mainline churches have actively participated in political life—but in a certain way. They counsel strict adherence to law and public ritual, matters which guarantee a class society. In elections they seek the structured, public policies behind the symbols and images, while their social compassion is exercised through formal public or private agencies.

For other Americans, particularly evangelicals, religion and life is a matter of the heart. Often lacking in traditions of political activity, they find public ritual and power intimidating and often persecutive. The heart and not law or policy is primary. First comes the conversion of the heart which is then manifested in public life in moral character. Indeed the real source of social trouble, as they see it, is deficiency of moral virtue which can be corrected only by conversion of the heart. Politics, to them, is moral character expressed publicly. For that reason Carter's personal faith, his simple talk, his call to virtue and wholesome endeavor signifies the kind of "politics of the heart" which millions of Americans think is basic to political life. "Whatever mistakes I may make," Jimmy Carter tells us, "I will never lie to the American people."

By its nature, "politics of the heart" requires a

personalistic and individualistic campaign. Indeed, Carter's style of intimate address, the projected image of the "outsider," the appeal to personal moral images is in sharp contrast to the issue-oriented approach. Labor leaders and crusading liberals bemoan Carter's success. And with reason. Carter addresses voters in their most primitive political capacity, namely as political isolates. Voters do not confront Carter as members of unions or as participants in social movements, still less as members of a social class.

Voters Politically Naked

To put it crudely, voters stand before Carter politically and socially naked. In this way they welcome his assurances, his description of America as a land of vigorous individual effort (and not social movements), his call to rise above interests and issues (Carter says he speaks on "themes" and not issues), his challenge to act individually and decently. By breaking people off from their social setting, Carter, in effect, negates the power of interest-conscious labor and issue-oriented liberals and re-presents the pre-twentieth century vision of America as a land of rugged individualists and lone pioneers.

It also is clear that Carter's campaign contrasts sharply with eschatological politics. Traditional eschatological politics takes the form of a reforming crusade in which the call for action presumes a flawed nation in need of social change. This tradition, which goes back to the Puritans, has found its most recent expression in the holy crusades led by George McGovern and Eugene McCarthy. Like the Puritans, contemporary crusaders have relied on a pessimistic impulse—a sense of despair, an awareness of deep and fundamental crisis—to prompt people to action.

Carter, on the other hand, urges people to act out of confidence that things are fundamentally right. Carter's evangelical milieu reflects enlightenment and pietistic assumptions, not those of Puritan Calvinism. Consequently he has replaced eschatology with ontology. His political sermons are filled with calm assurance that the people are virtuous and that our institutions are basically sound. Indeed the atmosphere of steady confidence projected by Carter and very much reminiscent of the campaigns of Franklin Roosevelt, stands over against the eschatologies of the crusading Morris Udall, the hate-soaked George Wallace and the War-mongering Ronald Reagan. Only Gerald Ford measures up to Carter in this regard, save that the President's believability is hampered by a stiff

plasticity.

Eschatological politics is also characterized by a political approach which assumes a systemic social malady and thus the need for a comprehensive social solution. But Carter's followers are not prepared to give such primacy to the social fabric. Instead they have chosen the human heart as the primary battlefield of good and evil. Consequently they are led to assume that society is basically a collection of fundamentally harmonious private interests. To some degree the absence of personal morality might spill over into society, but it is not private interests themselves which have a flaw. Thus, if there is to be anything like a public policy, it should emphasize minimal State interference. And this is exactly the nature of Carter's approach.

Left of Doctrinaire Right

It should be noted, however, that this is different from the Reagan position. Doctrinaire rightists see the basic struggle in society between private interests and the State. Carter's following focuses on the individual and the conflict within the human heart with the State a potentially bothersome but not necessarily evil force. Carter's economics are decidedly right of Center—which fits his ad hoc and minimalist view of the State—but he is no champion of the absolutely free market or the reign of the corporation.

Jimmy Carter's evangelical politics (or political evangelicalism) recalls a basic American dream: That of a nation free of the class bitterness of Europe, composed of hardworking, honest and virtuous individuals. It is a vision of the early frontier, the America of the pioneer—independent, basically good at heart, willing to act for the common good when called upon, asking in return only that there be few entanglements and there be no encroachment on individual freedom (such as with trade unions or political machines).

Recalls Woodsmen Image

This is the most basic American dream: A nation of self-reliant people, detesting lies, wanting simple, ad hoc programs, refusing to believe social trouble is deep or that the national life is flawed. Whereas Reagan recalls the war-whooping, gun-toting frontier brinkmanship of "Doc" Haliday and the wild West of Tombstone, Arizona, Carter bespeaks the woodsmen of early Virginia and Ohio

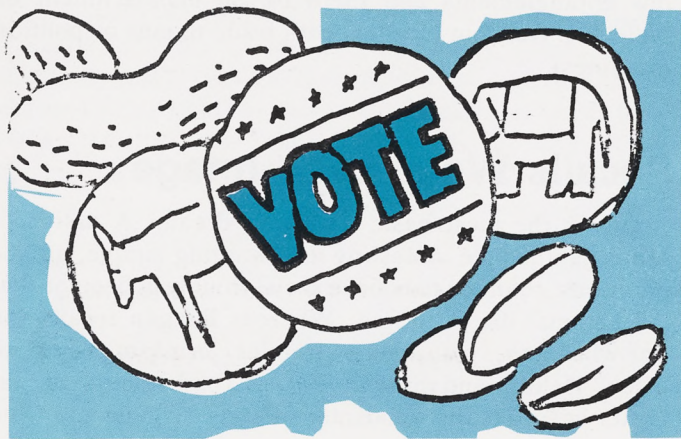
(Carter's strength is in the South and Midwest), the citizen of republican virtue of whom Thomas Jefferson dreamed. This is the vision which still inspires millions of Americans, particularly rural and suburban Americans, conservative Democrats and small business people, who form Carter's following. And this vision of America owes as much to the political work of Jefferson, James Madison and Andrew Jackson as it does to early evangelical Protestantism.

Of course, Carter the man is different from the Carter movement. He is a shrewd politician and knows that the real political world is composed of interests, class-conflict and social movements. Yet, for all this sophistication, both Carter and the image he is projecting can best be understood in the categories of evangelical politics I have outlined. His conservative economics, his ad hoc approach to policy, his appeal to the heart, his evident moral sincerity—all mark Jimmy Carter as the politician of evangelical America. And to that degree a product of political nostalgia.

I say nostalgia because I believe none of the outlines of evangelical politics to be ultimately real or relevant for our day. The question then emerges: If elected, what will Carter do when the harsh reality of class interest overwhelms the pieties of evangelical politics?

For me the answer is a sad one. I suspect Jimmy Carter will do what all evangelicals do when pushed. They move to the Right, where ideologically (though not socially) they already have ties. While campaigning in Michigan, it should be reported, Carter easily picked up the support of Henry Ford and many of the top executives at Chrysler and General Motors. A man, after all, is really known by the friends he keeps.

William R. Coats is Episcopal chaplain at the University of Wisconsin, Milwaukee.



Continued from page 3

our social structures and institutions unites victims of these differing oppressions in a common bondage. To be a woman, or to be Black, or to be poor—any one of these is a grievous liability in this society. But what of the "triple jeopardy" of being all three at once?

Women can claim with good reason that sexism is the most ancient form of oppression in human society. For countless generations women have borne the burden of a stereotype of inferiority, a denial of the fullness of the reflection of the image of God. Their being denied access to the "higher orders" of the ministry in the Episcopal Church is a reminder of how the dead hand of an oppressive past is still upon us.

Racism, too, has a tragically long history in human society. In America this racism has a particular form and content. Without an understanding of Black oppression, one cannot understand America. And without being Black, it is very difficult to understand Black oppression. This is the irony of seeking to solve the problems of America without coming to terms with American racism.

And there are those who are hungry because they are poor. And although many are women, and many are Black, and many are both, there are many who are neither. Millions of people in this country are hungry. There are many more such millions around the world. Be they women, or Black, or in Bangladesh or India, or in Bolivia or Peru, they have no sense of solidarity in their hunger. But there is a remarkable coherence and organization in the economic and political institutions and powers which cause and perpetuate that hunger, and that also maintain the patterns of sexism and racism.

Our church, therefore, clearly is hearing the mandate, the perennial call to serve society. Just as clearly, our church through its official structures is too encumbered with this world to be able freely to respond.

We must use the term "church" with care. It is the official structures of the institutional church which through the centuries have been conformed to their world. And at no time or place more so than in the years of the church in the American Republic. Even so, God has not left Himself without witness. The long story of the Christian church, as well as the short story of the Episcopal Church in America, is brightened with stars who were exceptions, the "untold story" of people and movements—truly "the church," though outside its official structures—who have not been conformed to this world, who have been in the vanguard of needed reform and renewal. We are not only the inheritors of an ambiguous church tradition. We are also the beneficiaries of these clear witnesses.

A 1957 Projection



Wishful thinking and illusion can combine with energetic planning to suggest that things are not so bad—unconsciously our expectations have been scaled down, reorganization of parishes and the demolition of buildings rid us of hauntings from the past as we erect smaller buildings for far vaster populations in our cities.

Our eager hearts leap at every evangelistic opportunity and are easily assured that the trough of the wave is passed and revival before us. There are even accommodating theologies that can reconcile us to the situation...And always there is our busyness, and indeed our proper business in maintaining the Church and her customary work, and more than enough to do without worrying about impossible things we may have left undone.

The reasons popularly given, both inside and outside the churches, for the weakness and collapse are woefully superficial and betray ignorance of the process of history through which the churches have passed since urbanization and industrialization in the modern sense began some seven or eight generations ago. Indeed, unless we become better informed, in twenty years' time we may blame the nakedness of the scene upon television!

(E. R. Wickham, Page 11-12 *Church and People in an Industrial City*, 1957)

Letters - continued from page 2

Questions for Van Buren

The following was written to Paul Van Buren in response to his article "People of the Promise" in the June issue of THE WITNESS.

Dear Paul:

It was very interesting to read your article on "The People of the Promise" right after Bill Stringfellow's "The Destiny of the Nation." The questions I want to ask you flow from a comparison of the two pieces.

Stringfellow starts from a confession of faith in Jesus as Messiah, defined in New Testament terms, which he takes to be normative for Christians today. On the basis of this confession he is free to radically criticize this nation, this century and the prevailing technological order. For him the message of the Lordship of Jesus is the same yesterday, today and forever. It is not something to be proved by the actions of Christians but simply witnessed to. It is not a message of hope in any naive sense of that word. It is a faith which can inspire and undergird resistance.

You write about the need to reconstruct the traditional Christian understanding of Jesus as Messiah along Jewish lines. Your respondent, Michael Fishbane, suggests that you open the possibility that Jesus was a false Messiah; those of us who believe in him will have to demonstrate that he is the Redeemer. The first question I want to ask is how far does Fishbane really understand your position?

When you say we must do "all we can to prepare for the day of renewal," are you adopting a progress-oriented understanding of history? If so, is the rapprochement you are building just going to be between liberal Jews and liberal Christians? Will there be room for the Christian or Jew with a radical eschatology?

I think Jesus *is* to be understood as the light to the Gentiles and that there can be a very creative co-existence between the two faiths. But I want to resist any attempt to resolve the essential mystery of each faith in a common theology. There are still two Covenants (as you say, at least two!)

I also join you in wanting to reject Christian imperialism. But I have found that it is precisely an old-fashioned "Jesus is Lord" theology which is enabling many Christians to struggle against the secular imperialism which is the real, demonic force today. Is the Resurrection what you say it is, a "tantalizing glimpse" of something yet to come? I guess it is. But it is also for us what Paul of Tarsus said it was, God's designation of Jesus as Lord and Messiah.

Rev. David Gracie
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

C & S, Witness to Run 3 Panels at Convention

Church and Society, in cooperation with THE WITNESS magazine, will sponsor three panel discussions on "Sexism," "Racism," and the "Theology of Hunger" on Sept. 13, 14, and 15, respectively at the General Convention in Minneapolis.

Among those who have already accepted invitations to participate are Gustavo Gutierrez of Peru, noted liberation theologian; Pam Chinnis, presiding officer, Women's Triennial; Rosemary Ruether, author and theologian; and Bishops Coleman McGehee of Michigan and John Walker, newly elected coadjutor of Washington, D.C.

Other outstanding panelists both from the Convention and outside the church will speak at the sessions, scheduled for noon.

Tickets at \$2 (which includes a light lunch) will be available at THE WITNESS/Church and Society exhibit booth (No. 122) while they last. For further information and a complete roster of speakers, check booth No. 122.

Study/Action Guide to Debut

A Study-Action guide to assist local groups in probing the social mission of the church and to provide clues for how to bring about social change will make its appearance at the General Convention in Minneapolis in September.

The guide was prepared by men and women, ordained and lay, activists and theoreticians, amateurs and professionals—all identified with the Church and Society Network. They undertook the task because two years of work with groups across the country indicated the need for a study guide at the grass roots level.

Designed that a group might move collectively through 12 sessions, the guide embraces the history of social concern on the part of the church, the theological convictions which have kept that concern alive, social analysis and a glimpse of some alternative societies, and suggestions as to how the foregoing relate to celebration and corporate worship.

Each unit will be self-contained, including study materials, questions around the readings, and bibliography. A section on guidelines for action rounds out the publication.

Look for it at THE WITNESS/Church and Society booth (No. 122) where publications of THE WITNESS and Church and Society will be available.

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