

VOLUME • 72 NUMBER • 1 JANUARY 1989

THE WITNESS

A theology of intimacy

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Letters

Of shamans and cooks

Bishop William Spofford's sermon (November WITNESS) on the occasion of the election of Barbara Harris as Suffragan Bishop-elect of Massachusetts amused me.

His allusion to certain "gifts and actions" connected to the priesthood as being connected to womanhood reminded me of some of the records on shamans of the various Indo-European cultures. (What were called *berdaches* by the American Indians.) Many of those records note that the shamans (i.e., *men* who dressed as women and took on female traits) exceeded women in their arts. They might make better cloth or bead products; or keep a better house.

Such conceit makes me think of our present practice of using "chef" when we talk of men; "cook" for women. For those who would subsist on truffles or capers and cracked green peppercorns in white wine sauce over whatever is in the refrigerator, that's fine. Personally, I'm a meat and potatoes folk; I prefer a good "cook" every day.

We ought to remember that priests evolved out of the shaman tradition. And we might do well to speculate that women were kept out of the priesthood for fear of competition.

I've only met Ms. Harris once, and then only for a moment at the "Under One Roof Conference." However, I've followed her "Struggles" column in your pages for a number of years. And, if I might, I would observe that the old boys may be finally meeting their match!

John Kavanaugh
Detroit, Mich.

Brazil includes women

Too often we only hear of the conflicts connected with the ordination of women. Of course, with the election of Barbara Harris as Suffragan Bishop in the Dio-

cese of Massachusetts, a woman, Black, and powerful, we remember all the women that struggled through the years in order that one day this wonderful event could be a possibility. We women in Brazil rejoice in her election and our prayers are with her in this new ministry.

I feel it is important to share with the readers of THE WITNESS a small victory for the ordained women of Brazil, which besides being a Third World country is still very much a *macho* world. I have worked in Brazil for 10 years, and for the past year and a half I have been Dean of the Cathedral in Brasilia. At the recent election in October for the Diocesan Bishop of Brasilia I was amazed to be the runner-up. I believe recognition needs to be given to this small Province of the Anglican Communion for its courage and openness to listen to God's call to become an ever more inclusive church which recognizes the significant contribution women are making in its leadership.

Revda. Dea Patricia Ann Powers
Brasilia, Brazil

How 'bout dem liberals?

Can an unrepentant Methodist liberal (leaning to radical) share something that he recently read with people of the Anglican Communion (especially George Bush)?

Some time ago I was reminded to turn in the King James Version to *Isaiah* 32 and read the first eight verses — you gentle readers "just know" that the King James Version has to be the "true and inerrant" word. Even Jerry Falwell says so.

Imagine my surprise when I read verse five, which says "The vile person shall no more be called liberal, nor a churl bountiful." Verse seven reads "The instruments also of the churl are evil; he cherisheth wicked devices to destroy the poor with lying words, even when the

needy speaketh right." It gets better with verse eight. "But the liberal deviseth liberal things, and by liberal things shall he stand." How about that!

So I tried other translations of Scripture. Only a Jewish version read like the King James Version. Other translations use "noble" instead of liberal. That's OK, too. I always knew liberals were noble. Then I looked up the word churl; among other things, it means stingy or miserly. Could that really have meant *conservative*? I wonder.

Robert Keosian
Hawthorne, N.J.

Can't have it both ways

Thoughtful readers cannot fail to react to Charles Sutton, Jr.'s letter in the November issue. He criticizes THE WITNESS for its failure to be *inclusive* and demands that the principle of inclusiveness in the Episcopal Church must apply to him and other "conservatives." This demand follows the first paragraph of his letter that calls for the *exclusion* of gays and women. Charlie, you can't have it both ways — inclusive for *all* or exclusive for whomever those in power wish to exclude. I invite you to read the Gospels to see which alternative Jesus would have us choose.

Peter Kane
Churchville, N.Y.

Guard's role exposed

Bravo for the article exposing how our National Guard has joined the secret war in Central America (October WITNESS).

Central America is a nice place to visit; I was there in December 1987 and July 1988. It's a nice place to live; I lived there from 1975 to 1986. But is it a place for our Army Reserve and National Guard to train, or for U.S. military personnel to be assigned to?

Ask Karen Schwab, widow of Jeffrey

Schwab of Plainfield, Ill. who was killed in November 1984 while "training" along the Honduran-Nicaraguan border. I visited with Jeffrey's parent to get the story.

Why can other Western nations like Canada, Italy, Switzerland and Spain manage to carry on aid programs in Central America without using a military apparatus? It's much more likely the people will view their presence as disinterested humanitarian help.

Let's encourage Americans to go to Central America as missionaries, as resource people for the Central American church. Let's beef up the Peace Corps, transferring Pentagon funds to civilian agencies, and allow them to get their "training" in Honduras. Let Americans train for peace rather than war.

On April 15, 1988 the Central American Catholic Bishops challenged our country to become a pacesetter when they said: "And we urge all the nations involved, but especially the great powers — the United States and the Soviet Union, in the name of Christ, the Prince of Peace — and in the name of humankind to come from the hands of God, *not to send any more arms to the region of Central America.*" (Santa Tecla Statement)

Nor any more Reservists or National Guardsmen either, I say.

**Bernard A. Survil
Donegal, Pa.**

(The American Friends Service Committee has published a pamphlet by Elizabeth Killough on the National Guard in Central America, from which THE WITNESS article was excerpted. Entitled Off Guard: Questions and Answers on the Role of Our National Guard, it is a useful resource and can be ordered for 50¢ (100 for \$25) from Peace Education/AFSC, 1500 Cherry St., Philadelphia, PA 19102. — Ed.)

U.S. aid supports war

In reference to your timely article by David Gracie about the refugees of El Salvador returning home (November WITNESS), our solidarity with the refugees and poor of El Salvador is imperative.

El Salvador is truly the modern day Holy Land — and North America, I fear, Rome. I urge readers to learn more about tiny El Salvador, a small country that receives a huge \$1.5 million a day from our nation's government for military aid — military aid that keeps the war raging.

We must not ignore the sufferings of our brothers and sisters in this hideously oppressed country, their sufferings caused in large part by our government's support of their military and oligarchy.

**Mary Ann Greenly
Reinholds, Pa.**

A fan for 62 years

I have been a WITNESS subscriber for over 50 years, and used to read it for 12 years before that, when working for a church in San Jose (after I graduated from St. Margaret's House). It was 5¢ a copy; we sold them to members of the congregation. I hope I can get more people to subscribe.

**Mary G. Zava
Laguna Beach, Cal.**

Spreading the word

I would like to invite you to consider granting a complimentary subscription to THE WITNESS for St. Deiniol's Library in North Wales.

St. Deiniol's is a unique institution which attracts clergy and other church leaders, teachers, scholars and writers from around the world. The institution is unique in that it is a residential library and readers have accommodations right on the premises. Persons from 37 different countries have stayed there in recent years for short or longer visits.

I am working with others to augment the periodical holding of the library with a stronger selection of the best North American religious journals, and would like to see THE WITNESS added to its collection. The advantage to your publication would be to expose it to an international readership who might eventually become subscribers. The advantage to the library would be to strengthen its present selection of periodicals without diminishing its tight operating budget.

I have enjoyed two stays at St. Deiniol's in recent years and would be greatly pleased if THE WITNESS could be added to its collection. I have been a subscriber for many years and would like to see it available to this international readership.

**The Rt. Rev. George C. Harris
Episcopal Bishop of Alaska**

(THE WITNESS is pleased to honor this request. We depend on the generosity of sustaining subscribers to underwrite gifts such as this, as well as gift subscriptions to Third World subscribers who could not afford THE WITNESS otherwise. — Ed.)

Where to protest?

As I was reading the November issue, and particularly the article about "gay bashing" in Australia and Great Britain, I hoped and half-way expected that, at the end of it, you'd perhaps give the names and addresses of people to whom one might write in both Australia and England to protest the actions which you've described.

While I'm grateful for the opportunity to use the addresses you did print, and while I will write them whatever words of encouragement I can, I would also be grateful for the names and addresses of those to whom I might voice a personal protest and plea for greater compassion

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THE WITNESS



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Editorial

The Pope's lost battalions

Guest editorialist this month is Monica Furlong, noted author, theologian, and founding member of the Movement for the Ordination of Women in England.

I decided recently that ecumenism is not all it's cracked up to be. Time after time the women in the Church of England asking for ordination have been rebuked for being so selfish as to want something which might imperil relations with the Roman Catholic Church. At the Lambeth Conference the Americans' blunt statement that they intended to consecrate a woman as bishop as soon as possible was thought to risk fatal damage to the ARCIC talks between Catholics and Anglicans, as well as causing all sorts of upset in the Church of England.

Suddenly, I realized that I had dreaded the idea of unity, that for us Anglican women to link up with Rome would be a bit like expecting a Jew to join the National Front or a Black person to emigrate to South Africa.

What brought this on was the Pope's summer thoughts on women, *De Mulieris Dignitatem* (On the Dignity of Women). The very title is enough to send shivers down the spine, suggesting, as it does, the opposite of what it says. And, predictably enough, the purpose of the Pope's holiday task was to assert that women, dignified or not, cannot be priests. What God intends them to be, he says, what they are admired and cherished for in the church, is wives, mothers, sisters and nuns, since they are "different by nature" from men, and they should not "try to appropriate masculine characteristics."

By becoming a nun, the Pope appar-

ently believes, a woman "realizes the personal value of her very femininity" (it is not quite clear how). All of us, nuns and the rest, should take the Virgin Mary as our model.

It seems to me that I have taken many female models in my time — my mother, my sister, my gym teacher, Jo in *Little Women*, Charlotte Bronte, Florence Nightingale, a sophisticated aunt, Barbara Stanwyck, Ava Gardner and Eartha Kitt, but the Virgin Mary has never been on my Hit Parade, partly because little is known about her and partly because I like my women more feisty and robust. Would the Pope consider any of the above as having "masculine characteristics," I wonder? If having self-confidence, brains, beauty, sexiness, independence, and a gift of gab is masculine, well, it can't be helped.

The Pope is unlikely to share my personal belief about women which is that virginal or not, they should be *fun*.

Some other women do identify with Mary, however, and good luck to them. What worries me is the kind of male idealization of women which Mary represents, since I know that the other side of that coin is a total contempt. In fact, as is well known, the Christians have a lousy history where the dignity of women is concerned, from the Epistle to Timothy onwards, insulting them continually. The Epistle forbade them to speak in church (a silence enforced for getting on 2,000 years); Tertullian called

them sewers, Jerome castigated them for looking pretty, Augustine thought they were not made in the image of God, Thomas Aquinas called them "misbegotten males," and throughout Europe and America thousands of women were burned as witches, at the church's instigation, for doing nothing worse than dabbling a little in herbal remedies.

When His Holiness speaks enthusiastically of women's dignity, therefore, it is rather like the Foxy Whiskered gentleman giving soft words to Jemima Puddleduck; if we have any sense we shan't trust him as far as we can see him, just as we have learned to pick suspiciously over the honeyed words of archbishops and bishops in the Church of England.

What amazes me is that the Pope presumably expects women to listen to the nonsense he talks about them, cheerily abandoning careers as engineers, stockbrokers, bankers, and chairwomen of multinationals, not to mention cleaners, cooks and careers for the geriatric and the disabled (or does he not mind about them?) and heading back like lemmings to the hearth and the nursery.

Not that I have anything against the hearth and the nursery — I've enjoyed both in my time — but it was only a part of my life. Neither then nor since did I feel myself defined by the set of simple but exhausting tasks which keeps the human race ticking over. If the Pope

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Detention in El Salvador

THE WITNESS receives numerous newsletters circulated by Episcopalian missionaries, but this one from Josie Beecher, describing her harrowing detention (along with her 5-year-old adopted Guatemalan daughter) by Salvadoran police particularly arrested our attention and elicited our prayers over the holiday season. Since its arrival, we learned that Beecher will remain in El Salvador to work with displaced persons, under the auspices of the Episcopal Church. Josie Beecher was a sheep farmer on Lopez Island, Wash. where she attended Grace Church for some 15 years. Her stint as a short-term Witness for Peace volunteer in 1984 inspired her to sign up for a longer period of service as a missionary in Central America.

I have been trying to discern in what way I can best serve the Salvadoran people and follow my calling as a Christian missionary. A part of this decision is whether to work directly with the programs of the Episcopal Church here.

In this light, I went, along with my daughter, Mariana, to spend a week in a community of displaced people in the eastern part of El Salvador. Some Salvadorans had moved there after spending time in one of the church-operated refugee camps. Others had simply wandered the countryside, fleeing from bombings, destruction and terror until they came together in this small abandoned village. We had visited there last year, but in the last few months I had heard of a lot of military activity in the area, including the detention and torture of several community residents. When it seemed that things had eased up a bit, I decided to go back.

Our visit was wonderful. The people welcomed us, especially Mariana, with open arms. The community is an hour and a half tortuous jeep ride from the nearest small town. This community has had very little support from any of the churches or international groups, unlike the communities of people who have repatriated from refugee camps in Honduras. Thus, for a variety of reasons, they

are extremely isolated and were pleased to have us.

That week taught me more about the praxis of Christian accompaniment than my whole year's work coordinating volunteers working with the displaced throughout the country. Short as a week is, I felt that we became part of that community, shared their joys, their work, their suffering, their hopes and fears.

Mariana blurred the distinctions between us and them as she essentially lived the life of a Salvadoran *campesina*. I did a lot of thinking about the issues of education and childraising during this time. She played happily with an old fragment of a plastic doll that was her friend "Marina's" only toy. They made clothes for it of newspaper and prepared "meals" from torn up flowers and thrown away tin cans.

This was quite in contrast to the exposure she has in the city to TV, on which children are crassly urged to want the best new toys all for themselves. She learned a lot about sharing, which I see as the most important lesson she, as an almost 5-year-old, needs to learn. I watched her come to realize that if she ate all of something, her friend didn't get anything. I saw her join in, like farm kids on Lopez Island, Washington, in the

States, in the work that is necessary for the maintenance of the community.

Every day started between 4 a.m and 6 a.m., depending on whether or where we were going to be getting water. One of the water sources is an hour's walk down a very steep trail. Even the most fit adults have a difficult time carrying the heavy jugs back up the hill. If they go to that only year-round source, they need to do so before the heat of the day. Either an older child will go while the parent begins grinding corn for the breakfast tortillas, or the adult will go at 4 a.m. in order to return to fix breakfast.

I confess I did not usually make the early water run, but Mariana and I did help with the tortillas. After tortillas and beans Mariana and I either went to a closer water source to bathe and wash clothes with some of the women and girls or visited within the community. During these visits Mariana and I helped strip the new crop of dried beans from their pods or corn from the cob and always Mariana played with the kids. Mid-day marked the same process of preparing the meal and afternoon usually meant another trip for water.

Each day a group of adults and older children went to work on a water project facilitated by the International Red Cross which involves digging a ditch by hand

in order to lay plastic pipe, and leveling the road at the same time. Another group works in the collective sesame seed field. In addition, individuals have their own *milpa* — corn or bean field — in which men and boys and single women work most days. The evening meal is prepared as dusk approaches.

On Nov. 17 toward day's end, I was returning with Mariana to the house in which we were staying. Suddenly from out of nowhere appeared about 20 heavily-armed, camouflaged soldiers, their faces painted a grotesque green and black. The leader of this patrol called me to come with him up the rapidly darkening road, off to the side. I had no choice but to obey. Mariana started whimpering and ran to me. I was glad to have her company.

The patrol leader asked to see my military permission to be in this community. I was not aware that this was one of the areas in which permission was required. Others had visited this area without *salvoconductos*. He told me that the people I had been visiting were communists. He said this community was the worst of the worst and that the soldiers would not even ask them for a drink of water. What was I doing there? I explained that I was visiting communities of displaced people as a Christian to find out how North American Christians can respond to their needs. I told him we were leaving first thing in the morning.

"Oh, no, you're not," he said.

He pointed to Mariana. "That's not your child. You are lying and this proves it. We are going to take you out of here and you cannot take her with you."

I said, "Of course, she's my daughter. She is calling me Mama." He said, "You are lying, she wouldn't be wearing *ginas* (thongs or flip-flops) if she were your child. Even my children don't wear them. Only people like this wear *ginas*." Mariana reached down to take her *ginas* off. I spoke to her in English and told her, instead, to go in the house and get

the bag that had her passport in it. I had my residency card with me but the rest of my identification was in the house. Unfortunately, she returned with my camera case. In the meantime, I tried to convince him that she wouldn't be talking to me in English if she was from this community. He denied that she had spoken or understood English. He again threatened that she would not be allowed to go with me. I would not have felt badly about leaving her in the community except that with the sudden appearance of the soldiers I did not know what was going to happen after my departure.

He then radioed his commander and asked what to do. His commander wanted us taken in immediately, but the patrol leader said he had other business in the area, so I would be taken out in the morning. I could not leave until I had his permission. If I tried to leave in my jeep they would shoot us. He had dropped the subject of Mariana but had not acknowledged she was my child. He ordered his soldiers to seal off the sector in which we were staying and posted soldiers in the doorway of the house. The

majority of them slept on the other side of the mud wall against which I would have been sleeping had I slept that night. I prayed that Mariana would not have to get up in the middle of the night to pee; I did a lot of other praying, too.

At 5 a.m. three women from the community arrived. On the previous afternoon they had asked me for a ride to San Salvador. When I asked the soldiers for permission to go, the patrol leader was not there. Extensive radio conversation ensued. They discussed sending a helicopter to get us. Finally, they decided to send us to the next town where the local National Police command was located. They gave them the specifics of the vehicle and a description of the occupants. There was no place else to go, and we were intercepted there, at the entrance to the town.

I made a last effort at non-violent resistance. I said what I always say when soldiers ask me for a ride, that because I work for the church, I cannot transport anyone carrying a gun in my vehicle — it is against my religion. Soldiers have always respected this and so did these, in



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spite of the fact that I was essentially under detention. So a group of six policeman jogged alongside the jeep as I slowly drove in to the command post.

I assumed that the women with me would be allowed to get out in town and continue on their way to the capital by bus. However, two of them had been released just two days before, after being detained a week. They had been beaten, interrogated, and ultimately released — because they own small *tiendas* where they sell corn chips, candy, cigarettes, sugar, etc. The police said they were buying these things to give to the guerrillas. When the two women were released, the police kept their purchases. This country does not have the type of judicial system where these things are kept as evidence. People who are arrested go directly to punishment without passing through the steps of filing charges and having a trial and sentencing. The third woman with me had come into town while the others were detained to ask the commander if permission was going to be given for any food to be allowed into their community. People were going to lose substantial sums of money if they kept on coming to town and having their money or purchases taken from them. The answer was no, but this was now their reason for detaining *her* as well. I asked the commander after my interrogation why the others were being detained; he said it was because they were known members of a communist group.

When we were first brought in to the police command the Salvadoran women were sent back into the stinking cell detention area. One of them was pregnant and also had an extremely malnourished 11-month old baby with her. Also with us was "Marina," the 8-year-old daughter of the third woman who had become Mariana's fast friend in the course of the week. When they tried to separate us from the Salvadorans, Mariana started screaming. The police quickly saw that

this was going to be a problem and ordered "Marina" into the room with us. I think that because of Mariana the Salvadoran women were treated better than they might have been otherwise. They were stripped and searched individually by a woman and forcefully interrogated but were not beaten. Mariana kept running back and forth between the Salvadorans in the holding cell and me in the waiting room. I would come into the cell to find her and thus was able to keep an eye on how they were being treated. Each time I went in, the police told me to leave but I also had to pass through when Mariana used the bathroom. At one point when I went back, I saw a man standing in the sun, stripped to his shorts and blindfolded, undergoing interrogation.

Blueprint for torture

When taken to be questioned I was seated at a desk facing the wall. On it was a drawing of the back side of the human body, with muscles indicated. Despite my confidence that as a U.S. citizen I was not going to be physically mistreated, it was terrifying to see this illustration with its implied blueprint for torture.

My interrogation came in several parts as different characters came in. All told me that I needed military permission to be where I had been and that the people I was visiting were communists or terrorists. They asked me if I had seen any guerrillas. No. They asked me how long I had been in the area and I believe were a little embarrassed that I was there for a week without them knowing it. They wanted to know how I knew the other women. Most questioned why I had been there and what other work my church does in this country. The first few were harsh in their accusations, mostly about the other women and the community, and of me by implication.

Then a uniformed policeman came in (the others wore plainclothes). He said that he was a Protestant too, but that I

should understand that helping these people (the displaced) was helping the devil's children. He said that to feed and clothe them, as I said my faith moved me to do, would only prolong the war and maim more soldiers. It was better for these people to die because they were on the side of the devil. He said the Lutheran church was on the side of the guerrillas too. (I had been looking at a bakery and sewing project that the Lutheran church had funded.)

Throughout the day the detectives and policemen changed back and forth. They wrote a report on the condition of my vehicle and listed its contents. I said, "Why are you doing that? The detective said we would be driving to the 6th Brigade in my car." With a sneer, the detective said, "You *were* going to be driving." Eventually we did, but they kept the threat of being transported by helicopter hanging over us.

The last in was the lieutenant in command, who played father figure, nice guy, and said how they would hate to see me hurt and were there to protect me. Since I had not eaten all day and had my money and documents taken away, he sent me with a detective to get some lunch. I asked him if he would call the church. He said he would, but never asked for the number. When I returned, I asked if he had called and he said I could do so from his phone. No one was at the church at midday so I dialed the Christian Volunteers in Mission house and quickly told them where I was and where I was being taken. It was a great relief to know someone else out there knew where I was, and I relaxed for the first time since the night before.

I tried to get help for the Salvadoran baby. The mother had run out of milk and the baby looked as if he might die. I was told it was not possible for me to take my money to buy milk for the baby. The lieutenant said we would be in the departmental capital soon and our money would be returned there. (It

would be another five hours.)

Eventually the police finished their interrogations, accusations, paperwork, phone calls and sent us with a detective driving and another truck following us to the 6th Brigade. I decided not to bother with my protest about having a gun in the car. On the way in, the women were allowed to stop for cigarettes and the mother bought some sugar to give the baby sugar water. With this he perked up until we were able to get milk.

Churches to the rescue

Apparently, friends in San Salvador had contacted the Roman Catholic Archdiocesan legal aid/human rights office, Tutela Legal, and they had sent a legal document demanding our release that arrived at the 6th Brigade before we did. In addition, representatives from the Episcopal and Lutheran churches were on their way with similar documents. Also when we got there, five U.S. Marine Corps military advisers were getting out of a helicopter and came over, offering to translate (!) and call the U.S. Embassy. The Embassy apparently was not particularly helpful or speedy in its response. But whether due to the presence of the U.S. advisers or the quick reaction of the churches, we were only held long enough for the 6th Brigade to go through our belongings yet again.

Amazingly, all of us were released and our belongings returned.

I wanted to get this information out in case rumors had gotten around. I particularly want to thank Karen Sauer in Texas and the World Mission Office of the Episcopal Church in New York for their willingness to respond. I will be able to thank in person Bishop James Ottley, the Episcopal Bishop in charge of El Salvador, and the rest of the Episcopal church here, as well as the Roman Catholic and Lutheran churches for their support. We are fine, but I ask your prayers for our continued safety and for the well-being of this displaced community. **TW**

Editorial . . . Continued from page 5

imagines that he is going to cram women back into the kitchen, rather like the Ayatollah ordering women back into seclusion, he might as well save his breath to cool his fettucine.

But such is the beauty of synchronicity that, even as he decides that women are too dignified to do anything but change diapers and clean up vomit, a woman was elected Bishop of Massachusetts in the Episcopal Church of America. God bless not just America, but those wonderfully forthright women, the "Philadelphia Eleven," who got themselves "irregularly" ordained back in 1974.

They refused to oblige by fitting into the stereotype women which seems to be all the churches can imagine for us, and so made possible this new development.

Others refuse, too. The St. Hilda Community met recently in East London and prayed for Barbara Harris. The Community believes, unlike the Pope, that women can be priests and, refusing to wait any longer for the endless prevarications and machinations of the General Synod, it invites women priests from other countries to celebrate Holy Communion. Its members, women and men, are mostly Anglican, but there are Catholics, Methodists and others who attend regularly.

For them, as for most Christian feminist groups, ecumenism long ago became a reality in maybe the only way that matters, an everyday respect for the ideas and beliefs of others and a readiness to share sacraments regardless of the nonsense talked by church leaders. In such places the monstrous sexism of the churches is transcended as men and women work on its problems together.

How many battalions has the Pope? I don't know, but I know who won't be marching with them.

(The above article appeared earlier in the Manchester Guardian Weekly, 10/16/88.) **TW**

The modern international slave trade:

Trafficking in human lives

by Parker Rossman

Slavery — defined by the United Nations as being forced to work without pay and against one's will — is on the increase in many parts of the world today. Ads in Beirut newspapers offering children for sale led me in 1987 to visit the London offices of the Anti-Slavery Society, the venerable organization that helped get slavery "abolished" in so many parts of the world a century ago.

"Does extensive slavery really exist?" I asked Alan Whittaker, public relations director of the Society, which works with the UN and Amnesty International in investigating such human rights violations.

"It does," he said, "even though slavery is now against the law everywhere, as is theft and exceeding the speed limit. Indeed, Mauretania — which still has perhaps 60,000 chattel slaves — has abolished slavery three times in this century." He defined six categories of contemporary slavery which the United Nations has identified:

1) Sham adoption

Col. Patrick Montgomery, Secretary of the Anti-Slavery Society, reports that sham adoptions are a cover for slavery in many parts of Latin America, Asia, and Africa. One Hong Kong "business man" was reported to have adopted over 140 foreign children which he then leased out as domestics. In 1986 a church group in Oklahoma discovered a refugee family that refused to send one child to

school. They had adopted her, bringing her to America with them to do the housework!

Especially in poor countries where lack of funds for social workers limits the quality of supervision, how can cases of legitimate adoption by foreigners — when a good deal of money changes hands — be separated from sham adoption to conceal slavery? *The Herald Tribune* (6/6/87) reported the passage of stricter laws in Sri Lanka to bar companies that buy children and sell them to foreigners for as much as \$15,000. Bribery in some Latin American adoptions has been similarly challenged as masking cases of slavery.

2) Chattel slavery

The increase in chattel slavery is as hard to control as the drug trade, the Anti-Slavery Society reports. A few years ago, two slave traders were caught offering an adolescent boy for sale in Nigeria. The resulting investigation led to the break-up of a slave ring importing people from Benin. More recently, news agencies reported that the Nigerian navy went to Equatorial Guinea to rescue nearly 500 Nigerians held on Bioco coconut plantations, saying: "Equatorial Guinea has an unenviable record of forced labor."

In Pakistan, young workers in stone quarries and for road building contractors were found to have been kidnapped. They lived in "Kharkar Camps," where they were chained at night and shot if they tried to escape. Some government officials did not count this as slavery at all, but as "child labor," often described as legal and essential in a poor country.

3) Child labor exploitation

The increase of forced labor by children, against their will, for someone other than their parents is perhaps inevitable as miserable poverty increases and 60 million abandoned children are on the streets of our global village. Ironically, the Anti-Slavery Society reports, such slavery has increased in some prosperous areas because people have money to buy slaves. During the 1986-87 season, the TV show *Sixty Minutes* had a report on the sale of Yugoslavian children to "fag-ins" who take them to Paris, Rome and other major cities to work as pickpockets.

Want ads in Beirut newspapers offering child workers for sale were called to my attention by an official of the Catholic Near East Welfare Association. These ads interested me because when we lived in Lebanon in the 1960s, it was not uncommon for child slaves to commit suicide by jumping off a balcony. A Christian visitor from Korea chided some American and European families who went to Lebanese mountain villages to "buy" young servants. Theoretically a "maid" got a small wage, but it was paid to her father. One American woman got angry when the Korean charged slavery, replying the girl was better off in her home than in the village where she would not go to school either. In the foreign home she had good food, medical care, and learned household skills that would guarantee her a better marriage.

Investigation showed however that such girls might spend their lives as uneducated, unpaid household servants. My wife and I stayed at a pension in Damascus, Syria, where the new owner

Parker Rossman is the author of *Pirate Slave* (Benzinger Verlag, Zurich, 1982); *Family Survival* (Pilgrim Press, 1984); *Helping People Care on the Job* (Judson, 1985) and many other books.

found that she had bought a maid along with the hotel. The maid, by then 26, hardly knew anything outside the walls of the pension. From childhood she had learned only how to scrub floors, wash sheets and make beds and was afraid that the new owner did not want to keep her, as she was now too old, uneducated, and isolated to find a husband. I asked a Syrian woman, the daughter of a Christian clergyman there, when slavery had been abolished in that country. "Has it been?" she replied. "Living with my parents is an elderly 'aunt' who worked from childhood without pay for my grandparents."

A 1985 report tells of thousands of children working illegally as domestic servants in Sri Lanka under conditions

where they commonly suffered broken limbs, were burned with hot cigarettes, and had their heads shaved.

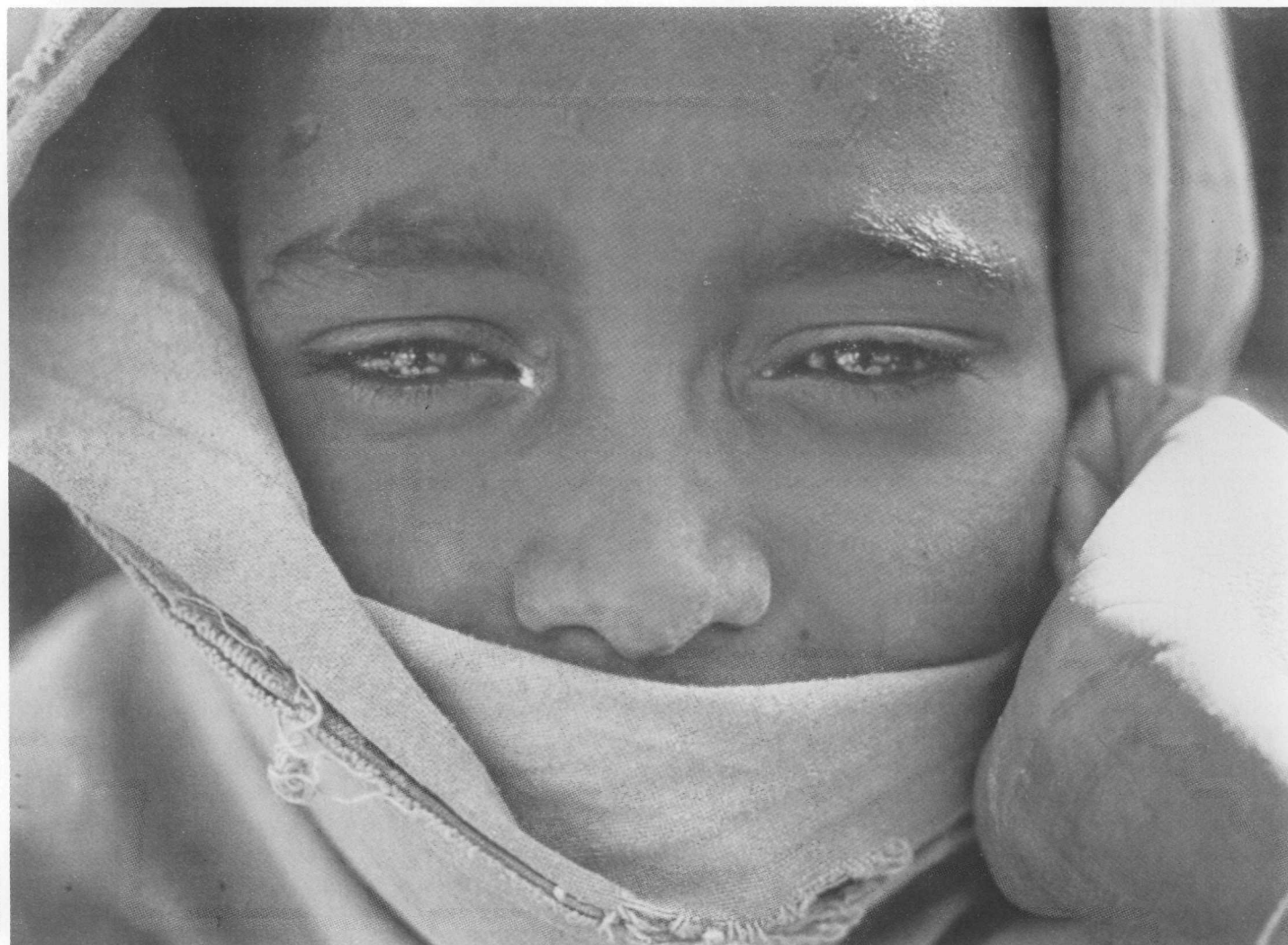
4) Servile forms of marriage

Is it slavery when a woman, who is not allowed to refuse, is sold in marriage in exchange for cows or cash, or when she is transferred to another man on the death of her husband? Perhaps such "peculiar wedding customs" do not usually involve slavery. However, a Methodist pastor and his family in Connecticut found that the American Field Service exchange student from Africa who had lived in their home for a year was sold to a rich old man by her father when she got home. Her American education made her a much-desired prize. When

the girl refused, her father arranged for her to be raped so that custom would force her to marry the old man who was prepared to pay so generously. The Anti-Slavery Society reports that some countries have repealed laws against such abuses as "vestiges of colonial rule" — especially when the law prohibited second and third wives, who were often secured basically to be unpaid servants.

5) Debt bondage

In many parts of the world people — and often their children — are forced to seek work in conditions of slavery until a debt is paid. An Indian Supreme Court judge found a case involving children, many under 14, who were locked up at night in a 60 by 15 foot cage. The firm



Water Poon

that employed them was paying them only the equivalent of 20¢ to 30¢ U.S. a week, plus 10¢ a week for vegetables. They had only muddy water to drink and were denied medication when ill. With full knowledge of government inspectors, they had been bonded to work off a loan equal to \$50 U.S., plus interest.

6) Serfdom

Agricultural laborers are often not free to leave the estate where they live and work. The Society's publication, *Child Labor in South Africa* documents cases of work without pay, and *Bitter Sugar* tells of Haitian men, women and children sent to work as virtual slaves in Dominican cane fields. The Society says that indigenous people frequently suffer such near-slavery, such as the "press-ganging" (forced into labor) of the hill people in Burma; and Indians sold to farmers in Brazil for \$400 and kept under guard so they could not leave. Children from hill tribes in Thailand are sold in Bangkok. They have almost no way to defend themselves, the Society says, and documents cases of children scalded as punishment and their "disappearance," which means they were killed and secretly buried. In 1985, more than 500 highland boys — sold for as little as \$7 each — were rescued from gold sluices in Peru where they were forced to work standing in water for 10 hours a day and were told they would be killed if they complained.

Such slavery is very common in narcotics production. The photo on the cover of volume 13, no. 2 of the *Anti-Slavery Society Reporter* is of a 5-year-old girl who had been kept chained in a cellar, forced to work day and night packing capsules of heroin for shipping. And Mexican TV in November 1984 showed films of rescued slaves who had been forced to grow and pack marijuana in the state of Chihuahua. The report showed five wilderness encampments where people as young as 13 were forced

by armed guards to work in concentration-camp conditions, terrorized into working long hours with no pay. There were many deaths from beatings, illness, exhaustion and malnutrition. Some 1200 were rescued, but they reported that as many as 12,000 peasants had been forced to pick and process drugs in this way. Some of the ex-slaves reported that if they tried to run away into the desert they were pursued by police helicopters.

The Anti-Slavery Society, as it reports the existence of millions of slaves today, does not include women and children sold and forced into prostitution. Sexual exploitation is handled by different private and UN agencies.

I asked Whittaker why the American public does not hear more about slavery. He replied that it is "invisible" for several reasons. First, it is hard to document cases and get reliable statistics from countries that are embarrassed or refuse to acknowledge that slavery exists there. Those countries are often too poor to conduct an adequate survey or to enforce the law.

Secondly, he said, the press is not interested. No newspaper in the world has a reporter assigned to cover slavery and only rarely does a reporter show up at the Anti-Slavery office to make enquiries. The death of two people in an auto accident gets more press attention than the abduction, since WWII, of 55,000 children in Lahore for sale as slaves. Slavery is almost invisible — until someone like the Korean Christian in Lebanon points it out — because children are still a low priority in the global village. For example, 140 million children have died in the last decade from curable diseases. Children are cheap. I once met a man in the Middle East who had sold one of his children so that he could educate the other. Perhaps that doesn't happen as much today, but it is still common.

Few Americans contribute to the Anti-Slavery Society because most think that

slavery was abolished in the last century. The Society needs money to help organizations like the Bonded Liberation Front of Swami Agnivesh, a former state education minister in India. It quietly purchases the freedom of slaves when governments refuse to acknowledge slavery's existence, or when officials connive with slave traders and owners. Money for Agnivesh's group to file court suits could secure the release from debt bondage of some of the 100,000 children who weave carpets in the district around Benares.

The most useful thing the Society could do if it had the money, Whittaker said, would be to develop a model project to help countries like Mauretania end slavery once and for all. Each time slavery is abolished in Mauretania, slaves fall back into bondage because they are hungry and can't find jobs. A UN Commission has proposed the development of fisheries — the rich fishing grounds off the coast are almost entirely exploited by foreigners — to provide employment for freed slaves. Without more money, all the Society can do is "keep a close watch" on slavery and try to get the word out to a disinterested public. This indifference is what an American family found a few years ago when their adolescent daughter went into a store in North Africa and never came out. The local police denied she had ever been there. After trying to find help from agency after agency, her parents were told that the best thing they could do would be to file a grievance with a UN commission against slavery — a commission that had no money to meet for the next five months.

Their daughter was never found.

During the anti-slavery crusades a century and a half ago, many American church people felt that no one was free as long as anyone was enslaved anywhere in the world. Why is this no longer true?

TW

Short Takes

Gentrified victory

Only about half the eligible electorate went to the polls in the November presidential election. It was the lowest turnout in 64 years and continued the generally downward trend of the past quarter century. But the half nation that votes is not what statisticians would call a random sampling. People with a college education and those who earn more than \$50,000 a year are twice as likely to vote as are those with only a grade school education and those who earn less than \$5,000 annually. Thus, the electorate is heavily skewed toward the rich and the well educated, the White and the conservative.

Bush made a powerful political and cultural appeal to White men; Dukakis had notable success with women, in large measure because of his forceful defense of reproductive rights. He also won the traditionally Democratic lion's share of Black voters and the majority of non-Cuban Latino voters. Factoring out the gender gap and the minorities gap from the turnout figures, the electoral equation brutally belies the myth that "the American people" gave Bush his victory. The reality in this election is that Bush won with the votes of a quarter of the eligible electorate and a plurality of rich White men.

The Nation 11/28/88

Strictly personal

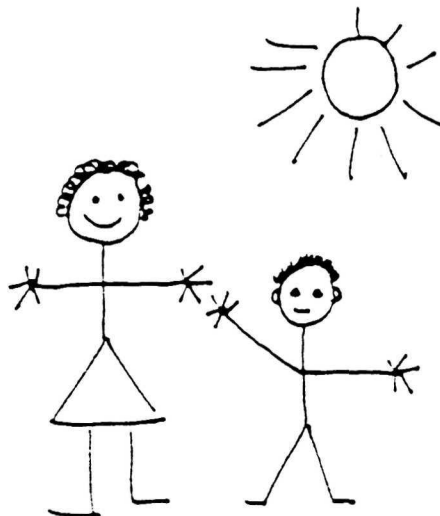
A young man was talking with the Virgin Mary in heaven and asked her a personal question.

"Mary, I noticed that you always look sort of sad on the statues and pictures of you holding the baby Jesus," said the young man. "Why were you so sad?"

Mary pulled the young man aside. "I have never told this to anyone before," she whispered, "but I was kind of hoping for a girl."

Catholic Bulletin, Minneapolis

Quoted in *Daughters of Sarah* 12/88



Prayer for children

Blessed God, you have created life to begin with childhood, a time of innocence, laughter and exploration. Bless, we beseech you, the children of this world. Grant unto them the nurture they need for strong physical growth, keen minds, balanced emotions, and a holy spiritual life. Send unto them teachers to inspire an inquiring and discerning heart, to enable curiosity toward their surroundings, and a knowledge of this global village. Bless them with love, hope and vision; and keep them ever in your unfailing compassion and protection, for the sake of the one who loved children, Jesus Christ, our Savior.

O God, the Mother of life, bless the children of this world who are dying from hunger, abuse, neglect and war. In the midst of their suffering, send your Holy Spirit upon them that they may know the loving embrace of your arms to cradle and to comfort them, to banish all fear from their hearts, and to give them hope for their life. Forgive us the wrong we have done unto the next generation of your children by our indifference, our inaction, our wrongdoing . . . In Christ's name we pray. Amen.

*Episcopal Women's Caucus
Lambeth Conference Liturgies*

Symptoms of inner peace

- 1) A tendency to think and act spontaneously rather than on fears based on past experiences.
- 2) An unmistakable ability to enjoy each moment.
- 3) A loss of interest in judging other people.
- 4) A loss of interest in interpreting the actions of others.
- 5) A loss of interest in conflict.
- 6) A loss of the ability to worry.
- 7) Frequent, overwhelming episodes of appreciation.
- 8) Contented feelings of connectedness with others and nature.
- 9) An increasing tendency to let things happen rather than make them happen.
- 10) An increasing susceptibility to the love extended by others as well as the uncontrollable urge to extend it.

Whitefish Peace Alliance Newsletter

So many homeless

George Burns, who at 92 is still on the road performing, tells about sleeping on the floor when he was a kid on the Lower East Side. When he complained, his mother scolded, "You should be glad you have a floor to sleep on." The story has a bittersweet twist these days.

Fellowship Magazine 12/88

Country booby-trapped

"Reagan Junior" seems to have no plans of his own for the nation. He's going to continue with Reagan's policies, he says. Is he that unsure about himself? Think about this: We've got our country booby-trapped with 60,000 nuclear weapons and missiles. One is enough to deter a sane leader; no number is enough for an insane leader.

Nancy Wysolki

On the other hand

Persons of courage never need weapons, but they may need bail.

Ethel Mumford

Courageous Incarnation: A theology

Intimacy is a powerful topic. It informs the identity of individuals, groups, and churches. It is at once a singular and a social reality. In proper English, “intimacy” does not refer to an abstract, privatized space. It signifies “pressing into” — touching and defining — the heart of a matter, whether that subject is the profound understanding of a person, or the unique characteristics of a relationship between two people, or the corporate identity church members express as they engage one another. Intimacy is about self-affirmation, relationships with others, and our awareness of God.

Intimacy for me is also a matter of living and dying. I remain tender about the death from AIDS of my former husband and lifetime friend, Bruce Thompsett, a man who was both very Anglican and very intimate. Consequently I want to offer practical theological nurture to those who think Christians must choose between being intimate or being Anglican, spiritual or sexual, repressed or liberated, or any other dangerous dualism that reflects disembodied images of humanity, abstract, distancing visions of God. I am still discovering in concrete, human terms how my theological identity as an Anglican informs the way I experience intimacy. Therefore I have chosen to press into the theological heart of Anglicanism, by focusing on the courageous doctrine of the Incarnation.

Dr. Fredrica Harris Thompsett is Academic Dean and Professor of Church History at Episcopal Divinity School in Cambridge, Mass. This article is excerpted from an essay in a forthcoming collection honoring the Anglican theologian, William J. Wolf.

Like most of our biblical and Reformation ancestors, I believe that theological knowledge can be a source of strength. For many of our early Christian ancestors, knowledge about God was a source of comfort and new life. It was essential for mission. The Apostle Paul knew the practical, persuasive power of the theology of the New Creation. In the earliest New Testament text, he told the Thessalonians, “we would not have you ignorant (about your questions).” The Thessalonians wondered about heaven, who would get there first, how and when this would happen. When Paul responded with an image of being drawn up into the arms of God, they were less fearful. He then urged them to “comfort one another” with this knowledge (*Thess. 4:13-18*).

Church members today are not unlike the Thessalonians. We have our own questions: about monogamy, about AIDS, about our own bodies, about self-affirming sexual lifestyles, about whether as Christians we have to make compromises that diminish our fully organic, sensuous selves. I do not believe God would have us ignorant about these questions. We, like the Thessalonians, are challenged to find in our local Christian communities comfort, strength, encouragement for mission, and relief from undue fears.

In other words theology, then as now, is about intimate identity. It presses into, touches, and defines who we are. Mature identity is always local and expansive, addressing “Who are we?” and “How do we relate to others who are different from us?” When we reflect for a moment on these two questions, we may recognize the basic issues that young persons

explore in peer groups, inquiries that Commissions on Ministry ask applicants for ordained ministry, dimensions that each of us embody and discover in our sexual identities, and questions we whisper to loved ones in our dying.

In Anglican theology one doctrine, the Incarnation, has been the guiding principle for belief and practice. In New Testament theology the potential goodness of humanity is dependent on the Incarnation, upon the God who came to live among us as God and as human. This fully embodied doctrine — proclaimed in “the Word became flesh and dwelt among us full of grace and truth” (*John 1:14*) — offers powerful, comforting assurance that God is for us and not against us. It is a theological vehicle that grounds knowledge of God, humanity and the world in which we live. A European theologian once characterized the Anglican Communion as the “Church of Christmas Day,” which is to say, the church of the Incarnation.

The prism of the Incarnation reveals what distinguishes Anglican identity from other Christian affiliations. Unlike most popular Protestant theology, Anglican theologians emphasize the goodness of God’s direct relation to the created world. Even in the Ash Wednesday service, the contemporary Episcopal Prayer Book affirms a God who “hate[s] nothing you have made.” We believe in a God who encourages us, in Prayer Book language, “to rejoice in the whole creation.” This means that God is not indifferent to this earth or the ways in which we inhabit it. Whether we wish it or not, God is in our lives.

Secondly, Anglican theology is notably and distinctly optimistic about humanity and the grace-filled possibilities

of intimacy

by Fredrica Harris Thompsett



we are given to “amend our lives.” Anglicans do not have to degrade humanity to elevate God. As Richard Hooker described it in the 16th century, the purpose of the Incarnation was to alter human nature towards conformity with God; “God hath deified our nature, though not by turning it into him selfe (God’s self), yeat by makinge it his (God’s) owne inseparable habitation.” Furthermore the doctrine of the Incarna-

tion, must also be taken as necessarily including the Atonement. On the basis of the passion, death and resurrection, Christ has already acted for us. Together the Incarnation and the Atonement express the saving, liberating character of Christianity.

This relationship implies a third, distinctive aspect of Anglican theology, one that is seldom, if at all, affirmed by TV evangelists. The Incarnation presents a radical exercise that is for God’s sake as well as ours. The doctrine of the Incarnation invites and provides a basis for humanity’s co-responsibility with God in Christ. Dorothee Soelle frequently refers to God’s need for us to do God’s work in the world, calling humanity “God’s hands.”

What if this doctrine of the Incarnation — the Event of Jesus: power in Flesh — this doctrine and *not* the Fall shaped our expectations of one another, our relationships, and our future mission as a church? What if there were no major crises between being and doing, no seemingly split consciousness between being fully Christian and fully human? What tools, old ways, would we have to give up? What practical theological tools could help us shape a more humane future? What would our identity look like, if we were courageously Incarnational?

Let’s clean out the rusty tool box first, so we don’t trip over any old axes. As the Black poet and theologian Audreya Lorde reminded us in her essay, “The Master’s Tools Will Never Dismantle the Master’s House.”

Perhaps the most personal work is giving up egocentricity about our own sexual identity. The way we define ourselves can become a barrier to welcoming others. For example, the belief that

marriage really is the best state for everyone is heterosexist. There are other forms of “sexualcentrism.” This is a word I just coined to describe the habit of disparaging the sexual relations of others just because they are not our own.

Here’s a painful remark I heard recently; “It’s too bad AIDS is spreading to normal persons like us, who don’t deserve to get it.”

The most dangerous version of stereotyping an “other” leads to abstracting that person, or groups of persons, into the image of an enemy who therefore becomes a legitimate target of aversion, exclusion, degradation and violence. On such personal roots, racism, homophobia, domestic violence and the genocidal “final solution” of the Holocaust were and are nourished.

There is another set of tools I would like to excise by name. These are those hierarchical oppositions which contemporary French feminists Helene Cixous and Catherine Clement have described as a “double braid” around the necks of all who seek to be fully embodied Christians. Among these destructive dualisms are culture over nature, day over night, head over heart, form over matter, thinking over feeling, male over female, master over slave, parent over child, white over black, etc. Without a lesser “other” in a hierarchical relationship, there could be no dominance, no submission. If there were no outcasts, those who seek domination would have to invent them. There are a batch of old tools that need to be thrown out.

Fortunately, transformative tools are available. I have in mind six (no doubt there are more) practical theological tools that are biblical in their radicalness and Anglican in Incarnational persua-

sion. Following the practices of those early witnesses chronicled in Scripture and mystics throughout the ages, I suggest we develop our capacities for what theologian Simone Weil once described as a way of looking that is first of all attentive. I do not mean staring, or gazing patronizingly. I do mean the kind of open looking that recognizes tension, ambiguity, difference, wonder and mystery.

Secondly, theologians and psychologists alike are recognizing that we need to encourage insights from different epistemologies. One way of knowing that I believe is essential for members of an Incarnational church is described as “connected knowing” in a recent book, *Women's Ways of Knowing*. Connected knowing involves intimacy and understanding between the self and another person or material form. Even rational, scientific epistemologies need not be dispassionate. Barbara McClintock, whose work on the genetics of a corn plant won a Noble Prize, said she could write a biography on each of her plants; “I know them intimately, and I find it a great pleasure to know each of them.”

Thirdly, if Christians are willing to admit that we live in a world characterized by pluralistic cultures, then the social sciences, rather than philosophy, need to “play the principle role of dialogue partner” with theology, according to Roman Catholic theologian Robert J. Schreiter. All sources that help us examine the context of human lives should be enlisted, including economics, political science, sociology, psychology and anthropology. The social sciences can help keep us from disincarnating theology.

Flexibility is another essential theological tool for courageous Incarnationalists. Brazilian liberation theologian Leonardo Boff describes flexibility as a basic category in biblical theology:

God was infinitely flexible toward humanity, accepting its reality with its undeniable limitations and

onerous ambiguities . . . the resulting Church clothed itself in a courageous flexibility toward the Greeks, Romans, and barbarians, accepting their languages, customs, rituals and religious expressions. It did not demand any more than faith in Jesus Christ.

Indeed, Anglican theology has a long history of doctrinal flexibility. Anglicanism was the one Reformation religion that consciously avoided becoming a confessional tradition. Our unique Anglican approach understands that the faith continues to be, in the words of a 1922 Church of England report, “handed down to us in the context of a living fellowship.” If flexibility ceased to be a basic theological category, the church would cease being Anglican and become more akin to an evangelical sect.

Theological flexibility requires a complementary mode of exercising authority. For Incarnational Anglicans, authority should be based on cooperation, rather than subordination, domination, or oppressive partnerships (even if they are sanctioned by law). Anglicans have traditionally redefined the nature of authority and questioned the way power is exercised in the institutional church. Throughout our history we have reformed both the content of tradition and the ways tradition is formed and passed on. There is no reason to stop now.

Like other Reformation churches, we also have to face the tension of living in the contradiction between authority and personal salvation. An ethic of authority based on cooperation allows us to live with this and other creative tensions. This mode of authority is signaled in the first section of the “Outline of the Faith” in the new Prayer Book which appropriately begins with a definition of human nature: “We are free to make choices: to love, to create, to reason, and to live in harmony with creation and with God.”

There is one final theological tool that is essential for Anglicans — valuing, not

merely tolerating, differences. For example, whether we admit it or not, many women and some men have suffered from oppressive, culturally-derived stereotypes of “masculine” men and “feminine” women. If we were to look for gender differences with assistance from the social sciences and greater theological attentiveness, we would no doubt develop a new appreciation for complexity, a sense of particularity, and a good deal of humility. Differences would remain but there would be a number of new variations, an enriched not impoverished humanity, and an expanded consciousness for the whole of creation.

In addition to naming and valuing differences, what are some other implications for a people of God guided by courageous Incarnational theology? Imagine a concrete, living Christian church in which inclusion, not exclusion, shapes identity; where understanding is valued over assessment and connection is deemed more important than separation. It would be a place with a new immunology to hierarchical “principles,” a home beyond inculcated vileness about human flesh where no one has to lie about the embodied testimonies of human experience. My predecessor at the Episcopal Divinity School, John Booty, has written that Episcopalians “need not hide differences and keep peace as much as accept creative tension, assure constant dialogue, and *anticipate gain* from whatever conflict occurs within the orbit of mutual respect and love.” In an Incarnational community that is both Anglican and intimate, there is no such thing as a “no-body.” God did not choose to dwell in a nobody! The courageous doctrine of the Incarnation invites, indeed demands, the best we have to offer — our fully embodied sensuous selves. Whether in the arms of our loved ones or the feeding nurture of the eucharist, Episcopalians are called to be Anglican and intimate. **TW**

Whither *a luta continua*?

by Mary Lou Suhor

To readers who have turned to Barbara Harris' column each month for her wit and wisdom concerning social issues facing the church and world: The bad news is that her busy agenda as Bishop-elect of the Diocese of Massachusetts has interrupted its publication, but the good news is that she has agreed to become a member of THE WITNESS Editorial Board, which will guarantee her appearance periodically in our pages.

THE WITNESS will assemble a special issue in April around her historic election Sept. 24, when she became the first woman to be named an Episcopal Bishop in the United States and the first in the worldwide Anglican Communion. We are hoping that a contribution from her will appear in that issue.

Meanwhile Bishop-elect Harris, former executive director of the Episcopal Church Publishing Company, has been feted at a number of celebrations.

Perhaps the most notable was the presentation of the Philadelphia Bowl for outstanding achievement to Harris by Mayor Wilson Goode at City Hall Dec. 12. Citing her long career as an advocate for the hungry, the homeless, and her ministry to prisoners, Mayor Goode said she was being honored for helping to seal the crack in our Liberty Bell a little more, and sending out the message that in this country sex and race are not barriers to higher achievement.

The Rev. Paul Washington, Episcopal priest and lifelong community activist, guest speaker for the event, emphasized that the reception or rejection of Barbara Harris as Suffragan of Massachusetts in the consent process taking place in the

church would spell out the future of that institution.

Gathering of consents from a majority of 118 Diocesan Standing Committees and Bishops has been marred by spurious attacks on Harris' educational and personal background, particularly by the Prayer Book Society, Episcopalians United, and the Evangelical and Catholic Mission.

For example, Prayer Book Society literature labeled Harris and her colleagues in the Episcopal Church Publishing Company as "Marxists" and "a group of loonies" who for years "have sullied the image, patriotism and stature of Episcopalians through radical and often bizarre actions and statements."

Washington told the assembly at Philadelphia's City Hall that he had received calls asking, "Is Barbara going to make it?"

"We have a way of asking the wrong questions," he pointed out. "The real question is, will the church make it?"

He traced the history of Blacks in this country, introduced to the church "while shackled before a Bishop in an ivory chair who sprinkled water on them to convert them from 'Black savages' to Christians. We were no longer infidels but Christians, baptized in chains. And in those days the churches bought slaves as investments to rent out to farmers who couldn't afford them. The churches were supported by our free labor," he said.

These were Harris' forebears, he pointed out. And being elected a suffragan bishop of the church, "she knows that in 1918 the first two Black suffra-

gans were assigned as Bishops for Colored people."

Washington said that at times he was "thoroughly disgusted" with the church, "but I have not despaired because God has always been able to raise up stones to do God's will."

"I've done a lot of marching around justice issues with people, both church and unchurched. God is not without witnesses. The question remains, will the church make it? How many women, how many Blacks have got to live and die before the church recognizes God's call to them?"

With regard to those who "demand impressive credentials" Washington said, these have nothing to do with religion. "Barbara knows what it means to fight for justice, not only for her own people but for all. God has given her that which is required to be a witness and a champion of the people. If by chance she doesn't 'make it', may God have mercy on that institution called the church."

Philadelphia Councilwoman Augusta A. Clark presented a resolution on behalf of City Council citing Harris' contributions to the community.

In the audience were the Rt. Rev. Allen Bartlett of Philadelphia and his Suffragan, the Rt. Rev. Frank Turner, and clergy from other denominations; family members and friends of the Bishop-elect, and members of the National Political Congress of Black Women who sponsored the reception following the ceremony.

TW

Confronting racism in Japan

by Susan E. Pierce

Failure to give one's print or to carry the passbook are punishable by up to one year in prison and a \$1,600 fine. Since 1952, more than 500,000 have been arrested for not having the passbook on their person.

The above sounds like a description of the apartheid system in South Africa. But it comes from a pamphlet about discrimination in Japan against ethnic Koreans and Chinese, the majority of whom are second and third generation residents. All foreigners in Japan are required to carry an Alien Registration Card. However, the majority of foreigners (80-90%) are Koreans and Chinese. They, or their ancestors, came to Japan as immigrant workers or slave labor during the colonial period — 1910-1945 — when Korea and China were annexed by Japan.

When World War II was over and Korea was freed from Japanese rule, the U.S. Supreme Commander for the Allied Powers (SCAP) occupation government had administrative control over Japan and Korea from 1945-1952. The legal status of Koreans in Japan after the war was decided by SCAP, which, as the Cold War with the Soviet Union intensified and the Korean conflict broke out, became less concerned with democratizing Japan and more concerned with retaining the loyalty of many war-time Japanese leaders.

At the end of World War II, many of the 2 million Koreans living in Japan voluntarily returned to Korea. However, 600,000 Koreans chose to stay, fearing the conditions in their war-torn, unstable homeland. Also, for more than half of them, Korea was a distant homeland be-

cause they had been living in Japan since before 1930.

SCAP first treated Koreans as “liberated” nationals, believing they would all return to Korea. In 1946, SCAP declared that all Koreans staying in Japan were considered Japanese nationals. However, in the increasingly paranoid Cold War atmosphere, SCAP was worried about the loyalty of the Koreans. As the occupation was ending, SCAP suggested that the new Japanese-led government institute an alien registration program based on the 1940 Smith Anti-Sedition Act and the 1950 McCarran Internal Security Act, both used in the United States to harass activists.

When the San Francisco Peace Treaty, signed by Japan and the Allies, went into effect in 1952, the Japanese government almost immediately passed the Alien Registration Law. Koreans and Chinese, even those who had held Japanese citizenship since 1910, officially became foreigners, losing any rights they had had.

The Alien Registration Law requires that all foreigners resident in Japan for more than a year register and be fingerprinted, and the process has to be repeated every five years. They must carry their Alien Registration Certificate at all times and must produce it on demand, or face interrogation, arrest and/or fines. Koreans complain that they are often stopped and asked for their certificates for no apparent reason while going about everyday business.

The law originally required that all aliens over age 14 register; in 1982, that was changed to age 16. Failure to comply incurs adult penalties. In Japanese culture, to be singled out, to “not fit in,” is a source of shame and embarrassment.

It is mandatory for aliens to include their occupation and place of employment when registering. Any changes must be reported promptly. Job security is a symbol of status in Japan, and Koreans, due to discrimination, have to accept low wages and unstable jobs which they lose whenever there is a recession. Koreans are saddled with the added burden of re-registering every time they change jobs.

As aliens, Koreans live with the ever-present threat of deportation. There was reportedly a case in which a Korean resident in Japan got involved in a traffic accident and was not carrying his certificate. For both offenses, he spent 18 months in a detention center usually reserved for those awaiting deportation. Foreigners can be arrested for failing to renew their certificates or register changes of address.

What Koreans, in particular, find so unjust and demeaning about being obligated to register is that their families have lived in Japan for generations. Their culture and their language is Japanese. Deportation to Korea means being sent to a totally unfamiliar country where they can't even speak the language. They perceive themselves as Japanese of Korean descent. The Japanese see them as outsiders.

A colonial mentality is at the root of the bigotry directed against ethnic Koreans. When Japan ruled Korea, the occupation government attempted to stamp out the native culture. The Korean language was banned. Koreans were forced to take Japanese names — one of the most famous examples of this was the Korean marathon runner at the 1936 Olympics whom Japanese authorities forced to compete under a Japanese

name. He was punished when he defiantly wore a Korean flag on his running jersey.

Another persistent problem is the Japanese insistence that the people of Japan are unique and it is impossible for a foreigner to comfortably assimilate without surrendering all ethnic identity. This means that any ethnic Korean who wants to apply for naturalization has to take a Japanese name and permit a household search by authorities to ensure that any traces of non-assimilation have been removed.

But since 1979, there has been a growing movement against enforced registration and fingerprinting. More than 18,000 Koreans and other nationalities have refused to be fingerprinted and the movement has gained international attention. Activists say that the anti-fingerprinting protests are a direct challenge to the Japanese government and to deeply entrenched attitudes in Japanese society. Many of those who have joined the movement have done so in reaction to generations of discrimination.

Yi Young-soo was one of 14 human rights activists from Japan to meet U.S. supporters and make known their opposition to the Alien Registration Law. The group came to Chicago in May 1988 at the invitation of the Chicago Committee for Human Rights of Koreans in Japan and the Midwest Social Justice Network of the National Council of Churches. Yi's story was typical of the experience of ethnic Koreans in Japan.

She was born to a Korean father and a Japanese mother in 1951 in occupied Japan. Both her parents had been born in Japan and were at the time considered Japanese nationals. But in 1952, when the U.S./Japan peace treaty went into effect, Yi said, "My father was suddenly stripped of his Japanese nationality, with no consultation or word of warning. Since nationality in Japan was reckoned patrilineally until very recently, I, too, lost my Japanese nationality. Neither

parent could understand how Japanese could suddenly be declared 'foreigners.'"

Yi said when the Alien Registration Law went into effect in 1952, her father, who had been forced to "Japanize" his family name from Yi to Rika, was registered under his Korean name and her name was also changed. "The government changed our nationality and name just like that. We had no recourse but to obey," she said.

Her parents divorced, and Yi lived with her mother. Though Yi's mother was Japanese, their position was still precarious. "My mother tried to verify her Japanese nationality, Yi said, "but the authorities would not allow it. She had to go on social welfare to support us, but because we were not 'self-supporting,' we became subject to deportation under the Immigration Control Act. We lived in constant fear of expulsion to some foreign country.

"The longer Korean families live in Japan, the less secure the residence rights of subsequent generations become. The children and grandchildren of those with permanent residence rights receive only three-year special residence permits. We are discriminated against when looking for an apartment, entering high school and college, taking out a loan or finding a job. It never fails."



Korean or Japanese?

But making the effort to assimilate and become "Japanized" presents a whole other set of problems for Koreans. Kim Fung-suk, another activist and fingerprint refuser, explained, "Becoming a Japanese national means becoming an "ethnic" (*Yamato*) Japanese. Koreans (or Chinese) hoping to naturalize must change their real name, give all 10 fingerprints to the police, have their personal privacy violated by public officials looking for proof of assimilation, and deny their ethnic roots.

"This would be the equivalent of forcing American Jews to adopt a WASP name, lifestyle and personal identity as a condition for acquiring full civil rights," said Kim.

Koreans and Chinese have been the leaders in the anti-fingerprinting movement, but they have been joined by a growing number of Westerners. Ronald Fujiyoshi, a Japanese-American United Church of Christ missionary who lives in Japan, became a fingerprint refuser after his experience of living and working among Koreans in a section of Osaka.

Fujiyoshi first became aware of the extent of discrimination against Koreans when he got involved in a fair housing movement.

"One real estate dealer advertised a listing with the words '*Gaijin fu akimasen.*' ('Foreigners refused. No chance.')" When we approached this real estate dealer, he claimed he was trying to do the Koreans a favor by telling them not to apply because there would be no chance they would be allowed to take that listing," said Fujiyoshi.

Fujiyoshi and other activists tried to talk to the real estate dealers, but, according to Fujiyoshi, "They said that Koreans were dirty, and because they ate a lot of garlic and *kim chee* (pickled cabbage made with garlic and hot peppers), it would cause trouble when sharing the common toilet of dormitory-type apartments with Japanese. And finally they mentioned the usual stereotype of Kore-

ans drinking until late at night and bothering the neighbors."

"In all my years of living in Japan, Korea, Southeast Asia and America, I have not found these traits to be the monopoly of any one racial or ethnic group," said Fujiyoshi.

A strong believer in human rights, Fujiyoshi has been in Japanese court since 1981 arguing his right to refuse fingerprinting. He told the Kobe District Court in 1983: "The question of my guilt before the law is also a question of the justness of those very laws."

The price for refusing to be fingerprinted can be high. At the least, refusers risk arrest, interrogation, harassment, and at the worst, deportation or being unable to leave the country for fear of not being readmitted. Currently, a French and a Chinese national with families and jobs in Japan have been barred from reentry because they refused fingerprinting.

But the anti-fingerprinting movement has the sympathy of a growing number of Japanese. For example, the Kawasaki and Okayama municipal governments are among the 1,000 municipalities who have issued Alien Registration Certificates to Korean refusers and did not report them to the police. And 10 million Japanese have reportedly signed petitions in support of the movements.

The movement has found strong support in the United States, particularly among Japanese-Americans who had personal experience with racial discrimination when they or their parents or grandparents were shipped off to detention camps during WWII because the U.S. government doubted their loyalty.

An Episcopal priest in Chicago, the Rev. Seiichi Michael Yasutake, is an active member of the U.S. support movement. He supplied the material on which this article is based. His family spent WWII in detention camps, and he was one of many Japanese-Americans who fought long and hard to successfully win

reparations from the U.S. government.

Yasutake hosted the Korean and Japanese activists during their visit to the United States and was part of a fact finding tour of Asian-American, Black, and White representatives of the U.S. Committee for Human Rights of Koreans in Japan. Yasutake told his hosts that "As an American of Japanese ancestry, I identify quite naturally with minorities facing discrimination in Japan."

He added that ending racism in Japan would benefit society as a whole. "The rights of the Koreans are critical for the health of the Japanese people. As long as people are acting superior to other human beings, they are victims of a sick society and they need to be freed from this illness," he said.

The Korean rights movement received support from the national Episcopal Church when the July 1988 General Convention passed a resolution calling on the Japanese government to end discrimination against Koreans and other minorities. Yasutake was instrumental in getting the resolution submitted and passed. The Consultation, a coalition of Episcopal Church social justice groups, has endorsed the movement, as has the National Council of Churches, the American Friends and the NAACP.

A group composed of Blacks, Native Americans, Puerto Ricans, Asians and Whites traveled to Tokyo to join demonstrations taking place on December 10, the 40th anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. The rally took place in front of the Ministry of Justice. The timing of the protest was crucial, as the Japanese government has plans to switch by 1990 to a laminated I.D. card — with much stiffer penalties for non-compliance — instead of the traditional booklet, and organizers feel the next year will be their last chance for a major action against the card. Protestors in Japan were joined by simultaneous demonstrations at Japanese consulates in cities across the United States.

Activist Kim Fung-suk summed up the feelings of those who are opposed to forced registration. She said, "I reject this dehumanizing process. I reject the government's policy of promoting a mono-ethnic ideology that destroys the dignity of non-Japanese minorities. As a human being, as a Korean, I will fight for social and political justice, and for the right of all people to live in this society as equals."

For more information on the Korean and other minority rights movement in Japan, contact the Rev. S. Michael Yasutake, 2744 Bryant Ave., Evanston, IL 60201. Telephone: (312) 328-1543. www

My old blouse

I had gotten it second hand
And it was my favorite —
well-worn, even darned a little
But one day I gave it to Komanya,
A young man
Who needed a white shirt
for his Baptism.
It was the kind of blouse
that would look all right on a man —
Cotton knit with V-neck
and short sleeves,
a small zip at the back.
He wore it the day he was baptized.

A year later now,
I attended infant Baptisms
this morning;
I watched as fathers and mothers
filed into the church
with their children.
Suddenly I saw my old blouse again
Strutting down the aisle
On a toddler —
Komanya's little brother.
Worn with zip in front,
it trailed the floor
Looking like a small *kanzu*.
My eyes moistened as I watched
the waters of Baptism
Wash over my blouse once again.

Komanya wasn't there.
I wonder if he had
no other shirt to wear.

Ann Klaus, M.M.
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from *Maryknoll Magazine*

Of centers and margins

by William McKinney

The oldline churches — the Presbyterian, Episcopal, United Church of Christ, and Methodist bodies who share a common theological heritage and current cultural affinity — are in a deep funk. Using a phrase I wish were mine, *Newsweek* said recently that they have moved from “mainline” to “sideline.” As usual they were at least partly correct for these churches are no longer at the center of things as they once were. Of course there is strength in congregations that the press consistently fails to recognize, but theologically and institutionally these are tough times for the groups who once dominated American religious life.

For most of American history the oldline churches were a dominant force religiously and culturally. To use a baseball metaphor, they were the only teams on the field. With disestablishment in the early 19th century, the oldline groups were forced to admit other teams, but they still owned the stadium. They gave up their established status, but retained their cultural and economic power.

By the early 20th century the old Protestant mainline gave ground to “newcomers” like Catholics and Jews. And in what historian Robert Hand has called the “second disestablishment” they gave grudging acceptance to religious pluralism. By 1957 Will Herberg could point to Protestantism, Catholicism, and Judaism as “three ways of being American.” Through the 1950s, however, the old established churches continued in the not unimportant role of umpire.

Since the 1960s the oldline churches have been forced onto the field of play itself. The rules of the game no longer seem clear and, as in baseball, it is hard to keep track of the teams. We face new questions: What does it mean to be “mainline” when there are said to be as many Muslims in America as Episcopalians? What does it mean to be mainline when it is not Edmond Browning or James Andrews or Avery Post but rather Pat Robertson who stares out at us from the covers of *Time* and *Newsweek*? What does it mean to be mainline when

the public knows Michael Jackson is a Jehovah’s Witness and Marie Osmond is a Mormon — but most would be hard-pressed to name a major public figure who is a Presbyterian?

Come with me to what has long been the symbolic center of American liberal Protestantism in the United States, the corner of 120th St. (also known as Reinhold Niebuhr Place) and Claremont Ave. in New York City. On the northwest corner is Riverside Church, from whose pulpit such distinguished preachers as Harry Emerson Fosdick and William Sloane Coffin have spoken not only to a neighborhood congregation but also to the nation and the world. Today Riverside is beset by internal struggles and financial difficulties that resulted in a deficit of about a million dollars in 1987.

On the northeast corner is Union Theological Seminary, a bulwark of liberal Christian thought and home to several giants of 20th century Protestant theology. Union has stood for intellectual rigor and interfaith dialogue in a world of religious and cultural pluralism. Today it is on the verge of selling or leasing one of its dormitories to help raise the additional \$2 million a year it needs to maintain the current levels of programming.

On the southwest corner is the Interchurch Center, home to the National Council of Churches and major agencies of a half-dozen Protestant denominations. When it was dedicated in 1958 about 30,000 people gathered to watch president Eisenhower lay the cornerstone. David Rockefeller brought greetings from his father, who provided the land for Interchurch Center, as he had for Riverside Church and Union Seminary. Rockefeller predicted that the address “475 Riverside Drive” would soon be known worldwide. Yet today the center prepares for the departure of two key tenants as the Presbyterians move to Louisville, Kentucky, and the United Church of Christ goes to Cleveland.

Just across Broadway from Union Seminary are the editorial offices of *Christianity and Crisis*, founded by Reinhold Niebuhr as a liberal Protestant voice on public issues. Today its staff struggles to maintain circulation and meet its payroll.

The institutions clustered here come as close to being sacred space in America as liberal Protestants have. And yet there are those who point to the area as a symbol of the moral and religious failure of leaders of the oldline churches.

William McKinney is director of educational programs and professor of religion and society at Hartford Seminary. He is co-author, with Wade Clark Roof, of *American Mainline Religion* (Rutgers University Press). This article is excerpted from the July 1988 issue of *Grapevine*, a newsletter published by the Joint Strategy and Action Committee, a coalition of the national mission agencies of Christian denominations.

That has been the consistent line of critics from within and without. A rather scurrilous new book by Edmund and Julia Robb, for example, called *The Betrayal of the Church*, presents reams of so-called evidence convicting liberal church leaders of everything from a commitment to totalitarianism to compulsive desire for self-destruction.

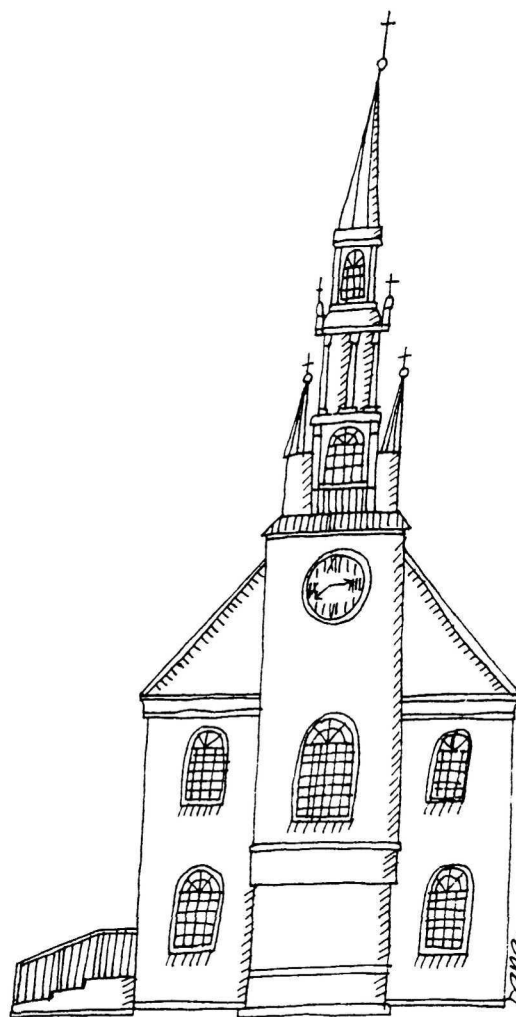
For the most part Christ's mission has, in my judgment, been well served by the people who lead our churches. Our General Assemblies and General Synods and our church leaders make mistakes but I invite anyone to compare their record over the past three decades with any comparable group of major American institutions. They have not failed their people.

My point is that the relationship between the oldline churches and American culture has changed. They are no longer at the center of things. They no longer own the stadium. And it is unlikely they will ever do so again. Yet our churches and members have not caught up with that change. We cling to the days when it was possible to speak of a "cultural mainstream" and to the times when local clergy and national church leaders were among the most important interpreters and custodians of that culture.

Our instincts lead us to the center. Deep in our hearts we believe ourselves to be "mainline." We want desperately to believe that, while we may be temporarily out of step with the religious or political views of many citizens in our society, in time they will catch up to us. Who among us has not secretly rejoiced in the troubles of the televangelists and hoped that millions of viewers will see the light and come home to the oldline churches?

As late as the 1950s it was fairly clear what it meant to be at the center. Among other things, for the oldline churches, it meant a New York headquarters. New York was the place to be since it was the undisputed center of economic power and communications and the seat of the oldline political establishment.

Today "New York" means something quite different. If in the 1950s it symbolized a position at the center of the culture, today it is for many a symbol of distance and alienation. "New York" has come to mean "other than the grassroots." The concentration of denominational headquarters in the East, says Jim Wall of the *Christian Century*, "has been a mistake, giving them a distorted view of the country." Relocation, he adds, "is long overdue" and needed to realign the denominations with "the needs and attitudes of the ordinary members." Not for Wall but for many others the issue of location of denominational offices has provided an outlet for latent hostility to cities. People say that New York has "too many minorities," and "too many Jews" and "too many feminists" to be an appropriate location for the offices of a re-



spectable church body.

All the talk about demographics and economics, the question of headquarters location, is an attempt to reestablish a relationship with the American heartland, to send a message that the Presbyterian, Lutheran and UCC churches are still "of the center." Yet I'm convinced that moving denominational headquarters to Louisville or Chicago or Cleveland or St. Louis will do no more to restore the role of these churches at the center than a move to New York did in the 1950s. The issue is not geography. Nor is it really the personalities or the ideological or theological views of the people who hold leadership positions in the churches. The real issue is how we will deal with the fundamental change in the relationship between the oldline churches and mainstream culture. The issue is whether we are now not able, perhaps for the first time in American history, to shape a relationship to American culture, based not on our being here first, or on what the culture expects of us, but on a biblically-oriented vision of the church's role in the world.

That's something new for churches that have been at the

center of things for so long they don't know how to act when they are off-center. It's new and rather scary. We would much rather go back to the way things were when people looked to the oldline churches for leadership and direction.

The oldline churches have, of course, been disestablished before — and we can learn something about our present opportunity if we remember how our mothers and fathers in faith dealt with their experience of disestablishment.

In 1818 Lyman Beecher, the hotheaded preacher who played a pivotal role in the history of liberal Protestantism, was pastor of the church at Litchfield, Conn., and the leader of the effort to preserve the established status of Congregationalism. Beecher lost. In his own words, "They slung us out like a stone from a sling." It didn't take him very long, however, to recognize that the removal of the church from the center of things could be turned to an advantage. Before long most church leaders agreed that when the churches were no longer dependent on state support "it threw them wholly on their own resources and on God."

When the oldline churches of the 19th century recognized that the center of American society was no longer their sole possession, they discovered a new freedom to be the church. Disestablishment unleashed energies the churches hardly knew they had.

We are in a similar position today. Oldline religion has again been disestablished and our challenge is to forego the temptation to reestablish our position at some imaginary center of the society. We need instead to take full advantage of the possibilities that exist closer to the periphery.

Looking to the future

Now what does all this theoretical talk about the relationship between oldline Protestantism and the center, about disestablishment, mean for churches and people who care about them? Let me suggest several possibilities.

First, it challenges the way we think about ministry and our mission. For the most part the denominations and local churches I work with are approaching questions of mission with a sense of loss.

I take history very seriously but this is not a time to be dwelling on restoration. The oldline churches have no hope of reaching out to the new populations of America — to people of color, those drawn by TV preachers, to those who struggle to make ends meet — if they remain bound to the notion that it is possible or desirable to restore the churches to their earlier position of dominance. It is only when we accepted the fact of our own new off-centeredness that we will have a chance of partnership with peoples whose experience has not been of the center but rather of the margins.

Second, accepting the fact of our disestablishment challenges us to rethink assumptions about our own institutions

and their appropriateness for the challenges that face our communities and their churches. Most of our assumptions about church life come not from the New Testament but from periods of American life in which we enjoyed a certain cultural hegemony. We hold firm to the old rules as if they were ordained on high.

We need to break the chains that bind us to ways of doing things that, however appropriate they might have been at earlier points in our history, prevent us today from the new challenges we face. Where is it written that effective ministry always demands three years of post-college study in an accredited seminary? Where is it written that virtually all of our theological education funds will go to the preparation of ordained clergy and virtually none to the preparation of laity for their ministries in the world? Where is it written that every congregation must be able to support a full-time minister, or occupy a building with a steeple, or own an organ, or gather for worship for one hour a week beginning no earlier than eight and no later than eleven on a Sunday morning?

The genius of Lyman Beecher and his 19th century partner was their recognition that disestablishment brought the need to create new institutions for the new roles the old churches would need to play — not so much because the old institutions weren't working anymore, but because in the words of the hymn, new occasions created new duties. Tract societies, foreign and home mission movements, educational institutions, and social reform efforts ranging from abolition to temperance to women's suffrage came into existence largely because laity and clergy in oldline churches saw the need to create new institutions based on post-establishment thinking.

Third, post-establishment thinking challenges the oldline churches to articulate a distinctive and a distinctively religious vision. John Murray Cuddihy has written that mainline religion today is "happen-to-be" religion. "My religion? Well, I happen to be a Presbyterian." "I happen to be a Methodist." "Or I happen to be a Lake Wobegon Lutheran." Establishment religion creates a religious style that is calculated not to give offense. But maybe it's time to risk giving offense to some of the groups vying for the center of American religious and public life. Maybe it's time for the oldline churches to go beyond "happen-to-be" religion, offering the people of our cities an alternative for much of the pap that passes for biblical religion on the airwaves and street corners of our neighborhoods.

This is not meant to be an endorsement of the major denominations' new-found emphasis on programs in evangelism and church growth, most of which seem to me to contain very little good news and not much potential for church growth. For the most part their resources are addressed not to American communities of the 1980s but those of the 1950s.

What about beliefs?

Ask yourself what is actually known about the religious convictions of the oldline churches of your community. My hunch is very little. People may have a sense of the programs, history, or even positions on certain public issues, but for the most part the content of the faith is a mystery. In what may be the best illustration of the prevalence of our pre-establishment thinking, we assume that people know what these churches stand for. And the churches themselves are largely to blame.

Finally, taking advantage of our "off-centeredness" gives us a chance to hear the word of God in fresh and invigorating ways.

A year ago I preached in my home church in downtown Hartford. Center Church, the first Church of Christ in Hartford, was founded by the Rev. Thomas Hooker in 1632 and is the "founding church" of Connecticut. Its Main St. location and its steeple rising above the city — though now dwarfed by office buildings — are silent reminders of the role the church played in the city's past. The church has had its ups and downs over three centuries and it struggles today to figure out what it means to be an historic oldline church in a city whose residents are predominantly Black and Hispanic, a city that has been ranked the fourth poorest in America. Its 300 or so members, mainly White and middle-class, mostly from the suburbs, are committed to the city and to the church's mission, but they aren't really sure what that means.

The Lectionary reading for the day was the first chapter of Paul's first letter to the church at Corinth: "Consider your call, my friends; not many of you were wise according to worldly standards, not many were powerful, not many were

of noble birth; but God chose what is low and despised in the world, even things that are not, to bring to nothing things that are, so that no human might boast in the presence of God."

This struck me then as an appropriate text for Center Church and strikes me now as an appropriate one for many other churches as well. In the early years of the American experiment, our churches were able to see themselves as "not wise by earthly standards," as "not of noble birth," as "the weak," as "the low and despised." In the early years these churches could see themselves over against the center as represented by the churches of the lands they fled. Paul's words were reassuring.

Later, in the halcyon days of the Protestant empire, such a reading became more difficult. Paul's words are hard to deal with when the church is at the center of things, when the church owns the stadium and sets and enforces the rules of the game. They weren't written for people at the center but for people on the periphery. I suspect there were years when they weren't welcome words in many oldline congregations. They just didn't fit any more. One suspects they were much more welcome in the churches of immigrants, Blacks and others who felt excluded by the churches that dominated the city's religious life.

Paul's words are empowering, however, when the church is closer to the margin. Today, no longer at the center of things, Center Church and oldline churches more generally are in a position to hear the word of God break forth in fresh and unforeseen ways. Accepting our off-centeredness will require all of us to learn new ways of thinking and acting, but it remains the only way our churches and communities can look forward to the future.

TTW

Letters . . . Continued from page 3

and tolerance. It seems to me that, if more people were to write, these folks might just begin to realize that there's a bigger world out there, one in which the sorts of brutal arrogance they espouse scarcely resembles what others call "faith."

Meanwhile, thank you for your magazine — and for your gift to us of Bishop-elect Barbara Harris.

The Rev. Robert Mackie
Hanover, Mass.

(Those wishing to write to protest the actions of the Diocese of London against the Lesbian and Gay Christian Movement (LGCM) and the Diocese of Sydney against AngGays can write to the heads

of the respective churches. In England: The Most Rev. & Rt. Hon. Robert Runce, Lambeth Palace, London SE1 7JU, England. In Australia: The Most Rev. John Grindrod KBE, Bishopsbourne, 39 Eldernell Ave., Hamilton, Queensland 4007, Australia. — Ed.)

WITNESS in new listing

Our Editorial Staff has recommended that we secure your permission to abstract articles from your publication for inclusion in *Religious and Theological Abstracts*.

These abstracts of published articles appear in hard copy in more than 1,000 libraries and research facilities throughout the world, as well as on CD-ROM,

rendering these scholarly contributions accessible to a wide academic community. Scholars are motivated to go directly to the sources. In addition to indexing these articles we also publish annually the subscription address of those journals we abstract. There is no financial charge for our services. (See page 25.)

J. Creighton Christman, D.D., Editor
Myerstown, Pa.

Superb work

I love the understanding, depth and clarity of the articles in THE WITNESS. Keep up the good work!

John Sivley
Norfolk, Va.

1988 Index

This year THE WITNESS celebrates the 72nd year of its founding, and the 15th year of its "resurrection" after the death of former editor William B. Spofford, Sr. We are proud of our long history of advocacy for the oppressed. The following index of articles which appeared last year in the magazine illustrates not only our concern with social justice and peace issues, but also our advocacy with those who are

engaged in Christian witness around those issues.

Articles listed under the categories of Social Action and Theological Reflection illustrate our emphasis on the action/reflection theological model.

Librarians, researchers and students have found this tabulation helpful in the past, which makes the tedious nature of assembling it all the more worthwhile to editorial assistant Susan Small.

THE WITNESS can also be found in Religion Index One, a publication of the American Theological Library Association, and next year will appear in Religious Theological Abstracts (See Letters.) In addition, University Microfilms International of Ann Arbor reproduces our publication in microform: microfiche and 16 or 35 mm film.

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Philly Bowl to Bishop-elect

Barbara C. Harris, Bishop-elect of the Diocese of Massachusetts and first woman to be elected Bishop in the Episcopal Church and worldwide Anglican Communion, was presented the prestigious Philadelphia Bowl by Mayor W. Wilson Goode Dec. 12 at City Hall. The award, of Wedgwood China, is engraved with scenes of historic events and personages from Philadelphia's history. It is awarded for outstanding achievement and service to the city and citizens of Philadelphia. (See story p. 17.) As THE WITNESS went to press, a majority of Diocesan Standing Committees had just approved her election and the consent process now moves to Diocesan Bishops for endorsement. Photo courtesy Office of the City Representative/Philadelphia.

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