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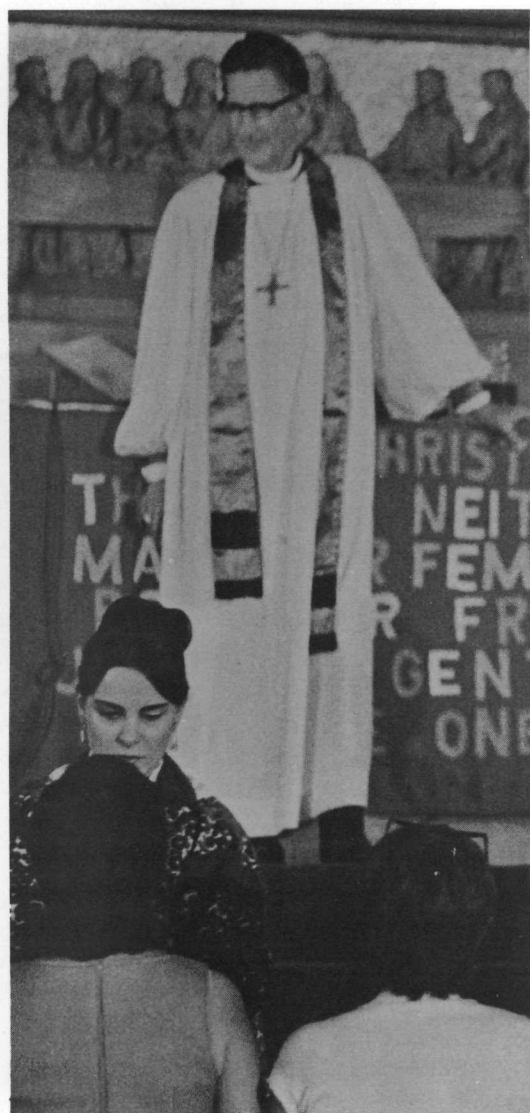
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# THE WITNESS

Special Issue, 60 cents  
August 25, 1974

## Eleven Women Ordained Priests In Philadelphia



### Christian Conscience?

The recent ordination of a number of women to the priesthood was done in only partial compliance with the established procedures for ordinations. The irregular character of that action draws attention to those internal laws of the church, the canons. Challenges to received institutions make lawyers of us all.

The canons concerning the ministry have all been written in terms of "he," "him," and "his." It could be argued that the language of the canons was open to the construction that "he" might mean "human being" or baptized person." But over the generations this understanding of the intent of the canons was never tested. Seminaries were all-male enclaves; the diaconate, presbyterate, and episcopate were filled exclusively by men; and few people seem to have thought these things should be different than they were.

After some years of consciousness-raising on the part of individuals and the community, women were, by express action of General Convention, admitted to the diaconate. Their call by God and their competence in ministry was and is undeniable.

Then, in the fall of 1973, a motion to admit women to the priesthood was presented to the General Convention. It received a majority in the House of Bishops and was approved by a majority of the deputies. However, since divided delegations are counted as negative, the negative votes plus the divided votes outnumbered the affirmative votes, and the action failed in the House of Deputies.

It would be unrealistic, however, to suppose that the conviction represented by half the bishops and deputies of the Convention of 1973 could be contained. Persons who are equally committed to priesthood for women might disagree on strategy. But people who think of the issue as fundamentally not one of interpreting canons but as one of obedience to a call of God will feel a need to do something.

One course of action would be to wait until another Convention, try again then, and meantime publicize the case while abiding by the decision of the church's national synod. But such a course would be slow and uncertain. The

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# Who We Are

The Reverend William Spofford, father of the present Episcopal Bishop of Eastern Oregon, was for some decades the prime mover of **The Witness** magazine. Starting in 1920, he produced a weekly which was, for many, the social conscience of the Episcopal Church. He believed deeply that Christian obedience required a posture of sharp criticism of the structures of this world. Some differed with him. All respected his integrity.

Early on, the effort was incorporated under The Episcopal Church Publishing Company. By dint of paying himself a subsistence salary, stinting on costs, receiving many contributions in addition to subscription prices, a small capital fund grew and with wise investment appreciated in value over the decades. At the time of his death over two years ago there were sufficient financial resources to resume publication, with funds enabling a guaranteed first year publication budget of \$150,000.

Bishop Spofford and his sister and niece wish the magazine to continue. They were instrumental in re-establishing a Board of Directors for The Episcopal Church Publishing Company, which consists of Bishops Arnold, DeWitt, Gressle, Hines, Krumm and Mosley, and Dr. Joseph Fletcher.

Over the past few months there have been consultations with scores of people concerning editorial policy. A real need has been discerned, a response has been assured, and **The (new) Witness** hopes, in its own high tradition, to bear testimony to God's continuing concern for the affairs of people.

## Special Issue

The sequence of events pertaining to the recent ordination of eleven women to the priesthood has been reported extensively through the various public media. This special, pre-publication issue of **The Witness** is offered as commentary on those events. We seek to identify and illuminate the issues in the life of the church and in the lives of people implicit in those events.

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# To Whom It May Concern

**The Witness** is an independent report on the issues behind the issues in Church and State and World.

Witnesses are those who know because they are present, and who tell what they know. You are present. What do you know?

You know that for the majority of the human family misery is increasing, all the myths of progress notwithstanding. You know that the small and weak nations of the world are being dominated and decimated by the larger and more powerful nations and by multi-national corporations. You know that in the United States enormous wealth coexists with extreme poverty. You know that Blacks, women, Latinos and native Americans continue to be victimized by persistent patterns of discrimination. You know that throughout the world our environmental inheritance is despoiled in the name of "productivity." You know that self-serving corporate and political bureaucracies are corrupting our sensibilities by the prostitution of words and the manipulation of images. You know that the churches are too conformed to the status quo to transform it. You know that vast numbers of persons are responding to the present state of the world by withdrawing into the cocoon of private life. You know how tempting it is to flee from the responsibilities of hope and languish in the inertia of despair.

## Join Our Search

Nevertheless, we suspect that you (like the members of the staff at **The Witness**) are unwilling to succumb to weariness and lapse into the idolatrous worship of personal powerlessness. As a result, we invite you to join us in the contemporary search for clear vision, honest speech and appropriate action. We hope to provide a forum for writers who have broken through the perceptual handicaps of national, cultural, economic, sexual and racial vested interests, and are trying to articulate the needs of all people in our times.

We hope to win the attention of readers whose minds already have been numbed by the assault of too many words, but who **still** are willing to listen to those whose words may point the way to responsible deeds.

Finally, we intend to encourage the formation of a network of writers and readers drawn together by a disciplined desire to be faithful witnesses to the One who daily renews the promise to preach good news to the poor, release to the captives, recovery of sight to the blind and liberty to the oppressed.



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# An Open Letter to The Church

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On Monday, July 29, 1974, the Feast of Sts. Mary and Martha, God willing, we intend to ordain to the Sacred Priesthood some several women deacons. We want to make known as clearly and as widely as we can the reflections on Christian obedience which have led us to this action. We are painfully conscious of the diversity of thinking in our church on this issue, and have been deeply sobered by that fact. We are acutely aware that this issue involves theological considerations, that it involves biblical considerations, that it involves considerations of Church tradition, and that it raises the vexing question of amicable consensus in our household of faith.

We are convinced that all these factors have been given due consideration by the Church at large, and by us. We note that the House of Bishops is on record as being in favor of the ordination of women. We note that a majority of the clergy and laity in the House of Deputies is also on record as being in favor, even though an inequitable rule

of procedure in that House has frustrated the will of the majority. All of the foregoing factors, by themselves, would not necessarily dictate the action we intend. Nor, even, would this intended action necessarily be required by the painful fact that we know pastorally the injustice, the hurt, the offense to women which is occasioned by the present position of our Church on this issue. However, there is a ruling factor which does require this action on our part. It is our obedience to the Lordship of Christ, our response to the sovereignty of His Spirit for the Church.

One of the chief marks of the Church is its being the community of the Resurrection. Ours is a risen Lord. He was raised in the power of the Spirit so that we might participate, however inadequately, in His triumph against sin and separation, proclaim the good news of His victory, and occasionally ourselves walk in newness of life. His Spirit is the Lord of the Church. Hearing His command, we can heed no other. We gladly join ourselves with those who in other times and places, as well as here and now, have sought obedience to that same Spirit.

This action is therefore intended as an act of obedience to the Spirit. By the same token it is intended as an act of solidarity with those in whatever institution, in whatever part of the world, of whatever stratum of society, who in their search for freedom, for liberation, for dignity, are moved by that same Spirit to struggle against sin, to proclaim that victory, to attempt to walk in newness of life. We pray this action may be, as we intend it, a proclamation of the Gospel — that God has acted for us, and expects us, in obedience, to respond with appropriate action.

The Rt. Rev. Daniel Corrigan  
The Rt. Rev. Robert L. DeWitt  
The Rt. Rev. Edward R. Welles

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*“The responsibility now falls directly upon those who feel aggrieved ‘to make no peace with oppression’ and to redeem the General Convention from a foolish mistake. As blacks refused to participate in their own oppression by going to the back of the bus in 1955 in Montgomery, women are refusing to cooperate in their own oppression by remaining on the periphery of full participation in the Church in 1974 in Philadelphia.” — from Dr. Charles V. Willie’s sermon at the Philadelphia ordination.*

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Tender, loving defiance

# Yes to Women Priests

by Betty Medsger

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One night in 1906 an 11-year-old girl was sitting on her bed reading by gaslight when her mother entered her room, sat on the bed and delicately asked, "Darling, what do you want to do when you grow up?"

The mother had carefully planned how to approach her daughter Jeannette with the difficult explanation of the doings of the birds and bees. "I later realized I was supposed to say, 'I want to be a mother and have eleven children just as you did,' " Jeannette Piccard now says, but that thought never occurred to her in 1906. Instead young Jeannette replied:

"I want to be a priest."

Her mother burst into tears and fled the room. "It was the only time I ever saw my Victorian mother run," recalls Mrs. Piccard, now 79.

Undaunted by the high drama her first announcement caused, Jeannette matured in her intent and in 1918 when the president of Bryn Mawr College asked the same question Jeannette gave the same answer. "Very well," the president said, "you should major in philosophy and psychology and by the time you graduate it may be possible for you to be a priest."

Merrill Bittner was born in 1945, 52 years after Jeannette. She grew up in an Episcopal parish in California, loved the Church and felt close to her priests.

Merrill taught biology for awhile, but felt a pull toward seminary and enrolled at Bexley Hall, Rochester, N.Y. As she became more certain of her vocation she returned to her home parish, eager to share her decision with the priests who had nurtured her in her faith. One said she should leave the Church. The other has not spoken to her since.

Both of these women have repeatedly been told by "wise men" to "go do something else."

Nevertheless on July 29 the Rev. Jeannette Piccard of Minnesota and the Rev. Merrill Bittner of Rochester, N.Y. — two women separated in age by more than half a century, bruised by prejudice based on their sex and joined by their common commitment to the Church — gathered with other women of similar experiences and similar commitments and were ordained as the Episcopal Church's first women priests. The other nine deacons ordained priests were: the Rev. Sister Alla Bozarth-Campbell, E.O., 27, Minnesota; the Rev. Alison Cheek, 47, Virginia; the Rev. Emily Hewitt, 30, New York; the Rev. Carter Heyward, 28, New York; the Rev. Suzanne Hiatt, 37, Pennsylvania; the Rev. Marie Moorefield, 30, New York; the Rev. Betty Bone Schiess, 51, Central New York; the Rev. Katrina Swanson, 39, West Missouri; the Rev. Nancy Hatch Wittig, 28, Newark.

Their historic ordination took place in a black neighborhood in North Philadelphia before some 1,500 witnesses at the altar of Church of the Advocate, an old church that has opened its doors many times to people who could find no other place to be heard.

The Rev. Paul Washington, rector of the host church, opened the service to warm applause: "What is a mother to do when the doctor says a baby is due on August 10, when on July 29 she has reached the last stages of labor pains?"

"We realize that a misjudgement of this sort can cause great inconveniences as well as problems. It would not, however, be an occasion for suing the doctor, for getting a divorce or for punishing the child for arriving too soon . . .

"May we praise God for those this day who act in obedience to God while we love and respect those whom this day we cannot obey."

Those ordained were among some 120 women deacons in the Episcopal Church, about 50 of them ordained as deacons since 1970. The four bishops who ordained the women risked censure or deposition for their action. The bishops were Robert L. DeWitt, resigned of Pennsylvania and president, Church and Society, a new organization devoted to keeping social issues before the Church; Edward Randolph Welles II, retired of West Missouri and an honorary vice-president of the American Church Union which opposes women's ordination; Daniel Corrigan, former head of the Church's Home Department. Also present, but not as an ordaining bishop, was Antonio Ramos, Bishop of Costa Rica.

The canon law of the Church neither specifically pro-

hibits nor approves the ordination of women, but bishops of the Church have condemned this ordination, in part, on the grounds that the national legislative bodies of the Church have not given a clear directive.

Even on that point participants in the Philadelphia ordination felt the Church's endorsement of women priests has been strong. In recent years each part of the Church — bishops, clergy and laity — has by majority vote approved the ordination of women priests. The Episcopal Churchwomen have also endorsed the principle twice.

Many Episcopal women deacons had properly prepared themselves for priesthood and were disappointed when last fall's convention — by a system of bloc voting — prevented their access to priesthood. Following that convention the bishops and the women held many conversations. Eventually, as conviction engendered courage, they decided that to delay was to postpone justice, and thus, the will of God for them and the Church.

Their ordination was also historic in that it was probably the first time that men within the Church placed themselves in jeopardy for the equal rights of women.

For ten days prior to the ordination, the Church at the highest levels tried to stop it. Presiding Bishop John M. Allin wired each woman and each bishop and asked them not to do it.

Alison Cheek, who before her ordination as a priest was an assisting deacon at St. Alban's, Annandale, Va., explained her refusal to drop out in a letter to Bishop Allin:

"When I became a deacon, the bishop charged me: 'You are to interpret to the Church the need, the concerns, the hopes of the world.' In the world there is a revolution going on — a women's revolution. Women are striving to define themselves, name themselves as whole persons. This, it seems to me, goes to the heart of the Gospel. The attitudes and actions of the Church have damaged women . . . . In order to live out my ordination charge, and to be who I am, I cannot comply with the request of either my bishop or General Convention . . . I have a lot of turmoil and grief around my decision. I'm not very brave, and don't look forward to the hatred I'll evoke. At the same time I go with joy at having come of age . . . ."

Most of the diocesan bishops of the women ordained in Philadelphia have indicated they doubt the canon law of the Church specifically prohibits ordination of women.

But they believe the traditional prohibition should be reversed by General Convention.

Many of the bishops in the eight diocese where the women are canonically resident have strongly criticized or defied civil law in order to stand for the human rights of blacks and other minorities or for the end of the Vietnam war. In those instances they felt the moral imperative more important than the legal technicalities.

The ordaining bishops decided, along with the women to force the Church to take a stand on this issue. Bishop Corrigan explained their position during the service: "There is nothing new in being compelled to choose the truth revealed in Scripture and expressed in doctrine when this truth is in conflict with our rules and ways . . . This is such a time."

That stand will be contested when the House of Bishops meets in Chicago in mid-August. Members of that House can either censure or bring their brother bishops to trial. The diocesan bishops may suspend their sister priests or at least inhibit them from functioning as priests.

All of the women knowingly risked their future careers as priests. Emily Hewitt, a professor at Andover-Newton, Theological School in Newton, Centre, Mass., expressed the feelings of herself and the other women:

"You cannot continue putting up with the Church's complicity with being untrue to the Gospel. To put up with it is to put up with a lie . . . If I finally can't exercise the office I'm called to, it seems better to do that than to make a mockery of the Gospel. It's better to be faithful, even for a short period of time, then not to do it at all."

—Betty Medsgar: former religion writer, Philadelphia Evening Bulletin and Washington Post; now freelance writer-photographer.

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# Woman in a Man's Church

by Rosemary Reuther

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The ordination of 11 deacons to the Episcopala priesthood on July 29 was an event of great historical importance. Like other acts of civil disobedience which involved persons in risking much rather than acquiescing to unjust laws, it represented a decision to obey God rather than men, to obey the true mind of the Church rather than the letter of the law.

This is an appropriate time to reflect on some of the elements of the Church's history that have made it so difficult to treat its female half as full-fledged human beings and Christians. Both the Greco-Roman and the Jewish heritages, which form the background of the Church, were rigidly patriarchal in their legal subordination of women. Both carried forward a tradition of hatred toward women that identified women with the dangerous, negative side of the human self. Judaism excluded women, not only from the temple priesthood and the rabbinate, but even from first-class membership in the synagogue. Women were shut out of the inner sanctuary and kept even from its outer precincts during their "uncleanness". The rabbis pictured the woman solely as the wife, who sent her sons to the synagogue, but was not herself called to the study of Torah.

The ministry of Jesus was a breakthrough that liberated women from their traditional subordination. Jesus spoke with women who were not his relatives and allowed himself to be touched by the woman with a flow of blood, rejecting the taboos typical of Jewish law. The first witnesses of the Resurrection were women, countering the prevailing view that women were not competent witnesses. Jesus had women followers and disciples, something that must have looked highly irregular at that time. Jesus' concept of the ministry was

based on a criticism of the traditional roles of leadership. The Christian minister was not to be a hierarchical authority figure. Rather, the model of ministry was to be the servant role of slaves and women. By contrast, the one person he rebuked for being too occupied with serving was a woman, Martha. The synagogue excluded women from studying as disciples of the Teacher. But Jesus called women to be his disciples, and declared that Mary, not Martha, had chosen the "better part". Thus the ministry was meant to be woman-like in being oriented to service, rather than to power and rule.

This iconoclasm toward the traditional view of women was continued in the early Church. Women normally were fullfledged catechumens and members of the congregation. Christian baptism, unlike circumcision, was a rite that made no distinction between men and women. Moreover, in the early Christian community, women were teachers and leaders. Even Paul, who is often seen as the woman-hater of the early Church, continued this practice of female leadership, both in the local Church and among the traveling evangelists (apostles). Paul's statement in Gal. 3:27 that "in Christ there is neither male nor female" expressed the theological conviction that the redemption won by Christ abolished the traditional inferiority of women, just as it abolished the traditional inferiority of slaves and gentiles. Paul applied this conviction when he took for granted the right of women to lead the congregation in prayer and prophecy. Yet he was reluctant to allow a similar breakthrough to take place in secular society. Here his social conservatism was in contrast with his theological radicalism. This was true in his treatment of both women and of slaves. He believed that the final transformation, which would change the status of worldly things, would come only at the "End" (which Paul expected to happen very soon). In the here and now, he believed, women should continue to obey their husbands, slaves their masters. Women should cover their heads when they lead the congregation in prayer or prophecy because of their social subjugation and their historical fault in causing the fall of the angels (I Cor. 11; Gen. 6, 4).

## Women Keep Silent

However, the statement in I Cor. 14:34 that "women should keep silence in the Church", long used as the chief text against women's ordination, contradicted Paul's practices elsewhere. It probably was an interpolation that came from the second generation Pastoral epistles. In these later epistles, which were the product of the deutero-Pauline generation, we have a more



institutional concept of ministry and a concept of the Church modeled on the patriarchal family. In contrast, Paul saw ministry as a plurality of particular charisms. The later epistles said that the women should be silent and submissive and should regard their salvation in the bearing of children, rather than in a new spiritual life represented by the Church. The Bishops and Presbyters were regarded as male heads of families, although the practice of ordaining women to the diaconate continued.

In the first four centuries of the Church's life, we see a continuation of this exclusion of women from their earlier participation in the Church's leadership. Gradually the ministry came to be seen as modeled after a new temple priesthood. The Roman priesthood acquired the privileges of a social caste. The idea that women were unclean and so should be excluded from the sanctuary, an idea rejected by Jesus, was reasserted, eliminating the role of deaconesses. Uncleaness also was seen as excluding women from full lay participation as well. As asceticism increased in the Church and shaped its ideal of ministry, women came to be more and more regarded as a sexual threat, safe only when veiled and hidden from public gaze.

Nevertheless, the Church Fathers never evoked the maleness of Jesus or the apostles as an argument for regarding women as second-class members of the community of redemption. This argument was developed in scholastic philosophy in the Middle Ages. Thomas Aquinas and others adopted Aristotle's views on biology, which defined women as misbegotten males. Women were seen as biologically, morally and intellectually inferior to men, by nature. Their role in the Fall made them the special exemplars of 'carnal lust'. In the "Malleus Maleficarum", the official handbook used in the Dominican witch-hunts, the maleness of Jesus was seen as redeeming males from the demonic temptations, but not women. Thomas Aquinas believed that the natural inferiority of women made it impossible for women to be ordained, because only males could represent headship, while women were, by nature, "servile people". This same argument was also applied to serfs. Thus the Church lost the original insights which said that the redemption won by Christ affirmed the equality of women as disciples, and which rejected the model of ministry drawn from male and kingly power.

## False Biological Views

In addition, the Church adopted a sexist model of symbolization, which made it very hard for women to be speakers rather than hearers in the Church. In Christian theology there is a pervasive tendency to symbolize all the basic relationships: the relation of God to Creation, the relation of Christ to the Church, the relation of the soul to God, the relation of the mind to the body, and, finally, the relation of the ministry to the people in a pattern reflecting a hierarchy of male "active principle" over female passive principle. The basic assumption of all these symbolic hierarchies is that the higher, acting and initiative force is male and the bodily-dominated principle is female.

This concept of the male as the formative principle, and the female simply as a passive receptacle, actually reflects Aristotle's false views of biology. It ignores the fact that sperm and ovum contribute equally to the formative seed of the child. The concept is still more ludicrous when applied on the psycho-spiritual level, where men and women clearly have

mind, ears and senses which make them equally actors, as well as receivers, of messages.

The secular symbolism of the male as the transcendent, initiating principle, and the female as a passive body, dominated by male power, also invaded the symbolism of the Church. Christ was taken to be like a head in relation to a body, a husband in relation to a wife. The model is hierarchical, with the female as the passive, receptive "underside" of an action which comes completely "from above". This symbolism becomes especially questionable when it splits the relation of the clergy and the people of the Church into a similar hierarchical dualism. The clergy become like transcendent fathers who hold all spiritual initiation in their hands. The laity become passive receptacles, women-children, in the hands of spiritual power, which comes to them from above and beyond their own powers of initiation. Both a clericalist ministry and a passive laity derive from the same sexist symbolization of the clergy-laity relationship. This symbolism makes it very difficult for women to act as leaders or to be legitimated as clergy, because they are always taken to be symbols of that which is to be dominated and acted upon.

We must reflect upon whether these sexual hierarchies, and the consequent exclusion of women from ministry, do not fundamentally contradict the message of Jesus. We have to rediscover the original perception of the Gospel in the early Church as a breakthrough to a redemption that annuls the historical sinfulness of societies which made women, slaves and alien races inferior and even quasi-demonic.

"In Christ there is neither male nor female." This means that the barriers of sexism, class hierarchy and racism have been overthrown by the redemption that has been won by Jesus. This means that the incarnation of Jesus should not be seen as sanctifying male power. It means that spiritual power is not anymore something which is "up there", above and over against ourselves. Spiritual leadership should no longer be exercise after the model of kingly power and patriarchal domination of males over women and servants. Rather, God has now become the "ground of our being". Grace is no longer something that is acting from the top of power structures, and which is filtered down to the people by oppressive hierarchies. Rather, it has now become the 'matrix', the ambience in which we live and move and have our being. The Holy Spirit, as God-present-with-us, allows redemption to flow up from the foundation of our existence. The people, not hierarchical power structures, are the initiators and foundation of the life of the Church. The Church is a new Creation where people teach and forgive each other. Ministers are servants of the people, not dominating rulers. Men are instructed to be ministers by being servants and helpers, while women are called out of their traditional subordination to become equal disciples.

This full message of the Gospel has yet to be learned by the Christian Church. The message has gone out ahead of us, inviting us to transcend our inherited traditions and enter into the full liberation of the People of God, won by the death and resurrection of Jesus. Now, it is time for us to catch up by being faithful to the Spirit's call.

—Rosemary Reuther: professor of Historical Theology, Howard University; author, *Liberation Theology*

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# Conscience and The Canons

(continued from front cover)

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advice to be patient with the church is often wise. But this issue is being posed for the church through specific people. Women have become convinced of a call of God to serve in the ordained ministries. That call has been tested, and the competences appropriate to it have been acquired. A large community recognizes that call comes from God and seeks its authorization in the communal, pastoral, and sacramental life of the church. The initiative in this matter seems, at least to a substantial portion of the church, to come from the Holy Spirit. God — constant in his very unpredictableness — is asking this Church to do something it has not done before. He is asking it through the persons of women who recognize deep within themselves an undeniable call to priesthood. It will not do to say, "But my doctrine tells me that you do not have a call". The reply is unanswerable: "But I do." Doctrine and discipline must come to terms with this concrete, personal fact. The conviction, determination, pain, hopes, and disappointments of a large and growing group of women in the church (and of others, men and women, who have identified with them) are prophetic signs. They require appropriate, compassionate, understanding response. The graceful thing would be for the relatively slow-moving institution to accept the pace of the personal.

Inevitably, a course of action other than that of waiting until 1976 commended itself to at least some persons. If the ordination of women to the priesthood is not authorized officially by the church, and yet it seems to be something that, by the best tests available, is the will of God for the church in our time, one responsible course of action would be an act of evangelical disobedience. To go ahead with an ordination with as much compliance with the doctrine and discipline of the church as possible, but without the full authorization of canon law, is certain to be an act with many anomalies. But it may be a way of helping the church to recognize and deal with the greater anomaly of a community of persons who are one in Christ but half of whose members are banned from the ordained priesthood. Persons who are convinced of the rightness of women's ordination are also convinced that without it the church is unfulfilled. An ordination of women presbyters may be an act of painful disloyalty to the church as it is, but at the same time, a joyful claiming now of the greater thing the church is called to become.

At any rate, moved by these or similar considerations, the decision was made. A group of women has been ordained by the bishops the church authorizes to ordain, supported by a body of clergy and lay persons using the liturgy appointed for such ordination and intending to do what the church does when it ordains. The point is not just to ordain women, but to ordain them in a church in which catholic substance and order are cherished under the informing judgment of the gospel. Things are never as tidy as might be wished, and irregularities are apparent. Diocesan bishops were not ordaining their own candidates; Standing Committees had not given official approval; the most probable meaning of the national canons was by-passed by the ordinands. The church will give close investigation to this act and ask some hard questions — partly of the initiators of the act, and partly, one may hope, of itself.

## Life Over Laws

By this action, the consideration of ordination of women to priesthood is altered. It is no longer an abstract discussion of what ought to be in law. The church will now consider the matter, having in its midst a group of women priests. These women will be serving in congregations and under bishops; their ministry will be widely received within the church. The interpretation of existing canons and the writing and adopting of new ones will be done with this new factor present in the concrete experience of the church.

What is the relation between life in the faith community and the church's code of laws? Canons are the church's effort to shape the life of a community which is called into being by that which transcends law. They regulate a life which they do not create. Thus, canons often have a secondary or following role in the church. The church is not constituted by law; it is constituted by the gift an act of God; it exists for worship, witness, and service. The church's primary account of itself is not juridical, but theological; and theology is an explication of the Gospel; and the Gospel is a loving, freeing, dignifying act of God for all people. The church always has direct access to that Gospel by which its life is led and corrected. The Gospel can lead into new forms of obedience and ministry, and when that happens, canons must scramble to keep pace. Canons tend to be regulative and conservative, rather than innovative. New things in the life of the church seldom happen because those who write canons decide that the body of law requires enlargement or tidying. There is a technical side to good canon writing, and the church needs to value it. But when constructive change takes place in the life of the church, it usually begins deep in the soul of a person (or within a small group), not always in the official structures of the church, but not always outside them. These persons (or this person), acting as they believe according to what the Gospel requires in their situation, do something which may stretch the existing rules to the breaking point. They are sometimes, but not always, vindicated as the official system responds to include the enlarged reality which was originally represented by a prophetic minority. They are sometimes rejected, and the thing they stood for dies or is forced to be represented in schism. Neither the representatives of the new departure nor the church which must respond is invariably wise or right. But that is the risk involved in seeking to express the freedom and diversity of faith within an ordered, lawmaking and law abiding community.

If we had to wait for discussion of the merits of new features of the life of the church to be carried on abstractly before

(continued on page 11)



**The WITNESS**

APRIL 1, 1965

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Editorial  
Selma: Desperation Only Resource

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California Customary  
Benjamin Minifie  
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# THE WITNESS

Special Issue, 60 cents  
August 25, 1974

Eleven Women  
Ordained Priests  
In Philadelphia



## Christian Conscience?

The recent ordination of a number of women to the priesthood was done in the only partial compliance with the established procedures for ordinations. The irregular character of that action draws attention to those internal laws of the church, the canons. Challenges to received institutions make lawyers of us all. The canons concerning the ministry have all been written in terms of "he," "him," and "his." It could be argued that the language of the canons was open to the construction that "he" might mean "human being" or baptized person. But over the generations this understanding of the intent of the canons was never tested. Seminarians were all-male enclaves; the diaconate, presbyterate, and episcopate were filled exclusively by men; and few people seem to have thought these things should be different than they were. After some years of consciousness-raising on the part of individuals and the community, women were, by express action of General Convention, admitted to the diaconate. Their call by God and their competence in ministry was and is undeniable. Then, in the fall of 1973, a motion to admit women to the priesthood was presented to the General Convention. It received a majority in the House of Bishops and was approved by a majority of the deputies. However, since the divided delegations are counted as negative, the negative votes plus the divided votes outnumbered the affirmative votes, and the action failed in the House of Deputies. It would be unrealistic, however, to suppose that the conviction represented by half the bishops and deputies of the Convention of 1973 could be tainted. Persons who are equally committed to priesthood for women might disagree on strategy. But people who think of the issue as fundamentally not one of interpreting canons but as one of obedience to a call of God will feel a need to do something. One course of action would be to wait until another Convention, try again then, and meantime publicize the case while abiding by the decision of the church's national synod. But such a course would be slow and uncertain. The

(continued on page 9)

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article is "Love And Marriage Revisited". Elliot Wright will discuss the current intellectual conflict at New York's Union Theological Seminary. Mohammed Kenyatta will write about the plight of the liberals (they are in disarray). Scheduled also are articles by Jesse Christman (social criteria on investments), Antonio Ramos, David Gracie, and James Morton. And there will be commentary by Robert L. DeWitt. That's just a sampling of what you'll find exclusively in *The Witness*. Don't miss a single issue!

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(continued from page 9)

anything moved, the waits would often be too long for the dynamics of the new situation. The discussion might be educative; the final action might be somewhat more united. But argument can be met by counter-argument for a very long time. In times of rapid change, new things will be upon us. Recognition and incorporation of them (if that is the response they get) comes later. Whether incorporated or rejected, weighty theoretical reasons are found for what is done.

### Sample Instances

This order of things could be instanced at length. A few samples: Monastic communities arose in Anglicanism out of a deep religious impulse (and midst furious controversy); the canons according them recognition followed. New marriage canons have been written after new patterns and problems of marriage have developed in the society and have been met responsibly by pastors. Canons are being drafted now to cover the position of bishops who assist in dioceses but who have not been elected as suffragans or coadjutors; but bishops have been doing such work for many years apart from any authorizing or regulating canons. The practice of ecumenical intercommunion is now widespread in the Roman Catholic Church and has been consented to by many members of the hierarchy, even though, by a strict construction, it is illegal. The law-makers can say that such an instinct was misguided; they can seek to stop the practice and discipline those guilty of it. Or they can include the practice in new and more generous regulations.

Probably the classic instance of the priority of the concrete life of the church over official regulation is the Book of Acts. At point after point, as the narrative moves, the church which was originally all Jewish found itself, contrary to anyone's expectations or design, admitting Gentiles as members because the Holy Spirit had claimed them. The Jerusalem Council narrative in Acts 15 is largely an account of events that had happened in the extension of the Gospel under the Spirit's leading. The conclusions of the council ratified what had already proved itself in the missionary work of the church.

This line of argument is dangerous, of course. It could seem to urge everyone to act on his pet idea and then ask the Church what it will make of it. But a challenge to the laws of the church is not undertaken lightly. Our obedience to God and our loyalty to the church are, most of the time, not in conflict. The canons, on the whole, do a pretty good job of guiding the working of a Christian community. Legal consistency is a way of assuring the continuity and self-identity of the church from generation to generation. Obedience to established law — its empowerments and its restraints — is our way of participating in that strange catholic and evangelical community which is Anglicanism. The canons make us responsible and humane when we might not be on our own. We run a risk in working outside them. But faith is a risky thing. Even though venture is part of faith, we do not venture without controls. The appeal of any action which violates the laws of the church must be to that theology which the church imperfectly embodies in its laws. The question for the ecclesiastical law-breaker is not the simplistic, "Have you broken the law?" The question rather is: "Has your conduct been faithful to that account of Christian faith, community, and life to which both you and the institutional church owe obedience, and by which you and the community are willing to be corrected? Has your action brought

the implications of the gospel into fuller engagement with the life of our time?"

### Church's Response

On July 29, an action, conscientiously undertaken, has challenged the church. The response is partly a matter of canons, but more largely, it is one of statesmanship, imagination, discretion, understanding, and charity.

Punitive action could be taken against the clergy who have participated — by the House of Bishops in the case of the bishops, and by individual dioceses in the case of presbyters. The case would be on the grounds of having violated the oath to obey the discipline of the church. The penalties could go as far as deposition. This is one of the possible consequences of their action that the women, the presbyters and the bishops had to weigh. It is one of the possible responses of the church.

But it is by no means the only one. There is no requirement that ecclesiastical disobedience be punished. There is every desirability that it be investigated. The disciplinary provisions are in the canons, but there is great room for discretion in the way in which they are applied.

An action has been taken intending the good of women, men, the ministry, the church, and the gospel. What is on trial is not only the initiators of such a challenge, but also the church which must respond.

If women are actually serving competently and faithfully as priests, if behind this first group there are more women who believe themselves called to this same ministry, if theological judgment can find nothing inappropriate in a woman proclaiming the word of God and voicing the thanksgiving at the Eucharist, if the Gospel of the oneness of all in the life in Christ has been made more believable, the canons need to incorporate unambiguously this inclusion of women in the priesthood. Beyond the anger, division, pain and misunderstanding of the present, this is a constructive task for the shapers of the ecclesiastical system as they look towards the next Convention.

—Daniel Stevick: professor of Liturgics and Homiletics, EDS, Cambridge; author, **Canon Law**

# Who's in Charge Here?

by Paul van Buren

At their recent ordination to the priesthood, eleven women deacons were asked the same question that is asked of every other candidate: "Do you think in your heart that you are truly called . . . ?" They gave the same answer others have given: "I think it." They or their examiners could, of course, have been mistaken. That risk attends every ordination, as it does every action in the life of the Church. Indeed, there is no Christian faith without that risk, for we are servants of a living Lord and are in constant danger of not hearing His orders, not understanding His will, or not detecting His signs. In this case, as in that of any other ordination, the candidates and their examiners thought in all honesty that the Lord was calling them now to this job. If He is, then an obedient Church can only accept His will. It is His Church after all, not ours: Easter has settled for us the question of who's in charge here!

The issue is not one of equal rights for women. Since the church is on earth and not in heaven, it would be most surprising if those involved in this action had not been influenced by the consciousness of the times, when women are entering so many areas and activities from which they have long been excluded in Western civilization. In such a time, it is not surprising that Christian women should also consider the ordained ministry. As a small sign of the freedom for which Christ has set us free, why should not the Church be open to such a development? It would be a serious misunderstanding of the matter, however, to support this action solely on the grounds of egalitarianism or simple justice. In the matter of ordination, equality and justice are hardly the issue. No one has a right to be ordained. Ordination is a response of the Church to the calling of its Commander. It is an action of obedience or it is a farce.

We say that the Church is apostolic. If it is, then the apostles

will be given a leading place in our deliberations. On the specific question of women priests in 1974, of course, they have left no instructions. The Book of Acts tells us that the apostles, in good form and order, chose Matthias to replace Judas. But Acts and the rest of the apostolic witness make it unambiguously clear that the Lord of the Church had other plans: "irregularly," He chose Paul to make up the complement of the apostles. The warning of the apostles, therefore, is that whatever structures, procedures, or "established channels" we may devise for ecclesial administration, we will never escape the risk of faith. If Christ is risen, we have a living Lord whom we must be prepared to hear today. Not the tradition, not General Convention, but the risen Christ is in charge of his Church.

This action, then, may be read as a sign that the Church has a Lord who is alive and active, who can still do a new thing among us. It is also a sign that the Church is alive, set free to respond to her liberating Lord. Once we become aware that we have a living Lord who still runs things, we may be awakened to the risks to which we have been called by our baptism. As a small sign of that liberation of all persons and the whole creation in which Easter lets us hope and for which Easter makes us long and frees us to work, we can give thanks for this act. It reminds us of who is in charge here, and it calls us again to the risk of faith in the one Liberator.

—Paul M. van Buren: Chairman of the Department of Religion, Temple University, Philadelphia.

## On the Other Hand

Ever since I served as a member of the special committee of the House of Bishop which dealt with the ordination of women I have been convinced that this is a move the Episcopal Church must undertake, indeed should long since have undertaken . . . I was increasingly convinced that an exclusively male priesthood in the Church is a misrepresentation of the High Priesthood of Christ . . . I am saddened that brother bishops with whom I share this basic conviction should embark on a course which I feel will do more harm than good to this important cause . . . I am convinced that these brother bishops have acted only after a great deal of thought and prayer and under the urgent mandate of their consciences. Nevertheless, their action seems to me to be an abandonment of the kind of process and procedure which our life together in the Church requires."

—John M. Krumm: Bishop of Southern Ohio; vice-president, Episcopal Church Publishing Company.

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# THE WITNESS

October 13, 1974  
Volume 58, Number 1

## The New Sexuality: Liberation or Flight?

by Gibson Winter



Tom Jackson

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# Letters to the Editor

The Witness reserves the right to condense all letters.

It is good to see The Witness in print again. The Church needs a voice for its conscience. My impression of the first issue, however, is that it is heavy—real heavy, man. A lot of theological talk—bishops to bishops, pious, ponderous and platitudinous.—*Kenneth E. Clark, Cincinnati*

It is especially good to see you developing in this publication appreciation for the truth that every Christian man loves his woman as himself, quite as every Christian woman loves her man as herself. The whole fixed idea of two sexes cancels out completely the full measured truth of the inviolable individuality of each sex. I am glad that you see clearly how man's irreverence for his femaleness must be his self irreverence which can only obfuscate his conception of his own wholeness and thereby inhibit his devotion to his complete divinity.—*John M. Dorsey, Detroit*

51% of the population are women, 60% of Church goers are women. Your magazine has a male editor and 75% male staff. All of the authors we can 'look forward to' are men. Actions speak louder than words—sexism lives and your magazine is a witness to it. Needless to say I cannot in conscience subscribe.—*Sydney Pendleton*

As far as I can tell, the new "witness" is in fact just another pressure group trying to convince the main body of the church that they are right and everybody else is either wrong, uninformed, or misguided. If you would join forces with "The Anglican Digest", "Christian Challenge", and "The Living Church", you could each have your own section, put it out as an omnibus, and save your collective selves a helluva lot of money.—*William L. Day, Unadilla, NY*

I find the editorial statement interesting although a bit discouraging. Since I don't know your audience it's hard to react specifically but the statement sounds like it's intended for those in retreat—to call a 'huddle', so to speak. If, however, it's really true that that's the state they're in, it does seem like a gentle, but also hard, statement of both push and shove. My sense is that the magazine is intended

largely for those who are not exploited so much by capitalism, but for whom capitalism is in a general way *oppressive*. It's an oppression of not so much material deprivation (the way a welfare mother is oppressed, for example) as an oppression of the fact that because of the nature of the society, human beings, even those materially well off, still cannot fulfill their full potential as human beings.—*Lynda Ann Taylor, Detroit*

I am particularly responsive to the expressed intention of forming a network of writers and readers across the church. Perhaps a forthcoming issue can be more specific in fleshing out the idea or even encouraging those of the readership once it is developed. I for one feel the need for such a collegiality and would be eager to contribute to the process.—*Cabell Tennis, Seattle*

**Among the Many Who Have Helped** us as consultants in charting a course for *The Witness* are the following: J. C. Michael Allen, Jesse F. Anderson, Sr., Barry Bingham, Sr., Eugene Carson Blake, Richard N. Bolles, Myron B. Bloy, Jr., Alice Dieter, Ira Einhorn, Norman J. Faramelli, John C. Fletcher, Richard Fernandez, Judy Mathe Foley, Everett Francis, David A. Garcia, Richard E. Gary, John C. Goodbody, William B. Gray, Michael P. Hamilton, Suzanne R. Hiatt, Muhammad Kenyatta, Roy Larson, Werner Mark Linz, James Parks Morton, Charles L. Ritchie, Jr., Leonard M. Sive, William B. Spofford, Jr., Richard Taylor, Paul M. van Buren, Frederick B. Williams, Gibson Winter.



# THE WITNESS

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## Juris- dictions Have Juris- diction

Writing in "The New Yorker," Richard Goodwin remarked that in bureaucracies even the highest-ranking managers are only employees. Their conduct must never seem to threaten the organization, he said. Conforming behavior has to be internalized. Eventually, the individual convinces himself he is conforming as the result of personal conviction. "Their interests and identity are also at stake . . . not only in American business but wherever bureaucracy rules . . ."

The Church also has its bureaucratic side. In addition to filling many other roles, bishops are also bureaucrats. At its Chicago meeting the House of Bishops responded bureaucratically to the ordination of the 11 women priests in Philadelphia. Like other human beings, bishops are in considerable measure situationally determined! "Where you stand depends upon where you sit."

It is not surprising, then, that the premature and precipitous action of the House of Bishops declared that a matter of substance was at variance with a matter of procedure. And further, that the matter of procedure, a bureaucratic matter, should take precedence.

What is to be done? "We express our conviction," states the House of Bishops' resolution, that the procedural fault lay in the absence of the required approvals in the several dioceses of the ordinands. Precisely so. Consequently, it follows that it is in the several dioceses that the solution can be found.

Now all that is needed is for the dioceses of each of the ordinands, through their respective bishops and standing committees, to rectify the procedural fault by certifying the ordinations. Then, substance and procedure will again be consistent with each other. This is similar to the canonical process of regularization followed when the apostolic order of priesthood has been conferred on others whose ordination did not conform to our canonical procedures—Roman Catholic priests, for example, who wish to have their apostolic ordinations regularized so they may be licensed in the Episcopal Church.

The House of Bishops raised a question of proper procedure. On that matter of procedure the jurisdictions (dioceses) alone have jurisdiction. Let the people of the several dioceses involved urge this action upon their standing committees and bishops.



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## The Church's Untold Story

# The Secret of the Holy Spirit

by William Stringfellow

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I was very impatient to be confirmed.

In my upbringing as a child in the Church I had come to think that confirmation was the occasion when the secrets were told. Confirmation, I supposed, was the event in which all the answers that had been previously withheld from me would be forthcoming. In particular, I recall, I was eager to be confirmed because I expected in confirmation to learn the secret of the Holy Spirit.

When adults named the Holy Spirit in the presence of children it was an utterly mysterious, unspecified, spooky reference.

It did not occur to me as a child to be suspicious that adults in the Church did not in fact know what they were talking about when they used the name of the Holy Spirit. The invocation of the name alone would be effectual in aborting the issues raised by the child. "The Holy Spirit" was the great, available, ready-made, all-purpose discussion-stopper.

Needless to say now, confirmation turned out to be a big disappointment. I waited through catechism, but no secret was confided. If anything, the name of the Holy Spirit was put to use in confirmation instruction with greater emphasis on obscurity and emptiness. At confirmation I learned no secret except the secret that adults had no secret, so far as the Holy Spirit was concerned.

It was only later on, when I began to read the Bible seriously and on my own initiative, that the terrible mystery attending the Holy Spirit began to be exposed to my own capacity for comprehension. In contrast to the childhood impressions of my Church experience, I learned the Bible is quite definite as to the identity, character, style and habitat of the Holy Spirit. Biblically, the Holy Spirit means the militant presence of the Word of God inhering in the whole of creation. By virtue of this redundant affirmation

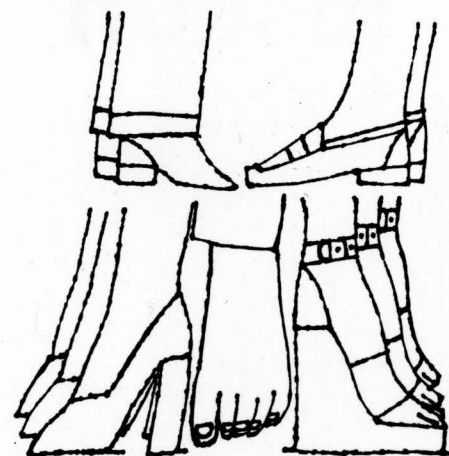
of the biblical witness, the false notion, nurtured in my childhood in the Church, that the Holy Spirit somehow possessed by and enshrined within the sanctuary of the Church, was, at last, refuted and I was freed from it.

It was the biblical insight into the Holy Spirit that signaled my own emancipation from religiosity. It was the biblical news of the Holy Spirit that began, then, to prompt the expectancy of encounter with the Word of God in any and all events in the common life of the world. Where human conscience is alive and active—that is a sign of the vitality of the Word of God in history. The only secret concerning the Holy Spirit which the Church holds has to do with the Church's discernment of and response to the militancy of the Word of God in the world.

All of this, and more, came quickly to mind, some weeks ago, when I received news of the resumption of *The Witness* and an invitation to contribute some articles to it. The overture was open-ended—I could write what I might be moved to write. I accepted the invitation as one which allows some comment about the Holy Spirit—about episodes and persons, known or overlooked, past or present, which may be regarded as part of the history of the Holy Spirit, and which may, therefore, be a portion of the untold story of the Church.

My remarks in an upcoming issue will concern Richard H. Wilmer who became Bishop of Alabama during the Civil War in an extraordinary way.

**William Stringfellow:** author, social critic, attorney and theologian.



**Correction:** Our last issue stated incorrectly that the House of Bishops had approved admitting women to the priesthood at the 1973 General Convention. Rather, the endorsement of that body came the year before at the interim meeting in New Orleans.

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## The New Sexuality:

# Liberation or Flight

by Gibson Winter

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Almost 20 years ago my book, "Love and Conflict: New Patterns in Family Life," appeared. Sexual mores and marital patterns seem to have changed radically in the intervening years. "The pill" made sexual intercourse conception-free and enabled the unmarried to enjoy sex without the embarrassment of mechanical contraception. Recognition of the population explosion threw cold water on the ideology of kitchen, children and church which had been sold to women in the 1950s. And then there was the women's liberation movement. Bisexuality, homosexuality, transmarital sex and especially open marriages began to point the way to a new sexuality for the 1970s.

Between the 1950s and the 1970s there seems to be a difference in kind as well as degree when it comes to sexuality. We were so "straight" in the 1950s! We are so liberated in the 1970s! Yet there also seems to be important continuities. We are still marrying and giving in marriage, although the sexual kingdom has arrived. Let us look at the similarities between the 1950s and 1970s.

Despite the seeming instability of marriage in our time, there appears to be a deepening commitment to the preservation of marital relationships. To this extent, the turn toward a stable home and marriage that was set forth in "Love and Conflict" is a part of the 1970s.

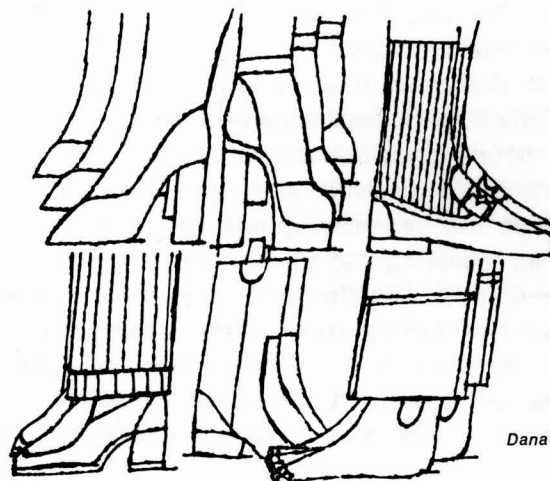
### Monogamous America

Marriage today is even more dependent upon the commitment of the particular couple than it was in the 1950s. The gradual spread of "no-fault" divorce means that the state is withdrawing slowly from this field except in so far as law can protect the rights of parties to a marriage and their children. If a marriage is going to succeed or continue now, it is more and more up to the couple with a slight boost from relatives and friends. This was already

true in the 1950s but it is much more the case now. Moreover, the changes and mobility that characterized the 1950s have been accelerated in the 1970s. And the pressures of bureaucratic life on marital partners have increased. Given these pressures, the remarkable thing is not the number of divorces but the relatively great numbers of stable marriages.

This concern for a workable partnership in marriage helps us to understand the new premarital coupling that seems to have replaced the traditional engagement. In earlier periods couples were promised or betrothed. In more recent times, they announced an engagement. In our period, they set up housekeeping together and this signals a serious commitment. That commitment may not lead to marriage, but there is every presumption that if it proves a rewarding and happy relationship, it probably will eventuate in a marriage. From one perspective, this seems to be an important change in the sexual mores. However, premarital sexual intercourse was already common in the 1950s though it was anxiety-laden and guilt-ridden. The important difference in the 1970s is the dissipation of fears of pregnancy and dissolution of a sense of guilt. But even more important, the difficulty of making a marriage work in our times makes such pre-marital coupling very useful. Here, we seem to be experiencing a completion of the sexual trends of the 1950s rather than a transformation. Premarital coupling, then, can be seen as part of the struggles to create a workable marriage—a contribution to monogamous America.

Even the "swinging" couples who enjoy plural sexual experiences together have, for the most part, a commitment to maintaining their marriages. In most instances, swinging seems to provide a means to extend sexual opportunities along the heterosexual and sometimes bi-



Dana Martin

sexual lines without generating the guilt and deceit that usually accompany adulterous relationships. There is some indication that wives, for the most part, join the swinging culture to preserve their marriages, and they drop out when their marriages are jeopardized. All of this is said rather tentatively, because research is particularly difficult and statistical data are not available. The basic trend to preservation of marital bonds, however, seems to be clear even in transmarital sexual experience.

In "Love and Conflict" I was concerned with the kinds of communication between husband and wife, parents and children, that would contribute to a healthier and more stable family. Little did I realize at the time that the liberation of sexuality could contribute to that stability rather than threaten it. This is an important disclosure coming out of the new sexuality of the 1970s. Whether this new sexual freedom will strengthen marital bonds over the long period is hard to say, but, for the moment, it is directed to the monogamous values that were being pursued in the 1950s.

There are other equally important differences between the 1950s and 1970s. I single out two differences for special consideration: 1) the struggle for equality of men and women; 2) the struggle for liberation beyond male-female relationships. Both of these trends point to a really new sexuality.

### **Marriage and Equality**

The struggle for equality of men and women was already emerging in the 1950s, but the media were giving the housewifely role a hard sell and few of us were at all sensitive to the depth and scope of sexism in American life. "Love and Conflict" made some reference to this problem, but its attention was turned primarily to the maintenance of the family as the major concern of the 1950s. The new sexuality is breaking through this traditional view of women: holding the fort at home, wiping the children's noses, pleasing the husband. For one thing, women now see themselves as wanting and needing scope for personal development in work of their choosing. This means that housework and care of children have to be seen as the shared responsibility of the man and the woman. Equal right to identity and realization of potential, in the home and outside, also means sexual independence for women. Sexual desires and feelings are no longer male prerogatives. Quite the contrary, what some see as the sexual superiority of women is now evident enough to threaten many males. The role of women as protected

housewives, imprisoned in the narrow space of the home, presupposed that women were above sexual feelings, though they were supposed to submit to sex on demand by their husbands. Women were viewed as sexual victims of the predatory male, and in many cases men and women acted out this fantasy in their marriages. It is interesting that in some of the studies of swinging couples, husbands find themselves threatened by the bisexual interests and intense sexual activity of their wives. This suggests that the fantasy of women as sexual victims was a way of bolstering an illusory male superiority.

As we think about the future of marriage and the place of sexuality in the society, the struggle for equality seems to be playing an ambiguous role. The emergence of women as sexually active can do much for a sounder and healthier marital bond. On the other hand, the struggle to achieve equality of sexes in a society which organizes its life and work on the basis of full-time male occupation creates serious problems for a home if there are to be children. Couples can, however, develop contractual agreements on how they will divide up work in the home and share income from outside the home, agreements which can be renegotiated from time to time.

### **Liberation from and for Sexuality**

Liberation beyond male-female relationships is probably the most radical form of the new sexuality of the 1970s. It is a fundamental break with the mood and style of the 1950s. And in many ways it is much more liberating than the various attempts to adjust sexuality to the pressures of the work ethic. Whether liberation takes the form of a gay life, lesbian sisterhoods or freedom for individuals to live a single life according to their own choice, America's mania for coupling, marriages and nuclear families is being challenged in a creative way by this new sexuality. A post-agricultural society does not need the intense kind of familism that has characterized so much of American life. The preoccupation with family life which was reflected in "Love and Conflict" is a kind of fetishism. Social life does not require marriage or even a preoccupation with sexuality. Human need only calls for the person's right to choose his or her style of life, and marriage is surely one of our most over-rated institutions.

### **Flight to Private Worlds**

Really important differences between the 1950s and 1970s have little to do with sexuality, family life or women's liberation. The 1950s were marked by optimism about



the affluent society and confidence in America. The 1970s are marked by loss of confidence in the American future and increasing foreboding about the human consequences of the affluent society. The new realities of the 1970s make it clear that America's productive orgy in the 20th Century was an ego-trip with devastating consequences for planet Earth. President John Kennedy expressed the mood of the late 1950s in his slogan, "The New Frontier." The 1970s have a secret slogan that is whispered in the night: "No more growth!" For a country in which growth means success, this is a final curtain on a bad scene. America is going through soul-searching which is nothing more or less than a crisis of meaning. As racism, urban chaos, inflation, political corruption, industrial manipulation, educational vacuity and escalation of medical costs overwhelm us, we wonder about the viability of the democratic way that was sold to Southeast Asia at the end of a rifle.

My biggest single question is why Americans have achieved virtuosity in sexuality but remain immobilized in dealing with their political, economic and social institutions? Actually, "urban" is getting to be a dirty word. Avoid it! Our economy fails to deliver the housing, basic standard of living, protection of the aged, liberation from ghetto life and opportunity for personal development which has been promised since the mid-nineteenth century. Industrial and financial powers manipulate our cities, red-line our ghettos and control our political and international relations without restraint or accountability. A bevy of so-called economic "scientists", worshipping a strange deity—The Free Market—devote most of their time (at no little profit to themselves) to perpetuating this economic monstrosity. The same goes for our political system, our health delivery system, our care for the poor and aged, our educational system. These are not systems! They are nightmares! In brief, the only thing we seem to be able to cope with is personal, private sexual activities. We are great on sexuality! On public matters, we are a flop!

My own interpretation of this situation is as follows: From the 1950s to the 1970s we saw the collapse of the dream of the Great Society. American nationalism, where it survived, embodied a chauvinistic militarism. The only meanings available to old and young were to be found in private areas of experience—sexuality, marriage, personal communities, religious experiences, organic gardening, voluntary associations (with and without purposes). With the collapse of public meanings, Americans fled into pri-

vate values. Clearly many of these private values are useful. Some even hold promise of pointing the way to a new society and a human future. Hence, the new sexuality and liberation from or for sexuality may contribute importantly to our human future. At the same time, the alienated public structures which parade under such grandiose slogans as "democratic way," "free enterprise system," "professional life," "higher education," and "Science" dominate our life and will ultimately destroy us and our world if they are not restored to human purposes and meanings. In this sense, the new sexuality is one more symptom of our national crisis of meaning. The turn to sexuality, like the orgy of religiosity in the 1950s, is one more stage in the flight from freedom and justice—away from a human future!

---

**Gibson Winter:** social ethicist; professor, The Divinity School of the University of Chicago; author, books on American institutions such as "Love and Conflict," "Suburban Captivity of the Churches" and studies in ethical theory such as "Elements for a Social Ethic."

## On the Other Hand...

Having recently been burned for making the same mistake, I want to warn Gibson Winter that he must make a clear distinction between the new sexuality as swinging, play-boying and complicated coupling within and without marriage, and the new sexuality as a raised consciousness of the economic, political and psychological dimensions of what it means to be male or female, man or woman. Swinging, as one articulate feminist pointed out to me in no uncertain terms, is simply the cheap exploitation of society. Feminists are not of one mind about this kind of sexual liberation. Many believe that sexual fidelity is as important to a liberated marriage or extended liaison as it was to the traditional male-dominated marriage. They just think it would be nice if men, as well as women, were sexually faithful.

In the matter of extra-marital sex and monogamous marriage, the only study I know contradicts the data Winter refers to. But, alas, it is not yet published. This is a study of egalitarian marriages and concludes tentatively that marriage is a pretty flexible institution. It can have almost any division of labor contracted into it and survive, but the one thing no marriage can take is having extra-marital sex contracted into it with the mutual consent of both partners. Everybody eventually gets mad as hell and the marriage blows sky high.

All this necessarily leads one to Winter's bewilderment about why Americans can manage their sexuality so well while letting the political, economic and environmental dimensions of their lives remain in such perilous shape. The family, provided that it is open, inclusive, generous, hospitable, just in its division of work and concern, and spirited, is the only felt, experienced metaphor we have for a just society. Marriage as some form of nuclear coupling is (or has been) much over-sold, but it is impossible to oversell the family or household, an institution done away with at the cost of our humanity. At the heart of such a household lies a commitment on the part of all members to do what they say they're going to do. Perhaps the neglect of our political and economic institutions and of our environment stems directly from the mismanagement of our sexuality. The same people who see no significance to sexual fidelity are those who can't see why they shouldn't move out if a Black moves into their neighborhood before the property values go down, those who will quit any job at the drop of a hat if another job offers more money, those who will put their kids in a private school at the first hint of bussing, those who will arrange to put Granny in some special place for the elderly because it's not good for the marriage to have her around. Those who see no significance in sexual fidelity are those who assume that death has total dominion over life; indeed, even over love. As a result they can't for the life of them understand why they should endure anything that interferes with their pleasure or self-aggrandizement. It may turn out that sexual fidelity and a Resurrection faith are significantly related.

**John H. Snow:** professor of pastoral theology, Episcopal Divinity School; author, "On Pilgrimage: Marriage in the Seventies."

## And Yet...

It is impossible to discuss, as Winter does, the new sexual mores and family patterns outside the social, political and economic conditions which set in motion the change from old to new. "The pill" and population explosion are important factors. But not to mention the civil rights and women's movements, the Vietnam War and American imperialism, and the lessons learned from this history of the last 20 years as the context in which the new sexuality and marriage mores were changed is to misunderstand what's happened. New sexuality, and specifically sex equality, is not simply a private/personal

escape (although as Winter points out, it can be), but also a new force for equality and human rights.

A major sector of the society during the past 20 years in which marriage, sex equality and the political and economic systems intersect is the work force. During the last 20 years the number of married women in the work force has doubled—in 1950, 9 million married women were in the work force, and in 1970, 18½ million—so that in 1970, 62 percent of all women workers were married with their husbands present and working. These women make up 34 percent of all married women in the United States, as compared with 14 percent in 1940. The majority of women workers, like men, work because of economic need not out of individual choice as the article suggests. Seventy-five percent of all married women workers come from families where their husbands are earning less than \$7,000 per year; the majority less than \$5,000.

The presence at work and absence from home of this large number of women is confronting both institutions with issues around sex equality—forcing changes in attitudes and practice which are long overdue. The issues which are being struggled for by both women and men in the work place and in marriages are concerned with (1) implementing and monitoring affirmative action programs at the work place; (2) sex equality in marriage (well described by Winter); (3) free child care provided at the work place; (4) organizing clerical and service workers, who are low paid and mostly women, to struggle against their exploitation as a cheap labor force. In these concrete ways women, as a new motive force in the work place and at home, are working together with men against the present system for a new society now. The new sexual equality when viewed in the larger context of the social/political/economic world is a constructive force actively moving for change.

**Mary A. White:** Oakland Community College, Womencenter, Farmington, Michigan



# Network Reports

## The Women Priests: What Are They Doing?

**Merrill Bittner:** associate minister, Church of the Good Shepherd, Webster, New York; co-director of the Women's Jail Project.

"My position at the Church of the Good Shepherd is to be clarified in light of the inhibition placed upon me as a priest. The function of my priesthood is being realized in helping others deal creatively with their reactions to the ordinations and with what all this means in the life of the Episcopal Church."

**Emily C. Hewitt:** assistant professor of religion and education, Andover Newton Theological School; visiting lecturer in religion and education at Union Theological Seminary (N.Y.); Treasurer, Board of Directors, "Christianity and Crisis" magazine.

"I am a communicant of St. Mary's Episcopal Church in Manhattanville, New York, where I served as Assisting Minister in 1972-73, and I serve on the Steering Committee of a special program funded by the United Church of Christ to train women for the ministry."

**Carter Heyward:** doctoral student in theology and tutor in practical theology at Union Theological Seminary (N.Y.).

"My parish, St. Mary's, Manhattanville, New York, is strongly supportive of my priesthood and understands that I cannot, and will not, function on the staff as a deacon. I remain open to a call from a parish to serve as one of its priests. I continue to be amazed by grace as I experience the joy that has come to so many of us since July 29. . . . There is no turning back."

**Suzanne Hiatt:** recently completed job as consultant on women in theological education for three Episcopal seminaries: Episcopal Theological School, Cambridge, Mass., Philadelphia Divinity School and General Theological Seminary, N.Y.

"I am considered a deacon in good standing in the Diocese of Philadelphia, though I have been officially 'admonished' by the Bishop of Philadelphia for allegedly

violating certain canons of the Church . . . I know myself to be a priest. I am engaged in job hunting."

**Marie E. Moorefield:** chaplain trainee, Topeka State Hospital; supply pastor for Asbury-Mount Olive United Methodist Church.

"I have been inhibited from functioning in Episcopal churches in the Diocese of Kansas by Bishop Edward Turner. Fortunately this action does not adversely affect the ministries in which I'm involved. The support expressed by people here for our action is wonderful—confirmation that the work we are doing is right and has long needed to be done."

**Katrina Martha Swanson:** Leawood, Kansas.

"As of August 12, 1974, there was a presentment against me on the desk of the Rt. Rev. Arthur A. Vogel of West Missouri. My function at this point is in being visible and therefore available to any people who want to be related to Jesus Christ our Lord through me and my existence as a priest."

**Betty Bone Schiess:** executive director, Metropolitan Educational and Cultural Center for the Aging, Syracuse, New York; instructor, adult church school class, St. Paul's Cathedral.

"The Standing Committee of the Diocese of Central New York which met on September 10 unanimously recommended to Bishop Cole that a special General Convention be called, and, by a majority vote, that the convention go about the business of regularizing the ordination which took place on July 29 in Philadelphia. Bishop Cole has appointed a committee of five people to investigate my ordination and make recommendations."

**Jeannette Piccard:** non-stipendiary priest functioning as chaplain to the elderly, Diocese of Minnesota; assisting as curate at St. Phillip's Church, St. Paul.

"For the immediate future I have agreed to function in the Diocese as a deacon. I am watching and waiting, and I am not alone."

**Nancy Hatch Wittig:** curate, St. Peter's Church, Morristown, New Jersey, where she is considered a priest validly ordained; in charge of developing a youth ministry.

"The Bishop of Newark, George Edward Roth, considers me a deacon in good standing in the Diocese. I will live out my priesthood in Christ as the Spirit sees fit. I have the full support of the vestry of St. Peter's."

**Sister Alla Bozarth-Campbell:** lecturer at Union Theological Seminary, New Brighton, Minnesota.

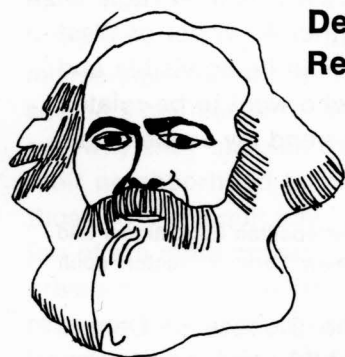
"At present I am committed to my ministry as director



of Ecumenical Oblates. I hope to find a ministry that will allow me to integrate an ecumenical vocation with the theological and aesthetic training I have had."

**Allison Cheek:** psychotherapist in private practice, Washington D.C. area.

"I have requested a leave of absence from the staff of St. Alban's Church, Annandale, Va., until such time as my priesthood is affirmed. I am meeting informally every week with the women students at Virginia Theological Seminary and assisting professor Henry Rightor this semester in his class on canon law."



### **Detroit: Religious-Marxist Dialogue**

"Christians can't be Marxists!" "What political programs do Christians have?" "Do Marxists believe in any absolutes?"

The Detroit-Religious-Marxist Dialogue began in response to a Michigan Methodist Conference resolution encouraging such an event. In September 1973 a 12-member steering committee of both Marxist and religious people who had been engaged in progressive or radical social action in the city met. They came from community organizations, and the civil rights and anti-war movements.

Our goals were: 1) "to confront the issues and assumptions of both religion and Marxism and the interface between them"; 2) to better understand the meaning of progressive and reactionary religious forces; 3) to investigate Marxism as an alternative tool of analysis; and 4) to think about the possible relationship of the two forces. We also wanted to dispel the illusions and stereotypes so well spread by anti-communist propaganda.

Four preparatory meetings in January brought together about 50 people to plan a spring conference. From the first, it became obvious that both sides needed more information and analysis. Both Marxists and religious peo-

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## **To Whom It May Concern**

*The Witness is an independent report on the issues behind the issues in Church and State and World.*

*Witnesses are those who know because they are present, and who tell what they know. You are present. What do you know?*

*You know that for the majority of the human family misery is increasing, all the myths of progress notwithstanding. You know that the small and weak nations of the world are being dominated and decimated by the larger and more powerful nations and by multi-national corporations. You know that in the United States enormous wealth co-exists with extreme poverty. You know that Blacks, women, Latinos and native Americans continue to be victimized by persistent patterns of discrimination. You know that throughout the world our environmental inheritance is despoiled in the name of "productivity." You know that self-serving corporate and political bureaucracies are corrupting our sensibilities by the prostitution of words and the manipulation of images. You know that the churches are too conformed to the status quo to transform it. You know that vast numbers of persons are responding to the present state of the world by withdrawing into the cocoon of private life. You know how tempting it is to flee from the responsibilities of hope and languish in the inertia of despair.*

*Nevertheless, we suspect that you (like the members of the staff at The Witness) are unwilling to succumb to weariness and lapse into the idolatrous worship of personal powerlessness. As a result, we invite you to join us in the contemporary search for clear vision, honest speech and appropriate action. We hope to provide a forum for writers who have broken through the perceptual handicaps of national, cultural, economic, sexual and racial vested interests, and are trying to articulate the needs of all people in our times.*

*We hope to win the attention of readers whose minds already have been numbed by the assault of too many words, but who still are willing to listen to those whose words may point the way to responsible deeds.*

*Finally, we intend to encourage the formation of a network of writers and readers drawn together by a disciplined desire to be faithful witnesses to the One who daily renews the promise to preach good news to the poor, release to the captives, recovery of sight to the blind and liberty to the oppressed.*

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ple viewed each other on many different levels.

A conference at the end of March drew 56 people to consider the questions: What is the crisis in Detroit and can Marxist and religious people work together on it? After an afternoon of assessment, some thought the dialogue should continue; others were ready to go back to the "dialogue of action."

Continually during the experience the lack of real understanding of each other's basic convictions, analysis of society and views on social change blocked discussion. This difficulty was compounded by the fact that only the Motor City Labor League, a Marxist-Leninist cadre organization, officially represented the Marxist position. Other Marxist were "independent"—not members of a Marxist or a Marxist-Leninist organization. MCLL was going through internal struggle and changes. The final assessment was that MCLL had not presented clear Marxist positions nor exerted strong leadership, just as the religious group did not put forth strong and clear religious positions.

The religious members of the Steering Committee thought the Marxists were not open to input from the religious people. One minister put it cogently: "They did not want me to have my own concept of God but wanted me to have the 'god up there' concept that is so easy to attack."

Though the goals of the dialogue seemed clear in November, they were difficult to pin down and less clear as we progressed. Religious people and Marxists will have to continue to confront each other in the next few years in order to make any final judgment about whether they can work together. Meanwhile, the Detroit experience produced some excellent theoretical and practical insights and certainly raised some of the key points of both division and unity for the coming period.

A detailed report of this seven-month project may be obtained by writing: Religious-Marxist Dialogue, 13100 Woodward, Highland Park, Michigan 48203.

**Jean Rooney:** staff member, Justice and Peace Commission, Archdiocese of Detroit.

### **Rochester: Ordination Aftermath**

On Sept. 9 the Standing Committee of the Diocese of Rochester by unanimous vote requested the House of Bishops to reconsider its decision in Chicago; to declare the ordinations in Philadelphia "valid, but irregular", and

to issue a directive to the whole Church that institutional sexism must be eliminated in the Episcopal Church. By majority vote the committee requested Bishop Robert Spears "to convene a panel of five theologians of national stature" to comment on the validity of the Holy Orders of the Rev. Merrill Bittner.

At the time *The Witness* went to press, four prominent theologians had accepted membership on the panel: the Rev. Albert T. Mollegen of Virginia Theological Seminary and the Rev. Richard A. Norris of General Seminary, New York City, the Rev. James Griffiss, Nashotah House, Nashotah, Wisc., and the Rev. Eugene Fairweather, Toronto, Canada.

# Women's Ordination: Ecumenical Ripples

Following are excerpts from a statement of Roman Catholic theologians and writers, sponsored by the appended names and presently being circulated for further signatures.

"Although there may be differences of opinion among us concerning prudential aspects of the ordination of eleven women to the priesthood of the Episcopal Church, which took place in Philadelphia on July 29, 1974, we, the undersigned Roman Catholic theologians and writers, wish to express our concurrence in principle with the acceptance of the ordination of women to the priesthood of the Universal Church. . . . We are sensitive to the pain which has been suffered by these women and many others like them who have found their design to respond to the call to the Christian ministry rebuffed by the official Churches. . . . Pope John XXIII in his encyclical letter *Pacem in Terris* said: 'Since women are becoming ever more conscious of their human dignity, they will not tolerate being treated as mere material instruments, but demand rights befitting a human person both in domestic and in public life.' "

Signed:

**Father Gregory Baum**, OSA, St. Michael's College; **Dr. Rosemary Ruether**, Howard School of Religion; **Sr. Augusta Neale**, Harvard Divinity School; **Dr. Leonard Swidler**, Editor: Ecumenical Studies; **Fr. James Carroll**, OSP, Paulist Center, Boston; **Br. Luke Salm**, FSC, Manhattan College, New York City, President: Catholic Theological Society of America.



Dana Martin

## Coming in the Next Issue:

Three personal reflections on the Church's stake in social action by three who are still there, but in a new way—William Coats, David Gracie and Alice Mann.

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# THE WITNESS

October 27, 1974  
Volume 58, Number 2



## Urban Missioner/ Parish Priest

David M. Gracie

## Whatever Happened To All Those Radicals?

Alice B. Mann

## A Calvinist Pilgrim's Progress

William Coats



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# “What Holds a Church Together?”

by Henry H. Rightor

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The question of what holds the Episcopal Church together has become more acute as a result of the controversial ordination of 11 women deacons to the priesthood on July 29, and the special meeting of the House of Bishops called in August to consider those ordinations. Because General Convention in 1970 and 1973 failed to approve the ordination of women to the priesthood, the bishops and standing committees of several dioceses who had favored such ordinations declined to proceed in the face of Convention's action. Because they failed to join the issue, there remains the constitutional question of whether a diocese and its officers retain sufficient autonomy to ordain a woman to the priesthood, Convention's disapproval notwithstanding.

There are now issues of polity and theology more pressing than the legal issues. Episcopalians who are concerned about holding our Church together might do well to shift their attention from what can we do under our constitution and canons to what *should* we be doing as agents of reconciliation in a pluralistic society. For, in our Church as well as our society, there are many black and brown people, many women and many young and old people of all backgrounds, who have become restive; they will no longer gladly accept the uniform rules set for them by some middle-aged white males (bishops, priests and laymen) who make effective use of the antiquated procedures of a non-representative General Convention that meets for only 10 days every three years. If a shift of interest is made to polity and the theology of reconciliation, we have something to learn and to share from our

own histories.

The authors of the Episcopal Church's original constitution and canons provided for a church that, in some respects, approximated “a network” more closely than it did the Episcopal Church of today. Take, for example the question of bishops, when the Episcopal Church got under way in 1798. Substantial mutations had developed in the churches of the various American states after the Declaration of Independence. South Carolina had become fearful of “prelacy” and came along in 1789 only when the original draft of the constitution was amended so as to permit a diocese to continue indefinitely without a bishop. (In fact, the Diocese of Georgia had no bishop for the first 35 years of its existence.) On the other hand, Episcopalians in Connecticut believed a bishop was indispensable to their mission and had already gone to unusual lengths to have Bishop Seabury consecrated in 1784.

These dioceses could enter into a fruitful life together because they had something besides uniformity to hold them together. They had a spirit like that described by St. Paul — a spirit which made the eye value the hand, the head value the feet — a spirit which united them all as diverse members of one body.

The Episcopal Church may be in trouble today because it has come to depend too much on a sterile kind of uniformity to hold it together — fearful that the only alternative to uniformity is anarchy. Meanwhile a lot of Episcopalians are beginning to think the problem of unity and diversity was handled better when South Carolina and Georgia and Connecticut each did its own thing with regard to having or not having a bishop. Such a polity could be translated into today's situation by encouraging dioceses which want women priests to affirm their historic autonomy by so ordaining women or regularizing the “Philadelphia ordinations.” These actions at this time would raise constitutional questions, but there are worse things than raising questions. It is suggested, however, that the solution to our problem still depends on identifying and cultivating the spirit that can again unite us as diverse members of the same body.

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Excerpted from a longer article in **Leaven**, newsletter of the National Network of Episcopal Clergy Associations.

Cover illustration by Tom Jackson.

# THE WITNESS

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## The Hunger, The Thirst

by Robert L. DeWitt

This issue of *The Witness* contains articles by three ordained persons — William Coats, David Gracie and Alice Mann. We asked them to reflect, personally, on the social mission of the Church. Although one of them is younger than the other two, none is old. Yet there is little of the exuberant assurance of youth in their statements. Once burnt, twice shy?

Though not old, they are veterans. They have been where the Church intersects society, and a busy intersection that has been in recent years. The incidence of accidents has been high. There have been casualties both personal and social; and a deeply sobering tie-up of traffic remains. The unfinished business of amnesty is a sample. Many of that generation looked into the face of their parents, of their communities, of their nation and of their culture — and everywhere they saw the face of death. The intricate and torn fabric of institutional and social life, and the thin, fragile tissue of personal relationships, pose dilemmas which are the despair of many stout hearts.

The church's mission is one of hope, together with faith and love. That hope, however, must be in touch with reality, not ignorant of it. Hope is not born of carping, of condemning. Neither is hope real if it is not informed. So the Church (and therefore this publication) should not indulge in shaking a condemning finger, but in providing suggestive analysis. Not fault-finding, but fact-finding. And model designing.

"Blessed are those who hunger and thirst after righteousness, for they shall be filled." Yes, and therefore blessings on all those today who stubbornly seek to relate the Gospel of love to the faltering structures and persons of our time. In so doing, they serve us all. For thereby they hold hope safely hostage until the day of the great ransom.

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# Urban Missioner/ Parish Priest

by David M. Gracie

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Returning to the parish has been good for me after spending several years as diocesan urban missioner apart from an altar and a local congregation. Not that we haven't done a lot of praying these past years. There have been Quaker meetings in draft boards, mass on the courthouse steps at the Harrisburg trials, and hymn-singing in the paddywagon with welfare rights mothers and children: "Precious Lord, take my hand, lead me on, let me stand."

But such glorious diversity leaves something to be desired. It makes for a life and an offering to God that is broad and sometimes sparkling on the surface but of uneven depth. In my file cabinet are folders on every issue from the cause of political prisoners in Rhodesia to the gay movement in Philadelphia. When the prayer meetings are not in progress, I feel like a social concerns bureaucrat. What hurts is that I cannot do justice to all of the concerns; yet I know each is a pressing matter of justice for someone.

Let me describe some of my feelings at a recent demonstration. One evening we picketed a local retailer of Farah slacks. Farah, we believed, had engaged in unfair labor practices to prevent the unionization of Mexican-American workers in its Texas plants. Being the son of a factory worker, I can easily become identified with a struggle against the exploitation of non-union labor. A Roman Catholic bishop on the scene in the Southwest had sounded the call and many churchpeople joined in a boycott of Farah products.

Our own picket line was not impressive. Several members of the Amalgamated Clothing Workers Union

were there, a few priests and a nun. You did read about it in the newspapers. But Amalgamated hired a professional photographer to take our pictures on the line; these shots were edited into a film depicting the boycott effort around the world. Why not? But I felt less than happy about it. I guess it was the thought of being used and re-used in one cause after another. It flattens one out after a while ("Who is he?" "Oh, he's the priest who serves the causes.") The technological dimension bothered me, too. How many times have we cleverly magnified small actions, and smaller personalities, by holding them up to the camera in a certain way? Why not? — when the cause is just. Still, it does become alienating after a while. (Footnote: The Farah strike is over. Go out and buy all the Farah clothing you want; it is now union-made. Amalgamated asks us to boycott Van Heusen products now. Their shops have run away as far as Taiwan!)

After the demonstrations, or the food drive for victims of a welfare foul-up or the Washington lobbying to cut spending in Vietnam, everybody goes home. Where is home? Some go back to the daily work of the union or organization of the poor to which they belong. Some return to the ideological community from which they moved out to join the action — Marxist, Quaker, black nationalist.

## A Sense of Proportion

Now, I am a parish priest as well as urban missioner for the diocese. Sometimes that compounds the confusion, but more often it makes for a certain wholeness.

A Teamster local was on the streets for five months demanding job security and pension rights for its members. One of the staunchest picketers was Ann, a member of our congregation. Ann is 62 years old and was due to retire from her job while the strike was in progress. She stayed on the line until they won. She did it not just for herself, she said, but for all the others who needed to be protected. I visited her on the line to chat and on Sundays we prayed for the strikers at the parish Eucharist.

Our parish is in the part of town where race relations are most strained now. Our white neighborhood surrounds a tiny black ghetto subject to raids and incursions by white youth. Black young people fight back. The result last summer was shootings, stabbings, arrest and much tension. I went to community meetings called to deal with the crisis not as a diocesan human relations agent (one of my Church House hats), but as a parish



priest. At the meetings I found a white family and a black family from our congregation among those willing to speak up and take some risks for racial understanding. I rediscovered a sense of proportion in my own ministry as I tried to understand and support these families.

What I knew to be true in the 1960s in an activist parish in Detroit I am finding again in a little bluecollar parish in Philadelphia: The Gospel, in its social dimension, must and can be heard as good news by each individual in the particular place where he or she is called to serve. I welcome the chance to go slower, to build more patiently and to recapture the relationship with individuals which we have sometimes lost through our necessary involvement with mass causes.



"Before Christ there is no aggregate, no mass; the innumerable are for him numbered — they are unmitigated individuals." Soren Kierkegaard said that, and we need not share his blindness to the socially-transforming power of the faith to affirm his main point.

The individual, the personal, the particular. That is what parish life provides. There is a labor movement and there is Ann on the picket line. There is the concept of racial justice and there are Babe and Bill and Woody at a neighborhood meeting. How personal everything becomes.

There are many generalizations that need to be corrected. We are in the heart of Kensington, advertised as the most bigoted part of town; yet there are whites here for whom racial equality is as obvious a need for their neighborhood as street lights and paving. There is a man in our congregation who wants George Wallace to be president but votes for the most liberal congressman in town. ("I know him. He has been to my home.")

I do not mean to imply there is no big picture: I just want to say it needs to be open to correction all the time.

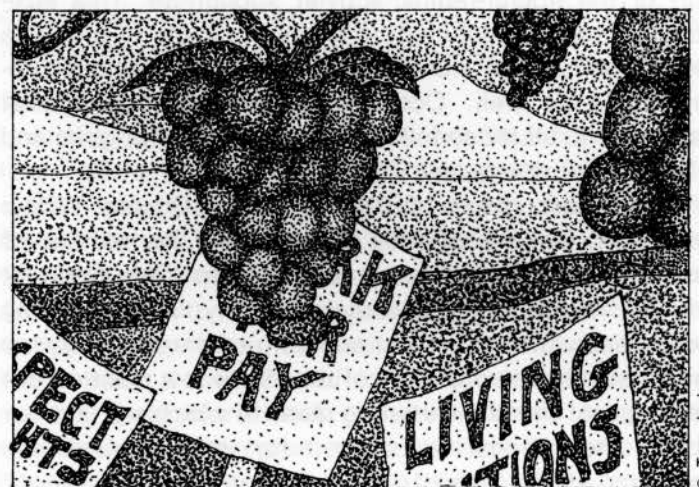
I find it interesting to come into the neighborhood for worship or other activities and think to myself about what

we did at headquarters this week that was at all relevant to the lives of people here. Sometimes we do well. A call for a diocesan-wide offering to help the people at Wounded Knee or for Vietnam reconstruction (North and South) can provide a link to other communities that might never have evolved from our parochial setting. The visit of the Episcopal Community Services prison chaplain and a return visit of men in our parish to the state prison is another link-up we would never have made alone. We found when we got to the prison a newly-confirmed member of the church who comes from our own neighborhood. So we introduced a new concept, prison reform, and gained a friend for whom it could make a difference.

Sometimes we fail. It is particularly hard to speak about war resistance to a congregation with so many connections to the military. If Cyprus or the Middle East heats up, at least one of our boys will be there with the fleet. Here the personal attachments militate against the social vision. I think that during the time of the Vietnam draft it might have been impossible in this parish to make the connections between the faith, and love and justice for the "enemies."

Sometimes I know I win no more than a friendly tolerance for some of my activities and concerns. But the door to involvement is open and some walk through it. I remember as a young man the first time I heard someone preach about the Kingdom of Christ as having something to do with a just and more loving social order here and now. It was a new word and I heard it gladly. And, come to think of it, the preacher was a denominational urban affairs man.

David M. Gracie: urban missionary, Diocese of Pennsylvania



# Whatever Happened To All Those Radicals?

by Alice B. Mann

In our Labor Day move to a new apartment, my husband and I came across all sorts of things we forgot we had. One was a collection of old "cause" buttons, which came staring out of a box at me with a shorthand history of the 1960s. SNCC. CORE. FREEDOM DEMOCRATIC PARTY. THE RESISTANCE. BOYCOTT GRAPES. DICK GREGORY FOR PRESIDENT. THE POOR PEOPLE'S CAMPAIGN, PEOPLE AGAINST RACISM. STUDENT POWER. MOBILIZATION TO END THE MASS MURDER IN VIETNAM. CHANGE, NOT CHARITY. BOYCOTT LETTUCE. EQUAL PAY FOR EQUAL WORK.

I started college in the fall of 1966. Within a year, I was part of the liberal-radical-activist subculture. This sizeable sub-culture included, in addition to lots of students like myself, large numbers of clergy and young professionals as well. Occasionally, I think about what happened to all those folk, about where they've gone and what they're doing now.

In the last issue of *The Witness*, Gibson Winter suggested that we as a nation have fled the realities of institutions and politics by focusing on "the world of private values," particularly sexuality. Out of my experience with the activist sub-culture, I would say that this intensely personal bias of the 1970s is a reaction not only against the disheartening mess in which we find our public institutions, but also, for me, against the character of the activist sub-culture itself.

In my experience this sub-culture seemed to disparage the world of personal meaning. It tended to be hard-driving, perfectionistic, guilt-ridden, reactive (and often over-reactive), dogmatic, and exploitative of women (especially in the earlier years). One found relatively little empathy there with the bourgeois "enemy," nor much insight into the sources of opposition to change — especially the emotional ones. The atmosphere tended to be demanding and judgmental.

What were the satisfactions? One was the fabricated self-esteem of being able to count oneself "part of the solution" and not "part of the problem." A related one was the temporary escape from guilt which all our busyness provided. A third was a clear and simplistic ideology (which varied from group to group) about the source of evil and the means of salvation. And a fourth was the excitement of believing that major changes were on the way fast; one had to believe this in order to go around telling others that these changes were "imperative," and that this was a crisis like no other.

These are not, however, the sort of satisfactions that feed long-term commitment to a cause. Healthy personalities were bound to rebel against the dogmatism, the denial of a wide range of personal needs, the perfectionism, the impatience, and the judgmentalism. People were sure to go looking for a more humane plot of psychic space to live on.

## The Camaraderie's Gone

This is, no doubt, escape. But some of it is the kind of escape that we would hail as "liberation" — as a step away from that wholeness if it involves an abdication of our responsibility for confronting the institutional problems, or a denial of their relevance to our "personal" lives. In a society like ours, there is no such thing as a "personal" sphere unaffected by institutional realities. Many of the "graduates" of the activist sub-culture of the 1960s threw out the baby with the bath-water: they plugged in to some more personalistic sub-culture and tuned out the rest.

But lots of us are still out there somewhere — trying to maintain commitments to social change and struggling to temper them with more patience, more tolerance of other points of view, more readiness to hang in with our institutions, imperfect as they are. And I believe that we're trying hard to accept more honestly our own needs to be fed, spiritually, sexually and interpersonally.

A major difference is that we're not an identifiable sub-culture any more. We don't have the same camaraderie, the same rallying points, the same visible support system of

ideas and relationships. We live a much more ambiguous life, in which the identity of the "goodies" and the "baddies" rarely can be proclaimed with any certainty. We're not always sure just how much we're "part of the problem" and how much "part of the solution," but we try to keep moving with whatever clues we've got. The cost is that it gets lonely and confusing sometimes. The payoff is that we get to honor more aspects of ourselves; we're also less obvious targets of stereotyping and resistance.

If I were to be given a magic wand and 20 years, what I would do is rebuild the social change sub-culture. I would mix together long-term commitments to institutional change, small and very personal support communities, a high tolerance for ambiguity and complexity, and a healthy sense that, whatever we attempt, God is making history out of our mistakes and successes alike, and is standing ready to forgive and accept us just as we are.

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**Alice B. Mann:** associate minister, Church of St. Asaph, Bala Cynwyd, Pa.

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# A Calvinist Pilgrim's Progress

by William Coats

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Each generation of Christian social activists recapitulates the Puritan heritage. This is because of that peculiar American notion that human destiny is bound up with the destiny of the American nation.

When I left seminary in 1964 to take my first job, I supposed I was not much different from others who linked the Christian Gospel with social activism. Many of us had taken to heart Dietrich Bonhoeffer's charge to be "wordly Christians." For my part, as an assistant to a black priest in a black congregation in southern Virginia, this meant a

commitment to the civil rights movement. Like many other white Christians my theology was heavily political; God willed the extension of equal opportunity, the guarantee of individual rights and integration. I wanted to build (or rebuild) the holy nation, the political substance of which was liberalism. And so we marched, sat in, registered voters, sponsored inter-racial conferences and lived together as if color did not matter.

It did not take long, however, before I realized that many black people, whatever their hopes for integration, did not accept the self-evident validity of the American liberal dream. I remember how shocked I was when a young black instructor from the University of California at Berkeley said to me she would rather send her children to a 'second rate' black college than to Berkeley. I could hardly fathom this rejection of one of the institutional embodiments of Western enlightenment. On another occasion, an official at the local black college, after assuring me of his support in matters arising out of some campus demonstrations, denounced me before the Board of Trustees. He was trying to save his institution. But I wondered how someone could place the survival of an institution (or even black culture) above those ideals of fairness, openness, progress and tolerance which I had associated with life itself, unless these ideals and the American dream they expressed were flawed. Or worse still, what if these ideals were a cover for exploitation? Heretofore I had assumed that racists and reactionaries were the main roadblock to progress, but now the prospect arose that the construction of social and political reality which we in the white world considered self-evidently just and humane was a way of pre-defining reality so that dominant groups within the white community could preserve their power. As this possibility dawned on me, sin took on Calvinistic dimensions. It was a seriously broken world in which we lived where even our ideals were idols.

## American Dream Defective?

At the national level the Episcopal Church was wrestling with the same issue. In 1967 it embarked on a multi-million dollar grant program to aid minority groups in self-determination. The General Convention Special Program was both classical charity and an attempt to vindicate the American dream. If the helpless could be presented with an opportunity to help themselves, all would be well. But, if the white donors hoped to preserve their world, the minority, particularly black, recipients wanted to build one of their own. The program was a marriage of convenience doomed to fail. Truth was not the same for each side.



Soon this divergence, coupled with the inevitable white backlash, buried the program. But the minorities' critique of white pretensions persisted. Was the American dream itself defective? Was justice more than charity extended to the helpless? Does not charity presume, and hence reinforce, structural inequities?

By 1967 the American dream was turning into a nightmare. Cities burned at home and in Vietnam. In the meantime I had become a chaplain at the University of North Carolina in Chapel Hill. An enchanting place with a liberal tradition, Chapel Hill, like many other American towns in the late 1960s, was in constant political turmoil. Nowhere was this more evident than among the left-leaning liberals with whom I worked in the Robert Kennedy and Eugene McCarthy campaigns and numerous local projects. Upper-middle class, we assumed there was a basic harmony in American life which had been upset either by some quirk in the flawed personalities of national leaders or else by the selfishness and short-sightedness of labor and business interests. Left liberalism lived on the hope



that renewed commitment to progressive principles on key issues would right the ship of state. The 'issues,' however, were no longer industrial oppression, economic inequality or class division; instead they were war, poverty, racism, and equal opportunity for oppressed groups.

### Utopia Now!

It became apparent we could not rally mass support to our banner. This caused me to question the whole enterprise. What if the issues outlined by left liberalism were only symptomatic and the traditional issues of class and economic life were more central? If this were so, an entirely different strategy and outlook would be required. It would mean, for example, not only dealing with the shape of the political economy, but also foregoing the naive notion that ideas establish themselves as political realities by means of moral zeal without the mediation of classes or social forces.

Developments within the Church further increased my doubts. Many of us tried desperately to get dioceses and other Church bodies to 'take a stand' against the war, the draft and misplaced national priorities. We wanted the Church to take moral leadership and restore integrity to American life. After years of such efforts, it was obvious the Church was going to do no such thing. At first this angered me, but then I wondered if we had asked the Church to be something it could not and should not be. Was it the job of the Church to give advice to the nation as if all the nation needed was some additional instruction to right itself? Further, even though it was understandable that political liberals would espouse the doctrine of the holy nation, I began to realize there was no scriptural warrant for Christians to do so. The Biblical writers, it seemed to me, believed as little in the idea of salvation by advice as they did in the notion of a secular holy nation. In the Bible loyalty to God did not mean loyalty (or disloyalty) to the nation, but critical distance from any idol. The Church's responsibility was to the Kingdom and not to the nation — two quite different things.

It was clear to me by 1969, as I assumed the chaplaincy to the University of California at San Diego, that some break with liberalism had to be made. In California one option immediately presented itself: the counter culture. I don't suppose this was ever a serious possibility for me, but it had its fascination. Indeed, what Christian, upon reading the Bible, could fail to draw some parallel between the New Testament Church and the American counter-culture? Did not the young Church hold to a set of values different from those of a hardened, cynical Roman Empire? Heedless, joyful, courageous, kind, often ecstatic, the early Christians had prompted Celsus in the Third Century to ask Origen if this was any way to run an empire? Origen, with his eye on another kingdom, had replied yes. The simplicity and innocence of the youth culture were its strengths. Like the liberalism to which it was related, it demanded the immediate implanting of virtue, except that the young wished to bypass the messy reality of politics altogether. Utopia now! I was just a bit too cynical for that. At any rate, by 1972 the counter culture was dead.

That left political radicalism. Both in North Carolina and in California I had worked with young political radicals in anti-war demonstrations, campus workers' strikes and political organizing. Isolated, bereft of a continuous, strong tradition, exceedingly young, the Left had a proclivity to sectarianism, irrationality and impatience. "If I can't produce the revolution in 20 years," a friend said to

me, "then fuck it." Nonetheless, the Left and only the Left, was critical of the holy nation tradition and at the same time delineated political reality in terms of those ineradicable features of class, economics and self-interest. Slowly I became aware I lived in a capitalist society (not just an evil one), that capitalism meant classes (not a harmony of interests momentarily upset), that the system necessitated that some get greater rewards than others (which is what equal opportunity amounts to) and that every aspect of society bears the traces of a market economy, being materialistic, hierarchic, 'thing-ified.' All that was needed was the actual material environment to which these ideas pointed and from which a lasting political movement might spring. Surely this would not be found in or around the elite campuses where radicalism flourished for so long.

### God of the Future

In 1971 I accepted a job as chaplain to the University of Wisconsin, Milwaukee. Milwaukee is a remarkably stable working class town with a long progressive history. The people are hard working, conventional in their social views, solid. Here is the stuff of America: no utopian dreams, no new world, only scaled-down visions and limited horizons. This is also the grim world of industrial America with its working class resentment — the anger of the trapped, the by-passed, the ignored (even if, economically, not the most oppressed). Here, too, one finds that awesome cynicism which, on the one hand, will uphold America in the face of dreamers (particularly affluent ones), and yet, on the other hand, will pierce the veil of hypocrisy and pretension. This is the urban soil in which radical analysis and a political movement can take root.

As I write in August, 1974, 15,000 workers are on strike in Milwaukee, 6 percent of our work force is unemployed and inflation is running at 12 percent per year. In the 1960s we forgot that for most people material concerns remain central to their existence. History is, after all, the struggle of contending classes for survival and power and not the unfolding drama of great issues or ideas. This lesson is a difficult one for those Christians who look upon politics as abjuring selfishness in the search for some harmonious ideal. Indeed, the monied class continually urges this course upon us, thereby diverting attention from the responsibility it bears for structural oppression. But self-interest is not the same thing as selfishness and working people have nothing to be ashamed of in fighting for their material interests. It is the beginning point of all

politics. Working people are free to fight for themselves (which is what the rich have always done albeit under the cover of promoting great ideals). Whether our actions are right or wrong will be judged by the God who is the power of the future.

Political theology means attending to the political consequences of theology and looking for signs of redemption beyond politics. The Church is called to be such a sign. Accordingly, many people expect the Church to speak out on key issues. If the Church today possessed the same position in society as did the 4th and 15th Century Church, there might be some point to public pronouncements. But this is not the case. We are witnessing a change in the Church's relation to society and cannot expect that public statements by the Church mean much, either to those outside the Church or to those inside. My hope, therefore, is that the Church will attend simply to the matters of preaching and celebration, which, in themselves, are radical enough and need no translation into moral crusades. Besides, what political slogan could possibly be more radical than the old confession made known in the breaking of the bread that 'Jesus is risen from the dead'?

### God Mandates Politics

After 10 years as a priest I am aware of continuity and discontinuity in my thought. I remain convinced it is impossible to talk of God without at the same time speaking of politics. Yet I do not believe this is the same thing as saying that God is one who caps our human strivings or that He is a metaphor for the vocabulary of liberal ideals. I believe God stands over against all our ideals — the holy nation being the most prominent political one — and exposes our hopes as riddled with pretension and deceit. This means that one is continually driven to the brink of a kind of fundamentalist non-engagement. For it is at that point one realizes that only by breaking all apparently self-evident ties between man and God can God truly be man's God; and further, one discovers that politics is possible because God, in raising the accursed criminal, Jesus, has personally mandated politics. Politically, this means that only a radically transcendent God is free enough to create something new on the other side of our present stagnation and despair. Hence I am a radical only in faithfulness to the God of the other side, the God of the future.

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**William Coats:** chaplain, University of Wisconsin, Milwaukee, author, *God in Public*.



# Bishop Wilmer's "Schismatical Consecration"

by William Stringfellow

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The gratitude and pride of Episcopalians because the unity and community of the Episcopal Church were not decisively impaired by the Civil War should not distort our recall of how near the Church came to schism, similar to that suffered by other churches at the time, based on race and geopolitics.

In 1861 the dioceses in the states which had seceded from the Union convened urgently, first in Montgomery, Ala., and then in Columbia, S.C. At the outset, there was no consensus. Some felt the war had separated, but not divided, the Church and that no ecclesiastical changes were necessary. Others, epitomized by Leonides Polk, the bishop of Louisiana (a West Point graduate who accepted a combat command as a general in the Confederate Army) asserted that "the Church must follow nationality" and that secession had rendered the dioceses of the South ecclesiastically isolated from the Episcopal Church in the United States and, indeed, from all of Christendom. Amid the passion and turbulence, a majority of the southern dioceses committed themselves to the organization of "The Protestant Episcopal Church in the Confederate States." That was probably a political necessity, if the Episcopal Church was to survive at all in the Confederacy, but it raised a plethora of questions concerning the theological validity and ecclesiastical regularity of the "new" Church and of the southern dioceses.

The immediate issue of how civil authority affects

church polity represents a venerable and redundant problem in Anglicanism. In the days of Henry VIII, the denial of the right of any foreign power to exercise authority within England undid the Pope's claim to jurisdiction over the Church of England. If denominating the King as head of the Church spared Anglicanism from Papal corruption, it, in turn, occasioned the quandary of Anglicans in the American colonies who remained Loyalists during the Revolution because they supposed that to renounce the Crown would plunge them into ecclesiastical chaos. "No king, no bishops!" was the slogan of American Anglican Tories. When the Revolution prevailed, and Connecticut elected Samuel Seabury as bishop, Seabury loitered around London for months, unqualified to be duly consecrated by the English bishops because of prohibitions of Parliament, before resorting to the consecration by the Scottish bishops, who were free of such political restraint. It was not until 1789 that questions of the regularity and the validity of Seabury's episcopacy were cured by ratification of the General Convention.

## An Audacious Election

While the Episcopal Church in the Confederate States was being constituted, a radically ambiguous case affecting church order occurred. Alabama had no bishop and it sought procedural instructions from the Council of Southern Dioceses which met in 1861. The Council affirmed the necessity of the episcopal office in historic succession but offered no counsel on how this might be attained in the circumstances for Alabama. In the exigency, though bereft of collegial authority or advice, Alabama elected Richard H. Wilmer as bishop and offered his election for the concurrence of the other southern dioceses.

It was an audacious and, some thought, impatient act. Though the southern dioceses had expressed a general intention to form a new Church, that had not yet happened. Indeed, the Civil War ended before the adoption of a Constitution and Canons for the Episcopal Church in the Confederate States. At the same time, not all of the southern dioceses withdrew from the Episcopal Church in the United States. Two dioceses maintained relations through the war, participating, among other things, in the certification of the elections of two northern bishops. The records are incomplete or lost as to diocesan action certifying Bishop Wilmer's election, though it is established that at least two did not consent to it.

Despite all this, Wilmer was consecrated by three southern bishops on March 6, 1862. "A schismatic con-



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secession" it was called. It is difficult, at least this side of Henry VIII, to imagine an ecclesiastical situation in which validity could be more controversial or regularity could be more questionable than in the Wilmer case. Yet Wilmer today is accorded full recognition in the historic succession of bishops in America. When the General Convention first met, after the war's end, the Presiding Bishop especially invited the southern bishops and delegations to attend. Fearing ridicule or rebuff, Wilmer refused the invitation. Nevertheless, when the matter of his ecclesiastical status reached the agenda, the two houses of the Convention enacted a joint resolution ratifying his election and duly recognizing him as the bishop of Alabama, thus obviating the vexsome problems of validity and regularity.

The ratification of Wilmer as a bishop was integral to the reconciliation of the Episcopal Church in the aftermath of secession and civil war, and near schism. It upheld the priority of conscientious intention over the letter of the law, and, I dare say, it acknowledged the impatience of the Holy Spirit, militant in history, superseding theological abstraction and ecclesiastical nicety.

Lately, in the House of Bishops, as elsewhere in the Episcopal Church, the terms "validity" and "regularity" have been much bandied in connection with the Philadelphia ordination of 11 priests who are women. One hopes that in the midst of this controversy, the case of Bishop Wilmer will be remembered for the precedent it offers for the ratification by the whole Church of these ordinations, and for a remedy to disputes about validity and regularity worthy of attribution to the Holy Spirit.

---

**William Stringfellow:** author, social critic, attorney and theologian.

# Network Reports

## Highlights of Executive Council Action

- Three "partnership consultations" held during August in Tanzania, Central Africa and Uganda reported that the most critical question asked and not answered in the meetings was: "What manner of need do church people in Germany, Canada, Britain and the United States have of African church people?" No longer will churches in Africa tolerate a donor-receiver relationship which means control by the West.

- The Council declared that President Ford's clemency and earned-reentry program falls short of the gospel's standards and urged local churches and individuals to work for a full reconciliation of these men with their families and country.

- The Council on Ministry urged major agencies of the Episcopal Church — the Church Pension Fund, Board for Clergy Deployment and the Board for Theological Education — to address themselves "to the issue of racism and sexism within their own programs and ministries" and to report back to the Council on "how they propose to confront these issues."

- The Council also defeated a resolution urging Bishop Allin to introduce into the October meeting of the House of Bishops a resolution to call for a special General Convention in 1975 to deal "with the issues of oppression, sexism and prejudice against women in the church and world."

- Granted \$8,000 to Bishop Francisco Reus-Froylan to cover the cost of legal and educational approaches to combat strip mining in Puerto Rico.

- Elected Mrs. Leona Bryant from St. Thomas, Virgin Islands, to replace Dr. Charles V. Willie who resigned from his Council membership in August.

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**Paul Washington:** Member of Executive Council



## Network Reports

### Puerto Rican Independence

A national demonstration in support of Puerto Rican independence will be held at Madison Square Garden in New York at 1 p.m. Sunday, October 27. The demonstration, which has been six months in the making, is expecting 20,000 people from all regions of the country and Puerto Rico. Speaking at the event: Corky Gonzalez, head of Crusade for Justice, Congressman John Conyers, Jane Fonda, James Forman, Juan Maribras of Puerto Rico, and David Garcia of St. Mark's Episcopal Church in New York. United Nations delegates from Africa, Latin America and Asia have been invited to participate in the demonstration.

### Equal Rights Amendment Still In Trouble

More than a hundred years ago, feminists and abolitionists split over the latter's refusal to press for women's rights and suffrage in the 14th and 15th amendments to the U.S. Constitution. Now a 26th amendment that would finally guarantee equal rights to women is making the rounds of the states for final ratification. The Equal Rights Amendment will become law if 38 states ratify it before 1979. So far 33 states have ratified, though two of those, Nebraska and Tennessee, have attempted to rescind their ratification.

The current fight for ratification has been unexpectedly stiff and there is a chance the amendment will fail. Conservative groups, notably the John Birch Society, are fighting it with money and influence. As usual, the

churches that have been heard from at all are against the amendment and are interested in keeping woman in her God-given place. The Episcopal Church has been silent, though here and there, as in North Carolina, a diocesan convention has gone on record as approving the amendment.

The amendment has not yet been ratified in the following states: Alabama, Arizona, Arkansas, Florida, Georgia, Illinois, Indiana, Louisiana, Mississippi, Missouri, Nevada, North Carolina, North Dakota, Oklahoma, South Carolina, Utah and Virginia. That means that Episcopalians in at least 32 dioceses have time to speak out for the Gospel imperative of justice and equality for all.

Readers of *The Witness* are invited to submit reports on a wide variety of subjects and events looked at from many perspectives. Send reports to *The Witness/Network Reports*, 17187 Wildemere, Detroit, Michigan 48221.

### Coming in the next issue:

#### Missionaries of modern technology:

Norman Faramelli on Multi-National Corporations

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# THE WITNESS

November 24, 1974  
Volume 58, Number 3

## The New Missionaries

by Norman J. Faramelli

## Reform in the Suites

by Jesse E. Christman

Network Reports-Letters



# Letters to the Editor

*The Witness* reserves the right to condense all letters.

In our pre-publication issue we referred to Bishop Welles, retired, of West Missouri, as an "Honorary Vice President" of the American Church Union which, at that time, he was.

The following excerpt from a letter to Bishop Welles, printed at the request of the A.C.U., updates that information.

"You may recall that some months ago you wrote to me and advised me to the effect that you believed women should be ordained to the priesthood and gave me an option of listing you in the above capacity in the A.C.U. or not. At the time I had no idea that you would be led to the schismatic actions of July 29th and, because the A.C.U. has never demanded absolute agreement as to 'opinions' from its members, I saw no reason to drop you from the listing. However, the A.C.U. *does* require loyalty to the One Holy, Catholic, and Apostolic Church, and to its doctrines and traditions, given through the ages under the Holy Spirit of Order and Truth and which can stand the Vincentian test. It is obvious that you departed from this loyalty on July 29.

"In the light of this, and with deep regret and sorrow, I must take up the option you gave me and by authority granted me under the By-Laws and the Council of the American Church Union, I have directed the Secretary to remove your name from our rolls.

"May God have mercy on you and the other offending bishops. Sincerely, The Rev. Canon Albert J. duBois, President, The American Church Union"

I was delighted to receive the first issue of *The Witness* — the special issue related to the Philadelphia ordination. It is very welcome and most refreshing. I subscribed to *The* (old) *Witness* and hated to see its disappearance from the scene. The other publications related to the Episcopal Church seem to carry only a report of 'institutional' news, some pious reflections, and a very conservative theological and political point of view. For a long time I've yearned for a progressive publication that could report the thinking of the 'talent' in our Church. People like Paul Van Buren, Joseph Fletcher, and numerous others have much to say and need to be heard by people in our denomination.

I wish you well and pray for your efforts. *The* (new) *Witness* is coming on the scene at a very important time

and the challenge is great."—Gary E. Young, Lexington, Missouri

Congratulations on the August 25 Special Issue of *The Witness*. Based on this fine intelligent commentary of the Philadelphia ordination, we have entered a subscription to the renewed *Witness*.

Your commitment to women's issues is obvious, however there seems an irony in the fact that *The Witness* board of directors is entirely male (and all clerics at that), the roster of outstanding future articles (p. 10) includes not a single female author, and your own editorial staff (p. 2) includes but one woman. Curious.

In the months to come as the reborn *Witness* flourishes, I hope all three areas will receive your attention and action.—Gretta P. Estey, Wareham, Massachusetts

Hallelujah! How very great to have *The Witness* back in publication—I have missed it mightily.

And so I will do some of my Christmas shopping early—as I wouldn't want anyone to miss a single issue—hoping you will start the enclosed subscriptions with your pre-publication issue.—Abbie Jane Wells, Juneau, Alaska

I am very glad to be able again to send my subscription money for *The Witness*. It is good to have a paper as spokesman for the social conscience of the Church.—Eleanor M. Clark, Wilmington, Delaware

I like everything about *The Witness*—what you say, how you say it, and how it is all laid out. I think it is going to fill a real need. Thanks very much for letting me have a look at the pre-publication issue.—Peter Binzen, Philadelphia

**Among the Many Who Have Helped** us as consultants in charting a course for *The Witness* are the following: J. C. Michael Allen, Jesse F. Anderson, Sr., Barry Bingham, Sr., Eugene Carson Blake, Richard N. Bolles, Myron B. Bloy, Jr., Alice Dieter, Ira Einhorn, Norman J. Faramelli, John C. Fletcher, Richard Fernandez, Judy Mathe Foley, Everett Francis, David A. Garcia, Richard E. Gary, John C. Goodbody, William B. Gray, Michael P. Hamilton, Suzanne R. Hiatt, Muhammad Kenyatta, Roy Larson, Werner Mark Linz, James Parks Morton, Charles L. Ritchie, Jr., Leonard M. Sive, William B. Spofford, Jr., Richard Taylor, Paul M. van Buren, Frederick B. Williams, Gibson Winter.



# THE WITNESS

Robert L. DeWitt, Editor; Robert Eckersley, John F. Stevens, Lisa K. Whelan, Hugh C. White, Jr. Editorial and Business Office: P.O. Box 359, Ambler, Pennsylvania 19002, Telephone (215) 643-7067. Subscription Rates: \$7.20 per year; \$.60 per copy. The Witness is published eighteen times annually: October 13, 27; November 24; December 8, 29; January 12; February 2, 16; March 9, 23; April 13, 27; May 18; June 1, 22; July 13; September 7, 21 by The Episcopal Church Publishing Company. Board of Directors: Bishops Morris Arnold, Robert DeWitt, Lloyd Gressle, John Hines, John Krumm, Brooke Mosley and Dr. Joseph Fletcher. Copyright 1974 by The Episcopal Church Publishing Company.

## Litigation or Morality?

by Robert L. DeWitt

Recently there appeared in the news media an item concerning the possibility of a civil suit being brought against the Episcopal Church. The story was based upon the fact that there have been conversations amongst some attorneys representing the 11 women priests raising the question as to whether the Church's present stance on the ordination of women may be in violation of federal law prohibiting discrimination on the basis of sex.

The initial reaction of many to this news was one of outrage. It is to be hoped that a second reaction will be one of sober reflection.

The tenuous and sometimes tense condition of the "wall of separation" between Church and State in this Republic makes it difficult to assess the legal exposure in this situation. Certainly, the civil courts are reluctant to assume jurisdiction in such a dispute if it can be avoided. However, such assumption of jurisdiction has many precedents. Last year in a much publicized case the Amish successfully defended, on the grounds of religious conviction, their refusal to comply with compulsory education requirements in Wisconsin. More recently, the president of the Mormon Church has been subpoenaed by lawyers for the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People because of the discriminatory practice of not allowing Blacks to become senior patrol leaders in Boy Scout troops under Mormon aegis.

Regardless of whether this issue of discrimination against women finds its way into civil court, it has already found its way into our consciousness. Bishop Emrich, retired, of Michigan, in the early days of the civil rights revolution of the '60s, used to say he was tired of learning his Christian ethics from the federal government, the labor unions, and major league baseball. His point was that on the issue of civil rights those institutions were in some respects morally more enlightened than the Church.

Regardless of whether a civil suit is brought against the Church charging it with illegal discrimination against women, what response does the very possibility of such action provoke in us? An outraged "they can't do that to us!" Or, a prudential "they couldn't possibly make it stick." Or, a reflective "are the traditions and practices of the Church on this issue morally inferior to the norms of the secular state?"

## Multinational Corporations

# The New Missionaries

by Norman J. Faramelli

Over the past few years Americans have been made increasingly aware of the multinational corporation (MNC). Definitions of the MNC may vary from: "A corporation with divisions in two or more countries," to "an economic entity that is managed from a global point of view." Nevertheless, one fact is indisputable: the MNC exerts enormous economic power in the international economy and is able to transcend national boundaries and national loyalties.

The MNC leaders are the new missionaries of the secularized gospel of modern technology. Not since the spread of the Christian Church has such a universal phenomenon appeared. The MNCs are the principal agents of global social change, transforming social and cultural value structures and reshaping political and economic institutions. There is no analogue to the MNC in the political arena.

Statistics illustrating the size and scope of U.S.-based MNCs are legion. In 1971, 51 of the top 100 money powers in the world were MNCs, the other 48 were nations. Of the top 10 MNCs in the world, eight are U.S.-based. Harold Perlmutter of the Wharton School suggested that if current trends continue, one half the world's production would be in the hands of 300 giant MNCs by 1985.

There is a variety of reasons for the rise of the MNC. These include the global economic recovery after World War II and the diffusion of Western technology throughout many of the poor nations. With regard to the American-based MNCs, the U.S. tax laws were designed to encourage capital flow into foreign countries. The U.S. firm, for example, does not have to pay a tax on overseas profits until and unless those dollars are brought back home. Needless to say, such incentives encouraged foreign investment and undercut the power of the American labor

unions, many of whom have watched their memberships shrink. Each wage increase and new workers' benefits are incentives for the firms to move into countries where the wage rates are considerably lower. (A \$3-4/hour wage rate in the U.S. looks gigantic compared with the 15-50 cents/hour rate in many of the less industrialized nations).

The central issues surrounding MNCs, however, have to do with control and accountability. Salvatore Allende (the late President of Chile), addressing the UN General Assembly, said:

We are witnessing a pitched battle between the great transnational corporations and sovereign states, for the latter's fundamental political and military decisions are being interfered with by world wide organizations which are not dependent on any single state and which are not accountable to or regulated by any parliament or institution representing the collective interest.

Those issues are particularly acute in the less industrialized nations overwhelmed by economic giants.

There are a host of arguments pro and con regarding the presence of the MNC in poor nations. The advocates argue that it provides the host nation with necessary capital, efficient technology, managerial skills, access to world markets. Critics counter that the MNC does not provide capital, but drains the capital from the host nation and increases its debt, provides the wrong kind of technology and managerial skills, while the markets remain dominated by the MNC. Furthermore, the host nation is often used as a tax dodge for the MNC. Critics such as R. Muller and R. Barnett in "The Transformation of Wealth" even claim that the MNC is the chief reason why the gap between the rich and poor is widening.

### Ambassadors of Industrialism

It is impossible to address all those issues in one article. The focus here will be primarily on (1) the values of the MNC, and the consequences of those values on the less industrialized nations, and (2) the appropriate response that concerned citizens can make to the MNC.

The MNCs are the ambassadors of the values of industrialism. Like the missionaries of old, they have an ambivalent track record. The MNC is the instrument by which the consumer society is developed, and by which industrial and consumer ideas are translated into realities. Thus, one's criticism or praise of the MNC depends largely upon how one views industrialism, the consumer ethic and all its accompanying inequities.

The gospel of industrialism claims that progress is



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measured by an endlessly increasing material standard of living. The poor are to be taken care of by economic growth, as part of that growth "trickles down" to the lowest economic sector. Of course, environmental damages frequently result, but that is seen as a small price for industrial progress. The MNC, of course, seeks to guarantee its future by attempting to maximize both its growth and profit profile.

Does the presence of the MNC help or hurt a poor nation? Obviously, that question has to be answered in a specific context and depends on the terms agreed upon — wages, taxes, licensing contracts, etc. The answer depends upon where one sits. If you are a well-intentioned corporate manager in New York City, or a manager in the foreign operation, you are convinced that by providing a few jobs you are helping the plight of the poor. If you are among the top 20 percent in that foreign nation, you will probably receive some of the benefits. If you are one of the many formerly unemployed in that nation who now has a job, you will probably be a little better off. But if you are among the bottom 50 percent of the population in that nation, the presence of the MNC will not help you; it may even make your life a bit worse. Numerous studies done by the U.N. and the World Bank demonstrate that, contrary to the myths, economic development in most poor nations (with or without MNCs) does not help the bottom 40-50 percent. A labor-saving device developed by the MNC in the U.S. may be appropriate there, but it compounds the economic problems when it is transferred to a poor nation with a high unemployment rate. Also, the MNC has great accounting flexibility since it can arrange its books to show a profit in nations where the tax rates are low, and losses where the tax rates are high, even if the opposite is true. Such bookkeeping helps to perpetuate poverty.

### Managers and Structures

Such critiques often infuriate the well-intentioned manager, who is trying to aid the development process in the poor nation. But we have to distinguish carefully between the economic structures with their operational values and the intentions of the manager. Often the motivation of the individual management is irrelevant.

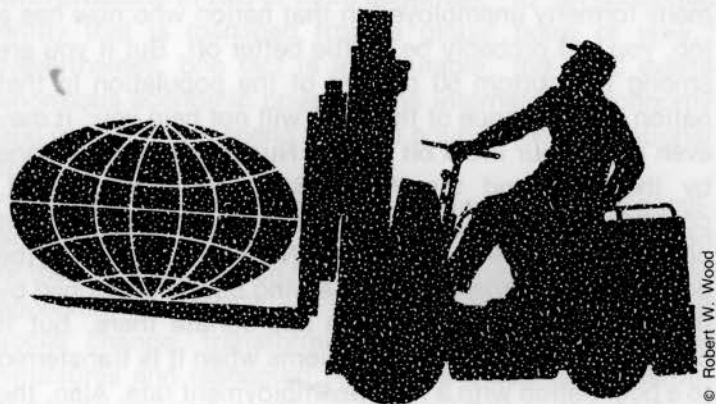
R. Barnet wrote:

The question . . . is . . . : Can the global corporation, given its drive to maximize worldwide profits, the pressures of oligopolistic competition, and its enormous bargaining power in weak economies, modify its



behavior in ways that will significantly aid the bottom 60 percent of the world's population? ("Foreign Policy," Winter '73-74, p. 122)

During the 15 years that MNC investments in less industrialized nations flourished, the gap between the rich and poor nations increased dramatically. But one might be further incensed and inquire: Why blame the MNC for the lopsided and unjust distribution of wealth and income in poor nations? Is not income and wealth distribution the responsibility of the national government and not the MNC? That is correct, but the presence of the MNC (with the consumer life style that it promotes) can preclude alternative models of distribution. In a poor society the consumer life style must, by necessity, be limited to only a few. In the 1960s, for example, Brazil had to make some hard economic decisions. If it redistributed income fairly, each Brazilian would have had enough for only a part of an automobile. The Brazilian government consciously



decided to subsidize the consumer class (top 10 percent) so its members were more readily able to purchase automobiles. Of course, to maintain political stability under such unjust conditions, the government has had to resort to various forms of repression, including torture.

The MNC professes to be politically neutral and, in most instances, earnestly tries to be. The ITT political intervention in Chile, for example, was the exception rather than the rule. But political neutrality is a fiction. Economic presence alone legitimates the status quo.

Despite its avowed neutrality, the MNC demands political stability in order to survive and thrive. Only stability can guarantee its growth of sales and profit margins. Oftentimes, liberal managers find themselves supporting (or at least existing with) regimes that espouse values and tactics that are antithetical to their own. But the MNCs appreciate the stability — absence of corporate criticism and outlawing of strikes — enforced by military

dictatorships. Being a hierarchical organization, the MNC has had little difficulty existing side-by-side with repressive military regimes. The harmonious co-existence between the MNCs and the military juntas in Chile, Greece, Brazil and repressive governments in South Korea, South Africa, Rhodesia, the Philippines, and South Vietnam illustrate the point. The instances are far too numerous to be coincidental. The most effective way to guarantee stability is to suppress dissent. That is, someone's stability is someone else's repression. That is a reality that MNCs would prefer not to face. A manager who is a zealous civil rights advocate in the U.S. finds it difficult to understand that his company's presence in South Africa is propping up a repressive apartheid government. But that is the difference between personal intentions and structural realities.

### An Appropriate Response

The responsible citizen is soon perplexed by something as vast and complex as the MNC. How does one sort out the ethical issues in order to see what is needed? After knowing what needs to be done, how can one take the appropriate action steps?

These are some preliminary steps that persons in the religious community can take to deal with the MNC.

(1) Religious institutions should engage their members who work in MNCs in dialogue. From them we can learn much about the operations and values of the MNC. But fruitful discussion demands viewpoints from others who are knowledgeable of, but not employed by MNCs, especially persons from the less industrialized nations (where the MNCs operate) who have not benefited from industrial progress.

(2) Religious institutions should use their stock ownership in MNCs as a means of leverage to get the necessary disclosures as to the company's policies and practices abroad. It is imperative that full accounting practices be disclosed so that the public will know if a company is using a particular nation as a tax dodge.

There are still more substantive measures that should be pursued by the religious community. For instance, it should work for legislation that will more carefully regulate the flow of capital out of the U.S., or at least demand that the MNCs make adequate provisions for the impacted U.S. labor force before it moves its capital abroad.

On a wider scale, many things need to be done to control, regulate and make MNCs accountable to the body

politic. These are difficult issues on which to get handles, but there is a need for:

- (1) International labor unions to counteract international corporations (steps toward equalizing the wage rates is in the best interest of all workers);
- (2) Regional compacts between the less industrialized nations patterned after the Andean Pact (Western Latin American nations) and OPEC (Oil Producers and Exporting Countries). Such regional moves will make it more difficult for the MNCs to play off one nation against the other;
- (3) Development of international organizations that can control, regulate and guide the MNC and subordinate private economic activity to the wider public good.

The MNC may not be the sole cause of poverty, but given its power, influence, uncontrollability and lack of accountability, along with its desire to maximize corporate growth and profits, it is clearly not the answer to global poverty. Nevertheless, it is essential to realize that the issue is not the abolition of all MNCs, or a reverting to an economic parochialism. The first issue is to decide what values we want to maximize in society and then spell out what role economic institutions can play in that process. If our concerns for economic justice and environmental quality are to be implemented, appropriate institutions will have to be designed, and existing structures reshaped.

The crucial question is not whether the MNC is good for the overall economic indicators such as GNP, but: What effect does the presence of an MNC in a particular nation have on the bottom 50 percent in that nation? That question demands our primary attention if global economic institutions are to be an answer to, and not the cause of, world poverty.

**Norman J. Faramelli:** co-director, Boston Industrial Mission; working on the social, economic, ethical and environmental issues related to industrial development.

## A Case in Point . . .

by Francisco Reus-Froylan

Norman Faramelli's description of multi-national corporations sounds familiar to Puerto Rico. A brief review of some MNCs and their effect on the "enchanted island" will show why.

Puerto Rico is 100 miles long by 35 wide, with a population approaching three million: a population density of more than 875 persons per square mile, one of the highest in the world. The industrialization of Puerto Rico has created a consumer society, urbanism, and technology. But it meant the disappearance of more than 100,000 jobs directly or indirectly related to agriculture. This fact has caused chronic scarcities of tropical foodstuffs and the seasonal migration of thousands of Puerto Rican migrant workers to the large farms of the eastern seaboard of the United States. It has meant the abandoning of the land and the growth of slums in Puerto Rico and the United States.

Meanwhile, the MNCs have fared better. The Puerto Rican government offers incentives: cheap labor, corporation tax exemptions for 17 years, renewable as they run out; heavy industry, user of great quantities of electric energy, is accordingly supplied power at less than cost, while individual consumers are subject to periodic rate hikes. Two petrochemicals receive water from a joint subsidiary which extracts water from subterranean streams without paying a cent. And the affluence of the refineries, petrochemical and pharmaceutical companies constitute a growing danger to the health of the people, agricultural and other vegetation; fishing in coastal waters has severely declined near such installations, while local and federal environmental agencies issue mild reprimands.

Puerto Rico has been evangelized by the MNC missionaries. Many of us think there ought to be a reformation.

**Francisco Reus-Froylan:** Bishop of Puerto Rico; recently received an Executive Council grant to assist in the struggle against industrial interests in his diocese.



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# Reform in the Suites

by Jesse Christman

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The decline in social activism in recent years, within and without the churches, has been the subject of endless words and explanations. Whatever the cause, the results are clear; student militants graduate and disappear; new-left activists retreat to communal farms, the Guru Maharaji or Transcendental Meditation; white liberals take up transactional analysis and the churches dismantle their social action agencies.

Impulses for social change take different forms in this decade. One of the more promising is the struggle for corporate social responsibility that grew out of the black struggle, the urban rebellions and the peace movement of the 1960s. It represents a change from "action in the streets" to "reform in the suites." Instead of popular agitation against the governmental establishment, it identifies the corporation as the engine that moves America and directs its limited resources toward affecting the behavior of corporate America.

Corporate social responsibility advocates use of a variety of methods, from stockholder resolutions to consumer boycotts, to press their point. They identify specific concerns — minority hiring, air pollution, investment in Southern Africa, strip mining — and address these issues corporation by corporation. They use the leverage of stockholdings to gain a forum and the pressure of media to advance the cause; they develop public interest law firms, research centers and publications. They seek support in Congress, in the university and among stockholders and consumers.

What does it all add up to? Has corporate America changed? Will it? Does significant social change come

about through this kind of pressure on corporate institutions? Or will this effort, too, fade away, discouraged and exhausted by the unequal struggle?

Four assertions can be made about the movement for corporate social responsibility. First, were it not for corporate social responsibility, social action in many national denominations would be virtually nonexistent. Second, the target is correct — the corporation is the heart of America's problem. Third, the expectation of fundamental corporate reform is unrealistic; indeed, corporate social responsibility is probably a contradiction in terms. Fourth, the corporate social responsibility movement must continue to grow.

## Church Social Action

Recent years have seen the systematic dismantling of the social action structures of major denominations. Staffs have been cut, budgets reduced and a generally low profile has been adopted in agencies once noted for their critical analysis and decisive mobilization for action. This has come as a result of the re-assertion of power by conservative regional interests resistant to what they view as an unrepresentative, out of control and left-leaning national bureaucracy. In most cases they have succeeded so well that social action in the churches has become a tame game.

Corporate social responsibility, on the other hand, has successfully bucked this tide, combining as it does the money managers who handle church investments, the remnants of social action and mission agencies and some grass-roots people upset over particular corporate behavior. This has allowed the church structures concerned for social responsibility in investment to move aggressively in a number of instances such as strip mining in Appalachia, investments in South Africa and copper mining in Puerto Rico.

The critical point of leverage is the investment portfolio. Even the most conservative churchperson is hard put to counter the argument that stewardship of the church's investments relates to where and how the dollars are used as well as what the return is. The irony, not to say contradiction, is obvious. Affluent churchpeople donate a part of their wealth to the Church, which in turn sets up programs to monitor and sometimes pressure the very companies which generated the wealth in the first place. Nevertheless, the Church's duty to practice a careful stewardship of its wealth provides a solid base for denominational involvement in the corporate social responsibility movement. That involvement is one of the



few signs of life in an otherwise moribund social action scene.

As gross as it may seem on first glance, the adage "the business of America is business" is on target. The critical issues of this society are decided with the interests of corporate America uppermost. This is true whether we talk of detente with Russia, the tax structure of cities and states, basic policies regarding higher education, the health care delivery system or the cooling of the war in Southeast Asia. This is no cry of alarm over a conspiracy in the board rooms to control the society, rather, it is an assessment of the underlying consciousness that pervades our world. The large global corporation, with its human, technological and financial resources, provides the goals, the direction and the organizational focus for the energy of our people. Its initiatives in seeking new markets, developing new products and searching out raw materials determine the basic character of our social existence.

### **Toward Corporate Reform**

A movement that directs its attention to corporate enterprises and seeks to influence and shape corporate decisions and behavior is dealing at the center of the control system of the society. The revelations that emerged in the investigations of Watergate only illustrate the functional interlocks between economic interests and political decisions. The hard fact is that the "golden rule" still holds, i.e., "he who has the gold makes the rules."

The stated intent of corporate social responsibility activists is "to make the corporations responsible." Presumably, this means that companies will build social criteria into their decision-making process which, if honored, will avoid the abuses of the social and physical environment which might otherwise result. It envisions an economic institution intricately wired into the myriad interests and constituencies on which it has an impact and acting in such a manner as to avoid injury to any. This vision may be unattainable, given the present ordering of our capitalist system.

Corporate organizations are pre-eminently profit-making institutions committed to growth and profit. Corporate managers are evaluated by their performance in the light of profit goals. The corporate management that fails to achieve its maximum economic potential will be replaced, and soon! Companies that fail to grow and prosper will be taken over or liquidated by the economic interests to which they are beholden. The upshot is that there is a narrow range in which corporate management

can work in pursuit of corporate responsibility. Small costs in large institutions are acceptable. Large costs will be borne only under direct coercion by government, a government not incidentally committed to the perpetuation and flourishing of this very economic system. This argument against the possibility of significant corporate reform is not based on devil or conspiracy theories, i.e., corporate leaders are not bad men in the personal sense. They are about as moral as the rest of us. But it is the institutional realities under which they operate that determine their decisions and corporate behavior. Those realities are growth and profit into the foreseeable future.

### **A Crucial Intersection**

The corporate social responsibility movement is positioned at a crucial intersection of corporate capitalism; that is, at the contradiction between the inevitable and necessary logic of capital to grow or die, to make a profit (larger than last year if possible) or lose the chance, and the pressing needs of a society fraught with inequality, outright poverty and deep-seated social disorder. It is involved in pressing corporate America to live out its liberal promise that our economic system can be the vehicle for solving the social problems of the society. In fact, it is pressing corporation leaders to do what they cannot accomplish — to save the world profitably. The result is catastrophic: imperialism and racism abroad, supported by the force of U.S. arms; inflation and unemployment at home; a consumer economy fueled by massive debt which enslaves, controls and trivializes our people.

Yet, the corporate social responsibility movement must press on. It must increase the demand for corporate responsibility to combat the ills of society. It must build the expectation among the masses of people that corporate America can and will act to solve society's problems. And, when it becomes clear that it will not because it cannot, corporate social responsibility advocates must be prepared to explain the reasons for that failure and to struggle for an economic system that can direct resources to areas of greatest need rather than greatest profit, a system that can build a new and viable democratic political system where politics directs the economy instead of being its compliant handmaiden.

The America of the 1970s badly needs a resurgence of creative imagination about new social, economic and political arrangements that will transcend and supplant the present political economy. We need a new way of allocating resources and organizing the energy and talent

of our people. We need goals which go beyond "getting and spending," beyond growth and profit for the privileged one-third of our society. We cannot continue forever patching up and rationalizing our economic order. The price of inflation and unemployment, trivialized and alienating work and leisure, racism and exploitation at home and abroad is too high to be acceptable. But to break out will require creative thinking and thoughtful action of the highest order. The beginning of the process is upon us, involving as it does locating the problem at the heart of the corporate enterprise. Corporate social responsibility is one available vehicle for thoughtful action to create a humanly effective and economically viable social order.

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**Jesse E. Christman:** began observing corporate behavior in four years spent on an auto assembly line; organizational consultant; board member, Interfaith Center on Corporate Responsibility; currently in management in a large company.

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## Tax Resistance

# David and Goliath

by Andrew Wallace

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Tax resistance is the fly in the soup at the sumptuous spring banquet of the Internal Revenue Service. A minor annoyance. No more.

Withholding federal income or telephone taxes is not going to topple the government or send it into bankruptcy. But in Philadelphia a variety of community groups have benefited from low-cost loans made by War Tax Resistance from a \$65,000 fund amassed by about 100 tax resisters.

Ordinarily, tax resistance is an individual act of conscience, similar to conscientious objection to military service — one of the few ways citizens have to say "no" to war, oppression, military might. Resisters have based

their arguments on religious principles or international law. A few churches have refused to pay the telephone surcharge.

John Egnal, a Philadelphia attorney who has specialized in the defense of tax resisters, said that one internal IRS memo instructed agents to prosecute the most visible resistance cases to get across the message to the rest that tax withholding does not pay. Another told them to ignore the church refusal to pay phone taxes so as not to stir institutional wrath.

There have been some victories and some defeats in the courts but the wins have been narrow ones and no one has established the major point — that being forced to pay taxes for an immoral war is an infringement of religious rights. Nor have the courts yet consented to listen to arguments arising from international law, Egnal said.

One of the recent victories came when the 4th Circuit Court of Appeals in Richmond, Va., ruled that Lyle and Sue Snider were not attempting to defraud when they claimed three billion exemptions (the population of the world) on their W-4 form. They were using "symbolic speech," the court ruled. Yet in California, Martha Tranquilli went to jail for nine months for listing as her "children," peace groups like Women's International League for Peace and Freedom and War Tax Resistance on her return.

Egnal described the government's attitude in recent cases as trying to balance its right to tax with the First Amendment guarantee of religious freedom — with the tax power always weighted a bit heavier.

### Other Court Cases

One recent court test involving a Quaker couple working for American Friends Service Committee resembled "a minuet," he said. In the ruling, the government agreed not to force AFSC voluntarily to hand over taxes the couple wanted to withhold as a protest and thereby violate their peace witness. Instead, IRS was able to withdraw the entire sum from the Quakers' bank account at year's end with penalties and interest. The peace principle remained intact and the government got its money.

One of the most fascinating tax cases to surface anywhere has been that of the Rev. David M. Gracie, the urban missionary for the Episcopal Diocese of Pennsylvania, who for several years has been refusing to pay 50 percent of his income taxes.

What makes it so interesting is that Father Gracie has involved the church in his struggle. To collect the priest's back taxes, IRS went to his employer, the Diocese of

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Pennsylvania, in 1972, and the diocese paid. But when IRS sent a second levy to the diocese last spring, the Diocesan Council did an about face and refused to honor it.

IRS went to court to enforce the levy and the Diocese argued that it was unconstitutional for IRS to force it to collect taxes from an employee who refused to pay for conscience' sake. Later, Father Gracie himself asked permission to intervene in the suit. His contention is that the First Amendment guarantees his right to withhold taxes when that money is being used for immoral purposes. To pay would involve him in "crimes against peace," he said.

In reversing itself, the Diocese sidestepped a potentially embarrassing dilemma: "Part of the role of the church is teaching people to make a decision about whether to participate in war," the priest said. If the church paid his taxes for him, it would short circuit his doing what it had taught him to do.

But Father Gracie thinks he has not been successful in getting the church to examine the underlying reasons for his protest. "When you are a citizen of an expansionist empire, where does your obligation to the state end and your resistance begin?" he asks.

### **The State's Authority**

William Stringfellow has a valuable observation on this dilemma in "An Ethic for Christians and Other Aliens In a Strange Land." He calls to mind that in the Garden of Eden, all creation fell along with Adam and Eve. Institutions — the government, Lions clubs, the military, even IRS — are in the same fallen state. To him the state itself is the paramount demonic power and its authority is the power of death.

Stringfellow sees the greatest evil coming not from the "evildoers," but from the myriads of human beings "immobilized . . . by their habitual obeisance to institutions or other principalities as idols . . . ."

Amid such decadence, he continues, "one can discern and identify maturity, conscience and, paradoxically, freedom in human beings only among those who are in conflict with the established order."

"In conflict." That's where many of the tax resisters are and where the churches should be. What war tax resistance is doing is continuing to force Americans to take seriously questions of governmental morality and demanding that it act humanly.

**Andrew Wallace:** wrote about tax resistance while a reporter for *The Philadelphia Inquirer*.

## **Network Reports**

### **Corporate Responsibility Strategy for 1975**

The Interfaith Center on Corporate Responsibility in New York City reports that in 1975 the major denominations in the United States, including the United Methodists, Presbyterian Church USA, American Baptist, and the Episcopal Church, will increase their actions on social responsibility issues over what they did in 1974.

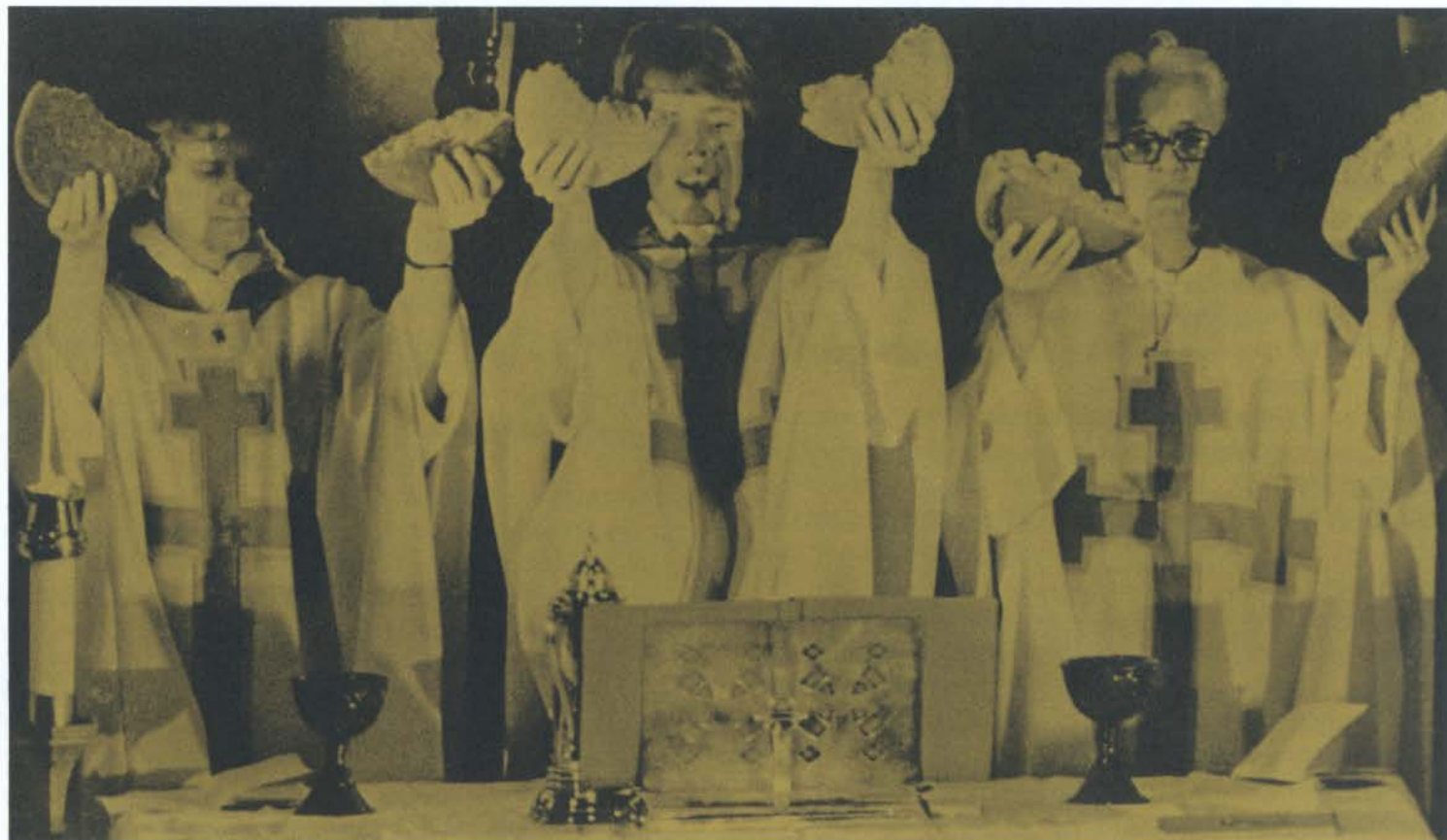
The issues that will particularly concern the churches in 1975 are: American investments in South Africa; the role of oil companies in Namibia, Southwest Africa; Equal Employment Opportunity; racism and discrimination against women; Agri-business and its role in the world hunger crisis; stripmining and alternate energy sources, investment in Latin America and the Philippines; and, for the first time, the churches are looking hard at the role of women as portrayed in advertising.

Representatives from sixteen denominations will meet in New York City the last week in November to determine policy and action strategies for 1975. For further information, write: Interfaith Center for Corporate Responsibility, 475 Riverside Drive, New York, NY 10027.

### **House of Bishops: Theological Consultants**

In a very important move, the House of Bishops at its recent meeting in Mexico voted unanimously to invite theologians and other consultants from time to time to assist the bishops in dealing with major issues confronting the Church.

This action was proposed by the Committee on Theology, and arose in the charged and confused atmosphere surrounding the issue of the ordination of women. It would seem to reflect a growing realization on the part of the bishops that our theology, both as Anglicans and Christians, is not a closed system but open to the ongoing revelation of God's truth in His creation.



**CELEBRATING A EUCHARIST**, three of the 11 women priests, *left to right*, the Rev. Alison Cheek, the Rev. Carter Heyward, and the Rev. Jeannette Piccard, participated in an ecumenical service at Riverside Church, New York City, on October 27.

AP Wirephoto

Readers of *The Witness* are invited to submit reports on a wide variety of subjects and events looked at from many perspectives. Send reports to *The Witness*/Network Reports, 17187 Wildemere, Detroit, Michigan 48221.

### Coming in the next issue:

#### Oppressor or Oppressed?

The Church in Latin America by J. Antonio Ramos  
With comments by J. Brooke Mosley

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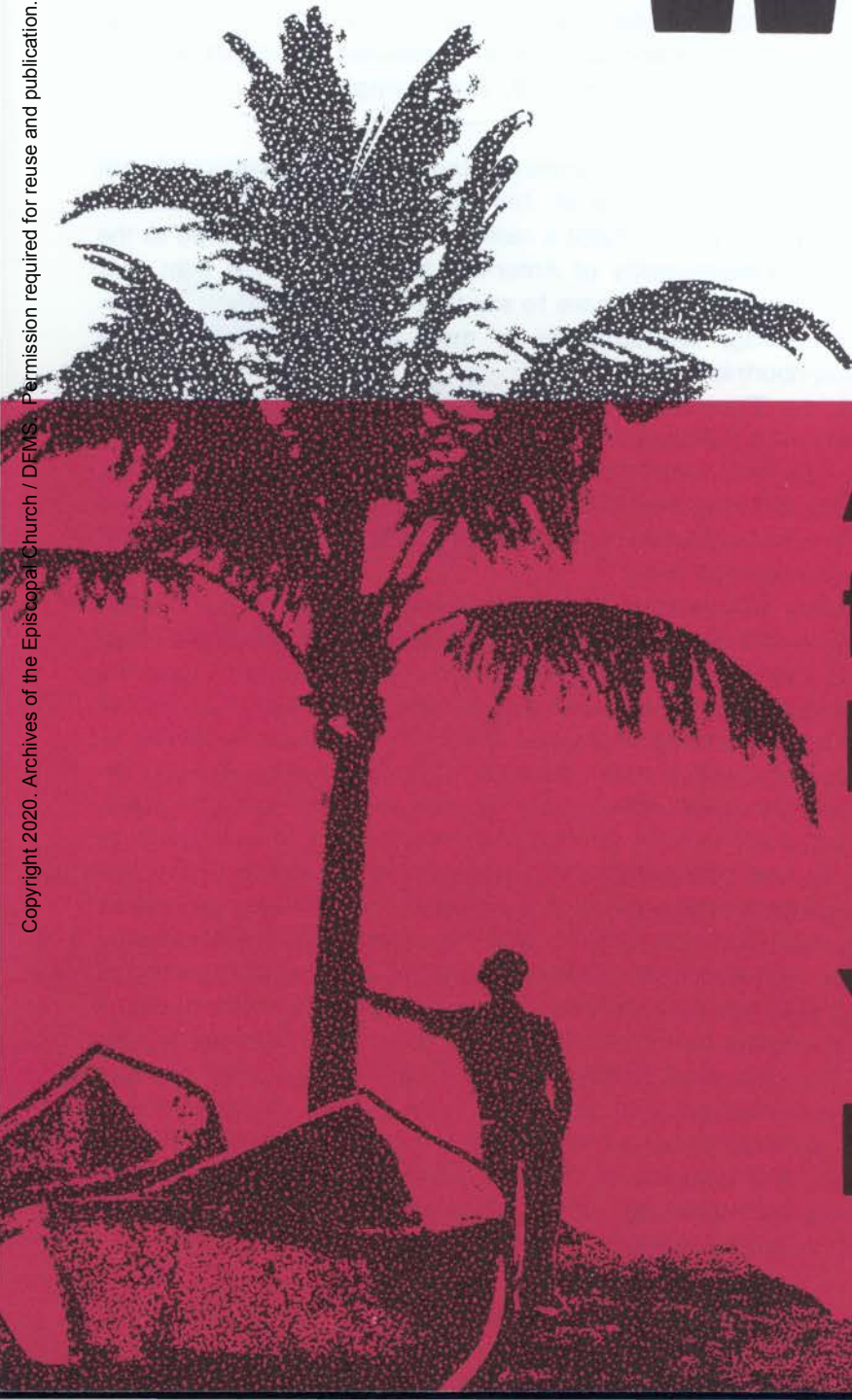
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# THE WITNESS

December 8, 1974  
Volume 58, Number 4



## A Quest for the Kingdom

J. Antonio Ramos

## Your Time Is Up!

Henry Rightor

# Letters to the Editor

*The Witness* reserves the right to condense all letters.

I found the lead article in the October 13 issue of *The Witness* most inappropriate for a Church publication. In "The New Sexuality: Liberation or Flight?" the author not only condones sexual behavior that, judged by Holy Scripture and the Prayer Book Service of Holy Matrimony, is immoral but actually recommends it, as a means to strengthen a monogamous marriage.

To call such behavior acceptable as "the new morality" is to deny that there is any such thing as fornication and adultery. Premarital coupling and "swinging" fit respectively under those two headings and for a Church paper to publish an endorsement of such practices is a betrayal of what the Church stands for in the area of sexual morality.—Henry N. Herndon, Wilmington

Gibson Winter seemed to be contradicting himself in his article. At one point he says the new sexuality of people living together prior to legal bondage, and men-women equality is great; yet at the end of his article he claims we're in trouble because this "new sexuality" is "a flight from freedom and justice — away from a human future.

Aside from this point, I do give him three cheers for stating his opinion that "pre-marital coupling" can be seen as an advantage. However, I don't believe that the guilt felt in the 50s for such an action is completely gone today. Although there's the "pill", voices of incriminating parents can still be heard saying, "Thou shalt not fool around."

There might be a lot of good marriages around, as Mr. Winter states, but my generation is constantly hearing the bad side — the divorce scene. Therefore, given my feelings and the feedback I get from my friends, I can't help agreeing with Gibson Winter and his pros for pre-marital coupling. So often parents think of this as just sex, sex, sex. This aggravates me. The term "living together" is simply that — not only sex, but two people sharing their lives together without a piece of paper, because they believe they have a mutually affectionate relationship.—Maryanne Momorella, Willow Grove, Pa. (Age 22)

I am a bit concerned over your reference to the kind of thing which you are trying to do with *The Witness*.

Please, please, please do not turn it into just one more mag with an axe to grind!

I have felt very strongly that we need a publication from the liberal point of view. On the other hand, I have felt just as strongly that a truly liberal publication should be a well-rounded one.

It is just that while we do need critical articles, we also need to keep our eye on the ball. Not all of Christ's teachings were polemics against the Pharisees!

We have heard so much about G.C.S.P., Prayer Book revision, women's ordination, etc., etc., and so little about the basic reasons for whatever may be our attitudes towards them.

Do remember, that most lay people look upon our intramural squabbles with a somewhat jaundiced eye."—George Wickersham, II, Hot Springs, Va.

It might seem to some reading Jesse Christman's article in the 11/17 issue of *The Witness* that he is at least a pessimist, at most a radical. Having been involved in the in-depth study of American business for the past four years, I would have to say that Jesse is a realist. If anything, the situation is more frightening than Jesse portrays it.

Two things not mentioned by Jesse are important as they relate to this subject of corporate responsibility. The first is symbolic and the second very real. The elevation of Nelson Rockefeller to the office of vice-president symbolically completes the circle between government and business.

The second and more important issue is our current economic situation. In part caused by the short-range profit-oriented thinking of business, inflation is now the banner being waved by businessmen as they call for the dismantling of the last thirty years of social progress — little as it was. Because of inflation the carefully orchestrated chorus calls for more corporate tax exemption, overthrow of all environmental laws, the weakening (if that's possible) of all government regulatory agencies, and new trade policies all designed to fatten corporate profits.

Christman states that the "corporate social responsibility movement is positioned at a crucial intersection of corporate capitalism." I would agree. He then places a heavy burden on those who will understand the failure. They must clearly "explain it" and "struggle for" the new and more just economic system. That struggle should begin now, and the church should be at its forefront for it is the degree of moral sensitivity within society that will formulate the value structures of the next economic system.—Frank White, New York City



# THE WITNESS

Robert L. DeWitt, Editor; Robert Eckersley, John F. Stevens, Lisa K. Whelan, Hugh C. White, Jr., Antoinette Swanger. Editorial and Business Office: P.O. Box 359, Ambler, Pennsylvania 19002, Telephone (215) 643-7067. Subscription Rates: \$7.20 per year; \$.60 per copy. The Witness is published eighteen times annually: October 13, 27; November 24; December 8, 29; January 12; February 2, 16; March 9, 23; April 13, 27; May 18; June 1, 22; July 13; September 7, 21 by The Episcopal Church Publishing Company. Board of Directors: Bishops Morris Arnold, Robert DeWitt, Lloyd Gressle, John Hines, John Krumm, Brooke Mosley and Dr. Joseph Fletcher. Copyright 1974 by the Episcopal Church Publishing Company.

## The Weightier Matters

by Robert L. DeWitt

The recent refusal by the Presiding Bishop to accept a contribution for the relief of world hunger and suffering dramatizes a tragic circumstance in the life of our Church.

At the much-publicized Eucharist at Riverside Church in New York City on October 27 which three women priests concelebrated, the offering was designated for the Presiding Bishop's Fund for World Relief. Last July the Roman Catholic Cardinal Cooke, out of concern for the famine-stricken people of the world, issued a pastoral letter to his constituents calling for the observance of meatless Wednesdays. Early in November the Episcopal Bishop Moore sent a similar pastoral to his people.

There is a striking contrast between the reason for the New York prelates' requests of their people, and the reason for the Presiding Bishop's rejection of the offering. The contrast identifies a sobering reality in the life of the Church. Bishop Moore referred to the present world famine as "not 'just another catastrophe,' but a major tragedy of history." The current unfolding of the facts about world hunger underscores the accuracy of his statement. The Presiding Bishop, on the other hand, turned down a modest contribution for the relief of that very tragedy "as a matter of conscience." The probable, though unspoken, reason was his concern lest his acceptance of the gift be interpreted as tacit approval of the service of thanksgiving from which the offering came.

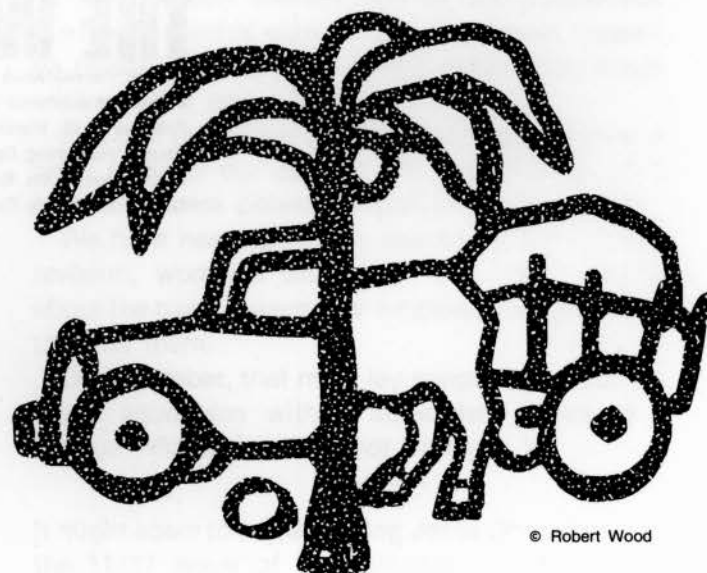
Even though the world food crisis is a major concern of the Presiding Bishop he must nevertheless be wary of prematurely or implicitly recognizing the ordination of the women priests. He is caught in a dilemma, victim of an incongruity in the life of the Church.

Because he is the Presiding Bishop, a point of procedure must take precedence over purpose. A molehill of scrupulosity must be allowed to overshadow a mountain of mission. It is expected. Yet, this reversal of priorities is a scandal to many outside the church, as well as to growing numbers within the church.



# A Quest for the Kingdom

by J. Antonio Ramos



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The Editors of *The Witness* have asked me to write an article reflecting upon those issues of our society and of the Christian community which have influenced my ministry as a priest and bishop of the Episcopal Church.

We live in an age of oppressors and oppressed, both of whom are in slavery, chained and in bonds by virtue of those very conditions. However, the shameful fact about all of this — something which we, as a Christian world body, have not yet been able to see and understand — is that we, the so-called disciples of that freeing and liberating Lord, are the ones who perpetuate this state of sin. We, brothers and sisters in the Faith, continue to keep each other in a state of slavery and oppression throughout the world. For the Christian Church, spread throughout the entire globe, in the six continents, has in its body, the Body of Christ, both members who are oppressors and oppressed, rich and poor, well-fed and starving, clothed and naked, sheltered and roofless. This is our modern tragedy, our sin, our shame, our challenge for the years to come.

It is within this understanding of what our present world demands of the Christian community that I see my ministry as a bishop of the Episcopal Church, as a Christian, and as a citizen of the world. I am committed to the cause of liberation, understood in biblical terms, the cause of liberation of both society and the Church. Perhaps a brief look at some of the experiences I have had may tell something about why I stand where I stand today.

I was born in 1937 in a small rural community in the mountain area of Puerto Rico: a twin in a family of 18. At

that time Puerto Rico was a rural and agricultural society. It was a time of large families which constituted an economic productive unit, with the head of the household proud of such a proliferous gift. My father was quite prosperous, owning a coffee farm, a grocery store and a bakery, of which he was the baker and we were his assistants. My mother ran the grocery store, and all of us learned from our very early years to provide the necessary labor. We went to the farm when we were not in school, and, at the time of the crop, all of us, boys and girls, had to miss school to join in the gathering of the coffee crop. In the afternoons we helped with the preparation of the dough for the bread, taking turns during the week to get up daily at 3 a.m. for the baking. Early in the morning, one or two of us went on horseback to deliver the bread to many near and distant places. At home, washing of clothes and bathing had to be done in the river, with rain water gathered in containers for cooking. Cooking was done with vegetable charwood. On many occasions we had to study under the light of a candlestick.

Soon the depression and the Second World War began to hit us hard and we began to learn what it was to walk barefoot and what real fasting and abstinence meant all year round. The rural exodus to the city and the emigration by thousands of Puerto Ricans as cheap labor to the United States made things worse. Right now, we only own a small piece of land where my father lives alone, in the wooden house where my twin brother, a younger one and I were born.

All of us were baptized, raised and nurtured in the local

Episcopal Church. It was very near our home, at a time when most of the work of our Church in Puerto Rico was in the rural areas, a sector of Puerto Rico's society largely neglected by the predominant Roman Catholic Church. From my infant years, I was a devoted and faithful member of that very small church, the center of the community's life. At the age of 15 I was admitted as a candidate for postulancy by the then Bishop of Puerto Rico, the Rt. Rev. Albert Ervine Swift, my second father, a loving, caring person, who gave all his efforts in providing Puerto Rico with an indigenous leadership and a native bishop. I became a deacon in 1962, having graduated from Ripon College in Wisconsin in 1959 and later from the Episcopal Theological School.

In June 1962, I joined the staff of the Cathedral in San Juan, as a Curate of the then Dean of the Cathedral, The Rt. Rev. Francisco Reus-Froylan. I became the chaplain of the Cathedral School and of the University of Puerto Rico. As chaplain, I met a student of mine, a very shy and beautiful girl. We fell in love and she became my wife. Since then, Minerva has been the source of my strength and inspiration and has given me the courage to pursue this ministry up to this moment. Later, I became a canon of the Cathedral; in 1966 its dean and in October of 1968, at the age of 31, I was elected Bishop of the Church in Costa Rica, a country which I had visited only once. (In those days, missionary dioceses were not allowed to elect their own bishops, only to nominate.) To the Costa Rican Church I was an unknown figure, so that my election was somewhat contested by them; rightly so.

### **Toward Independence**

I am now in the sixth year of my episcopate and already looking forward to 1976 when the Costa Rican Episcopal Church will be able to exercise its own right to self-determination, by electing its own bishop. This will culminate a process of change begun before I came to Costa Rica: the establishment of the Episcopal Church in Costa Rica as a national Church, able to govern its own affairs. With the full support of the clergy and the laity of the diocese we have been able to establish local diocesan structures for self-government and self-support, and develop a sense of selfhood so necessary for any young church. Right now, we raise locally most of the budget for our programs. Thanks to capital funds which we were given by the Executive Council and the women of the Church, we have been able to produce locally the necessary resources for the support of our diocesan

structures and programs. This has been made possible also by our continued development of a self-supporting ministry and by the introduction of changes in our styles of ministry and mission. Each of us provides for his own housing, so that we are no longer dependent on the Church for this; nor do we receive the well-known fringe benefits. Each receives a straight salary, just like any other one in Costa Rican society. At least 40 percent of our budget goes to support programs dealing with hunger, poverty and the poor. By 1976, when I will resign as bishop, we hope to become an autonomous Church, free to govern its own affairs and capable of supporting most of its work.

### **A Maverick Bishop**

During these years I have participated also, with other Christians in our Latin American continent, in various efforts to focus the attention of the Christian community to the issues and problems which the Third World faces. These problems must be the concern also of the Christian community in the rich and developed nations, such as the United States, which also encounter the same issues and problems with the poor and oppressed, the Third World, in their own midst. It is no mere coincidence that in both situations, the ones who suffer exploitation and

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Are we not called to follow the example of the Master of our lives? He stands for the poor, the sick, the lame, the imprisoned, the oppressed, the persecuted, and in His death and resurrection, makes us instruments of His liberating love.

---

oppression, poverty and hunger, are the non-Whites; and that those who enjoy prosperity and oppress are Whites.

I realize that because of my choice to stand with and for the oppressed, I am considered by many in my own Church and outside, a "radical," a "maverick Bishop." However, are we not called to follow the example of the Master of our lives? He stands for the poor, the sick, the lame, the imprisoned, the oppressed, the persecuted, and, in His death and resurrection, makes us instruments of His liberating love.

As I reflect upon my own life and ministry I realize that I have gone through a major metamorphosis in my view of things, in my thinking, in my concepts and attitudes. I can see now how the following experiences have turned me around from a defender of the status quo, to one

embracing the cause of liberation both in society and the Church.

- 1) My early youth, when I experienced what it was to be poor and lacking.
- 2) The summer I spent at the Ascension Church in Chicago, when I first had a close experience about, and felt the plight of, Puerto Ricans in the United States.
- 3) The summer which I spent in Kingsport, Tennessee, while a college student, at the invitation of the women of the Diocese of Tennessee whose "adopted son" I was at that time. There I lived with a family and worked daily at the local hospital as a janitor. That was the first time I earned a salary. My first traumatic experience took place when I went to a movie-theatre and was confronted with the dividing signs at the doors: BLACK this way, WHITE that way. Although I did not realize it at that time, that experience, together with others at the bus station and the bus itself, created a great turmoil inside me and the first signs of rebellion against the system.
- 4) At seminary, when I started dating a girl and was rejected by her parents because I was a Puerto Rican. It was at that time that I participated in a picket line for the first time, protesting discrimination at the Woolworth stores throughout the country.
- 5) At the Cathedral in San Juan, Puerto Rico, as a part of a pilot project which the diocese had started, when I initiated, with the assistance of US and PR volunteers, a summer project in one of the slums near-by. It was really then, when I had close contact with the urban poor, that I became sensitive about the colonial status of Puerto Rico and the exploitation it was suffering at the hand of North American business people. For the first time, I joined a political party opposed to the status quo. At the Cathedral, I also learned that Puerto Ricans, brown skinned, could not worship together with white Anglo-Saxons, although they were under the same roof. Each had its own rector, its own vestry, its own organist, its own secretary. I later learned, coming to Costa Rica, that this was typical of many other situations in Latin America, in which North Americans live in "compounds," segregated from the local population, not just as a matter of a "language problem," but because of attitudes of racism and superiority.
- 6) My first meeting in the House of Bishops took place

at Notre Dame, that controversial Special Convention. The plight of the Blacks and other ethnic groups brought to surface what I had personally experienced: racism and oppression in the household of God. How could anyone, with a sense of conscience and commitment to Christ, keep silent in the face of racism and oppression, not only in society, but in the Body of Christ! Our Church, through its missionary efforts throughout its history, had been ministering to Blacks, Puerto Ricans, Indians, and others, on the other side of the ocean. Here was that wounded, non-white neighbor on the other side of the street, yet we were acting as the Levite and the Priest in the parable of the Good Samaritan. It just did not make sense. Since then I have been trying to relate mission at home and abroad as one. We cannot be hypocrites in the name of Christ. He is the same at home and abroad.

---

J. Antonio Ramos: Episcopal Bishop of Costa Rica.

## Sober Second Thoughts . . .

The ethical questions raised by Bishop Ramos have long confronted the Christian community and press hard upon it today. We believe that the Gospel liberates humankind from all that fetters and debilitates, and that an unreserved outpouring of love and service is required of us on behalf of everyone, everywhere, in every way. This conviction, deeply held, can drive us to make strenuous efforts to reform or replace those structures of society which are often the cause of human misery. And this we will seek to do in addition to celebrating and proclaiming the Gospel by worship, word and personal service.

But it is no simple matter to make wise decisions about the complicated, perplexing and crucial issues of the day; and there is no easy ministry for those who engage in conflicts of power, which inevitably arise whenever systemic change is seriously sought. Partly for these reasons, and partly because "preaching the Gospel" by personal words and witness is itself so demanding, the Christian who is inspired to reform or replace ravaging structures is not likely to find strong support from the established and visible church. For it, the main thrust is usually like that urged by Pope Paul VI at the conclusion of the recent Synod of Bishops. In response to the Latin American Bishops who had pled for greater church



commitment to liberation movements, he said: "The totality of salvation is not to be confused with one or another aspect of liberation. . . Human advancement, social progress, are not to be excessively emphasized on a temporal level to the detriment of the essential meaning that evangelization has for the Church of Christ, the announcement of the good news".

This is a typical churchly response, affirmed by the Grahams and the Peales of the world. Rare exceptions occur: the World Council of Churches' support of controversial movements in Africa is one; the recent policy change in Church World Service may be another; and the short-lived General Convention Special Program, sponsored officially by the Episcopal Church, was a miraculous third while it lasted.

Bishop Ramos is chief pastor in a missionary diocese largely supported by the Episcopal Church. Is it realistic to expect that the missionary thrust of that church in Latin America will follow his lead and move toward a greater commitment to "the revolutionary process of liberation"? Not likely. For it is frequently true that the overseas missionary presence of the Episcopal Church, wherever it is, is even less committed, both theologically and practically, to Christian social change than the Episcopal Church in the States. Practical difficulties account for this to some extent, of course, for the Church's overseas personnel still includes American citizens, which rightly limits action. But in even the most indigenous overseas missions, the generalization holds true.

Our gallant brothers and sisters in Episcopal missions overseas often shame us by their faithfulness and zeal, by their loving, personal witness and service. But I find it difficult to imagine their responding wholeheartedly to Bishop Ramos' call to get involved and support the liberating process. In this respect, they are like the Episcopal Church at home.

**J. Brooke Mosley:** former deputy to the Presiding Bishop for overseas relations; currently assistant bishop, Diocese of Pennsylvania.

# Your Time Is Up!

by Henry Rightor

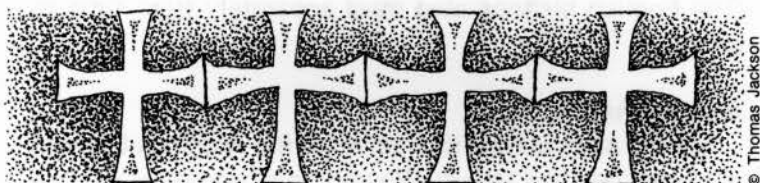
For ten minutes the black man had been speaking to all the members of General Convention, using the microphone he had taken away from the Presiding Bishop. Then, an official on the platform approached the speaker and said, "Your time is up." The black man replied, "*Your* time is up," and kept on speaking.

It was Labor Day weekend, 1969. The place was the Convention Hall on a University campus in South Bend, Indiana. The occasion was a plenary session on the second evening of the Special General Convention of the Episcopal Church in the United States of America.

A large group of black churchmen unexpectedly entered the hall during a scheduled program on "Ministry." Their guest, Muhammed Kenyatta, took the microphone from Bishop Hines, who was presiding. Bishop Hines made the best of a bad situation by asking all those who favored giving Mr. Kenyatta the floor for ten minutes to raise their hands. There was a scattering of raised hands and, without asking for the vote of those opposed, the Chairman announced that the vote had carried.

The purpose of this article is to consider the statement that was made by the Convention official and adopted as a reply by Mr. Kenyatta: "Your time is up." Who was right when each told the other that his time was up? Five years have passed, and it is now time to ask, "Whose time was up?" Could either voice have been the voice of true prophecy? And, if so, which voice spoke the truth?

I would suggest that both speakers may have been right. I mean by this that the outraged minorities and the outraged women and the outraged youth, all symbolized by Mr. Kenyatta, may never again be given any more time to speak to the Episcopal Church. Convention may not let them in again. I also mean that the Episcopal Church, symbolized by the Convention official, may never again be given any more time to minister to outraged minorities,



outraged women and outraged youth. They may have given up on the Church.

The South Bend Convention itself was an experiment. The Episcopal Church was experimenting in listening and ministering to groups that could never be formally represented in General Convention as it is presently structured. The South Bend experiment was undertaken because the preceding Convention, meeting in 1967 in Seattle, had been a sobering experience.

### **Listen to the World**

Just before the Seattle meeting the cities had been burning and the youth rebellions had been taking place. The Convention voted down any kind of proportional representation that might have given disaffected Episcopalians a formal voice and vote in its proceedings. While it was unwilling to undergo this kind of restructure, which would provide the Episcopal Church with representative government, the members of the Convention were troubled, nevertheless. So, in his valedictory as retiring President of Convention's House of Deputies at Seattle, Clifford P. Morehouse proclaimed that the Convention was "ready to listen to the world, hear what it says, and then to act."

"Work Groups" were set up as a substitute for representative government at the following South Bend Special Convention. The work groups were designed to provide places where bishops and deputies could all meet with Convention visitors and hear "other voices of people within the church — black, young, female, Indian, Latin" (*The Episcopalian*, October 1969, page 9). To insure the presence of "other voices," the Convention broke its precedent regarding the time and place of meeting. Instead of meeting during the busy season in the Fall, it met over the week of the long Labor Day weekend; and, instead of being located in Honolulu, or Miami Beach, or Seattle, it was held on the accessible, inexpensive Notre Dame University campus.

The result was that bishops and deputies heard and saw more of the visitors than they had bargained for. The visitors were not content with tidy work groups, and the black take-over of the plenary session the second evening was just a beginning. Later during the Convention a white grandmother from Michigan insisted on having the microphone in the House of Bishops and addressed that body. At another time a large group of young people, white and black, walked to the bottom of the gallery surrounding the House of Deputies which was in session; they stood silently with their backs to the Deputies to

protest the defeat of a resolution regarding "The Church as Sanctuary."

### **Consent of the Governed**

Looking back on the South Bend Convention, it is hard to understand the Convention's horrified reaction to the "other voices," which led to the hardening of an over-all, conservative position. We are citizens of a country that announced its birth by the Declaration of Independence. That document proclaimed that the authority of government lies in "the consent of the governed." This was not a platitude; it was a principle people died for in the American Revolution.

It should not have been surprising, therefore, that these "other voices" made themselves heard in an irregular way at South Bend. General Convention has consistently rejected any method of proportional representation that would permit Deputies to represent people in a "regular" way. The Convention is structured so that Deputies represent not people, but geographical entities, that is, dioceses. As a result, the Diocese of San Salvador with its 66 communicants has the same representation, the same number of votes in the House of Deputies, as the Diocese of Los Angeles with its 93,493 communicants.

By the same token it should not have been surprising to American citizens that 11 women were ordained to the priesthood in an irregular way last July in Philadelphia. Convention has consistently failed to approve opening the priesthood and episcopate to women. This has made certain bishops and their diocesan standing committees, who favor ordaining women to the priesthood, shy about exercising their autonomy and proceeding with such ordinations in a "regular" way. As a result, our priestly and episcopal orders are not representative of over half the members of the Body of Christ who are female.

It is not as though Anglican theology or tradition were unreceptive to representative government or representative orders. Staring at us across the Atlantic is the new General Synod of the Church of England. It is a comparatively small (500 plus) unicameral body, in which only diocesan bishops sit in the episcopal order, and clergy and laity are proportionally represented in their two orders according to the communicant strength of their dioceses. (The English bishops also meet separately from time to time.)

### **Across the Pacific**

Staring at us across the Pacific is the Anglican Diocese of Hong Kong and Macao. Women have been ordained to a

fruitful priesthood in that Diocese; and this has been without benefit of canonical or Prayer Book revision.

Why is it so difficult for the Deputies and Bishops in *our* Convention to countenance "other" voices and "other" ministries — that is, voices and ministries from their own? One explanation, that is both obvious and painful, is this: the power to control Convention is concentrated in only two persons and their principal appointees. They are the Presiding Officers of the two Houses and Chairpersons of the strategic Convention Committees, Joint Commissions, all of which they appoint under the existing Canons and the Rules of Order in both Houses.

Those who make up this small controlling group are committed, able, hard-working Christians. The fact remains, however, that they are also white, middle-aged, middle to upper-income males. To expect them to "think black" or "think young" or "think poor" or "think female" is expecting almost too much. The Vice President of the House of Deputies, Dr. Charles V. Willie, began to think both black *and* female this summer — and he resigned that office.

Until the composition of Convention is changed, it will be individuals, congregations and dioceses who must see to it that time is *not* up for the "other" voices and "other" ministries. Individuals, congregations and dioceses have enough autonomy to guarantee that time is given to those voices and ministries, NOW. Our calling to Christian mission and ministry demands it.

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**Henry Rightor:** teaches Canon Law as well as Pastoral Care at Virginia Theological Seminary.

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# How Long, O Lord?

by Arthur E. Walmsley

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*Shower musing, the other morning:* There's life in the old church yet. (This premature euphoria enhanced somewhat by the mellow hues on the trees we glimpsed out the window, the tang in the Fall air, and, not least of all, upbeat returns from the Every Member Canvass).

*Shower meditation verse, imperfectly remembered but here quoted correctly:* "Today we are sure: the risen Christ is preparing his people to become at one and the same time a contemplative people, thirsting for God; a people of justice, living the struggle of men and peoples exploited; a people of communion, where the non-believer also finds a creative place."

*Sober reality crowding in:* Headline read minutes later at breakfast, "BISHOPS CHARGED FOR ORDAINING WOMEN. Greenwich — Shortly after the conclusion of the two-day Episcopal Church Executive Council meeting at Seabury House here, it was learned that formal charges have been received against the four bishops who . . ."

Oh hell," we said, the wife and I, "here are people on all sides who are looking for reality in the Church, and we exhume the Inquisition."

Clem Welsh said in his excellent College of Preachers newsletter recently that "the preacher agonizes over the attempt to relate the Word and the world, and his effectiveness depends on the openness with which he exposes to the listener that internal struggle."

By that token, the Episcopal Church has a fierce effectiveness. We have a splendid ingenuity at washing dirty linen in public. The agony's there, all right. But in a tragic, poignant way, the question ceases to be whether we will join the issue of sexism, or whether women will be ordained priests (they will be, after Minneapolis, or *have* been, depending on one's stance); rather it becomes whether the structures of the Episcopal Church are not a quaint anachronism in a word full of agonies.

And that's enough to make even a bright October day feel like late November.



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## The Church's Untold Story

# Gerald Ford's Eccentric Conscience

by William Stringfellow

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Americans have become accustomed to Presidential theology.

A succession of Presidents — good ones and bad ones, those wise and those foolish, some honest and some deceptive, the competent and — perchance — the insane — have belabored the notion that their occupancy in the White House renders them especially proximate to God. Presidents warn us of the lonely agony of their decisions, as if only God is privy to them, to reinforce an argument that Presidential decisions have frightful and ultimate consequence but are, fortunately, righteous in God's sight. Presidents pronounce their opinions and publish their policies under divine imprimatur. They are, they assure us, up to nothing less than the will of God.

Probably all rulers suffer such delusions. Doubtless many people consider it no more than rhetorical license: a

grandiose, but harmless, hyperbole which Presidents, like emperors and similar potentates, including pontiffs, indulge, making an appearance of humility out of arrogance.

I do not think that Presidential theology is innocuous, either politically or theologically. Politically, it is an effectual way of stifling criticism or of defaming opponents or of suppressing intelligent participation of citizens in government. Theologically, it is, too often, a means by which mistruth of the most pernicious sort is given currency and credibility.

The gross example, recently, of strange doctrine in Presidential theology is found in Gerald Ford's excuse for the pardon of his predecessor. The objective in the matter, as the President has candidly acknowledged, was political — "to firmly shut and seal this box" — Watergate — despite the prematurity of a pardon before indictment of Richard Nixon. The theological rationalization for this preemption of due process of law was said by the President to be his conscience which, he avowed, is governed by "the laws of God" and is, thus, "superior" to the Constitution of the United States. As if to solemnize his act, the President publicly disclosed it straightway he came from the altar of St. John's Episcopal Church, across Lafayette from the White House, where he had received Holy Communion. An aide to Ford further emphasized that the President calculated his announcement at an hour when millions of Americans were also going to church. "He figured," according to Philip Buchen, the President's counsel, "this was a very solemn moment that exemplified an act of high mercy. It was appropriate that it should occur on a day when people have thoughts like that."

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*"Modes of production establish constraints with which humanity must come to terms, and the constraints of the industrial mode are peculiarly demanding. The rhythms of industrial production are not those of nature, nor are its necessary uniformities easily adapted to the varieties of human nature. While surely capable of being used for more humane purposes than we have seen hitherto, while no doubt capable of greater flexibility and much greater individual control, industrial production nonetheless confronts men with machines that embody "imperatives" if they are to be used at all, and these imperatives lead easily to the organization of work, of life, even of thought, in ways that accommodate men to machines rather than the much more difficult alternative."*

*from "AN INQUIRY INTO THE HUMAN PROSPECT" by Robert L. Heilbroner,  
W. W. Norton and Company, Inc.*

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## Whose Conscience?

In political terms, the pardon dispensation seems to me quite comprehensible, even though its legal status is controversial. But the theologizing of it issues in a doctrine of conscience that is astonishing and bizarre. That is most obvious when one recalls that Jerald terHorst resigned as Presidential press secretary simultaneously with the utterance of the pardon on grounds of conscience. Does the conflict between the dictates of the Ford conscience and the insight of the terHorst conscience mean that God is incoherent? Or does this mean that, as between Presidents and press secretaries, the perception of "the laws of God" which assertedly "govern" conscience is different in a basic sense — one right, the other wrong, with no way to figure out which is which? A similar issue arises when the Nixon pardon is juxtaposed to the Ford conditional amnesty scheme for war resisters. How can the President insist upon the clarity and preeminence of his conscience at the same time that he denies the validity of the same grounds for acting to those who opposed the war and the draft because of their consciences?

One clue to the answers to such questions as these may be the curious remark of President Ford, when he announced the pardon, that he believes "with all my heart and mind and spirit that I, not as President but as a humble servant of God, will receive justice without mercy if I fail to show mercy." According to the pietism of Gerald Ford, it is fear of the wrath of God which prompts conscience: guilt defines conscience! That is what explains the radically idiosyncratic character of Ford's doctrine of conscience. And in that belief, which I take to be unambiguously sincere on Ford's part, lies the classic heresy of white Anglo-Saxon Protestantism.

## A Greek Idea

The truth, in contrast, is that the concept of conscience is very seldom invoked in the biblical witness. It originates as a Greek — not a Christian — idea. In one of the few places the term is even used in the New Testament (it is not used at all in the Old Testament), Paul refers to it in his apologetic passages in First Corinthians concerning how not to offend the consciences of those who are not Christians. In Romans, Paul identifies conscience not as an equation for the will of God but, on the contrary, as the "conflicting thoughts" and as "the secrets of men" which will be judged by Christ Jesus. The most notable mention of conscience in the Bible occurs in the First Epistle of Peter where the meaning of baptism, as the sacrament of

the new and mature humanity of persons in Christ, is explicated. There conscience has no eccentric connotations, as it did for the Greeks and as it evidently does for Gerald Ford, but is an expression of the commonality of the baptized with the whole of humanity. There conscience does not mean a private, unilateral, self-serving, morally superior conclusion, but, rather, the freedom to transcend self for the sake of human life of one who is forgiven. In the biblical faith, conscience is not apprehension about God's wrath, but living in the trustworthiness of the judgment of God.

If Americans must hear the rhetoric of Presidential theology while suffering the political consequences of the pardon of Mr. Nixon, then President Ford is consigned to endure the political unpopularity of his decision with the advantage of conscience.

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William Stringfellow: author, social critic, attorney and theologian.

# Network Reports

## Roman Catholic Theologians Support Episcopal Women

One hundred and twelve Roman Catholic theologians and religious writers have signed a statement of support for the 11 women ordained to the priesthood on July 29 in Philadelphia.

The statement (*see October 13 issue*) expresses concurrence with the principle of women in the priesthood and says, "We are sensitive to the pain which has been suffered by these women and many others like them who have found their desire to respond to the call to the Christian ministry rebuffed by the official Churches."

The statement also asks the Roman Catholic Church to accept priesthood for women in the communion.

## Lawyers Meet To Discuss Eleven Women's Defense

A group of lawyers convened by William Stringfellow met on October 30 in New York City to review the legal defense of the 11 ordained women priests.

The lawyers discussed the possibility of civil suits which might be brought under various state non-discrimination statutes. "There's no great keenness to go into secular courts," Stringfellow said. "On the other

hand, lawyers have a responsibility to advise their clients about all possible ways of safeguarding their rights if the ecclesiastical courts are not sufficient."

Other methods of defense under debate were challenges to the tax-exempt status of the Church as well as to the General Convention's negative action on the ordination of women. The latter would involve the "one man, one vote" doctrine.

Lawyers attending the meeting were: Henry Rightor, Jr. Alexandria, Va.; Emmelyn Logan-Baldwin, Rochester, N.Y.; Arnold B. Kassabian, Annandale, Va.; Greer Lockhart, Minneapolis, Minn.; Frank Patton, New York City; Lillian Altree, Charlottesville, N.C.; Ellen Dressel-huis, Minneapolis; Robert Kendall, Philadelphia, Pa.; Henry Franzoni, Bloomfield, N.J.; Constance E. Cook, Ithaca, N.Y.; and John Ballard, Philadelphia.

Readers of *The Witness* are invited to submit reports on a wide variety of subjects and events looked at from many perspectives. Send reports to *The Witness/Network Reports*, 17187 Wildemere, Detroit, Michigan 48221.

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