

# The Standing Commission on Human Affairs and Health

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### A. MEMBERSHIP

The Rt. Rev. Willis R. Henton, *Chairman*, Alexandria, Louisiana  
 The Rt. Rev. John H. Burt, Cleveland, Ohio  
 The Rt. Rev. Calvin O. Schofield, Jr., Miami, Florida  
 The Rev. William A. Spurrier III, Cataumet, Massachusetts  
 The Very Rev. Joel W. Pugh, Little Rock, Arkansas  
 The Rev. Barbara H. Schlachter, White Plains, New York  
 Mrs. Richard Hawkins, Lafayette Hill, Pennsylvania  
 Dr. Anna H. Grant, Atlanta, Georgia  
 Dr. Edward L. Alpen, Berkeley, California  
 Dr. John T. Maltzberger, Belmont, Massachusetts  
 Dr. Elizabeth S. Russell, Mount Desert, Maine  
 Dr. Mari Duncombe, Fairbanks, Alaska

### B. SUMMARY OF THE COMMISSION'S WORK

The Commission met five times during the triennium—three times in Atlanta, Georgia, and twice in Alexandria, Virginia. One subcommittee met once in Austin, Texas. Some work was carried out by correspondence.

The resolutions contained in the two sections of the Commission's report—Human Affairs, and Health—had the unanimous support of the members of the Commission.

### C. FINANCIAL REPORT

Income	1980	1981	1982 (to 2/28)
Appropriated by the Convention	\$8,873.00	\$16,700.00	\$1,200.00

The Very Rev. Joel Pugh replaced the Rev. Thomas F. Pike, who resigned.  
 The Rev. Barbara Schlachter replaced the Very Rev. Urban T. Holmes, who died in 1981. Dean Holmes made a distinguished contribution to the Committee's work and his death is a great loss to the Church. May his soul rest in peace and may light perpetual shine upon him.

**Expenses**

Meetings and related expenses	\$8,873.00	\$ 9,176.59	\$5,657.69
<i>Balance in account, 2/28/82:</i>			<u>\$3,065.72.</u>

**D. REPORT ON HUMAN AFFAIRS**

*The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor; he hath sent me to heal the brokenhearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised, to preach the acceptable year of the Lord.*

—Luke 4:18-19

The central responsibility of the Standing Commission on Human Affairs and Health each triennium is to report, identify, and recommend appropriate responses for action to the General Convention of the Episcopal Church with respect to the current state of human affairs and health in this world for which Christ died.

It is with sadness that we must report that, during the past three years, the overall condition of the human race within this nation and throughout the world has deteriorated seriously. In many areas “crisis” is too mild a term to describe what we face at this hour of history.

Two potentially devastating possibilities now loom on the horizon of the global situation. One is the very real threat of world economic collapse, now the subject of increasing anxiety within the financial community. The other, the threat of thermonuclear war, is made more believable by the deepening struggle for economic advantage and the tensions rising over the likelihood of economic disaster. In fact, one feeds upon the other.

As the peculiarly 20th century problems of the prevailing transnational economy have developed, the chasm between rich and poor countries also has widened. With this has grown the tempo of legitimate rising aspirations among the world’s huge underclass of poor and oppressed people. The failure of the institutions of government and society (including the Church) to create new designs for distributive justice and peace has left these aspirations unsatisfied.

On the world scene it is distressing to point out:

- That the United States of America and the Soviet Union are feverishly preparing for nuclear wars, even as a dozen other nations move toward completion of their own atomic weapons. Driven by a sense of “manifest destiny” to be first, to be most influential, to have its own way in all important matters, to assert universal validity for its own social and economic credos, the two super-powers, each gathering such allies as it can, are on a collision course with each other, a collision in which there will only be losers.
- That what we had hoped would be “the century of the common man” has turned into the century of homeless persons. Today, more than 16 million men, women and children are displaced persons or refugees who have fled or been uprooted from their homelands. Some of these “uprooted peoples” have been persons displaced by wars in which the United States played a major role; others have fled from tyrannical regimes or have been identified as “surplus population,” folk who cannot be supported by the economies of their respective countries or otherwise considered “undesirable.” The traditional American hospitality towards refugees and

immigrants has cooled as this country again becomes a "country of first refuge."

- That food shortages, malnutrition, pollution, inadequate energy supplies, low standards of education, escalating crime and inadequate health services plague people on every continent. One condition contributes to *all* of these predicaments: the maldistribution of resources, resulting in a growing gap between rich and poor everywhere. While it is easy to blame "over-population", the data seems strongly to suggest that economic stability generally produces population stability. Thus, the distributive justice question becomes a first issue for Christians.

Within these United States, the state of "human affairs" reflects the world picture, made more tolerable only by our relative affluence. We see:

- That massive craters of unemployment have opened up all across the nation, especially in the Midwest and Eastern seaboard, once the industrial heartland of America. A large part of the decline, economists agree, can be attributed to lagging American industry and competitive position. Firms in this nation can no longer compete with foreign rivals. Our productivity growth has slowed to the lowest rate in the industrialized world. One principal cause of our decline has been the diversion of capital and significant research and development away from vital civilian industries. The productive resources necessary to modernize or otherwise maintain economic strength have either been exported abroad by multinational corporations, or siphoned off into wasteful arms production.
- That, for Black people especially, unemployment has become unequivocally the number one problem. Three times as many Blacks (34%) feel that joblessness rather than inflation (11%) is their most serious problem. Contrary to the popular belief that the Black unemployment crisis is primarily among Black youth (though 49% of Black teenagers seeking jobs are unemployed), joblessness among Black household heads is 27% — three times the U.S. Labor Department jobless rate of 9.5%.
- That the scourge of "racism" persists — affecting Hispanic, Native American and other ethnic groups, as well as Black people. In many school systems, racially separate attendance patterns and exclusionary practices still exist. The new leadership of the U.S. Department of Justice announces it will no longer support court-ordered racial desegregation of schools if that requires housing. In most metropolitan areas, there is still a firm division of the races within cities and suburbs with respect to housing. Law enforcement methods commonly bear down more heavily on people of minority races.
- That civil liberties are being eroded on a broad front. The Ku Klux Klan is gaining new strength in a number of states. Jewish houses of worship are fire-bombed and Jewish cemeteries desecrated. In schools across the country, censorship has reached epidemic proportions. Arsonists attack abortion clinics. A new breed of angry, militant "right wing" groups, often with the Bible in hand, emerge better organized, better financed, and far more sophisticated than any of their predecessors.
- That, for the first time in American history, the federal government has cut billions of dollars in benefits for the poor. Thirty-two billion dollars have been slashed from food stamps, nutrition programs, rent subsidies, and employment opportunities. And, as a result, the poor have become poorer. The figures are staggering. There are 25 percent fewer benefits for 900,000 low-income, disabled, and elderly persons. One-and-a-quarter million handicapped persons have had their opportunities lessened. The 1982 federal budget constitutes a massive transfer of resources from the poor to the wealthy.

- That a double standard has emerged in which we Americans find our country deploring oppression and death in Eastern bloc countries of Europe such as Poland, while shipping arms and financial assistance to countries such as El Salvador, Guatemala, and Argentina where tens of thousands have perished or disappeared at the hands of oppression. This selective righteousness is another indicator of the moral torpor and corruption into which national leadership has sunk.
- That an inevitable accompaniment to these economic and social trends cited above is a tragic destabilization in personal, family, and community life. In human terms, where large scale structural unemployment accelerates, the loss measured by divorce, alcoholism, wife and child abuse often reaches calamitous levels. During a five-year period in one industrial area, the number of broken homes increased from 15% to 30% — a development which coincided roughly with the deterioration of work opportunities in that community. Today in the U.S.A., forty percent of all marriages end in divorce. And the number of unstable and unhappy homes — and homes in which there is no peace, understanding, and love — force one to conclude that most families today are in dire need of help. Values that once seemed to assure stability and happiness are now seriously questioned. Some people say the family is in trouble so deep and so pervasive as to threaten the future of the nation. Others say this is a time of difficult transition to new forms of more healthy family constellations.
- That women especially find themselves compromised by the economic milieu. A third of the women who work in this country are the sole supporters of their families, yet for every dollar working men earn, working women earn only 59¢. Indeed, the average working woman earns under \$12,000, barely enough to pay for her increased rent and the skyrocketing prices of food and clothing. And when old age comes, 90% of women in private industry retire with no pension (those with a pension get an average of \$80 per month). The grim outlook for younger women still at work is that one in four can look forward to living in poverty in her older years.

These realities, and others by the dozen which can be cited, remind us that at home and abroad we find ourselves in a period of major social disintegration. An underlying reason for the crisis is that the resources of this small planet are being stretched to their limits. Until now, we have built our society on the assumption that these resources were generally inexhaustible. Coupled with this has been a curious “cut back” in emphasis on and funding for research, as well as a selfish resistance to measures which might distribute more equitably such resources as we have. The “exploitive philosophy” which heretofore has undergirded the way we have developed our American economic style of life simply cannot now deal with the new reality of limitation. As a result and out of fear, we drive ourselves to spend more than half our allocable public monies to increase the military arsenal in a vain hope that through our armed might we can somehow hang on to what we already have and guarantee for ourselves continuing access to other parts of the world for those things we believe we need.

Paradoxically, by constructing the most sophisticated and expensive weapons of war the world has ever known, we are only further undermining our faltering economy and escalating the prospects for human annihilation on an unbelievable scale. Competent studies demonstrate that a dollar spent on arms production creates an essentially useless item which, in turn, does not thereby stimulate further economic development the way a dollar spent on civilian goods does. Thus, our missile, or our neutron bomb, serves to stifle our domestic economy even as it multiplies the danger of a way that could very well end all human life on the planet.

Within our own country, a wave of plant shutdowns and the retraction of major sectors of American industry are sweeping the nation, thereby constituting the worst threat to the economic welfare of this country in a hundred years. At stake are the gains won by labor through hard and often bloody struggle during that hundred years period. Also at stake is a growing, marginalized population of poor and minority people, who often have no work, or must work in a non-union atmosphere at inadequate wage levels. The threat is not only economic but moral as well. Decisions made by corporations to close down or suddenly relocate can destroy a community's productive life and bring tragedy to families. They are, thus, ethically unacceptable without some prior attention to community impact. Often their justification on grounds of necessity, reason, and logic is a false ground serving only the narrow self-interest of those who preserve power and wealth through their disregard of the common good. Through business mergers and acquisitions, a growing centralization and concentration of power in the corporate and financial community make democratic processes virtually irrelevant in many places. In this context, the public interest becomes increasingly vulnerable to the symbols of authoritarianism, whether of the left or the right.

Many American towns now show the tragic results of these developments. Public schools cut quality programs and still run out of funds; city governments teeter on bankruptcy; public transportation falters; juvenile delinquency rises at an alarming rate; stores on main street become vacant; the potholes in our streets multiply. The problems are so great that even community leaders, formerly effective, feel powerless to act. Beyond that, people lose hope in the major institutions of government, business, labor, education. Leadership everywhere becomes suspect, even in church! Self-interest and apathy have become the two poles of public life.

Viewing the scene theologically, we are in a time of spiritual decay, despite the popularity of cults and much of the religious "born again" talk. Material wealth and military superiority have become the "gods" that really motivate us, for they speak more loudly to our basic insecurities than the good news of the gospel. Even our professed high value for human life often appears more like rhetoric than reality when we exhibit our contentment with urban wastelands, our passion for more nuclear weaponry, our willingness to let our schools decay, and our insensitivity to hungry people in underdeveloped lands.

Are we only to assume that it is simply "hardness of heart" that allows us to accept a global economic system which starves little children and consigns one billion people to grinding poverty?

#### **Where is our hope?**

*Therefore, if anyone be in Christ, he is a new creature; old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new. And all things are of God who hath reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ, and hath given us to the ministry of reconciliation.*  
—II Corinthians 5:17-18

At this moment in history, we who are Christ's church, gathered in local congregations all across the nation, cannot avoid entering into a struggle with the principalities and powers and rulers of darkness which dominate the human condition. Beset on every side, from both within and without, the church remains a place of freedom both to struggle and to celebrate the struggle. The space to struggle is created by the action of God in history and by the faithfulness of our response, as faltering as it may appear to ourselves and to others.

Though our moment in history is not a peaceful one, we are being called to account for those actions, conscious or unconscious, in which we have not been faithful to our

stewardship of the created world — which has been entrusted to our care. We are called to confess that we are in many ways slaves to economic systems which we trusted would create a heaven on earth. We have forgotten that our help is in the Lord; yet in our fearfulness we have polluted, destroyed, and allowed to be corrupted by our sin the glories of God's handiwork.

Nevertheless, in all our uncertainty, unfaithfulness, and confusion, out of our struggle to realize God's purpose, good things can come, have come. Out of our struggle has come, hesitantly, imperfectly, but in fact, a revised liturgy that speaks to us afresh in contemporary language of the continuation of the acts of God. Again, haltingly, but honestly and in fact, the equality of women before God has been lifted up in a new understanding of lay ministry and in new provisions within our ordination canon. Age-old themes of domination and superiority are being challenged. Beyond that and in the midst of our struggles, we have seized opportunities to reach across boundaries and to speak with and experience the life and witness of our brothers and sisters of other nations and other faiths. Our Anglican and ecumenical ties are stronger now than at any other time in recent history, and we are living more closely with all the inhabitants of this global village. So we observe, not proudly but gratefully, that in our best moments, with God's grace, we have on occasion borne remarkable witness to the cause of justice and human dignity in this beleaguered world.

By way of illustration we recall:

- That in 1963, itinerant farm workers, for many years recipients of a fine social service ministry by the churches, suddenly challenged the major denominations to help them acquire the skills that would enable them to win justice and human dignity for themselves. In response to their request, the National Farm Worker Ministry, sponsored ecumenically by the major communions, including the Episcopal Church, assisted Cesar Chavez and his Hispanic colleagues to master the techniques of labor organization. The United Farm Workers of America is a direct result of that training. Higher wages and a part in the decision-making process which affects their lives are now available to most grape workers and lettuce farm hands in California.
- That in 1980 the churches of America resettled more refugees than in any other year in history (with Episcopal churchpeople handling the largest number among the major communions comprising Church World Service).
- That in the 1960s, when it became apparent that American corporate investment in South Africa was bolstering the apartheid policy of that government, several major national denominations, including the Episcopal Church and despite criticism from many in our own constituency, joined together to raise a common voice of protest in stockholder meetings of selected American industries and banks. Later on, corporate policies in other social issues came to be scrutinized — fair employment policies, war/peace issues, infant formula, and sexism, to name four. Today the Interfaith Center for Corporate Responsibility, a direct result of those early efforts, not only advises churches but counsels universities, pension plans, and other investors willing to listen, on responsible stewardship.
- That in 1977 when the Lykes Corporation, owner of the Youngstown Sheet and Tube steel company, closed down with scant advance notice their largest mill, thereby ending employment for 4200 workers, an Ecumenical Coalition of the Mahoning Valley was convened to help the Youngstown community find an appropriate response to its impending disaster. While the Coalition plan was never finally embraced by the federal government, the concept of a worker-owned and operated plant, producing at a profit, was offered as a way a community can regain

some measure of control from industrial conglomerates over the economic future of their city. And today there are over one thousand worker-community owned businesses operating at a profit across America.

Yes, the churches can make a difference.

### The vision

In such a time as this, then, there is a renewed need for Christians to take the lead in holding up before society a great new social vision. When confusions and uncertainty abound, the future surely belongs to those who can see and embrace such a vision.

By a "new social vision," we mean a new understanding of how men and women can live and relate to one another through community in love, in justice, and in joy.

Our vision must encompass our social, economic, political, sexual, and family relations. It must have the capacity both to change personal lives and to generate new social and institutional patterns. And where else can these successfully grow than from religious roots?

The changes we need, both in our personal lives and in the social order, have to do with our most basic value assumptions, with questions of ultimate reality and authority in our lives — questions like: Whose world is this anyhow? What does God really expect us to do with our lives? What is more important, people or things? Questions like these have to do with our spiritual and religious assumptions.

Visions rooted merely in secular ideology — national patriotism, economic theories, and the like — will not be enough, though we find it fruitful to cooperate with secular allies willing to work with us. In history, major social transformation has for the most part grown out of religious revival and spiritual awakening — the Mayflower Compact, the abolition movement, the civil rights struggle of the 60s, the drive to end our involvement in the Vietnam war. Every one of these began as a prophetic vision of what God intends. The renewal of faith more than the spread of ideology has been the catalyst for change.

There is, we believe, the mandate in Christian faith for providing such a vision through our life together in the Church. Here and there we can already see Christians trying to live out biblical economics, as a system based on competition is transformed by them into a system based on sharing. Indeed, some Christians have found that living at a fraction of the average American lifestyle can become a natural way of life, as compassion takes root in community life. Christians can become (as indeed some among us already are) clear and credible voices advocating for the poor and challenging the arrangements of wealth and power which oppress the poor and diminish us all.

Can we not envision congregations individually and in ecumenical clusters which can respond by witnessing to the urgency of peace in the face of the danger of nuclear war? Only those who are able to find their security elsewhere (as Christians find it in their God) can help the fearful learn less destructive ways of resolving conflict. In communities of faith, where the war system has been renounced as spiritually idolatrous and politically suicidal, concrete initiations are emerging to "beat swords into plowshares."

Social disintegration should not simply be viewed with despair. It can be, in fact, a sign of hope, when people lose their idolatrous belief in the current values being honored in the marketplace. It is only when disintegration leads to despair that our society is in danger.

Biblical hope, as we understand it, comes from having a vision of the future which enables us to live even now in its promise. It is hope not simply limited to a better life in the next world, but it is born of the possibility of living differently in this one. And the living demonstration of this hope was, of course, Jesus of Nazareth, bone of our bone, flesh

of our flesh, yet God's chosen instrument through the cross and resurrection to demonstrate the validity of that hope.

### Some things we can do

We now make several specific suggestions that can be done in dioceses and in congregations to enable young people and adults of the Church to make real this vision:

1. *We can challenge people to dig beneath the symptoms of poverty, racism, and other forms of injustice to expose and to understand the causes of dehumanization in the social systems of our time.* This should be not only an important educational experience but should also issue in concrete action "in the town where you live." The inner cities and rural poverty pockets of our nation are populated by victims of our economic systems. They are the unemployed, the under-employed, the powerless, and the exploited. Many of these people suffer from cultural and linguistic alienation. They feel devalued. The image of God which we as Christians believe is in them is violated. An Episcopal Church which will not unmask and challenge the forces which devalue human life is not an institution that will be taken seriously in the future of American society. Here is a task for every adult forum, for every parochial organization, Bible study group, work party, ecumenical conversation.

2. *The theological principle of Incarnation (God present in the flesh) must be the "modus operandi" for any diocesan or parish response in human affairs.* The Church must belong to the people it seeks to serve. Even the people who never come inside the church building to worship must feel that the Church is their sanctuary, ally, friend, co-worker in the struggle for human justice. A servant Church must be unashamedly *for the poor*. It must listen to and must be directed by the voice of the Lord as expressed by the poor. This means quite literally that the Church in the persons of both its clergy and laity should be present in a new way by visiting those in prison, meeting with civic reform groups, spending time in unemployment offices, experiencing what it means to live on a welfare subsistence budget, so that the taste, touch, feel, and resulting pain of poverty and oppression can take on reality.

3. *The Church should identify with the movement for community organization in cities, towns, and countryside, initiating where no movement exists. Available funds for a serving ministry should be channeled to appropriate indigenous community organization movements, in addition to being used in private and church-run social service agencies.* However important social service may be, it is not effective enough for making today's major Christian witness. Social service can often simply involve something done for the recipient, ministering to effects rather than to causes, and demeaning persons in the process. It may even make the one served dependent. The Christian task is to enable men and women to take charge of their own destiny, to fight their own battles, with the church standing by their side as the enabler, ally, and advocate.

4. *We should press for the creation at local, diocesan, and national Church levels of a process through which clergy and laity can address:*

- The social effects of Church investment policy.
- The escalating curtailment by government of human service programs in order to indulge in the arms race.
- The crippling effect on cities of massive capital withdrawal and the departure of industrial production to areas where wages are sub-standard and working conditions are more susceptible to exploitation.

5. *Through the weekly liturgy, in all our preaching, in our prophetic and pastoral ministry to people in power, and, most of all, in our life together in local parishes, the*

*gospel proclamation of the sacredness and essential unity of all human life on earth must be a constant theme.* No better has this been said than by the world assembly of Anglican Bishops at Lambeth in 1968:

“The Church meets men and women in their need on the biblical basis of solidarity of the human race, both in sin and in hope. We find our true identity in Jesus Christ and with one another in Him. It is in this faith that we approach such problems as race, want, and conflict.”

### **Actions recommended to the General Convention**

As a way of mobilizing the concern of our people for the need of moral criteria in the reindustrialization decisions by government, private corporations, and unions, we recommend:

#### **Resolution #A—58.**

A resolution on moral criteria in reindustrialization decisions.

*Whereas*, the earth is the Lord’s creation and we are called to be stewards of that creation; and

*Whereas*, Christ’s great commandments call us to love our neighbor as ourselves; and

*Whereas*, major industrial shifts in these United States are causing widespread unemployment and the visitation of economic crisis in many communities; therefore be it

*Resolved*, the House of \_\_\_\_\_ concurring, That this 67th General Convention of the Episcopal Church recommends to government, private corporations, and unions the following criteria for economic decisions and laws involving reindustrialization plans:

1. That such decisions take into consideration the common good of the community measured by whether the decisions:
  - a. Serve the goal of optimal employment for people;
  - b. Maintain wage and salary standards for all employees;
  - c. Support practices of collective bargaining;
  - d. Contribute to the stability of affected communities; and
2. That such decisions take into consideration long-range as well as short-range consequences, including whether the decisions:
  - a. Strengthen the existing industrial base or replace it with a substantial and equivalent alternative;
  - b. Contribute to the rational use of the industrial potential of workers in the affected community;
  - c. Make efficient use of increasingly scarce resources such as air, water, land, ores, minerals — particularly the non-renewable resources; and
3. That such decisions avoid increasing the concentration of power and wealth as is consistent with both biblical teachings about justice and American democratic traditions; and be it further

*Resolved*,

1. That each congregation of this Church be encouraged to undertake serious discussion of economic decisions by government, private corporations, and unions with respect to the above criteria, drawing upon the theological resources of Christian faith and the integrity of biblical teaching about justice; and
2. That the Secretary of this Convention is instructed to send copies of this Resolution

to the President of the United States and to appropriate members of the Administration, including the Secretaries of Commerce and Labor; to the president of the AFL-CIO and other appropriate labor officials; and to the presidents of the United States Chamber of Commerce and the National Association of Manufacturers; and

3. That the Bishops of the several dioceses be requested to send copies of this Resolution to selected company presidents and labor leaders residing in their jurisdictions; and

4. That the Standing Commission on Human Affairs and Health, working in cooperation with the Church Center staff, make a fact-finding inquiry among dioceses and their congregations concerning the issues and perceptions which arise from discussion about the reindustrialization process, with the aim of presenting the results to the next Convention of this Church.

As a way of mobilizing the concern of our people for the need to turn away from the insanity of the present arms race, not only for the sake of human survival on the planet but, also, in order to relieve destructive economic burdens being presently placed upon our people, we suggest:

**Resolution #A—59.**

A resolution opposing the arms race.

*Whereas*, the unprecedented horror of a nuclear holocaust is universally acknowledged; and

*Whereas*, the current emphasis on military production is seriously eroding our national economic, technological, and human resources from the pressing needs of our society, while adding to inflation and unemployment, by creating fewer jobs than would be created by the same amount of money invested in the civilian sector; and

*Whereas*, it is manifestly the poor, among whom our Lord chose to be born and to whom he chooses to send us, who suffer most grievously from this diversion of national resources; and

*Whereas*, the fallacy of the idea that more arms means more security leads us to place our reliance, not upon our God and the gifts of life and creation, but upon the gods of technology and destruction; therefore, be it

**Resolved**, the House of \_\_\_\_\_ concurring, That this 67th General Convention of the Episcopal Church calls upon the United States of America and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, and all other nuclear powers, to adopt an immediate mutual freeze on all further testing, production, and deployment of nuclear weapons and of aircraft and missiles designed primarily to deliver nuclear weapons; and be it further

**Resolved**, That the Secretary of this Convention be directed to send copies of this Resolution to the President of the United States and to the President of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics.

In addition to proposing the resolution above, we feel it imperative to address also the climate in our society which continues to undergird the appetite for the arms race. Policy-makers attempt to frighten the public with such phrases as “window of vulnerability.” In addition, we find ourselves victims of patriotic slogans which minimize the destructive character of modern war. Bloodshed gets depersonalized when the Pentagon estimates the number of people killed as “collateral damage” — which, in turn, may be “fairly extensive” or “limited” or even “tolerable.” From this it becomes an easy step to think of warfare in antiseptic language. For these and other reasons, we believe the leadership of our Church should take steps to organize the vast unorganized human protest against the steady build-up of the “war mentality” by proposing:

**Resolution #A—60.**

A resolution calling a joint action conference on the arms race.

*Whereas*, we applaud the Presiding Bishop's sermon of last Advent in the National Cathedral, when he warned against the danger of nuclear war, and applaud the House of Bishops for issuing their October 1981 Pastoral Letter, "Apocalypse and Hope," which also warns against the arms race; and

*Whereas*, we also applaud the efforts of many Episcopalians, individuals and groups, to restrain the arms race through seeking cooperation and alliances with other religious and secular movements; and

*Whereas*, several other large groups and important persons have recently made strong statements against the nuclear arms race, warning of its catastrophic dangers; and

*Whereas*, in spite of all these laudable efforts, there continues to be an urgent need for a more coordinated and efficient effort if our society is to make any significant restraint on the arms race; therefore, be it

**Resolved**, the House of \_\_\_\_\_ concurring, That this 67th General Convention of the Episcopal Church authorizes and requests the Presiding Bishop, aided by representative lay and clergy aides of his choice, to call for and seek out a Joint Action Conference with Protestant, Orthodox, Roman Catholic, and Jewish leaders, together with groups of scientists, physicians, labor leaders, educators, and other like-concerned groups, in order that from such a Conference may come more cooperative and effective action towards changing nuclear and other arms policies, both here and abroad.

It is often necessary to remind ourselves that we, as Christians, should be "agents of change" in a world like ours which is dominated by huge social forces. The powerful persons who direct these social forces are not necessarily more evil than the rest of us. But the structures, systems, and institutions they govern often manifest sin in a special, corporate way. Moreover, this sin is usually and plausibly dressed in socially acceptable clothes — "Higher standard of living", "Don't blame me, I don't make policy; I only follow orders", "It's good for the stockholders . . . for national defense . . . for the workers . . . for freedom's sake," etc. In order to challenge this kind of structured injustice and sin, we recommend:

**Resolution #A—61.**

A resolution on empowerment.

*Whereas*, many of the forces making for social disintegration today, both at home and abroad, are the result of large systems — economic, political, cultural and racial — which are usually beyond the personal control of individuals, however altruistic, to alter very significantly; and

*Whereas*, leaders within those systems, even those with deep personal piety, are often so wedded to those systems that they are either blinded to the injustice they unwittingly wreak or feel powerless to correct the injustice when they do perceive it; and

*Whereas*, pious resolutions, forceful sermons, and even protest demonstrations by church people, though they may illumine the dread aspects of those systems, do not usually of themselves persuade the decision-makers in the systems to alter the disintegrative effect of that which they do; therefore be it

**Resolved**, the House of \_\_\_\_\_ concurring, That this 67th General Convention of the Episcopal Church encourages the formation by its clergy and laity of Coalitions which, acting always in consonance with the spirit of Jesus and under obedience to the

teachings of the New Testament, will have the purpose of effecting change in those power structures of society which dehumanize life for God's people; and be it further

*Resolved*, that such Coalitions be committed to a non-violent style and be encouraged to risk dramatic ways, including political and economic action where appropriate, to raise a biblically aroused social conscience; and be it further

*Resolved*, that such Coalitions, whenever possible, be ecumenical and open to alliances with secular coalitions.

Because there are many signs that the battle against "racism" at home and abroad shows evidence of faltering, we recommend that high priority be given to the following:

**Resolution #A—62.**

A resolution on racism.

*Whereas*, Racism, the most corrosive scourge of modern civilization, gives every sign of resurgence at this period of history, both at home and overseas; and

*Whereas*, the "colored" minorities, and other economically oppressed groups around the world, are expressing impatience with inequality, disadvantage, and denial; and

*Whereas*, Holy Scripture reminds us that "God . . . hath made of one blood all nations of people to dwell on the face of the earth" (*Acts 17:26*) and that "there is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for you are all one in Christ Jesus" (*Galatians 4:28*); and

*Whereas*, previous sessions of the General Convention have on frequent occasions called the clergy and lay people of this Church to eradicate the divisions of race both in our ecclesial fellowship and in society at large; therefore, be it

*Resolved*, the House of \_\_\_\_\_ concurring, That this 67th General Convention of the Episcopal Church request every diocese and local congregation to create a Special Committee on Racism, with assisting material to be provided by the staff of the Episcopal Church Center, in order to demonstrate to the world that the promise of America is no longer a nightmare for some, but a viable dream for all. The initial agenda for each Committee might include:

1. To study, identify, and confront the root cause of racism in all people, systems, and institutions; to produce educational programs and to advocate economic and political reforms;

2. To lend support for truly desegregated communities, schools, and houses of worship;

3. To apply a collective imagination for the creation of new jobs, including training programs in job skills and work discipline that are characterized by equality of opportunity — from the base to the zenith of the employment ladder;

4. To encourage, recruit, and deploy minority people in all professions on a non-discriminatory basis.

In light of the appalling tragedy which continues to unfold on nearly every continent as refugees clog highways seeking relief from "man's inhumanity to man," we recommend passage of the following:

**Resolution #A—63.**

A resolution on relief for refugees.

*Whereas*, the earth is the Lord's, created by Him and entrusted to all his people to be enjoyed equally; and

*Whereas*, Christians understand that they have a special responsibility to work for a world in which God's plenty is shared by all; and

*Whereas*, there are today sixteen million refugees, many of them displaced by wars in which the United States has played a major role; and

*Whereas*, present American policy politicizes the plight of refugees, welcoming some and rejecting others — as in the case of Southeast Asians who are welcomed to these shores and Haitians who are not; and

*Whereas*, all mankind lives in an interdependent global neighborhood, and achievement of decent lives for people in many regions of the world will require extensive developmental aid from more fortunate areas, particularly the United States; and

*Whereas*, during the last triennium, congregations of the Episcopal Church throughout America have resettled a record number of refugees, aided in this process by the excellent staff of the Presiding Bishop's Fund for World Relief and the ecumenical offices of Church World Service; therefore, be it

*Resolved*, the House of \_\_\_\_\_ concurring, That this 67th General Convention of the Episcopal Church commends the Presiding Bishop's Fund and Church World Service for their leadership in facilitating the resettlement of refugees and for promoting a United States refugee and immigration policy which in principle and implementation opposes any discrimination on the basis of race, religion, geography, nationality or language; and be it further

*Resolved*, that this Convention calls upon the Clergy and Laypersons in our dioceses and local congregations to encourage in their several communities a freer acceptance of refugees, especially in areas of high employment potential or other feasible places; and be it further

*Resolved*, that this Convention urges the President of the United States and the Congress to welcome by a uniform federal code to our shores refugees and immigrants in proportion as our nation is able to provide shelter and sustenance, without discrimination as to race, geographic origin, or nationality; and be it further

*Resolved*, that this Convention recognize that future refugee problems cannot disappear without active work for the improvement of the quality of life in developing countries, and, therefore, urge enlarged support for long-term developmental programs within Third World countries; and be it further

*Resolved*, that this Convention urges the President and the Congress to adopt policies that will grant permanent resident status to overstayed/undocumented persons who have resided in the United States for a definite and reasonable period of time and have come here because of political and economic stress.

## E. REPORT ON HEALTH

### Advancing Medical Technology and Reproduction

The last two to three decades have encompassed the beginnings of a true revolution in the control and regulation of human reproduction. Part of this revolution finds its roots in social change: the Supreme Court rulings on abortion, the awakening spirit of independence of the womens' movement, and the dramatically changing sexual mores of our times. But, for the moment, setting aside the social issues, medical technology and biomedical research advances have provided us with enormously powerful new tools to modulate, terminate, promote, and prevent the processes of conception and intrauterine

development. Furthermore, we have new tools to inform us of the "state" of the fetus; its developmental health and welfare; its gender; its likelihood to grow to adulthood without the development of genetically determined disease. These developments are only the heralds of more to come. This century will most likely see the development of means for the complete extracorporeal maintenance of the developing fetus. Manipulation of the genetic content of the germ cell is also not far beyond our present day grasp.

All of these developments carry with them the need for concurrent healthy development of theological, moral, and sociological insights and positions that permit us to apply this knowledge freely given by God in such a way that we fully protect those who cannot protect themselves and assure that the long-range effects on the future of mankind are fully understood, and, in particular, that we do not offend or destroy individual dignity and values.

Of the many new method procedures, the Commission chooses to address those that are already in widespread use in medicine. We list the following as needing immediate consideration from our point of view:

1. Birth control.
2. Abortion.
3. Prenatal diagnosis.
4. Artificial insemination.
5. "In vitro" fertilization.

Before discussing each of these issues separately, it's worthwhile to address some general considerations about all such techniques which can modify the reproduction process.

The priceless gift of God to man, the capacity to begin anew the life process, and to protect and nurture the child to beginning newness of life, is such an overwhelmingly awe-inspiring gift that a decision to interfere or alter the process cannot be entered into lightly. We suggest that careful and prayerful examination of motives and intentions are necessary to assure that man's intentions can and do submit to those of God. Repeatedly in recent writings, there is reference to the present environment of narcissistic individualism and "self love" as a replacement for altruistic Christian love.

In each of our individual decisions affecting the process of conception, development, and birth, one should prayerfully and thoughtfully consider one's intentions, one's motives, and one's values. The guidance of trusted counselors is essential to assure oneself that the chosen course can be tested against God's commandments and man's ethical values.

### **1. Birth control**

The Lambeth Conference in 1958, dealing with the family in contemporary society, reaffirmed the acceptability of usual methods for prevention of conception, ruling out only one-sided (unilateral) denial of intercourse and coitus interruptus as acceptable methods. These positions were reaffirmed in the 1968 report of the Lambeth Conference.

The methods of control of conception are now far advanced, and we will see even further developments in future years. Chemical control of male fertility is already a near reality. This Commission finds little cause for moral or theological concern in the utilization of contraception methods that are used under the general rubrics laid out above. That is to say, have the decisions to undertake contraception been lightly and selfishly made, or have the decisions been the result of prayerful, thoughtful consideration centered upon the needs of all concerned? Are the use of these devices and drugs for manipulative or exploitative purposes?

## 2. Abortion

The issue of termination of the intrauterine existence of the embryo or the fetus has been the subject of enormous emotional and political controversy over the last decade. One sees the argument from the anti-abortion side as the struggle of those who would save life against those who would take life. From the other side, one sees the argument as the struggle for the right of self-determination against those who would oppress and dictate the reproductive life of the prospective mother. It seems to us that neither extreme is defensible or rational. The Church has stated its position, at the 1976 General Convention, on termination of fetal existence. It is an enormously weighty action, not to be centered upon lightly. The decision to proceed should again be the result of prayerful request for the guidance and support of God in the examination of his intentions for us. Assuming such effective examination of the issues, one can hope for a decision that one must, perforce, live with for a lifetime, while at the same time minimizing one's sense of guilt and loss. But of equally forceful weight is the consideration that *not* to proceed with abortion in the face of incontrovertible evidence of severe fetal abnormality is to deny reality and to bring upon the parents and child an enormous price in pain and emotional suffering.

## 3. Prenatal diagnosis

The techniques of prenatal diagnosis are in a stage of almost explosive development. The Commission originally thought about this issue only in terms of amniocentesis, the procedure which permits collection of small amounts of amniotic fluid for diagnostic information about the fetus. However, it is clear that a wide battery of new tests facilitate the collection of fetal diagnostic data. These tests range from examination of fetal blood and skin, amniotic fluid culture, direct visual examination of the fetus, and external procedures such as ultrasound. Other advanced experimental procedures are merely "waiting in the wings" for further development.

It is estimated by many qualified experts that we can now diagnose over 70 conditions of fetal abnormality, ranging from the trivial to the extreme. Not the least of these determinations that can now be done with facility is prenatal determination of the gender of the prospective offspring.

What ethical and moral questions face us, given the enormous armamentarium of newly acquired skills and techniques? Only time and trial will allow an explicit answer to this question; but certainly the boundaries of the problem, however blurred, are starting to emerge.

The first, and clearly most troubling, problem to present itself is the use of information derived from such techniques for the termination of fetal life, based on what might be called trivial or self-serving needs. The extreme example might be the determination of fetal gender with the purpose of parent selection of outcome. More bluntly put, should these methods in combination with abortion be used in "family gender planning"? Some might say this will never happen; but we suggest that, if a market exists, the need will be filled. There is more than adequate evidence that such gender selection procedures are already in use, as documented in recent writings. The point is made that prenatal diagnosis information will range from detection of trivial abnormalities, or suspected abnormalities, to the most extreme of physical abnormalities and life-threatening diseases. One class of diagnoses which will provide truly troubling bases for decision-making are those diagnoses which indicate, by chromosomal or biochemical markers, the *possibility* that a trait or a disease may develop later in life. What decision path should prospective parents choose if, for example, there is a test which indicates the likelihood of diabetes in later life? Furthermore, often unsubstantiated claims are made that certain chromosomal irregularities may produce faulty offspring. A present example

of such a claim is that the existence of the so-called "supermale" chromosomal abnormality may be associated with latent criminality or aggressiveness. Many of these claims later prove to be totally without basis, and yet may continue to be the grounds for an abortion.

The medical scientists responsible for the advances we are discussing are to be lauded, not condemned, for developing these procedures of great value. The impact on reduction of human suffering, both emotional and physical, will be enormous. It is for us, the recipients of the gift, to use this newly found power in ways respectful of life, dignity, and, may we also say, a *little diversity*.

If there is an ethical or moral position to be taken on this issue, and we believe there is, then certainly much that was said relative to abortion in the preceding paragraphs is immediately applicable. Only after careful and thoughtful consideration, accompanied by professional medical and ethical counseling, should the decision for abortion be made.

To use such information to plan treatment and support of the new-born should be a paramount goal. Beyond this, one enters the uncertain domain of what defects dictate termination of fetal life. Certainly gender determination must fall outside the domain of acceptable reasons. (Exceptions would be those few cases of sex-linked diseases of serious outcome.)

Only thoughtful, prayerful consideration of the alternatives, with professional guidance and counseling, can help one penetrate this problem with appropriate insight.

One cannot help but remark that an alternative course remains for the prospective parent. Since some, but not all, defects can be predicted in advance by competent genetic counseling, it is possible to avoid at least some after-conception decision-making.

One must finally raise a voice for a quality mentioned only by allusion earlier. Diversity among us is to be cherished. Let us speak out against the old goals of perfect humankind that were central to the human eugenics movement of the turn of the century. That idea was rejected then and must not now be allowed to enter our world in a new and covert way.

#### **4. Artificial insemination or "surrogate parenthood"**

Let us consider the question of artificial insemination under a broader ranging rubric. We have used the term "surrogate parenthood" in the section heading to indicate the possibility that the ethical, moral, theological, and even the legal, aspects of all forms of shared parenthood have common foundations. Firstly, to identify the issues we will discuss, artificial insemination signifies the use of donor sperm for fertilization of the ovum within the body of the female by artificial placement of the sperm in the female. Surrogate female parenthood is defined as the use of a volunteer female, usually unrelated to the couple desiring a child. Insemination of the female in this latter case is usually accomplished by artificial means, with the male of the receiving couple as the donor.

Clearly, artificial insemination of the female by donor sperm from an anonymous source, is, practically, a much simpler matter. The prospective mother should not be able to ascertain the identity of the donor under usual circumstances, and few would deny that the donor male has little or no emotional attachment to the prospective fetus or infant through the medium of the ejaculate provided anonymously by him. The surrogate mother, on the other hand, must, under usual circumstances, have forged important parenting bonds to the new-born by the time of completion of pregnancy and successful delivery. Tacit admission of the great difference between the involvement of male and female surrogate is to be seen in the marketplace value of the two services. Sperm donations will return, at most, several hundred dollars to the male, while the female surrogate service presently will return tens of thousands of dollars.

One must certainly affirm that many positive values are associated with the providing

of a child to an otherwise childless marital union. The negatives of these circumstances would mostly arise as the result of either misadventure (such as undiscovered hereditary traits or transmitted disease) or deliberate manipulative behavior on the part of one or several of the participants.

A serious consideration associated with any form of surrogate parenthood is the very real possibility that one partner, the natural parent, has a very powerful lever which can be used against the other, adoptive, parent in times of emotional crisis or stress. Equally forceful is the weapon of natural parenthood when wielded by the child against an adoptive parent.

We believe it is necessary to affirm the value of surrogate parenting through the means of the anonymous male donor, since, in spite of the hazard mentioned just previously, the wholeness of the marital union brought about through wanted children must be valued above the risk. An essential element for positive and successful outcomes from surrogate parenting is the need for careful genetic screening of the anonymous male donor, a procedure often overlooked in the present.

Are we subverting God's will through such intervention in the reproductive process? If the childless couple comes to the act of artificial impregnation after thoughtful and prayerful consideration, then only a broadened base of love and understanding can grow from the presence of the child. Let us hope that those couples who perceive that the presence of the new child will yield therapeutic benefits to a wounded or faltering marriage will see the falseness of such a hope.

On the face of it, the surrogate mother artificially impregnated by the male of a childless marriage can provide the same benefits as the opposite pattern. Indeed that is possible, and one could not, we believe, judge one to be acceptable and not the other — on moral or ethical grounds. However desirable the outcome, though, there are fundamentally different emotional impacts that fill one with trepidation at the potential harm to all participants. Certainly the natural mother must experience all the emotional, psychological, and physical changes associated with child-bearing that will force strong ties to the newborn, while, at the same time, she is being treated as a mindless child-bearing animal by the prospective recipient parents. Can the adoptive parents be comfortable in the knowledge that their happiness is tempered by the sense of loss and separation experienced by the natural mother? Can the natural mother restrain her compulsions to reenter the world of her child? It seems to us that in the balance the gain of the couple with their new child cannot outweigh the emotional distress and even grief experienced by the natural mother.

Finally, one is compelled to speak out on the issue of surrogate performance of either gender, the goal of which is the providing a child to a single adoptive parent. On the whole, this action appears to us to be in the mainstream of American narcissism and self-indulgence. The child is brought to a single person household for reasons of personal self-satisfaction and achievement rather than for the completion of God's holy union, and is to be condemned.

##### **5. "In vitro" fertilization.**

In this process the first step of conception is carried out in the test tube. The fertilization process is carried out by collecting ova from the prospective mother and sperm from the prospective father. These elements are brought together in the test tube to permit the union of the two. The process so easily described is indeed complex in all of its steps. After fertilization the ovum undergoes several divisions and then is implanted in the uterus of the female from whom the ovum originally was taken. The process has, so far, had only limited success, but it seems assured that in the future it will be possible to carry out the procedure with great facility.

The purpose of this process is to overcome physical difficulties preventing the uterine implantation of the fertilized ovum through normal processes. There have been voices raised already in objection to this procedure — on the basis that one is grossly interfering in the reproduction process, a process or physiological function which some presume to have special protection. Is such concern warranted? We believe not, insofar as the normal or expected applications of the process are concerned. The normal parents, defeated in their efforts to achieve pregnancy by normal routes are using physical means to assist in a normal life process. This does not, on the face of it, appear to be subject to objections on moral, theological, or ethical grounds any more than the use of other prosthetic devices used to assist in life processes, such as artificial organs, limbs, or implants.

Of course, there are serious possibilities of abuse, but it would appear these abuses arise mostly when one or the other donor is not a member of the marital pair. We perceive the possibility, as mentioned earlier, of the reemergence of the quackery of nineteenth century eugenics again. So far in the development of the procedures, the fertilized ovum can be implanted only in the donor female. But visionaries see the day when a preselected bank of male and female gametes could provide stock children to order. It is not beyond the realm of possibility that before the turn of the century the Orwellian concept of a fully artificially maintained embryo can be achieved. By this we mean that we can expect to see, probably in this century, development of means for maintaining the fertilized ovum, from the time of fertilization to the full-term infant, in an artificial environment. If for no other reason, the development of commercial meat animals provides financial incentive for development of artificial uterus and artificial placenta. Such technological success will provide a new frontier for explanation of Christian theology and ethics. Fortunately, for now, we can struggle with our simpler problems associated with modulating and/or managing the awesome processes of new life.

### Marriage

For the last fifty years there has been a quiet, yet persistent, struggle on the part of the church to maintain a clear view of Christian marriages against the background of increasing divorce rates, alternatives to monogamous marriage, and the growing sexual permissiveness. Frequently the struggle, it would appear, has taken the form of either a truculent refusal by the church to entertain, on the one hand, the possibility that its traditional teaching on marriage has been historically conditioned or, on the other hand, a virtual concession to the moral solipsisms of the times and the view that marriage exists solely to give us pleasure or for convenience.

Everything in the church, like everything in life, proceeds from a gift. People are given to each other in order that they may redeem each human being — “the hope of glory.” Everyone of us is a Christ to our neighbor.

Redemption means that God is at work saving us from ourselves and re-creating us. Essentially, this is an action of enabling us to overcome selfishness and our habitual centering of our interests upon our individual selves. The principal sacraments of the Church, eucharist and baptism, show us that, while we are always related to God, we are necessarily related to each other. While God is saving us from ourselves, this action is accomplished by our being given to each other anew.

Persons in marriage and in friendship bring to their relationships everything that they have been and everything that each can hope to be. The environment of a marriage, therefore, is one in which the reality of each of the spouses is submitted to the other critically and lovingly — in order that each may learn anew, and again and again, that each is now in marriage what each has always been: God's own. The married man and woman who are friends to each other, who may be parents of children, are, with them, also a small community of memory and hope, living in the realization of redemption.

Marriage and friendship are two of many arenas of redemption. It is our task here especially to consider marriage as an arena of redemption. God gives us all to each other for our common redemption. Marriage, then, is a special relationship in which a man and a woman—whatever else they may claim or acknowledge to be at stake in their marriage—are given to each other, give themselves to each other, for their mutual redemption.

It is essential, if any sense is to be made of holy matrimony for Christians, that this be understood from the outset. It would then be the foundation of all instruction pertinent to marriage. The specific pertinence of this for marriage can be demonstrated in designated premarital counseling sessions. One would want to assume that the more general claim, namely, that God gives us to each other for our mutual redemption, will have been constantly a part of all of our teaching and preaching in the Church.

Specifically, the persons who are to marry each other—and obviously those who are already married, for however long—will be helped to understand that they in particular have a vocation to and for their mutual redemption.

We do not understand this in any sense as displacing their erotic or passionate attraction for each other. The redemption of which we speak works through their erotic and passionate attraction for each other—and, indeed, through every aspect or facet of their lives together.

Every human being has a desire for union with some other, a desire for intimacy which is most immediately identifiable in sexual desire. The fulfillment of this desire in intercourse is not always an act of love and it certainly does not inevitably end in marriage. Casual sexual intercourse is frequently a destructive expression of Eros, of humanity's longing for union with the other. We may consider it destructive because, when the implications of physical union are realized, it has become increasingly common through human evolution to create a bond of some endurance, perhaps lifelong, for which sexual intercourse is the concrete expression. This is to say that marriage is not *merely* a social institution, existing for the purposes of rearing children as is sometimes implied. In fact, a case can be made for saying that, from the beginning, in the human understanding, the socialization of children was secondary to the quest for an appropriate institution which could "contain" the feelings and institutions aroused in primitive humanity by sexual intercourse and its expression of Eros. In fact, a case can be made for saying that both sexual desire and its symbolic meaning are utterly integral to humanity, dating back tens of thousands of years.

Eros is one of the psychic energies within each person that strives for oneness with the other. One must be careful not to romanticize it. Eros is in itself neither good or bad, but functions within the flawed human creature. Consequently, without the redeeming love of God, it inevitably turns on itself. Its best aspirations are never realized, short of God's gift of wholeness. But it is a force that is always present and takes a specific form, albeit imperfect, in the tangible marriage covenant.

Whether Eros can always function toward wholeness within the relationship between one man and one woman only—i.e., in a monogamous marriage—is certainly open to debate. At a time when "alternatives to monogamous marriage" are being suggested in western culture, and when missiology is questioning the disruptive force of making monogamy a condition for baptism in polygamous societies, it is important to consider to what extent the Judaeo-Christian commitment to monogamous marriage is an historical expression of the inner meaning of marriage and to what extent it is intrinsic to that meaning. There are, however, other hindrances to marriage than those that are social and cultural, or what were termed "flaws."

Here we are able most appropriately to introduce the concept of sin. In that regard we make the simple and important claim that sin—whatever else it may be said to

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be—works against redemption; sin is in operation contrary to redemption. Moreover, it is necessary to claim that both redemption and sin are at work in every person, and, specifically for us, we claim that sin and redemption are at work in both parties to a marriage, as Christians are compelled to understand marriage. It is necessary too that such a truth be part of our general Christian instruction, and especially that it be part of premarital instruction, and marriage counseling.

We, in fact, want to make such claims as these as strongly as we can. We want to claim that these are truths for *all* persons, without regard to whether they are conscious of it or not; and if they are conscious of it and claim not to care or repudiate the view as false or nonsensical or whatever, we, nonetheless, have our claim to make.

We have to insist upon such a claim as this because behind it are several truths indispensable to Christian being. They are these: The first thing that is at stake in these claims is the relationship of God to the world. The second thing is the relationship of man/woman wholeness to and in the image of God (*imago Dei*). The third thing is the relationship of Christ to the church as groom is related to bride. We will come shortly to consider each of these three in more detail.

The church blesses some marriages. Why does the church do this? We bless some marriages because we have convinced ourselves that the ones that we bless will strongly signify “the mystical union that is betwixt Christ and his church.” The expectation is that the union will be lifelong. That is, we understand that, once Christ is related to the church, he always remains related to the church; it is a union—however it may vary over the ages—that fundamentally remains the same. This is a love that cannot be worn out or outlived.

We understand that these loves are not equal, that is, that the church is not capable of the same kind or degree of love as Christ is, and that Christ is not capable of the same kind of love that the church is capable of. There is a complementarity and a completion of love when we view the two in union.

The married couple will show forth to themselves and to others the relation of Christ to the church. In short, the couple are an image of a relation of Christ to the church. That is one major reason why we want to bless some marriages. Christ and the church are the principal instruments of God’s redemption that is being worked in the world.

Marriage is the joining, the sharing, of a woman and a man, in which each gives herself or himself in trust, respect, and openness (from the *Book of Common Prayer*, cf. “With all that I am and with all that I have, I honor you”) to the other in order to create a human space where together by God’s grace they can grow to wholeness. This goes on in the face of the sinfulness of each. It is the nature of human beings to grow and to decline (to die). We change as time passes. This is inevitable. All growth or change is not necessarily for the better. Because marriage is constituted by two human beings, it will change and grow—for the better or for the worse.

Our expectation is not so much that marriage make us happy as that it make us whole; these are two related, but different, things. A marriage that is victimized by our feelings, even when they are largely positive, does not hold much promise of wholeness. Such a marriage is more likely to be a source of avoidance (i.e., a place of escape) than it is likely to be a place for resolution of those crises that arise within life, those crises that can be used for the making whole of the man’s and the woman’s common life. It is always our conviction that redemption works in us, works in the overcoming of our sin by glory.

There is another relation at stake in human marriage—another, that is, than that of Christ to the church. The other principal relation that is reflected or imaged in the marriage of a man and woman is that of the enduring relation of God to the world.

The church blesses a marriage in order to declare that it is a sign of God's love and fidelity to baptized Christians. In so doing it implies that the finality of marriage is God.

The church has traditionally seen marriage as the clearest analogue of the relationship between God and humanity. The Priestly writer(s) in Genesis speak of the image of God in humanity as related to our being male and female. Israel is the bride of Yahweh and the church is the bride of Christ. The Song of Songs, an explicit Hebrew love poem filled with delightful *double entendres*, has provided Christian spiritual masters through the ages with a literary foil for their speculations upon the relation of God to his church or to individual Christians. The marital bond opens out to a mystery, as does the relation between the loving God and his beloved people.

God is the shaper and the maker of the world. That in the world which most clearly and directly reflects or images the nature of God is men and women who are made according to the image and likeness of God.

Thus we move to yet a more primitive way of understanding man and woman. Thus far we have proceeded from (1) human marriage (which is universal in some form—"common as dirt," we might say) to (2) the relation we understand to obtain between Christ and the church, to (3) the relation of God to the world, to (4) the very nature of God to the internal relations of God's own self.

All of this must surely seem quite fraught at the outset, but it need not be so. We are not claiming that a given married couple is conscious of this often, or even that they ought to be conscious of it. Consciousness of what or who we are is not always the most important thing about us. (We come shortly to a further discussion of intentionality.) We are more than we are conscious of; we are more than we know ourselves to be. This is crucial, and it affords us a great opportunity for instruction—just as it does with respect, for example, to baptism. We are asserting both in the case of the baptism of a child, and in that of an adult—that the first and the last claim and all intermediate claims upon that child or adult are God's. That is, we assert that we are God's, whatever claims the world may lay on us; so we are more than, and other than, we know. In the case of marriage, being more than we know leads us readily to the discussion of intention in marriage—that is, of intending, for example, "a lifelong union." Whatever else we may want to say about intention, it is crucial to bear in mind that intention is always a project of consciousness, that is, intention is largely a rational expression of *purposiveness*.

Everyone already knows that what we propose—are purposive about—does not always turn out, "work," for us. Clearly, we are more than, or other than, our purposes. Everybody already knows, for example, that "the heart has reasons." That is, we may say, our bodies, our psyches, have "purposes" that cannot be decided by our rational minds. And anyone who is or has been "in love" knows these things. Or—as one Christian writer has put it in writing about the Eucharist—we "experience more than we understand." We mean by this that experience is a larger category than understanding.

Intention is, then, we may say, important, but it is a fragile thing. If we are going to speak, as persons now do, of "the death of a marriage," we need something other than, something stronger than, intention as grounds for either a death certificate or a certificate of viability with respect to a given marriage. What could such a more secure ground be? We submit that one such ground is in fact the vows which are made public before God in the marriage rite itself.

Although we will return to the matter in more detail later, it is well to discuss briefly the matter of divorce inasmuch as divorce always represents at least the acknowledgment that vows made earlier have now been broken. All successes or failures in a marriage are to be judged relatively. That is, all judgments of success or failure are (premature) human

judgments. They are premature *because* they are human. All success or failure in marriage is within the arena where sin *and* grace, damnation *and* redemption are at work.

If a marriage “dies,” it, of course, may never have been alive, at least from our human point of view. And if a marriage fails, or, ends in divorce, the blame—the sin—cannot all properly be laid at the door of the man and the woman, but must also surely be laid at the door of the church. The failure may, in part, be that of those who vowed that they would do all within their power to sustain the man and the woman in their marriage. It may also properly be laid at the door of the clergy whose instruction and counseling may have been non-existent, poor, or perfunctory.

Suggesting congregational or clerical failure in the breakdown of a marriage has at least the virtue of showing that the church understands that marriage is a matter of concern for the community of the faithful. That is our primary reason for emphasis upon the idea of the *social* importance of marriage. Only secondarily, then, do we acknowledge that marriage is a “social institution” and as such to be of concern to the civil authorities.

This ought to be evident already, namely, that marriage and its well-being in general—but especially in the case of particular men and women—is of import to—that is, is the business of—the community of the faithful, the church. A marriage of a man and a woman is not and cannot be a strictly private affair.\*

That no marriage is private is seen in a more fundamental sense by the church. Every marriage is open to God, that is, we might say, every marriage is public to God. The individual lives of the man and of the woman continue in marriage to be what they were before marriage, namely, open to God. This kind of openness continues, of course, in marriage, and God continues to know them individually as they were known to God before marriage. If there is any sense for Christians in the idea of so-called “open marriage,” it is that marriages are partially open to the community of the faithful, and totally open to God.

That every marriage is public to, or open to, God affords us a way now to speak more clearly and more directly of vows, of vows as being of stronger grounds for marriage than the intention of the man and the woman in contracting the marriage.

Let us say that a vow publicly taken—that is, taken before the people gathered for the wedding and before God—is a spoken promise and hence is the grounding of the man’s and the woman’s intention in God. Vows constitute, then, a public way of saying that God is greater than our intentions, just as *we* are more than our intentions. It is, further, a way of saying that God is to be trusted to continue to direct our lives together in love, strength, and faithfulness.

If the vows publicly made anchor the intentions of the man and the woman among and in the community of the faithful and in and before God, then we can say that children produced by their marriage are *like* vows. Children who are adopted by the couple are obviously also capable of being understood to be *like* vows. Children, in these instances, are to be seen as more powerful than intentions, perhaps in the same sense that we say that actions are more powerful than words. In children the creativity of a marriage finds its supreme expression in the generation of other people, in the generation of other incarnate consciousness. But aside from that issue, the bonding of man and woman finds a completion of their love and fidelity in their participation in the socialization of a child, be they the biological parents or not. The gift of children requires a spirit of sacrifice and

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\*Perhaps this would argue for having marriage services at scheduled public services of worship.

an ordering of values which becomes an instrument of grace in the finality of marriage.\*

Children, thus, embody intentions. They always stand more strongly than intentions because, for good and for ill, children are living signs that we are more than and other than our intentions.

Children are who and what they are. We get the children we get, not the ones we want. However welcome or unwelcome that fact may be, it faces us with the truth that any man and any woman who marry each other marry more than and other than either could possibly know. Mystery marries mystery when person marries person.

Children, who are mysteries each in each's own right, are the living signs to the parents that each parent is larger than either's intentions. Mysteries bring forth mysteries when the married couple begets children. Children are always also signs both of "the mystery of iniquity" as Paul calls it (*II Thess. 2:7*), and they are signs of the hiddenness of redemption, the measure of the leaven in the meal (*Matt. 13:33*).

We need to take care in our instruction for marriage about saying, as some of us do, that since the couple are the only ones who really know what the nature of their relationship is, what their love really is, that thus only they alone will know when the relationship is dying, when love is gone, or that the marriage is "dead." It is important, as we have claimed earlier, to say that the living marriage ought not be identified with the happy marriage, meaning one that gives only or almost only pleasure. There is often more fulness in marriage that lives most of the time at the foot of the cross than one in which the pursuit of good times never requires that a wife or husband suffer pain or draw on their deepest faith in God and themselves. The convenient euphemisms of "total incompatibility" and "irreconcilable differences" often refer only to discomforts that are matters of indifference to a Christian commitment.

The question of when a marriage is dead is one of discernment, and such a decision requires the church's gifts of discernment in the classical or spiritual sense of that word. Therefore, it is important that the church take an active role in counseling not only with marriages in distress, but in the spiritual maturation of all such bonds. In this way the church has a perspective from which to make judgments as to the relative health of any relationship.

Evil is often experienced as fragmentation or dissolution of the person. The word "diabolic" means to pull apart. Some clue to the death of a marriage lies in the destructiveness of the relationship at the level of our *fundamental* identity (as contrasted with a relationship that creates some inconveniences, unhappiness, or embarrassment), which involves our basic commitments to values and our personal place within a Christian view of reality that gives birth to those values.

When the church believes a marriage to have died, it should provide an opportunity for the participants to mourn its death and repent for the sins of the old marriage. In no sense is this an act of punishment, but rather it makes available an opportunity to be purged of the diabolic marriage. Failure needs to be recognized, and, once recognized, it can become the ground for a new life. We have to insist then, in view of much that has been said hitherto, that God knows better than either of the partners to the marriage concerning such a matter.

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\*We may say, that while responsible planned parenthood is desirable in a marriage, we must also strongly put it forth that a wife and a husband are expected to be responsible about all aspects of marriage, including children. It is the task of the church to provide the resources necessary for understanding what such responsibility requires. This is essentially the position taken by the bishops of the Anglican Communion in both the 1958 and 1968 Lambeth Conferences.

Any talk of God knowing better can only be realistic if we are able to assume that the marriage, begun with the blessing of God, is continued as the couple seeks the blessings and graces of worship, prayer, and the sacraments, afforded them in the community of faith.

Such an expectation can only be taken seriously if it is made clear at the beginning of premarital instruction that marriage is—as we have claimed here from the outset—a principal arena in which God is working our salvation even in the face of our sins.

Everything that we have tried to claim here goes in the face of our culture's view of marriage as a sentimental romance of the like-minded, or of those with compatible "life-styles" or coinciding or complementary professional objectives. Marriage is one more surprising, apparently improbable, place where we discover anew that each of us is Christ to our neighbor. In marriage there is that great opportunity, namely the opportunity to discover Christ in that other, who is also co-parent of one's offspring, lover, combatant, friend, enemy, brother, or sister.

Marriage is the place—the institution—where it is constantly possible to discover daily that, in having thought that we chose each other in marriage, we learn that we chose more than we knew, that we chose other than we would reasonably have bargained for, that we are to be with one another till death, as Jesus has promised to be with the church to the end of the age, as God has been with the world since the beginning. Is there anything more common than this? Is there anything more splendid? When what is already good is made better than good, we call it not "best," we call it "glorious." What is already good—as we affirm that God has made us to be from the beginning—when what is already good is made better, it is glory. What we want to hold out then in these remarks about marriage is that, while marriage is one of the special ways in which God works his redemption among us, it is also one of the primary ways in which God glorifies human beings; and in the glorification of human beings we understand, first of all, that glory is given to God properly.

#### **Actions recommended to the General Convention**

In response to the changing world and the new technologies science is making available having impact on marriage, sexuality, and child-bearing, we recommend:

#### **Resolution #A—64:**

Concerning the need for expanded counseling support.

*Whereas*, there are increasing numbers of topics of great personal concern, in which people are looking to their clergy for assistance in interpretation, guidance, and counseling, and these areas include the application of new scientific advances, as well as personal understanding of self needs and spousal relationships; and

*Whereas*, no one person can reasonably be expected to have comprehensive knowledge of all the pertinent topics, it is unreasonable to suggest that expert counseling could be provided on this scale by individual clergy; and

*Whereas*, an important function of the parish family is involvement in meeting the spiritual and social needs of its individual members; therefore, be it

*Resolved*, the House of \_\_\_\_\_ concurring, That the 67th General Convention of the Episcopal Church urges

- 1. That the clergy coordinate an effort to identify responsible persons in their community who can provide information in the relevant areas concerning marriage and reproduction in the modern world, serve the educational needs of clergy and laity, and be resource persons for information sources and educational opportunities; and**
- 2. That consideration by diocesan and seminary Commissions on Ministries organize**

**continuing education opportunities for clergy and laity in topics of specialized counseling needs, including such areas as genetics, changing biotechnology, communication skills, parenting, marriage, death, and other areas as appropriate.**

**Resolution #A—65.**

Concerning prenatal gender selection and identification, *in utero*, of fetal abnormalities.

*Whereas*, new biomedical diagnostic techniques now allow the detection of a wide range of medical abnormalities in the unborn child; and

*Whereas*, the gender of the prospective newborn can also be determined by the same techniques; and

*Whereas*, such information gives use to the need for serious and difficult decisions as to the advisability of continuing a pregnancy; therefore, be it

**Resolved, the House of \_\_\_\_\_ concurring, That the 67th General Convention of the Episcopal Church strongly condemns the act of abortion when the sole purpose of such action is the selection of the gender of the child; and be it further**

**Resolved, That this new ability to diagnose serious abnormalities in the fetus before birth is a welcome gift to reduce pain and sorrow in the parents and suffering in the newborn, but that abortion after the diagnosis of non-serious or trivial abnormalities, or abortion in a case where purely cosmetic abnormalities are discovered, is viewed by the Church as a matter of very grave concern.**

**Resolution #A—66.**

Concerning surrogate maternal parenthood.

*Whereas*, a new and controversial practice has come into use for providing children to an otherwise childless marriage, in which the male partner's sperm is used to impregnate a willing female who undertakes contractually to deliver her child at birth to the childless couple; and,

*Whereas*, such a practice is exploitative of the natural mother and attaches undue and even self-worshiping importance to the sperm of the donor male; therefore be it

**Resolved, the House of \_\_\_\_\_ concurring, That the 67th General Convention of the Episcopal Church strongly condemns the practice of so-called female surrogate parenting.**

**Resolution #A—67.**

Concerning "in vitro" fertilization.

*Whereas*, "in vitro" fertilization is a new medical technique whereby the male parent's sperm is allowed to impregnate the ovum collected artificially from the female, and this process takes place "in the disk" followed by implantation in the donor female; and

*Whereas*, this technique enables parenthood for those who are otherwise prevented from pregnancy by a physical defect in the reproductive tract of the female; and

*Whereas*, such a procedure provides a child to an otherwise childless marriage and both members of the couple are party to the conception, be it

**Resolved, the House of \_\_\_\_\_ concurring, That this 67th General Convention of the Episcopal Church gives approval to usage of so-called "in vitro" fertilization for the purpose of providing children in a marriage.**

**Resolution #A—68.**

Concerning the sale of human semen.

*Whereas*, human semen is now widely available in the United States through a variety of commercial arrangements; and

*Whereas*, pregnancy using such genetic material is now procurable inside and outside of marriage without ethical scruple and with minimal supervision—medical, governmental or otherwise; and

*Whereas*, the exploitation of reproductive material for financial gain tends to diminish the sense of sanctity of human life; therefore be it

**Resolved**, the House of \_\_\_\_\_ concurring, That this 67th General Convention of the Episcopal Church holds that human semen should not be bought and sold for reproductive use.

**Resolution #A—69.**

Concerning diocesan commissions to review policies on marriage.

*Whereas*, marriage in the United States as a secular and a religious institution is in a time of dramatic change and re-evaluation, it is a time for the Church to undertake a careful reexamination of both the sacramental nature of Holy Matrimony and the institutional nature of the secular relationship of marriage; therefore, be it

**Resolved**, the House of \_\_\_\_\_ concurring, That the 67th General Convention of the Episcopal Church encourages each diocese to establish a special Commission on Marriage, the responsibility of which will be to review and report on current diocesan policies and practices respecting Holy Matrimony; and be it further

**Resolved**, That the central theme of such reexamination shall be the redemptive and sacramental nature of Holy Matrimony; and as a point of departure for the considerations of the diocesan Commissions, the working paper attached, prepared by the Standing Commission on Human Affairs and Health, is offered for earnest consideration; and be it further

**Resolved**, That the charge to the diocesan Commissions shall include, but not be limited to, consideration of: means of revitalization of the sacramental and redemptive qualities of marriage; existing Canons on marriage; counseling, advice and spiritual support for prospective partners in the sacrament; continuing education procedures and practices for clergy and laity, including children and young adults; the role of the clergy and the marriage partners in the failed marriage; pre-nuptial guidance and instruction; continuing parish support for the married pair; guidance in childbearing and rearing; and other appropriate matters; and be it further

**Resolved**, That the findings of the diocesan Commissions shall be forwarded to the Standing Commission on Human Affairs and Health in time to permit that Commission to study and review the findings during the triennium preceding the 69th General Convention and to make legislative proposals to that Convention.

**Resolution #A—70.**

Concerning advisors to assist in remarriage of divorced persons.

*Whereas*, applications for remarriage of divorced persons within the Church have greatly increased; and

*Whereas*, expert advice can from time to time be useful to the Bishops and Priests who may be in need of assistance or of independent and informal opinion; therefore, be it

**Resolved**, the House of \_\_\_\_\_ concurring, That this 67th General Convention of the Episcopal Church encourages each diocesan Bishop to appoint a panel of suitable persons to assist in weighing applications for remarriage by divorced persons when the Bishop or diocesan Clergy wish to seek advice.

**Resolution #A—71.**

Concerning preparations for marriage when one party is unbaptized.

*Whereas*, Holy Matrimony is a sacrament of the Church, in contrast to other forms of wedding, civil or religious; and

*Whereas*, marriages between Christians and non-Christians are subject to extraordinary stresses and difficulties; be it

**Resolved, the House of \_\_\_\_\_ concurring, That the 67th Convention of the Episcopal Church proposes that when Holy Matrimony is contemplated, and one of the parties is unbaptized, extraordinary care be exercised to explain the sacramental nature of Christian marriage, to provide instruction in the Christian faith, to discuss the couples intention for expression of their faith in the marriage, and to invite the non-Christian party to consider baptism.**

**F. OBJECTIVES AND GOALS, 1983-85**

**Overall Objective**

To assist the bishops and deputies of the General Convention by performing the functions assigned to the Commission—to concern ourselves, as a Commission, with theological, ethical, and pastoral aspects regarding health, sexuality, and bioethical problems.

**Process for Completing the Overall Objective**

1. At its first meeting the Commission will consider: (1) resolutions sent to it by the General Convention, (2) suggestions from the Commission of the triennium 1980-82, and (3) “brain-storming” of its own on the purposes of the Commission as outlined in Canon I.1.2(n)(4). Areas to be addressed and goals for dealing with the same would be set by the Commission.

2. From past experience it is estimated that about five meetings during the triennium would be needed to complete the goals set, with considerable correspondence and research being done privately by members between meetings. Some subcommittee work probably would be necessary.

3. The Commission would come to the Convention of 1985 with a report, which might include resolutions for action or study, position papers, and/or suggested subject matter to be dealt with by the Episcopal Church Center staff.

**G. BUDGET APPROPRIATION FOR THE TRIENNIUM**

The experience of the 1980-82 Commission would indicate the need for a budget of \$42,500, which includes an estimate for inflation over 1980-82 expenses. About 90% of this would be for expenses of meeting and travel for five meetings of the Commission, plus Subcommittee and Executive Committee meetings as required. The balance would be for office expense, resource materials or persons, and some special travel for the Chairman, such as travel for consulting with Episcopal Church Center staff.

**Resolution #A—72.**

Budget request.

**Resolved, the House of \_\_\_\_\_ concurring, That there be appropriated from the assessment Budget of General Convention for the expense of the Standing Commission on Human Affairs and Health the sum of \$42,000 for the triennium of 1983-85.**