

The **+** WITNESS

DECEMBER 3, 1964

10¢

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Story of the Week

Plan for Union with Methodists Strongly Backed by Anglicans

★ Three major Anglican dioceses have announced overwhelming support for proposals to unite the Methodist Church and the Church of England, according to detailed voting figures released in London.

Their backing adds considerably to the support already announced for the proposals, which were published in a report last year on conversations between the two Churches and could have wide repercussions if adopted. But the big battle to decide whether there will be final unity is still to come. There is no lack of opposition, and next year will be the key period, according to all available evidence.

The three latest dioceses to back the unity proposals are Liverpool, Bradford and Newcastle, all densely-populated industrial centers in northern England. Their votes were taken at diocesan conferences, when delegates were asked to say whether they approved measures for unity between the two Churches.

In all three the vote was overwhelming. At Liverpool, to give one example, 216 of 221 parochial church councils gave what Canon R.A.S. Martineau, chairman of the adult council of the diocesan board of education, called "a mandate to the Church of England for union with the Methodist Church." Voting by

suridecanal chapters (ministers) and suridecanal conferences (ministers and laymen) were almost alike.

At Bradford, where 135 clergy voted in favor of a continuing move towards unity between the two Churches, with only three against, Bishop Michael Parker said the diocese had given a clear indication that it would wish the task of preparing the way leading to true unity to receive thorough and continuous attention at every level.

The ultimate issue is still far from certain, however, for there is still a strong body of opposition to unity in various quarters. This is the program for the next few months:

In February a special meeting of the House of Laity — which, with the Houses of Bishops and Clergy, constitutes the National Assembly with the Methodists. This results from a decision of the Assembly to approve a motion by the Archbishop of Canterbury requesting the House of Laity to take cognizance of the report, conversations between the Church of England and the Methodist Church, and to submit any comments it wishes to offer to the joint committee of the convocations. This report contained the unity proposals.

The joint committee of the convocations is a body which

meets privately. Dates of meetings are not announced. It will consider any comments submitted by the House of Laity, together with all the informa-

STRINGFELLOW GOES TO TULSA

★ Some months ago, the Council of Churches of Greater Tulsa invited William Stringfellow to address its annual assembly. He was also invited by representatives of Roman Catholic, Jewish and Protestant bodies in Oklahoma to address the Oklahoma conference on religion and race during the same visit. Following, however, the issuance of the statement of conscience on racism in the presidential campaign which Stringfellow made public on behalf of over 800 churchmen during the General Convention, considerable pressure was exerted by some Tulsa citizens to have Stringfellow's engagements cancelled. Some financial support was withdrawn from the Council of Churches. The church where the conference was scheduled to be held withdrew its hospitality. Some church members denounced Stringfellow as "un-Christian" and "un-American" in an advertisement in the Tulsa press. Stringfellow received many letters urging him not to come to Oklahoma. An engagement at a local parish was cancelled. Stringfellow went to Tulsa and the article on page eight is a transcript of his address to the Council of Churches assembly.

tion it has gathered on the subject from the various Anglican dioceses and elsewhere. Its report will then be made known to the convocations of Canterbury and York which are scheduled to meet from May 17-21 and will decide whether to go ahead with the unity proposals.

Then the conference of the Methodist Church will be held at Plymouth from July 2-9. In recent weeks the 34 synods in the Methodist districts of Britain have been voting to elect representatives to attend this conference, which will have to decide whether to accept the Anglican-Methodist report proposal for a scheme of intercommunion as a step towards full union.

Archbishop in Favor

So far as the Church of England is concerned, Archbishop Ramsey is fully in favor of union. At the National Assembly meeting he said the decisions of the convocations of Canterbury and York in May would be of immense importance. They would take the form of "yes" or "no" or a request for further investigation.

"It is clear," he added, "that the faith and order conference at Nottingham (earlier this year) showed that there is a strongly growing conviction among the Churches in this country that the establishment of intercommunion does not suffice; the bringing about of a united Church is the goal, and a goal that must not be far distant.

"I believe that the accomplishment of intercommunion and unity between the Church of England and the Methodist Church will call for the facing of big changes."

He did not feel that the uniting of the Church of England and the Methodist Church would hinder other aspects of

Christian unity, particularly relations with the Eastern Orthodox.

"Finally," he said, "I believe that if it is not possible to secure unity between Anglicans and Methodists, it is not possible to achieve Christian unity anywhere. And this is something that none of us believe."

Not Complete Scheme

Dr. Ramsey spoke after Canon E. W. Kemp of Exeter College, Oxford, had declared: "As Anglicans we ought to ask ourselves seriously whether we really do desire union with our Methodist brethren and believe that they have something of real value to give us, and whether we are prepared for the practical application of that rigorous distinction between truth and prejudice which the call to Christian unity requires."

Canon Kemp emphasized that the report was not a completely worked out scheme for the union of the two Churches but that it presented an outline of proposals sufficient to enable people to make a judgement.

"Our goal," he said, "is that the Methodist Church and the Church of England should become one." He did not deny that there were many practical difficulties to be overcome.

Methodist Opposition

In the case of the Methodists, the recent election of synodical representatives for next year's conference has been of special significance in view of their role in the unity issue. In addition, the dissensions within Methodism on this matter are considered by observers to be much deeper than those within Anglicanism.

For example, an organization known as the Voice of Methodism has been constantly urging Methodists to reject the 1963 proposals. This body has carried

a campaign of wide scope. It has urged members of synods, when electing representatives for next year's conference, to vote "only for those known to oppose the scheme."

Another organization, the conservative Methodist Revival Fellowship, has opposed the Anglican-Methodist report. It believes that under unity Methodism will be accepting episcopacy as a theological principle. On the other hand, it does welcome moves for closer relations between the two Churches.

URGE USE OF TRUST FUNDS FOR MRI

★ The Anglican Church of Canada has been severely criticized in its own national publication for "sitting on" \$50 million in trust funds while committing itself to raise \$2,500,000 for Anglican world missions in a five-year period.

Arnold Edinborough, author, editor and university professor, wrote in the Canadian Churchman that "if love of money be the root of evil, we should take a very close look at the roots of the Anglican Church."

Charging an air of smugness was abroad over the Church's mission efforts, Edinborough said the \$2,500,000 would be used to help priests overseas receiving less than \$50 a year, teachers who get little more than their keep at what he called pitifully inadequate schools, and bicycles for people who have to cover long distances on foot in doing the Lord's work.

While satisfaction was being shown in the \$2,500,000 commitment, he said, "the Anglican Church of Canada is sitting on maybe 20 times that amount, and clearly it is not going to touch a nickel of it."

Edinborough said a quarter of the amount is held for pension funds, but the greater part

was for a "multiplicity" of purposes.

While acknowledging that a trust is a trust, Edinborough said that when he asked, at a diocesan meeting, why the Church could not dig into capital, he was told bluntly that it was "sacrosanct."

"That word sacrosanct stuck in my gullet," he said, adding: "How can churchmen square their attitude with the statement of Jesus in the Sermon on the Mount: 'Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth where moth and rust doth corrupt . . .'"

Edinborough said the real estate holdings of the Anglican Church could be measured in

hundreds of millions of dollars. They included not only the ground on which the churches stood, but many areas in older cities which are far from the Church, "but from which the Church still derives satisfactory revenue."

He held that a considerable portion of church workers' time is taken up with administering trust funds and real estate businesses.

"If the Church in Canada were to agree to divest itself of even one-tenth of its present endowment and trust money, we would be able to send several times the amount we have already undertaken to raise for Anglican world missions."

the U.S. we see no other honorable course to follow."

Suggestions for the re-establishment of law and order in the city included: "All officers should make only lawful arrests; harassment arrests, no matter what the provocation, are not consistent with impartiality of the law . . .

"Citizens of both races should re-establish avenues of communication and understanding.

"We urge the widest possible use of our citizenship in the selection of juries . . . that men called for jury duty not be excused except for the most compelling reasons . . .

"We urge our fellow citizens to take a greater interest in public affairs, in the election of candidates and/or constructive criticism of public servants."

In an apparent reference to the Ku Klux Klan whose members have been reported as infiltrating law enforcement agencies, the statement said that no one should serve as a public official if he belongs to an organization declared subversive by federal agencies or if he "takes on any obligation upon himself in conflict with his oath of office."

RELIGIOUS CENTER AT UNIVERSITY

★ A religious center to house campus ministries of five Churches and the office of the chaplain is being built at the University of Southern California. Ground was broken on Nov. 23 for the two-story building to cost \$425,000.

President Norman Topping said the center will be unique in the west, "because it is specifically intended to develop coordinated and cooperative programs toward mutual objectives of the Protestant denominations and those shared by all religions."

Campus ministries of Episcopal, Baptist, Presbyterian, Methodist, Lutheran Churches are to share the building.

White Citizens of McComb, Miss. Urge End of Racial Violence

★ Clergymen were among some 650 white persons signing a statement calling for an end to racial violence and for "equal treatment under the law for all citizens regardless of race" in the segregated city of McComb, Miss.

Condemning the "acts of terrorism committed numerous times against citizens, both Negro and white," the statement declared: "We believe the time has come for responsible people to speak out for what is right and against what is wrong. For too long we have let the extremists on both sides bring our community close to chaos."

The statement was drafted by a group of business and civic leaders, called citizens for progress, whose members were not identified. It appeared with the names of those signing the declaration as a paid advertisement in the McComb Enterprise-Journal.

Besides clergymen, signers included businessmen, lawyers, doctors and bankers. According

to Oliver Emmerich, editor of the daily which printed the ad, the signers represented leaders of the city and a cross-section of the white community.

The advertisement followed a series of editorials in the Enterprise-Journal condemning the more than 30 "racial" crimes that have occurred in McComb, where civil rights volunteer workers, trained under a program of the National Council of Churches, have been conducting freedom schools and voter registration classes.

In view of the race strife, the ad said, "there is only one responsible stance we can take and that is for equal treatment under the law for all citizens regardless of race, creed, positions or wealth; for keeping our protests within the framework of the law; and for obeying the laws of the land regardless of our personal feelings."

Although some of these laws "may be contrary to our traditions, customs, or beliefs," the ad said, "as God-fearing men and women and as citizens of

Anglican and United Churches Discuss Union Plan in Canada

★ A draft plan for a merger of the Anglican Church of Canada and the United Church of Canada — which seeks to solve the thorny questions of apostolic succession and a unified ministry — has been unveiled in Toronto.

Under study of the committees of ten, national negotiating groups of both denominations, the plan was seen as "accelerating the conversations" toward formation of a new "Church of Canada." Talks on the merger have been in progress for 20 years.

The plan was formulated after three years by some 40 priests, ministers and laymen of the Huron Anglican diocese and the United Church's London conference. It was signed by 18 United Church members and 17 Anglicans.

Known as the London plan, it calls for the presbyterian-style United Church to accept bishops in the apostolic succession and the Anglicans to accept the United ministry without reordination.

Bishops would be elected by "diocesan presbyteries" and be responsible to them. Within the group which drew up the plan at London, Canada, the acceptance of bishops by the United Churchmen represents a tremendous concession, even if the bishops are to be under diocesan presbytery authority.

"The bishop in his diocese represents the Good Shepherd," the plan says. "The idea of pastoral care is inherent in his office. Both clergy and laity look to him as chief pastor and he represents in a special degree the paternal quality of pastoral care."

Under the plan, the bishop would be responsible for the

ordination of presbyters — as the priest-ministers would be called in the new Church — and for their appointment to pulpits. At present, in the United Church, ministers are called by congregations; and in the Anglican Church, appointed by bishops.

The plan calls for creation of an unspecified number of diocesan presbyteries, provincial conferences, and a supreme court to be called the general synod — as in the Anglican Church.

It provides for a lay or clerical moderator as presiding officer and a primate as the new Church's spiritual head. The moderator would serve a two-year term and the primate's tenure would be limited to 10 years.

The Church of Canada would recognize only two sacraments — baptism and holy communion. These have always been the norm for the United Church, but Anglicans also recognize five other sacraments — ordination, marriage, anointing of the sick, penance and confirmation.

Other provisions include that seminarians be ordained for one year as deacons — in the Anglican style — before being made full-fledged presbyters. Church property would be held on behalf of the national Church, but would be bought and sold only with approval of the local congregation.

In commenting on the plan, Ernest M. Howse, moderator of the United Church, said it should be the working document for further talks. He said it "represents a good deal of work and careful consideration and at least it does something . . . all we've done so far is talk."

While he thought the London group was far ahead of other planners, Howse said he did not see much sign of a breakthrough in the stalemate.

Bishop Frederick H. Wilkinson of Toronto, who heads the largest of the 28 Anglican dioceses, said the London plan did not really answer questions connected with the theology of a unified ministry.

A more positive solution for unifying the two ministries should be found, he said, other than the proposal for "avoiding reordination, conditional ordination or supplemental ordination."

Anglican high churchmen insist that all United Church ministers should be reordained by bishops in the apostolic succession. But United Church leaders believe that this would invalidate every baptism, confirmation and other religious rite conducted by their ministers.

Meanwhile James R. Mutchmor, past moderator of the United Church, said he had "grave doubts" that his denomination would accept the authority of bishops. He said the episcopal system "does not attract me" and felt that "hierarchies are on the way out."

However, disagreeing with him was Angus J. MacQueen, also a past United Church moderator, who said the plan's "interpretation of the function of a bishop would win the approval of the United Church."

He explained that under the plan, a bishop would be responsible for the spiritual and temporal discipline of his diocesan presbytery. But it also provides that elders would have some responsibility for spiritual matters, and a board of stewards for those of temporal nature.

MacQueen added that a bishop "would not be stripped of all powers," but would be the "pastors' pastor, the permanent presiding officer."

EDITORIAL

The Church Suffers From its Virtues

ARISTOTLE once said that "the true nature of anything consists in that which it is at its best." If men would let that truth sink in it would have a very beneficent effect upon their lives and their characters. We are so apt to evaluate things at their worst.

We admire dogs because of the best dogs that we have known; we do not judge them by the curs that have bitten us. We salute the flag because it stands for the best of governments in spite of the fact that sometimes politicians transform it at times into the worst.

But when the natural man is confronted with spiritual obligations he is irritated by what he regards as foolishness and forms his estimate of the Christian Church in the light of his prejudices and so emphasizes the failure of its disciples to display its potential virtues.

For example, the statement that there are sinners in the Church is about as sensible as to say that there are sick people in hospitals and therefore hospitals should be condemned, or that there are ignorant people in schools and therefore schools are to be despised. Christ came to heal the sick and to impart wisdom to the ignorant, but he did not institute a mechanical device by which sinners were to become saints overnight.

It is perfectly true that if the Church is to be judged by the rank and file of its members it is not impressive, but if one applies Aristotle's test and we value it for the best that it has produced the Church has no need to be ashamed of its mission.

If a university can turn out a few outstanding scholars it is not to be condemned because the bulk of the students treat it as a country club for the development of social and athletic activities. The fact that it produces some savants is proof that it has the capacity for learning.

The Church suffers from its virtues. As our Lord expressed it: "Because I tell you the truth therefore you will not believe me." People do not want truth if it interferes with self indulgence and demands of its disciples some degree of sacrificial service.

The gospel, like education, is a gate of oppor-

tunity rather than a throne which men inherit. It is a long path from the door to the throne, straight and narrow, and few there be that travel it. The ultimate destination of the road is not affected by those who deviate from the path.

We have entered once more on the Advent Season. The road leads us through Advent to Christmas, through Lent to Easter, through the great forty days to Whitsunday. In a real sense it should be a merry-go-round for it leads to joy through sorrow and to victory through failure and to our Father's house through temptation.

There are other paths but they lead to cynicism and disillusionment. You cannot travel both paths for they have different destinations and if you are living for purely material ends you cannot expect to find spiritual values. The true nature of the Christian journey consists in what it is at its best and it is your privilege to test it along that line. At its worst the Christian life is a sham and as the Master said is like "salt that has lost its savour, good for nothing but to be trodden under the feet of men."

It does not demand the impossible of you but rather that day by day you trudge along doing the things that the Master asks you to do in his name. Sometimes the path is monotonous but when you reach the end of the journey the prospect is glorious. The true mountain climber does not permit the difficulties of the way to prevent the realization of his purpose.

There are three things for the pilgrim to remember in his journey:

- That unless you are really seeking the Kingdom of God and his righteousness you have no business on the road.

- That if you are going to judge persons and things by their worst you will have a very unhappy journey.

- That if you are going to spend your time fussing about the obstacles of the way instead of climbing over them you will never reach your destination.

Advent is a good time to acquire the art of travelling along the way that leadeth to your Father's house without censoriousness or faultfinding.

It is only thus that you will judge the gospel by its best and not its worst.

POLITICAL WITNESS OF CHURCH OF CHRIST

By William Stringfellow

Attorney and a Witness Editor

BACKGROUND INFORMATION ABOUT THIS

ADDRESS WILL BE FOUND ON PAGE THREE

I HAVE HAD a considerable correspondence recently with citizens and churchmen of Tulsa. It has not all been fan mail. Most of it has urged me to "stay in New York where (I) belong" and to cancel tonight's engagement and the other engagements tomorrow. These appeals to stay away only persuaded me all the more to come, and to appear in Tulsa in the flesh so that you could see for yourself that I have neither horns nor tail. Nor do I have two heads — nor two minds — nor two mouths. I do have — if anyone cares to strike them all together four cheeks.

I am a layman in the Church and an American citizen who seeks to discern what the faith which has been received from our forefathers — from Abraham and from Saint Paul — means in the society which we have inherited from our founding fathers — from Patrick Henry and Alexander Hamilton.

Many earnest and very well intentioned Church members — who want to remain loyal to the Church — are concerned nowadays, in fact they are greatly agitated — about what they regard as an unwarranted intrusion and involvement of the Church and of some of their fellow Church members in controversial public issues: in taking sides in the political crisis which still besets the nation, in direct action in the racial struggle that engulfs this society, in the attention — even as cursory as it yet is — given to the persistence of poverty in the midst of the fantastic affluence of this country, to name only the few most desperate and notorious contemporary public issues.

Characteristic of this concern is that the Church not be compromised by involvement in worldly affairs — that the Church of Christ and the Christian people remain outside of, or above, or withdrawn from the political and social conflicts which separate and divide and disrupt men in their secular lives.

Let the Church — these voices say — remain pure and undefiled.

Let the Church, at least, be one place — they say — left to men where men can contemplate their God, devote themselves to "spiritual" things, and get away from conflict, dissension and discord.

Let the Church be a shrine of peace of mind and positive thinking and of the blessed assurance of better things somewhere, sometime, someplace beyond this realm. Let the Church be uncontaminated by worldly business. Let the Church be a place of rest and abstinence from worldly cares. Let the Church be a refuge from the world. Let the Church be an escape.

This is a common and popular view within the Church in this society. It is likely the dominant point of view among laity — especially in the churches of American Protestantism. It is not, however, the point of view of the New Testament Church. Hear, for example, the Letter of James:

"Religion which is pure and undefiled before God and the Father is this: to visit orphans and widows in their affliction, and to keep oneself unstained from the world."

There are many echoes of the same theme throughout the New Testament not only in the historic ministry of Christ himself in his own association with publicans and sinners: prostitutes, politicians, tax collectors, the diseased, demoniacs, the poor, soldiers, thieves, hoodlums and, even, ecclesiastical authorities, but also in the later apostolic ministry of the Church of Christ with its emphatic stress upon the posture of the Church as in, though not of, the world.

It is, simply, not possible to listen to the letters of the New Testament — Romans, Colossians, Galatians, Hebrews, Timothy, James, to name the most obvious examples — without hearing this same theme. And the same can be said, I do

believe, of that most neglected work of all in the Bible — the Book of Revelation to John.

But, for now, take the passage from James. James is a book of practical theology, as it is now called in the seminaries — thereby obscuring the fact that all theology which has integrity in the gospel is inherently practical. James counsels that the practice of the Christian faith means an involvement in the world which does not conform the Christian to the world. Visit orphans, comfort widows, care for the unwanted, seek out the outcasts, love your enemy but in a way which leaves one free from the world, free from all worldly conformities, free from the secular ethics of success, free from the idols of security, riches, fame, property, popularity, free from self-indulgence and, what is in the end the same thing, free from all attempts at self-justification, free from the wiles of the devil and free, at last, from the power of death at work in the world.

Be in but not of the world. Be involved but unstained.

How shall this apparent paradox be understood?

Abstinence Is Involvement

PERHAPS the first thing to keep in mind is that in this world there is no such things as neutrality about any public issue. To be sure some societies permit a greater freedom of involvement in public dialogue to their citizens and their institutions than do others, but in no society, least of all one which professes to be a political democracy, is abstinence from public controversy a responsible alternative or neutrality in public affairs an intelligent option. Every citizen and every institution is involved in one way or another either by intention or default.

Those who suppose they can withdraw only deceive themselves because deliberate abstinence or asserted neutrality are themselves forms of involvement in politics. It is possible to conceive of circumstances, I guess, where these forms of involvement may be rationalized, but let no citizen or institution, including the Church, be so naive as to consider that these are anything else than particular ways of becoming and being involved in politics.

To take the most obvious example, in American society, the citizen who does not cast his vote gives in fact the weight of his vote to the candidate who happens to win the election. His abstinence or neutrality amount to support for the winner, since his vote, if cast, might have

defeated the candidate who won. The issue, in such circumstances, is not really either abstention or neutrality but the uncritical and indiscriminating use of suffrage. Such a citizen allows others to determine by their votes the political consequences of his default. It is a form of involvement, all right, though it seems to be a stupid way to be involved.

Fascism By Default

MUCH THE SAME applies to the great institutional powers within a society. One has only to recall what happened in Germany a few years ago to see that what contributed more than perhaps anything else to the usurption of political democracy and the rise of totalitarianism in Germany in the thirties was the silence and default of the Church and of the university. The Church and the university as institutions, as well as multitudes (though not all) of Church members and intellectuals, became accomplices of Hitler's rise to power, by their blindness to political realities, by their preoccupation with academic theology, by their reluctance to speak out, by their refusal to protest.

There were, of course, the paramilitary groups, the radical anti-semites, the political fanatics at work on the scene actively seeking to establish Nazism in power, but they were mightily and, in retrospect it seems, indispensably supported by abstention, neutrality, silence and default by Christian people and by the intelligensia, save for those few who did speak out and were either banished from the nation or imprisoned or condemned to die.

In politics, and particular in the politics of democracy, every citizen and every institution is involved, whether they like it or not, whether they realize it or not, whether they desire it or not. The serious issue is not whether one is involved, but how one is involved: naively, complacently, stupidly or intentionally, outspokenly and intelligently.

That being so, I suggest that the one virtually certain way to be in the world as a Christian and to be conformed to the world, the way to be defiled in one's involvement, is in vainly practicing abstinence and supposing that one is thereby not involved.

The Incarnation Means Involvement

BUT IF THERE is no option of withdrawal, if silence is a form of involvement, if default abets the winning side, if all are in fact involved, how

shall Christian people and how shall the Church be responsible in their political involvement? How shall they be involved and yet remain unstained by the world?

Surely the answer to that is: in the very manner of Christ's own ministry in this world.

The most elementary doctrine of the faith is the Incarnation. The Incarnation is not a theological abstraction — though it often be mentioned that way in catachism. It is not some quaint or spooky figure of speech. It is not even a difficult mystery, on the contrary, the Incarnation means that God himself, in Christ, has shattered for men, the very mystery of his being and purpose and activity in this world. The Incarnation means God's passion for the world's actual life — including its politics, along with all else — is such that he enters and acts in this world for himself.

Apart from the Incarnation there is no meaning in Christmas's message that God is with men, nor in Easter's assurance that God acts in this world for the benefit of all men, nor in the evidence that in Pentecost God inaugurates the true society which is the Church.

In other words, the Church and the Christian people are not simply involved in politics because of the nature of politics as such by which all are involved and abstinence is a fiction, but they are involved profoundly in politics because they honor and celebrate God's own presence and action in this world, because they know that the world — in all its strife and confusion, brokenness and travail — is the scene of God's work and the subject of God's love.

According to the gospel God is not confined to the sanctuaries of the Church. He is not enshrined in any altar. The reason Christians gather now and then in their sanctuaries is not because God is there, but rather to celebrate and proclaim God's presence and action outside the sanctuaries in the common life of the world. Worship which has integrity in the gospel is always an intercession by God's people for the cares and needs of the world and always a thanksgiving — a eucharist — for God's love for the world. Worship at the altar is thus authenticated by the constant involvement of the people of the Church in the world's life and by the public witness of the Church in the world.

It is sometimes asserted that the Church should only concern itself occasionally in public affairs where society is confronted with a "moral" issue. The problem with that view is that it

over-simplifies the moral conflict in the world. There is no issue in society which is not a moral issue, in fact, though the attention of conscience may be from time to time more acute about some issues rather than others. Yet in this world — in a fallen world — all men live at each other's expense and every decision and action, even those which seem trivial or only private or unambiguous, is consequentially related to the lives of all men.

Men live at each other's expense — that is — what you or I decide and do affects all other men and every decision and action is thus a moral issue, an expression of one's responsibility for and love for other men or else a sign of one's disregard for and alienation from other men. Indeed, on the Last Day, though not before, God's own judgment of every act, word and deed of every man will expose the moral disposition of each man in relationship to all other men. Meanwhile, each man must make his own decisions knowing that each decision is a moral decision with consequences for all other men but not knowing what many of those consequences are or will be until he is judged by God's mercy. Meanwhile, each man must take his stand in the practical affairs of this world in fear and trembling.

The Style of Political Witness

THERE IS no convenient set of rules, no simple blueprint, no simplistic ethics of decision for the Christian. The Christian witness in society does not consist of praising and practicing the "Golden Rule," which is a secular ethic of self-interest anyway that demeans the essence of the gospel. But there are some clues about the style of witness characteristic of the Christian life in the world both for the Church as such and for the individual member of the Church.

One thing is that the Christian takes history very seriously. If for no other reason he regards the actual day-to-day existence of the world realistically as a way of acknowledging and honoring God's own presence and action in the real world in which men live and fight and love and vote and work and die. And the Christian knows, more sensitively and sensibly than other men, that this world is a fallen world. That does not mean that it is an evil world, it means that this world is a place in which death is militant and aggressive and at work in all things and that, apart from God's work in all things, death is the only meaning in history. The Christian knows

that in this world which is, apart from God, a realm of death all relationships have been broken and all men suffer not only estrangement from one another but even alienation from themselves.

Of all men, the Christian is the most blunt and relentless realist. He knows that no institution, no ideology, no form of government, no society can heal the brokenness or prevail against the power of death. And though the Christian acts in this world and in particular circumstances in a society for this or that cause, though the Christian takes his stand and speaks out specifically, he does not as the servant of some race or class or political system or ideology but as a use of his freedom from just such idols.

That means, of course, that the posture of the Christian is inherently and consistently radical. (I do not use the word in any of its political connotations). The Christian is perpetually in the position of complaining about the status quo, whatever it happens to be. His insight and experience of reconciliation in Christ is such that no estate in secular society can possibly correspond to or much approximate the true society of which he is a citizen in Christ.

He is, everywhere in every society, an alien. He is always, in any society, in protest. Even when a cause which he has himself supported prevails, he will not be content, but will, so to speak, be the first to turn around and say — "That's fine. We have now done this or that, but it is not enough."

To be concrete, in just one example, many Christians at the present time in the United States are deeply and actively involved in the struggle to achieve integration in American public life. The Christian in that struggle, however, will characteristically be the first to recognize that integration of American society, as much as it is absolutely essential to the survival of this nation, is in no way to be confused with or identified with the Kingdom of God. Integration, from a Christian point of view, must be counted as a modest, conservative, attainable, and necessary social and political objective in this nation at this time, it is by no means the measure of reconciliation among men in this world.

And let it be repeated right here that the proximate and provisional nature of secular political movements in no way counsels Christians to abstain from involvement in such issues. Let it be as plain as it can be: abstinence is, theologically speaking, a form of nihilism, an affirmation of death as the ultimate reality in human existence.

The True Society

THE CHRISTIAN is concerned, politically, for all men in all the diversity of problems and issues of public life. Characteristically the sign of the inclusiveness and extremity of the Christian's concern is represented and embodied in his specific care for those who, in a given time in society, are the least in that society, for those whom all the rest have ignored or forgotten or cast-out or otherwise have abandoned to death.

The venerable ministry of Christians, since the very days of the New Testament, for instance, for the poor is not simply compassion for their endurance of unemployment or hunger or cold or sickness or rejection by society but is also at the same time a way of caring for all others in society who are not poor or who have some security from the assaults of poverty. And, in the end, the Christian knows that his passion for the world, his involvement in society, his stand in politics, his witness in the present age encompasses even his own enemy, even those whom he opposes in some specific controversy, even those who would deny the freedom of his witness, even those who hate him, and especially those who are threatened by his witness.

In the end, the Christian political witness for the Church of Christ means demonstrating in and to the world what the true society is by the living example of the society of the Church, and, for the individual Christian, political witness means to affirm and love the true humanity of men in Christ in the midst of men's betrayal of that gift.

In the end, the Christian political witness is the boldness to trust that God's love for this world's existence is redemptive, so Christians are free to live in this world by grace in all practical matters and political decisions.

THANKS FOR THE HELP

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THE EARLIEST RECORDS OF JESUS

By O. Sydney Barr

Professor at General Theological Seminary

A REVIEW OF A BOOK WITH THE ABOVE

TITLE BY FRANCIS WRIGHT BEARE

THIS BOOK is especially welcome. It is such as to make one ask, "Why didn't someone think of this before?" Clergy, in particular, will find it an excellent up-to-date review of their seminary studies in the Gospels and, by all means, should have it on their shelves. More than this, though, the layman will find it fascinating, and a work which will resolve not a few of the puzzles which are evident to even a cursory knowledge of the New Testament. The book is solid fare, but not highly technical, and could be used effectively not only for adult study courses, but also would make a superior text for students in college and seminary.

As is well known, the first three Gospels (Matthew, Mark, Luke) are closely related. Mark, it is almost unanimously agreed, was the first to be written, sometime between 65 and 75 a.d. Luke (85-100 a.d.) and Matthew (85-100 a.d.), independently of each other, copied (often times almost verbatim) large portions of Mark. There is also a considerable amount of material in the two later Gospels which Mark does not have.

All this becomes intriguingly apparent when we take the three Gospels and set them side by side in parallel columns — as is done, for example, in Huck's famous "Synopsis of the First Three Gospels," for which Professor Beare's book has been written as a "companion." Why, for instance, does Mark make no mention of Jesus' birth and infancy, whereas both Luke and Matthew — although in totally different manner — do? Why does Mark say of Jesus, "Is not this the carpenter, the son of Mary?" Luke, "Is not this Joseph's Son?", and Matthew, "Is not this the carpenter's son? Is not his mother called Mary?" Why does Luke omit so much of Matthew's Sermon on the Mount? Why do Luke and Matthew tell us of John the Baptist's preaching of repentance in identical words, whereas their accounts of Jesus' temptation differ drastically not only in wording but in order? Why do we

have only in Luke the account of Jesus' examination before Herod?

These and innumerable other such questions are not new; they have been debated for years. But Professor Beare's "commentary" — despite his disclaimer on page 11, this is the least inadequate description — throughout stresses particularly the differences and similarities between the first three Gospels. In his own words, he puts it this way: "Their purpose (these notes, as Beare modestly describes his work) is rather to lead the student into an understanding of the nature of the materials with which he has to deal, and of the motives and methods of the Evangelists. Exegesis and exposition are therefore subordinated to the discussion of the problems raised by criticism."

Diversity in Traditions

AS A RESULT of this approach, two things become apparent. First, we see clearly that, before the Gospels were written, there had developed relatively firm traditions as to the words and deeds, and faith's understanding thereof, of Jesus. Second — and equally important — it becomes clear that there was a rich diversity within that tradition. Each Evangelist — and each prior purveyor of the oral tradition — brought to bear upon the sacred memory of Jesus' ministry different needs, a different perspective, a different understanding, and a different experience of Jesus Crucified-Risen. It was this fact — if we may oversimplify a bit — which caused modifications of the tradition and, at least in part, accounts for the puzzling differences which were noted above. The important thing is that these differences are not the result of confusion, they are not evidence that Christianity stands on the shaky foundations of an unreliable tradition. Quite the contrary, they point to the overwhelming richness of earliest Christian experience, and, behind this, to the reality and power of the Christ who had so completely upturned every aspect of their lives. This, it should be noted, has proved generally to be the fruit of historical criticism

The Earliest Records of Jesus by
Francis Wright Beare. Abingdon. \$6.50

as applied to the New Testament — that while it does in some respects change our picture of the first beginnings, it continues to uncover for us a wealth of material which adds immeasurably to our understanding of the “why” and “how” and “wherefore” of Christian origins.

The author’s brief introduction is an excellent succinct exposition of that oral tradition which was the medium of memory and missionary preaching and instruction for the earliest Christians, and of that process by means of which that tradition became a written one — our Gospels. And then, section by section — the divisions correspond to those in the second English edition of Huck’s “Synopsis,” edited by B. H. Throckmorton, Jr., New York: Nelson, 1957 — the reader will profit by having this aid in front of him as he tackles Beare’s study — he takes us through the Gospel materials. Included are excellent explanations of biblical ways and

customs and language. For those who wish to pursue further, there are copious bibliographical references in the body of the text.

Neither Dry Nor Dull

AND NOT LEAST, this book proves that biblical scholarship need not be dry, and that commentaries need not be dull! It is an especially valuable addition for the library of anyone who is interested in Christians origins. Testimony to this is the fact that the first edition has been sold out, and a new one, with corrections, is now available.

Frank W. Beare is professor of New Testament studies at Trinity College, Toronto, Canada. He has written widely in both the biblical and related fields. His commentaries on I Peter and Philippians, and — in Vol. 10 of the Interpreter’s Bible — on Colossians and Ephesians are especially well known.

THE EIGHTH DEADLY SIN

By Allen F. Kremer

Episcopal Priest and College Lecturer

IF WE ARE GOING TO LIST SEVEN WHY NOT

ADD ANOTHER THAT IS EQUALLY DEADLY?

CHRISTIAN theologians with their so-called God wisdom have presumed to decide what is a deadly sin and what is not. There are those sins which can be forgiven; those which cannot. This sacred conclusion offers a concise and final system which unfortunately has little or anything to do with the Christian gospel. Neither the New Testament nor the Old Testament has the presumption to declare so neatly and definitively a precise degree of deadliness.

There are the traditional seven sins but I add one other which I believe is probably more deadly than any which is listed. Certainly it is more baffling. Perhaps it can be related to the basic sin of pride or self-centeredness which has somehow been agreed upon as The Sin. I will not presume to say it is not The Sin. I will simply raise the question as to how another human failing or sin, if you prefer, fits into the tidy scheme of what is wrong with man.

What about ignorance, stupidity, or lack of

knowledge or, if it sounds better “Agnosis”? What about the poor benighted human who just “does not have it”? Where does he fit into the theological scheme? He just does not know “the faith once for all delivered to the saints”. What do the holy fathers do about him? Consign him to hell, limbo or where? They probably have an answer. But let’s forget it for somehow I feel that it might differ from the answer the Lord would give. He was always much more understanding than his interpreters.

The closest problems of human relationships often stem from a lack of knowledge. Husbands and wives who do not mean to hurt each other, do so constantly because they do not know any better. They mean well. Yes, they love each other, but they do not know how to live closely with each other. The reply is, if there is faith and love, there is a way. I answer that there are too many cases where there is faith and love, and

hope and charity but throw in ignorance and there is no way.

There are millions of people who are duped on foreign policy; they wish only to live in peace. They would never, given a chance, willfully hurt or kill anyone. Yet through lack of knowledge they support a policy of death and destruction to millions of people, including themselves. They are not deliberately evil. They simply do not know any better. They are loyal. They are honest. They live by the limited concepts which they have received. But they are ignorant. They do not know. The Gnosis is not there.

Within the Church there are innumerable petty minds, trying to chip away at one another. The ignorance is frightful. Little people making fantastic claims about their Church, and even worse, their branch of the Church which They have decided is The Church. Most of these claimants have nothing whatsoever to back them up except their own pious enthusiasm. Eliminate

the unthinking sheep-like followers who pay money to perpetuate the absurdity and nothing would be left. Stupidity, ignorance, innocent and willful lack of knowledge, wreck havoc.

Do not these attitudes single or combined constitute a deadly sin? Is there less responsibility in these attitudes than for example, in lust, envy or malice? It is hard to think that one sets his mind to these deadly sins. It is equally hard to think that one says, "I want to be stupid. I don't want to know". This is the ultimate of Agnosis.

But, there it is and it is an evil thing causing as much unhappiness, unsettling as many lives, separating humans from each other and their God as any other factor.

It is unreasonable, of course, but it exists — as much a reality as any one of the seven deadly sins. And it is as deadly.

I am not sure at all that we have any right to list them so glibly, but if we can list seven—why not list the eighth?

- NEW BOOKS -

E. John Mohr
Book Editor

ZWINGLI: THIRD MAN OF THE REFORMATION by Jean Rillet. Translated by Harold Knight. Westminster. \$6.00

Ulrich Zwingli, the founder of Protestantism in German-speaking Switzerland, was a contemporary of Luther, and almost a generation older than Calvin. When the average Anglican thinks of Protestantism, he is apt to be thinking about Zwinglianism even though he may not realize it. Calvin was a high churchman; not so Zwingli. Luther contended stubbornly for the bodily presence of Christ in the eucharist; not so Zwingli. If Luther and Calvin were the two most eminent architects of the Reformation, Zwingli was the third. Indeed, much of the popular, common-garden variety Protestantism encountered in the United States today is more nearly Zwinglian than Lutheran or Calvinist. So the practical impact of Zwingli's ideas upon the history of Protestantism should not be underestimated.

The author of this attractive and readable account is a minister of the Swiss Reformed Church on the staff

of St. Peter's Cathedral in Geneva. He has good command of Zwinglian bibliography, and makes considerable use of the monumental work of Walter Kohler.

The book is not only a rather complete biography of Zwingli and a picture of the man as a human being, but is also a helpful resume of his theological ideas.

Like all the reformers, Zwingli assigned supreme authority to Holy Scripture. He held the orthodox doctrine of God, and agreed with Luther in teaching justification by faith and in rejecting the medieval system of merit. Zwingli was a strong predestinarian. He inherited from the civil government of Zurich a system of government by councils, as Calvin was later to do, somewhat reluctantly, at Geneva. Like the French reformer, he sought to raise the moral tone of the community.

The great differences lay in the doctrine of the holy communion. The famous Marburg colloquy of 1529, arranged by Prince Philip of Hesse, brought Luther and Zwingli together in theological conversation, but failed to produce agreement. Luther rather stubbornly insisted on an objective presence of Christ in the elements, while Zwingli taught the "bare memorial" ("real absence") theory so widely associated in the popular mind with Protestantism. Some years later, of course, Calvin was to advance his doctrine of a

spiritual real presence, which was a middle-of-the-road position.

The book is sympathetic to Zwingli, but it is not propaganda. While showing that Zwingli was far more positive and constructive than is commonly supposed, it does nothing to qualify the impression that the Zwinglian reformation was radical in spirit when compared with the work of the more catholic-minded Calvin and Luther.

— GEORGE MORREL

The reviewer is rector of St. Simon's Parish, San Fernando, California, and instructor in Anglican Theology, Bloy House Theological School, Los Angeles.

UNITY IN FREEDOM by Augustin Cardinal Bea. Harper and Row. \$5.00

It seems unaccountable that the Vatican Council has not yet made any statement on religious liberty, or on the Jewish people and the charge of "deicide". But large bodies move slowly! And the Vatican reporters assure us that the Council does not wish to act hastily and then regret ill-chosen words, in years to come. There may be deeper reasons, e.g. the opposition of the conservatives in the Curia and elsewhere. But the ultimate outcome is assured, the chief guarantee being the character and convictions of the great Cardinal Bea, a man of profoundly Christian character and the widest and most generous human sympathies

and principles. This book is a kind of forecast of what we may expect when the Council finally acts, for Cardinal Bea is head of the Commission which is at work on the statements.

Incidentally, he cautions against too sanguine a view of reunion. The Council is not an "ecumenical conference", and the goal of reunion may be a considerable way ahead, in the future. But at least the Church is moving in that direction. Moreover, Cardinal Bea's view is all-embracing. His subtitle is "Reflections on the Human Family", and much of the book deals with world problems. Indeed, that is really the focus and target of much of the Council's thinking, that is among the great majority of the Roman Catholic Bishops, of whom we hear from time to time. Others may make the speeches. The Council Fathers do the voting. And in voting it is the majority that counts. That is why we are so optimistic.

— FREDERICK C. GRANT

Dr. Grant, professor emeritus of Biblical Theology, Union Theological Seminary, New York, was an official Anglican observer at the first session of the Vatican Council.

Note: — This review was written before the close of the third session of the Council on Nov. 21. Action was taken, as Dr. Grant foresaw. Sanche de Gramont, writing for the New York Herald Tribune, concluded his account of the struggle between the conservatives and liberals, said; "The Fathers showed they were breaking the restrictive mold of past Councils to correct old mistakes and prevent new ones. The declaration on the Jews, after running the gantlet of political intrigue and mysterious redraftings, emerged as a firm basis for an end to anti-Semitism in the Church. The declaration on religious liberty also showed the Council pressing for freedom of conscience, even though it might some day lead the Church to modify its most-favored religion position in many countries."

MARRIAGE TODAY

By

Albert Reissner

Psychoanalyst of Brooklyn, N. Y.

A Reprint as a pamphlet of his lecture at Trinity Church, New York.

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The Witness

Tunkhannock,

Pennsylvania

News from Around the World

Ecumenical Service was held Advent Sunday at Christ Church, Cambridge, Mass., declared by Rector Gardiner Day to be "the first time that the clergy and choir of a Roman Catholic and an Episcopal Church have joined together in a full service of worship in this country." Permission for the service was authorized by Cardinal Cushing and Bishop Stokes. There were two sermons, one by the Episcopal bishop and the other by Bishop Riley of Boston, representing the Cardinal. R. C. Chaplain J. I. Collins and P. E. Chaplain W. J. Schneider, who minister to Harvard and Radcliffe students, read the lessons. Rector Day and Msgr. A. F. Hickey, vicar general of the R. C. archdiocese, took part in the service. The chaplains in a joint statement said; "This service witnesses to that which brings us together. For centuries we have emphasized our differences, and differences remain. Today in the midst of our differences we point to that which brings us together."

Eastern Orthodox Churches, meeting in Rhodes with delegates from all 14, voted in favor of conversations with the Roman Church, stressing "on equal terms" and under "right conditions". Resumption of meetings with the Anglican Church — last held in 1931 — was endorsed with nominations of those to take part, subject to approval of Patriarch Athenagoras. At the end of the two-week meeting, the Patriarch was honored at a dinner with the head of the Romanian delegation saying that under the Patriarch's leadership Orthodoxy no longer occupies "herself only with her own problems," but shows concern about all problems facing the world.

That the Romanian metropolitan made the speech was significant since it — along with Russia, Poland, Czechoslovakia, Georgia — had voted against conversations with Rome at the Pan-Orthodox conference held in 1963.

A Deal approved by the congregation of National Presbyterian Church, Washington, netted 2-million plus 12.4 acres containing four buildings, not far from the Episcopal cathedral. So the downtown landmark, where several presidents worshipped, will be torn down to make room for an office building.

A Strong Movement toward union among young Protestant Churches in the newly-independent French-speaking African nations was reported in Paris by Pastor Charles Bonzon, director of the evangelical mission society.

Addressing the interdenominational agency's General Assembly, he said that this unity movement has been particularly promoted by the autonomous new Churches which originated through the work of the society's missionaries.

He said that young African Churches are showing a growing impatience with denominational divisions brought about by some 150 years of missionary activities by diverse church groups.

Discussions looking toward a united Protestant Church are already going on in such countries as Malagasy, Zambia (formerly Northern Rhodesia) and South Cameroons, Pastor Bonzon told delegates.

At ecumenical assemblies, he said, African and Asian participants are a major force in promoting unity among Protestant Churches. Such efforts, he

added, receive strong support from the society.

Pastor Bonzon also reported that while the young African Churches are administered by native personnel, there is need for more missionaries to supplement their own clergy. These missionaries work under the jurisdiction of local churches,

which have adopted their own forms of liturgical and doctrinal expression.

He said that the Protestant communities created through the missions society in French-speaking Africa have about 1,150,000 members, some 600 native clergy and 170,000 pupils in church schools.

Four Dying Churches in Schellsburg, Pa. — population, 288 — have found new life through merger. All of them had visiting ministers, some of them serving as many as seven widely scattered churches. There was no resident minister in the town. The congregations first tried federation which didn't work too well. So under the leadership of the secretary of the state's council of churches they voted to merge. United Church of Christ was asked to appoint a resident pastor, the other three denominations — Lutheran, Methodist, Presbyterian — withdrawing from the scene. Attendance and financial support has considerably exceeded previous combined totals. Over two-thirds of the total population has attended services on several occasions.

Common Lord's Prayer is likely. Protestant, Roman Catholic working on a revision of the Lord's Prayer to make it acceptable for common recitation by French Christians, according to Father M. Gy, a director of the center of pastoral liturgy in Paris.

He said it is hoped that the translation will replace the slightly differing versions now used by Christians and make it possible for joint recitation of the prayer at ecumenical gatherings.

It also was reported that Catholic translators are working on an official French text for those parts of the mass to be said in the vernacular as a result of the Vatican Council's constitution on the liturgy.

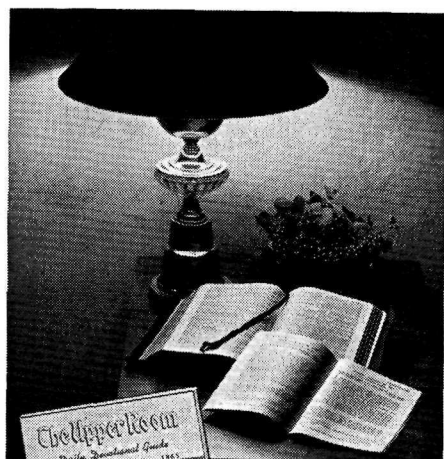
Mass is expected to be said in French in this country shortly after the New Year. The French translation also is to be used by French-speaking Catholics in Belgium, Switzerland, Canada and former colonies of France.

Missionaries, most retired, came together November 18 to commemorate the memory of one of their peers, Dr. John Wilson Wood, who served for 40 years as director of overseas missions at the national headquarters of the Episcopal Church. Following a brief service of worship, the group of 75 trooped up to the eighth floor to dedicate the office of the director of the overseas department to Dr. Wood. Furnishings of the office, now occupied by Bishop Stephen F. Bayne, Jr., were made possible by the contributions of 103 missionaries who served in the overseas mission field under Dr. Wood's direction. Quite appropriately, Bishop John B. Bentley, who himself directed overseas mission work from 1940-64, dedicated the office with words of praise for Dr. Wood's "40 long years of service."

"These are long years," he said, half-humorously adding, "If you don't think so, you should try it sometime."

Dean Reus-Froylan was consecrated bishop coadjutor of Puerto Rico on Nov. 30 at the cathedral at Santurce. Arthur Lichtenberger, Presiding Bishop, was the consecrator, with Bishop Swift of Puerto Rico and Bishop Boynton of New York the co-consecrators.

Program Unit of NCC designed to "follow the needs of the ordained minister from recruitment to retirement" gets under way at the beginning of the year. The idea is to relate clergymen to specialized ministries in hospitals, with drug addicts, in labor unions.



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--- BACKFIRE ---

Charles A. Higgins

*Dean of Trinity Cathedral,
Little Rock, Arkansas*

Barbara St. Claire wonders (11-12) whether it is the old women that deputies to General Convention are afraid of when they vote against changing "layman" to, "lay person". Since the average age of delegates to the Triennial appears to be rather ripe she may have a point — but I doubt it. If there is any particular type of woman the deputies are afraid of it is those who are professionally related to the church by marriage or employment. These "pros"

are prominent at Triennial. They make splendid contributions to the Church and doubtless many of them would make excellent deputies — but to call them "lay persons" is a ridiculous broadening of the meaning of "lay".

In fact the present number of lay deputies who are professionally related to the Church through their employment indicates, entirely aside from consideration of sex, that a reappraisal of the qualifications of deputies is overdue. Since the Church probably provides the living for 250 lay women to every layman, the fears of some deputies who want the House of Deputies to maintain a balance between professionals and non-professionals is understandable.

The possible reduction of true lay representation in the deputies and the consequent silencing of 95% of the membership of the Church is an alarming prospect.

Eugene S. Patton

Vicar of St. John's, Ashland, Pa.

A loud Amen! to Bill Gray's article about holy communion before confirmation. Each day

I find it increasingly difficult to justify our present position — that children must be confirmed before they may receive communion.

If we are to take seriously the teaching of the catechism, then I feel we are doing our children a great disservice by continuing to make confirmation a requirement for receiving communion. If a sacrament is the means whereby we receive spiritual grace, and if the benefits of the sacrament of the Lord's Supper is the strengthening and refreshing of our souls by the body and blood of Christ — if all this is true, as stated in the catechism, then how dare we have the audacity to withhold communion from our unconfirmed children?

The position of the bishops, to judge from their action at General Convention, is that visitors who have not been confirmed by a bishop may receive communion in the Episcopal Church. Why, then, is it necessary that our children be confirmed first? Yes, I know about the rubric on page 299, but why must it apply to our own children and not to adult visitors?

Perhaps it served a good purpose at one time in our history to make a "lesser" sacrament (confirmation) prerequisite to a sacrament that is "generally necessary to salvation" (the supper of the Lord). But I just do not see that this has validity today.

I don't know what is the proper age for a child to receive communion. The Orthodox practice seems to have much merit.

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But I would very much like to see children begin to receive communion no later than the second grade.

J. Robert Zimmerman

Rector of Calvary, Danvers, Mass.

Many thanks are due to the Witness for publishing William B. Gray's article about communion before confirmation (11/19). It opens this topic for serious discussion in our Episcopalian tradition, as it has been for some time in other traditions, notably the Lutheran.

I would venture to suggest a few practical reasons why I think his viewpoint is valid. First of all, the family service. For a decade or more, now, most Episcopal churches have combined the church's regular worship with their education program. This means that children must attend a service in which they cannot fully participate. This was not a problem in the days when children went to church school with "opening exercises" until they were confirmed.

Secondly, the liturgical movement, with its stress upon the centrality of holy communion. This is true in all of our parishes, regardless of the frequency of celebration, but it is acute in those parishes which have a family eucharist bi-monthly, or even weekly. It is good that children should grow up on the eucharistic worship of the church. But it is boring to them when they cannot climax their participation with the reception of the sacrament.

In order to compensate for this, many parishes "bless" the children at the altar rail. I feel that this is an unsatisfactory solution. It is unrubrical, it is meaningless, and it, too becomes boring. How much better to let these children receive their Lord at a level they can understand!

Finally, there is the debate over the meaning of confirma-

tion itself. To be sure, it is the gift of the Holy Spirit. But does this mean that the Spirit isn't present in baptism? Certainly not. As Dr. Charles Smith of ETS said, the Spirit is given with a purpose, such as ordination; and the gift of the Spirit in confirmation has been interpreted to mean the strengthening gift to lead an adult Christian life.

It is here that Bishop Bardsley's proposal makes much sense to me. I think there is much to be said that the period of adolescence is to be avoided for confirmation because of the emotional turmoil. But to confirm before this, for example at age ten, is too young to have meaning for an adult decision for Christ. A much better age would be immediate post-adolescence, for example, sixteen. This would make the "adult decision" meaningful to the confirmand, and would also make the task of instruction for confirmation a more important one. But most assuredly, we do not intend to make young people wait until they are sixteen to receive holy communion.

Therefore, in light of Mr. Gray's comments, and the comments I have made above, I propose for consideration the following: first communion at eight following some months of instruction on a modernized catechism; confirmation at sixteen following a full year of instruction on the faith of the Church at the high school level.

Frances E. Tebeau

Churchwoman of Everett, Wash.

Referring to your editorial in the October 29th issue of the Witness, relative to "Johnnie Jones" newly elected Presiding Bishop.

I am deeply offended at such a flip reference to a bishop of the Episcopal Church. In this age of sloppy casualness, unbridled self-gratification and slavish obedience to fads and

status symbols, dignity, self-discipline and obedience are considered stuffy and square. However, I submit to you that though Christ did move among the dispossessed, the sick and maimed, thieves and harlots and the rapacious poor but he did not for a moment lay aside his dignity. In the midst of his wondrous love and compassion was a dignity and majesty that drew those who became his followers, as much as his love and compassion. And so it must be now. After each burial service for my parents, held in the church, a number of people, not of our church, and some of no persuasion at all, came to me and said they were greatly impressed with the simplicity, beauty and dignity of the service.

The church is the only place in the whole world where one can go with no more status than the little girl who 1900 years ago was refused a room at the inn, and offer one's puny substance and service, imperfect prayers and foolish, wayward heart and know that these meager offerings are welcomed, purified, sanctified and perfected and accepted by a love greater than the human heart can hold.

Deeply rooted as our corner of Christ's Church is in the beginnings of the Church we do have a dignity, self-discipline and obedience to at least try to maintain—in the deepest meanings of these words, which is to say in their Christ-like implications. There is no room for flipness and sloppiness in the things pertaining to the teachings and to those who teach and uphold them, and the ordained offices of the Church and those who hold them.

It is because this beloved corner of Christ's Church we call the Episcopal Church is the most precious thing in my life, that I cannot be silent about this matter.

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