

The **+** WITNESS

JANUARY 14, 1965

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NEW YORK CITY

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Story of the Week

Rumpus in England When Vicars Refuse to Baptize Infants

★ Four Anglican vicars who have publicly rebelled against Church of England policy of infant baptism were criticized severely by the Church Times.

Two of them resigned over the baptism issue and two others said they had decided to baptize no more babies. The Times acknowledged their feelings on the issue, which it said has sometimes been one "of acute controversy," but declared editorially: "There should be no sympathy at all with those priests who in the past week or two have publicized their outright refusal to administer holy baptism to any infants at all. Such a refusal is in plain defiance of the rule and practice of the Church from which they derive their orders, and in which they hold their office and earn their living."

"The Church of England is committed at present to infant baptism, beyond all argument . . . and every priest at his ordination has solemnly promised always so to minister the sacraments . . ."

The four priests are the Rev. H. M. Carson of St. Paul's, Cambridge; the Rev. George Forester of St. Paul's, Beckenham; the Rev. Richard Vick of St. Paul's Westcliff-on-Sea; and the Rev. Christopher Wansey of Roydon.

Mr. Carson announced his resignation after criticizing the Church attitude toward wedd-

ings, burials and baptisms, and was later re-baptized at a Free Church in another district. He said his greatest problem was infant baptism, adding: "I was unhappy about the service in which the child baptized is declared to be regenerated."

Then Vick and Wansey, both of the diocese of Chelmsford, announced that they had decided not to baptize infants. Finally, Forester announced he was relinquishing his benefice. "I shall wait upon God," he declared. "I have been on this road since 1950, and I was baptized myself as an adult just before I went up to Cambridge University."

Vick said he believed infant baptism was an unscriptural practice; he suggested a service of "dedication" in which a baby is blessed and received into the Church. He also thought children should not be baptized until they were of sufficient age to decide for themselves.

He had been told by Bishop John Tiarks of Chelmsford, he said, that he should resign if his decision was final.

Wansey said he had written to the bishop asking him to invite all clergy in his diocese to stop baptizing infants. "To baptize an infant when he or she has neither repentance nor faith," he said, "not only eviscerates the sacrament but also deprives that child of the privi-

lege and unique experience of adult baptism in later years. This is a deprivation that the Church should not follow."

The Times agreed that there are many priests within the Church of England who favor some measure of reform of the present system of baptism, who find it difficult to square with their consciences the admission to the font indiscriminately of children whose parents and godparents show little sign of intending to bring them up within the Church's fellowship.

It also said a clergyman had the right to campaign for an alteration in the law and practice of the Church, if he thinks that they are in error. But, it added, "he has no right to behave as if they did not exist and to arrogate to himself authority to judge these matters for himself. We hope that a statement may soon be forthcoming from the highest authority to remind dissident clergy of their plain duty and their solemn oaths."

ST. JOHN'S WASHINGTON HAS FAMOUS CROSS

★ The Rev. John C. Harper, rector of St. John's Church, Washington, D. C., has announced the gift to the church as a memorial to the late Katherine Ingalls Graves of a reproduction of a famous Irish 12th century cross.

This new ecclesiastical ornament will be carried as a processional cross. The original of this cross, known as the Cross

of Cong, is one of the principal treasures of the National Museum of Ireland. So far as is known only two previous reproductions of the cross have been made, one about 100 years ago and another more recently for the Archbishop of Melbourne in Australia.

The Cross of Cong was made about the year A.D. 1123 for Turlough O'Connor, King of Ireland, (A.D. 1106-1156). It appears to have been originally made for the church in Galway, and it was probably transferred to County Mayo some time in the twelfth century.

Top Religious Stories of 1964 Picked by Secular Reporters

★ Use of English, or other modern languages, in some parts of the mass, to replace the traditional Latin, was ranked the top religious story in 1964 in a poll among U.S. religion editors and reporters conducted by the religious newswriters association.

Other Roman Catholic developments dominated the religious news of 1964, according to the men and women who report, write and edit news of religion for U.S. and Canadian press associations and daily newspapers.

The English Mass scored 204 points of a possible 300 and was rated the top story by one-third of the editors and writers.

In second place, with 167 points, was the religious liberty issue at the Vatican Council, especially Pope Paul's rejection of a plea by 1,400 bishops for a vote on the statement at the recent third session. In the poll, one writer noted the "emergence of American bishops as leaders of the liberal bloc."

Two other Vatican Council developments tied for third place at 157 points each. These were the Council's preliminary approval of a Catholic-Jewish statement absolving Jews of the charge of decide in the crucifixion of Christ, and the principle of collegiality — the concept of bishops sharing in the Church's government under supreme authority of the Pope.

Collegiality was defined in the constitution on the Church, approved by the Council's third session and promulgated by the Pope.

The remaining seven of the top ten stories were:

- Vatican Council debate on birth control, during which demands were made for a more liberal Church stand (143 points).

- Pope Paul's air flight to India, longest journey ever made by a reigning pontiff (130).

- Participation of churches in the civil rights movement (105).

- Vatican Council's Decree on Ecumenism, allowing Catholics to pray with other Christians in certain specified circumstances (74).

- A virtual tie between permitting mature married deacons to serve in the Catholic Church (56) and the award of the Nobel Peace Prize to Martin Luther King, Jr., (54).

- Massacre of Dr. Paul Carlson, a medical missionary, and other Christian missionaries by Congo rebels (48).

- A virtual three-way tie: the temporary setback to proposals for a merger of six Protestant denominations, with the Methodist Church declining to join in drafting specific union proposals but agreeing to re-

sume negotiations at future meetings of the consultation on church union (37). Pope Paul's visit to the Holy Land where he met Ecumenical Patriarch Athenagoras of Istanbul, supreme leader of Eastern Orthodoxy. This marked the first meeting of a Pope and an Orthodox patriarch in about 525 years (36). The Churches' involvement in the presidential campaign, especially the opposition of many Protestant leaders to Sen. Barry Goldwater and his extremist supporters (35).

Ranking close behind the first ten, with 30 points, was the continuing debate on prayers in public schools, especially the amendment to permit such religious practices.

Some of the editors and writers made comments on news developments and at least three criticized Pope Paul's actions in the closing days of the Council's third session.

One writer said the Pope "scorned collegiality, named Mary as Mother of the Church and made unilateral 'suggested' changes in the Council's document on Christian unity." Another said the Pope's "intervention on religious liberty put the brakes on the progressives," and a third contended the pontiff had "retreated" from aggiornamento, or Church renewal.

One writer saw "a general failure of the Vatican Council to meet the hopes of mankind," but another commented on "the revolution taking place at the Vatican Council, coupled with the picture of the Pope riding around the world in jet airplanes." Still another reported that the "ecumenical spirit of the Vatican Council is really beginning to be felt at the local level among Catholics, Protestants and even Jews. English in the mass will bring more warmth and cooperation."

But a Midwestern writer cautioned that "Christians have

reached the really difficult terrain in their progress toward unity, as shown by failure of the Vatican Council fathers to vote on religious liberty, the obstacles that have developed in the path of the Anglican-Methodist merger in England, disagreements among the Orthodox, and the delays suffered by the consultation on Church union."

Looking ahead, two writers predicted: "We will see the eventual passing of the Catholic

confessional, since we are entering a new era of religious concepts in which any intermediary between God and man is becoming more and more resented."

"If Vatican Council continues on its road to liberalization, including a more flexible stand on birth control, Protestants will be in the position of having to come forward with more compromises of their own, leaving their rather rigid position of opposition to all Roman Catholic beliefs and practices."

Dr. Spike Sees Rights Groups Encouraged by House Vote

★ The fact that as many as 148 members of the House of Representatives voted against seating the five-member Mississippi regular delegation has "tremendously encouraged" civil rights forces, according to Robert W. Spike, executive director of the National Council of Churches commission on religion and race.

Though the contested delegation — four Democrats and one Republican — was seated on a 276-148 vote, the negative response was considerably larger than had been expected.

"This means that the climate for more civil rights legislation in this Congress is much healthier than we had been told," Spike commented.

Here during the opening of the 89th Congress, he said that the race commission and other civil rights groups would urge introduction of a measure that would establish a system of federal registrars to open voting registration to all eligible citizens.

The challenge to the regular white Mississippi delegation was instigated by the Mississippi Freedom Democratic Party and a "leadership conference" of major religious, civil rights,

civic and labor groups active in the racial justice struggle.

In the House, Rep. William Fitts Ryan (D.-N.Y.), who led the floor attack for the civil rights groups, called the 276-148 vote "a historic achievement."

"I think it is a real warning to Mississippi for the future," he said. "It really heralds the beginning of the end of disenfranchisement."

Ryan made the motion, which passed, to have the Mississippians stand aside while the rest of the House members were sworn in. He was not allowed, however, to introduce a "fairness resolution" which would have kept the Mississippi delegation out of seats while the House established procedure to investigate the election.

Seating of the delegation came on a voice vote after Rep. Carl Albert (D.-Okla.) won a motion to close debate. The roll-call vote on his motion was accepted by liberals as a sufficient test of strength and it passed by the 276-148 margin.

Three Negro women from Mississippi — Mrs. Fannie Lou Hamer, Mrs. Victoria Gray and Mrs. Annie Devine — who attempted to obtain seats in the House while the legality of the

regular delegation's election was investigated were turned away from the chamber as they tried to enter.

They then joined some 600 Negro men and women from Mississippi who stood outside the Capitol in silent protest, each wearing tags showing the name of his town or county.

Another who tried to gain entrance to the House was a man in a bizarre costume and blackface who burst onto the floor and shouted, "Tse de Mississippi delegation! I want to be seated."

As he was hauled away, he identified himself as a member of the American Nazi party.

While the regular white Mississippi delegation was sworn in, their seats remain under challenge, it was noted by Spike. He said the Mississippi Freedom Democratic Party has filed a statutory contest with the clerk of the House which will be referred to the elections subcommittee of the administration committee.

"But we don't have much hope that anything will come of it," the churchman added. He apparently referred to the fact that of the six Democrats on the elections subcommittee, which cannot be compelled to act, five are from Southern states.

Spike said that the Mississippi Freedom Democratic Party had emerged from the challenge contest "with almost total civil rights backing."

INAUGURATION DAY PRAYER SERVICE

★ Washington's Protestants and Roman Catholics will unite for the first time in a service of prayers for the well-being of the President, Vice President and nation on inauguration day.

The unique service will be under joint auspices of the Catholic Archdiocese of Washington and the Protestant Council of Churches.

Suggestion for the service was

made by Dean Francis B. Sayre of Washington Cathedral and chairman of the public worship committee of the Council.

Invitations are being sent to President Johnson and Vice President-elect Humphrey, their wives, and 1,000 high government officials, clergy and lay leaders.

The ecumenical service will

be held at St. John's church at Lafayette Square, just a short distance from the White House. It will begin at 9:30 a.m.

The joint service was made possible by action at the Vatican Council when strictures against Catholics participating in non-sacramental inter-denominational rites were lifted.

Christianity Called Catalyst Of Authentic Revolution

★ Revolutionary changes in the world today should not create fear or surprise among Christians because the Christian faith is the "catalyst of authentic revolution," a theological professor said in Lincoln, Neb. to some 3,500 Methodist students and campus ministers.

"The God with whom the Christian faith is concerned," declared Paul L. Lehmann, associate professor of systematic theology at Union Theological Seminary in New York, "is not one who lives in some external dimension nobody has ever located but is one who goes before his people like a cloud by day and a pillar of fire by night."

He addressed the eighth quadrennial conference of the Methodist student movement, which was attended by delegates from all 50 states and 40 nations.

Gathered under the theme, "The Church in the World," the students and campus pastors engaged in both general sessions and "living encounter" discussion groups to explore the relationship of Christianity to educational disciplines and to discuss "basic issues of the contemporary world."

Methodist Bishop James K. Mathews of Boston, Mass., who delivered five sermons to the

delegates, also stressed that revolution is the natural environment of Christians. Current world change can be seen in scientific, urban and secular areas, he said, declaring that God is at work in each.

"If we can discern what God is doing, we can respond to his action with our own deeds and become fellow-workers with him in the accomplishment of his will," the bishop said. "On the other hand, if we fail to see or refuse to see what God is doing, we are at a complete loss to know what we must do, so that significant living becomes impossible for us."

"The man of faith acknowledges that God is indeed at work in the world making all things new. The biblical perspective is that the old has passed away and that the new has come."

Speakers at the conference included Rep. John Brademas (D-Ind.), who emphasized the Christian obligation to recognize the "link between the law of love and the practice of politics."

"There is a concept which relates the two," he said, "and that concept is justice . . . it is our love for our fellowman — commanded by Christ — that generates in us a concern that our fellowman be treated justly."

Love is the force that motivates our commitment to justice.

"So we now have, I believe, in the concept of justice, a link that binds together the worlds of Christian faith and political action and does so in an intellectually honest, theologically consistent and realistic way."

In fulfilling the Christian responsibility "to seek justice for their fellowmen," the Congressman added, the Church must speak to men today "not only in their individual and family capacities, but to the social, economic and political dimensions of their existence as well."

Another speaker was Jose Miguez-Bonino, president of Union Theological Seminary at Buenos Aires, Argentina, who detailed aspects of the revolution in Latin America and discussed the role of Protestantism there.

The first task of the Church, he said, "is simply to be the Church," adding: "It is not the task of the Church to lead a revolution, but it is definitely its responsibility to awaken political vocations and to encourage, comfort and surround with love those who respond to them."

"But it is also its task to make its members who work in other vocations feel the social, political, constructive dimension of every work today in Latin America."

"In a continent in which frustration begins to create in the masses a mood of cynicism and dismay," Dr. Miguez-Bonino continued, "the Church must create a minority with a militant stance in life, a community of committed people, who have been promised service rather than success and can therefore face victoriously the disillusion and frustrations of a long and wearisome struggle."

EDITORIAL

The Church Gets MRI Into Action

RALPH: CARIBOO — Bishop Ralph Dean of Caraboo, Canada, to U.S. Episcopalians — is now sending from the London office of Mutual Responsibility and Interdependence the reports formerly received from Bishop Stephen Bayne.

The procedure is to send "Directories" to the nineteen national Churches of the Anglican communion. In due time a "Check List" is distributed, recording the response from different parts of the world. The last to be received is dated December 15 in London and is "Check List No. 4". It is a 12-page closely typed list of projects either accepted or contemplated.

With it is an introduction by Bishop Dean with a few observations which we pass on:

"There is good reason to be thankful for the signs of renewed obedience to mission in the last fifteen months since Toronto, but it may be well to remind ourselves that the situation does not stand still in the areas from which the Directories come. A fully revised African Directory will go out shortly. As soon as possible, supplements to the South Pacific and the Jerusalem Archbishopric Directories will also be distributed. But even these revisions do not fully reflect the sense of urgency and even of apprehension which Christians must feel as we contemplate the present unfolding of events in Africa and in parts of Asia. It is becoming more and more obvious that time is short. We have little time in which to perfect our missionary machinery, and the western agencies of the Church's mission may need to learn ways of more rapid improvisation in a world of rapid change."

"We must be grateful", says the Canadian bishop, "for the seriousness with which the Church of England is ready to contemplate drastic changes at home, and new ways of sharing its resources with the Church in other lands." This is spelled out in the document with projects totalling \$840,000 to be considered in 1965, to be added to the projects previously accepted since MRI got under way at the Anglican Congress in the summer of 1963.

He reports also that the committee on MRI in

Australia is selecting projects based on four convictions:

- Help to enable the indigenous ministry to carry out the work of evangelism more effectively.

- The need for better paid and better quality manpower.

- Appeals of these types will spark off a response in Australia better than conventional appeals for new churches, hospitals and schools.

- An increased ecumenical dimension: projects from the Church of South India are included "because we believe India's needs are most urgent in today's world and the Church of South India appears as both a neutral and an ecumenical area." (This comment may be read in the light of current proposals for Church Union in Australia, in which a number of non-Anglican Churches are considering the episcopate as practised in the C.S.I. as one of the bases of a United Church).

The Church of Canada, as we have reported previously, was the first to respond to MRI, and did so generously — and is continuing to do so.

Here in the U.S. the response has been closs to nil — thus in this No. 4 list there are but seven acceptances from a list of 190 projects. Our slowness is understandable. We waited for General Convention approval, which was received. There a 24-member MRI commission was set-up, taking over the functions of the P.B.'s strategic advisory committee, which had been created three years previously to plan long-range strategy — a merger, the MRI committee reported in St. Louis, that is "a logical consequence of the Church's accepting the challenge to organize its whole life around its mission — a mission to our cities and suburbs, our town and rural areas, as well as to far-away places and peoples."

The commission will meet in Washington, January 27-29, at the time of the installation of Bishop John E. Hines as Presiding Bishop. Con-venor is Bishop Thomas Wright of East Carolina who chaired the preliminary committee on MRI and who, on behalf of the committee, told a joint session of convention that "our Anglican Church structures, our provinces, our dioceses, our parishes, and our personal lives are inefficiently and

aimlessly preoccupied with things that matter very little to either God or man . . . Our habits of thought and action, our everyday structures and operating procedures, are utterly unsuited to the purposes of God and the needs of mankind today."

A full time director for MRI is to be appointed and Bishop Bayne, now head of the overseas department, has prepared a list of 350 projects about to go to provinces, dioceses and parishes for implementation on a "church-to-church, person-to-person" basis.

These projects, Bishop Bayne has stressed, have been put on the priority list by regional

Church leaders in the areas concerned, not by central Anglican authorities, such as the Presiding Bishop or the Archbishop of Canterbury.

Also underscored by Bishop Bayne is the fact that the spirit of "mutual responsibility and interdependence" has permeated the selection of projects with some regional leaders deferring projects of their own to others whose needs are greater.

So, when next we hear from Ralph: Cariboo, we are confident that in Check List No. 5 we will find the Episcopal Church, USA, down for very many projects throughout the Anglican world.

POLITICS: --- THE SECRET BEHIND RELIGION

By George F. Tittmann

Rector of St. Mark's, Berkeley, California

THE CHURCH IS IN POLITICS BUT NO HUMAN ORDER OF SOCIETY IS GOD'S KINGDOM

IN THE SPIRIT of sharing problems with grown ups, instead of spoon-feeding kiddies with religious digests, let's join in an alluring, frightening but inescapable train of thought — about truth.

The essence of the human enterprise is the effort to find out a basis for the deciding life, that is, existence which does not just drift in the midst of reflexes, moods and whimsy, but makes decisions about how to use freedom, continually discriminates among criteria for making choices of goals and means to those goals.

All this we might summarize as the search for truths, a truth, Truth. It can also be said to be a quest for Authority, the Good and Beautiful, the Right, the Absolute — or "God". Now men have over the ages come to many conclusions about this search and this discovery. Just to locate ourselves in our own present time in the wider context of all men in many times, let's mention one or two.

Men have tried to find the locus of truth in Common Sense. Is there, in the language of older seekers, a "consensus gentium" a common ground of all reasonableness and reasoning which, if the rubbles of emotion, rationalizings and passions are cleared away, will emerge with a clear beacon

of light for all to follow into universal harmony? Can we tutor ourselves in some gracious and honorable tradition of rational men, and so find a unifying, peace-making, over-arching truth, equally true for all?

This is a splendid vision, beckoning, yearningly to be desired. But it just has never seemed to be too clear a vision when brought close to living human experience. For when we get closer to life and history and people, we find, to the discouragement of the hopeful, that Common Sense is never so "common" after all. Husband and wife find there is male sense and female sense. Merchants know there is one "sense" of the poor customer and another of the rich.

What is common sense for one nation is folly for another, and this can be true for empires, hemispheres, races, classes and all the political segments of mankind. The "self-evident" truth of our Declaration of Independence is only what we hold to be so. Others do not. And this is not just to say that people do have a sense that is truly common, but just don't always live up to it; rather that sensible men at their best intelligence and clearest thinking, pressing reason to its very limits, do not always arrive at a meeting

point and find agreement on what is "sensible".

The best we seem able to say is that, while such a common mind of all men is most ardently to be desired, worked for, sought after — it is not something prudent men can really count on very much. And you don't have to go far to see how this is so: from the negotiations over the Korean settlement at Panmunjon or disarmament at Geneva, to the family disputes over after-dinner coffee; from election debates to an argument between a freedom worker and a southern deputy sheriff.

What Kind of God?

MEN HAVE TRIED to find the locus of truth in Religion. The operative word-symbol here is "God", of course. But it takes very few exchanges of ideas in the matter of Religion to discover that just the word "God" settles nothing at all. It may indeed invite a reverence to the discussions, but it also can fuel them with the utmost ferocity. There is no fanaticism which can equal that of men who hate each other in the common name of "God". This is simply a brutal, unhappy fact of open human experience over ages of time.

Nothing about this quest for truth under the title "God" is settled in the least — until some agreement is reached about what is meant by the word. What kind of God are we talking about? How, where, as what, is this God known? And right away, answering those questions, we find ourselves looking into the kaleidoscope of the myriad Religions of human record.

Each religious system — and they all have some system, either clearly formularized or simply acted on as given premises — has its legacy of tradition — part written in books which cannot be changed, part in later writings which explain the original books, part in what learned and wise men of the tradition up to the present teach by way of interpretation of both.

And within every Religion with all these traditions, written and oral, there are subdivisions, "denominations", which are convinced about some variation on the basic deposit of their first truth.

Again, it's one of the sad facts of the record that these subdivisions of Religion arouse the divisive fanaticisms of believers, often to bloodshed, over this search for operative truth which is the common enterprise of us all — and you don't even have to go outside the Christian story, or even outside our own country's history, to document that.

Through Jesus

NOW IT HAPPENS that we Christians belong — at least in part — in the category of Religion, too. What is our truth; or truth-as-we-see-it?

Yes, of course, it has to do with "God". But we, too, have to go much deeper into the matter than that. God — how known, where, and through what media?

We, of course, as properly trained Christians, immediately point to Jesus as the clue to the character, actions and purposes of God. That is what Christians must do, rightly.

But how do we know Jesus? It is obvious that we testify to his real presence in our midst, as we do with immense solemnity and simplicity in the eucharist, indeed in all Christian worship. The living Christ, we say, is ever among us, in us, with us — in fact he is sovereign in all dimensions of creation, over all creatures.

But how do we find this to be true? How do we identify what is among us — in this healing, challenging, unifying power — as Jesus? Where do we get our definitive picture of him? Answer: in the Bible, yes — even in the Old Testament (which may not mention him by name, because, through the New Testament we are given the clue to his presence all through the history of both Jew and Christian.)

But when we point to Jesus as identified for us in the Bible, which point of view about Jesus shall we accept, stress, emphasize, use as a key-clue to all others? We have to ask this more surgical kind of question for the simple reason that Jesus is described by the different authors in the different books in various ways: as Law-giver, as Forgiver, as Satan-Conqueror, as Unifier of men, as Divider of men, as Sacrificial Victim, as Teacher of the Highest Way, as Self-Communication (Word) of God, First-to-be-Resurrected, Divine Light of the World, Cosmic Reason — almost, but not quite, said to be God himself, as Divine Solace, heavenly Emissary, humblest of Servants, King of Kings, First-True-Man-Since-Adam, and so forth.

And whether it is comforting or not to us, the fact is that Christians through the centuries have found these and other portraits of Jesus Christ as their several guides for life and action: social reformers, bloody crusaders, gentle mystics, rigid moralists, Franciscan paupers, poetic intellectuals, communal experimenters, imperial ecclesiastics, international missionaries, ritualized cultists, orgiastic Spirit-led enthusiasts, militant God-and-Nation patriots, pacifist zealots.

Diversity of Images

SO AMID this extraordinary diversity of images of Jesus, over the millenia Christians have settled on certain broad agreements about what he was really like, and therefore, how we, in our belief in him as the clue to truth, must live out our days. They have selected, by a consensus, data about him which guide in the organization of life.

Some settle for the Bible records, as written, alone — and try to make their peace with the diversity in its books. We call them biblicists, fundamentalists. Others include some great, recent interpreters of the Bible, a Calvin or Luther or Wesley, and leap over earlier history back to the Bible — thus generally omitting, as clues to understanding Jesus, all that happened in between.

Some, like Anglicans, choose both the Bible and the so-called consensus of all Christian thought — especially of those thinkers in the early centuries of the Church, say, the first four or five centuries (the first General Councils of the Church) — and trusting sound critical reason to help discriminate among these broader sources. But the more we know about those ancient times and their thought, the more diversity and even contradictions we find, and we become aware of some basis of selectivity which is really not actually in those sources themselves. On what deeper basis still do Anglicans actually choose their locus for truth?

Some have decided that, while the whole of Christian history, including the Bible, ancient authors, and all Church Councils clear up to the present, along with the ideas and insights of every century, comprise the arsenal of truth, the decision about just what portions of these many sources are binding (“dogma”) is to be made by one man in his office of teacher, the Pope, speaking officially for all.

There are many permutations on these categories of decision made by Christians. But here is the shadowy thought which seems to steal up behind us all in our various positions:

Idolatry

AS WE DECIDE on our Christian clues to truth — that is, to God, known in Jesus, and identified through the interpretation of centuries — we find that we are actually making our choices on the basis of some desires and values and standards that are very much closer at hand, more part of how we live, more personal than this data we ap-

peal to in Bible and Christian history. Since there is no clear and final definition of Christ, and hence of God, upon which all of us can meet without disagreement, all Christians engage in doing something which they cannot avoid, but which, by their own standards, is probably the most dangerous and evil act of which men are capable: Idolatry.

We are, in the last analysis, coming to these sources of truth with our own picture in mind of what the world should be like, and doing our selecting on the basis of our own desires. “Idolatry”.

More specifically, we already have in mind the world as we like it, or would like it to be, and select from the Bible and Christian record what best supports that pattern. “Idolatry”.

In other words, from our human experience we find around us a social order we are content with, or see one which we think better, an order of this world’s life which permits us best what we want for ourselves, and on that basis, we gather to decide what Religion will best support our cause. “Idolatry”.

All Christians do this, whether it is a solemn conclave of Roman Catholic prelates in Rome, or a not-so-solemn meeting of Anglican bishops at Lambeth every ten years, or Mr. and Mrs. X who are going elsewhere now because they do not like what goes on at a local parish, or a preacher trying to filter out from a bewildering mass of traditional data, what is true for a congregation.

So we are exposed, we Christians of every status and stripe, as we do this, for our complicity in the greatest sin of all—the sin of “Idolatry”. We are all guilty of the sin of idolatry, and though we can repent of it we cannot really help it. We bring to God our axioms of demand about life and proceed to organize our Churches, worship, theologies, prayers, to secure, explain or support what we would have of Him.

This is not something anyone is more guilty of than the next. It is true of the most authoritative and reverent scholars, and it is true of the casual Churchman picking his parish — though it is never really a casual choice — and of course it is true just as much of the so-called irreligious outsider whose decisions are not spelled out in religious language.

Basic Categories

ALL MEN select their data to choose and define their “God” — i.e., truth — on the basis of what will make for the kind of society they cherish.

All men create, or hire, their gods, to one degree or another, to serve themselves. And this is no less true of Christians, in any time and of all kinds, than of the crudest tribalist or the most nationalistic state cultist. The only difference — and it can make all the difference, of course — is that Christians know that sad propensity in themselves, and repent of it bitterly — or should.

In other words, “politics” — and this we must understand in its largest sense as man’s unending pursuit of “polis”, social order — is actually far more important a level of human concern than any Religions will ever be. In fact, it is the political dimension of Religions and forces Religion to formulate itself into creeds, conduct and cultus — its three basic categories.

Karl Marx had a remarkable insight when he said that economic factors moved history and motivated men most deeply — an insight which he only borrowed from the prophets of his Jewish ancestry who spent themselves in denouncing men’s idolatries of their social orders.

So, when you find Religion greatly captivating, or irritating, people, it will be well to understand clearly that it is doing so in largest measure because the religious labels and slogans in fact stand in men’s minds — or perhaps more often beneath their minds — for either political stability or political change. It’s not the Religion. It’s the Kind-of-World-We-Want which exercises us so deeply. And that’s what “politics” means.

Does this line of thought help to make sense of the first of the Ten Commandments, “Thou shalt have none other gods before Me”? And does it not urge us to make sure that the first commandment, upon which all the others hang, gets endless, insistent repetition?

This kind of thought cannot be pursued in one chase, at anything like the lengths it should, but we might attempt a tentative conclusion or two:

Church in Politics

THE CHURCH, as Christian men and women, is of course up to its ears in politics, all day and all night forever: in this sense the Church can never “stay out of politics”. But, the Church-Pronouncing, through any united voice, must never entirely espouse one course over another. It must rather witness to the fact that no human orders of society are God’s Kingdom — though we must constantly make responsible decisions for one kind over another.

JANUARY 14, 1965

In the endless, ageless dilemmas of Order vs Freedom, the Christians must always, in the final stand, choose for Freedom. Why? Because this is our best way of saying that we must leave room for the absoluteness of God’s Order, His Kingdom — alone. Freedom for dissent, for the new, for change — even when it means revolutionary change — the constant listening to the rebel, is our best human proof of being alert to the peril of idolatry. And this is so even when there is always real danger of making an idol out of liberty itself.

We in our time are barely beginning to become aware of our foundations, only beginning to systematize our dilemmas and analyses in this field for modern understanding. Perhaps it can all be reduced to this one challenge:

The next time you say — or think — the phrase “as a Christian”, or “as Christians” — what do you mean, and how did you come to mean it so?

Finally, a word from our Good News, our Gospel, will suffice to end our thoughts at this moment:

We, and our forebears, the Jews, conclude our pattern prayer with the words “. . . thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory for ever and ever”.

If we are sure of nothing else, we can be sure of this: that at least His Kingdom is forever. It is the only ordering of creaturehood we can know that is forever and ever, and in that alone, His Kingship can be our trust.

An Open Letter to a Friend

About the Holy Communion

By Massey H. Shepherd Jr.

Professor at Church Divinity School of the Pacific

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THE CHURCH AND TEEN-AGE DRINKING

By Robert Nelson Back

Rector of St. Luke's, Darien, Connecticut

STANDS THAT RELIGIOUS PEOPLE SHOULD TAKE TO AVERT TRAGEDY

A GIRL was killed in an automobile accident; the boy who was with her was arraigned; people who served them liquor were arrested — and once again Darien is headline news in the nation. We have to live with our propensity for being newsworthy. We are photogenic although we wish at times like Greta Garbo that we would be left alone.

Our virtues are never extolled, and we have plenty of them, our contribution to the life of the world is ignored — even that our little yacht club gave Bob Bavier and Bill Cox to the sports world and kept America's cup in this country has not been particularly noted — but our sins are exposed. If any community lives in a goldfish bowl we do. If we sneeze we are startled by the "gesundheits" that echo all around us. Perhaps this is good; we are privileged people and God has to remind us somehow that because we are privileged we bear great responsibility.

Sometimes I feel ashamed to live in Darien, not because it is a bad town, but for the opposite reason, because it is so good to live here. I am a New Englander with the kind of conscience that makes me worry if I enjoy something too much. What pleasure to be in a town that is so beautiful. We have water and boats and beaches; we have trees and fields and open spaces. I don't deserve all these natural riches when others have to live in slums and hovels. And the people of Darien: we are not the slick, sleek stereotypes we are made out to be but individuals of amazing independence, freedom, intelligence, and concern. I don't deserve the friendships I enjoy here when others in the world live in limited and limiting circumstances. I assume we are a wealthy town; everyone says so, although I have not met anyone who admits that he is wealthy. Sometimes I feel ashamed because God seems to have opened his hand and given me all his gifts and I haven't done very much with them except enjoy them — and that's pretty selfish. I identify with Lord Kelvin who after fifty years of teaching natural philosophy at the University of Glasgow when he was toasted at a banquet in his honor replied,

"As I look back on my work the chief impression I get is one of failure."

We have so much and we have done, and do, so little with all the gifts God gives us. He has freely opened his hand to us; we have accepted and with that acceptance goes a profound responsibility. If our consciences are easy we don't have consciences, for our task is always greater than our ability.

The Girl and Boy

I HURT for the girl who was killed in the accident, although she is safe in God's keeping. I was at the accident, called out of bed by the police, and I still get sick thinking of the ugly, twisted wreckage of that car. I hurt for the boy. He was confirmed in this church; he knelt before this altar and the bishop said to him as he placed his hand on his head, "Defend, O Lord, this thy child with thy heavenly grace; that he may continue thine for ever; and daily increase in thy Holy Spirit more and more . . ."

I hurt for the families of the dead and injured. I hurt for the parents who were arrested because they served liquor to these and other young people and have become famous or "infamous" overnight. They did not anticipate tragedy; indeed they probably would have rather died themselves than have happen what did happen. I know the pressures that were upon them. I too have heard the words from young lips; "we have to have alcohol at the party; no one will come if we don't."

The pressures of society — no one quite knows where they come from — but suddenly they are here and we have to bow before them or seem odd or be unpopular, but this teen-age drinking thing sneaked up on us. It took a while coming; it didn't arrive full-blown overnight. It came quietly and slowly and we didn't quite get to assessing it. Suddenly: tragedy. We had our warnings — and looking back we wonder how we could have been so dull—but we were. It's one thing to serve alcohol to your own children and something else

again to serve it to another's unless you are willing to take on his parental responsibilities.

It's one thing to serve alcohol to people you know and whose way with alcohol you know, and something else again to serve it to those you don't know and whose way with alcohol you don't know. All this is looking back, and we should have talked about this long before, and I hurt for those parents who are exposed for our sins and who are suffering for our iniquities.

Not Alert

IT IS EASY to be sidetracked by legalities, whether or not the law regarding serving alcohol to minors is a good law, whether or not it is enforceable, whether or not a man's home is his castle. It is easy to be sidetracked by other peripheral issues, whether or not this law like prohibition will force young people to bootleg, will drive them to Port Chester. We can talk all around the subject, even point out that it is better for young people to learn to drink at home than in a bar somewhere. But the fact remains, the cold, hard fact, if we had to do it over again we would have found some other way. We didn't want this tragedy — above all we didn't want it — but it was inevitable, this one or another like it — and all we can say is we were not alert, we weren't thinking.

Alcohol is among God's good gifts, although it is among his more dangerous gifts. Yet I suppose every gift of God is dangerous. Certainly nuclear fission is, and a beautiful tree is the raw material from which bows and arrows are made, and mother-love can warp and pervert a child to make a monster of him. Acknowledging alcohol as among God's good gifts our Church has spent much time and energy defining the use and misuse of it.

For example, a commission on alcohol reporting to the Church recommended that Christians drinking cocktails before dinner have grace, or a blessing, not after drinking and before eating, but before both, putting eating and drinking under God. Because alcohol is so potentially dangerous, the Christian must always see it in relation to God: his gift which demands unusual care and responsibility. There is very little alcoholism among Orthodox Jews for the very reason that alcohol is consumed always within a worship or religious context. Even a family meal is a holy meal and God is present. There is no division between sacred and secular; all things belong to the eternal.

Society in Reverse

IT IS IRONIC that our community has been scored for irresponsibility, for we are a responsible people. Our men keep farmer's hours: up at dawn and back home at dark, if home at all for they may be flying to Chicago, San Francisco, or Hong Kong. But at home, with the few hours they have, they spend remarkable chunks of time with their wives and children and civic affairs.

Our women have to assume traditionally male roles: they are the bookkeepers, plumbers, carpenters, painters, and business managers. They often have to be fathers to their children as well as mothers.

This may be a society in reverse but here it is, and it is ours, and the deep sense of responsibility in this community is impressive. Our children have parents who are decision-makers for the nation, and it would be easy for these parents to fall apart when they reach home, their castle. But for the most part they don't; they do what they have to do; they exercise their responsibility. Yet the fact remains we have been asleep, and we have evaded our responsibility in this area which is now national and international news. We have no choice but to look it squarely in the face and resolve under God to do something about it.

But what can we do? We can stand firm against pressures we know are wrong. We can create pressures of our own, good ones. We can quit trying to keep up with the Joneses. We can dare to say, no. We can come to grips with the changing times in which we live. In our youth, young people also drank. They got drunk. But there weren't as many cars — the modern teenagers lethal weapon; young people were less mobile; they were less hostile, restless, and rebellious; there were more checks and balances; there was more authority.

We can't turn the clock back; we are where we find ourselves. We have to grapple with things as they are. But we can. We worship a God who cares, who supports the right, who holds up the arms of those who do the right.

We've been asleep.

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THE WITNESS

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SHOULD CLERGYMEN ACCEPT FEES?

By Wolcott Cutler

Clergyman of Cambridge, Massachusetts

WHAT HAPPENED IN A SMALL PARISH WITH FEES FOR SPECIAL SERVICES

A TWO-PAGE SUMMARY in *The Witness* for November 26, 1964, of the report on clergy income, released recently by the National Council of Churches, mentions, among many other interesting items, that, "Contrary to popular opinion, American pastors receive relatively little in fees, free goods or services, and discounts. They receive an average (median) of only \$89 per year for fees . . ."

I interpret this statement to mean that half of the 5,623 local parish clergy reporting were receiving less than \$89 per year in fees, and half were receiving some \$89 a year or more. This aspect of support should be explored further.

In a small parish of which I was rector for thirty-six years, I once made a review of the 558 burial services that I had been called upon to conduct. The summary revealed what cannot come too far from indicating a fairly typical trend. Of the 558 persons whom I had buried, 106 were total strangers, 85 were relatives of parishioners, 66 had formerly been parishioners, 191 were on our current parish list but never attended Sunday services, 48 had attended usually at Easter, and 62 had attended once a month or oftener.

Similarly with regard to contributors, only less than one fifth of the 558 ever gave either systematic offerings or other remembered gifts to our parish, as far as I could tell.

I believe that something similar could be said of the weddings that the ordinary parish minister is called upon to solemnize. Omitting the extraordinary case of the Little Church Around the Corner — the Church of the Transfiguration in New York — one may doubt if more than one third of the persons who come to be married are actually parishioners, let alone supporters of the church.

The two thoughts to which I am leading up are these. In the first place, while it would clearly not be proper for either a clergyman or a parish to require payment for any of their services to the community or to the public, is there any valid reason for a church to decline a free-will offering

or gift from persons who feel gratitude for any service that any minister may be able to render?

If I may be autobiographical for the sake of specific illustration, in the case of my last 164 burials as rector of a parish, I note that 16 families made no gift — nothing ever being asked or in any way suggested — one gave \$2, twenty-one gave \$5 each, ninety-eight gave \$10 each, twenty-four gave \$15 to \$25 each, and the remaining four gave \$50 to \$100 each. Can anyone assert that under such a variety of voluntary responses, our parish should have declined to accept the proffered evidences of appreciation?

In the second place, there is the important question of how the fees or gifts received are to be treated. The parish of which I write was operating on a budget of \$4500 to \$5500 a year, including its grant of \$600 a year from the diocese. Our endowment funds totalled \$12,897 at the beginning of my rectorship, which led me to bank all fees as they were received in a special endowment account, the interest only to be drawn upon for parish use. The results of this practice have exceeded our fondest hopes. From the very beginning, we always drew and used the dividends from the slowly increasing special fund, but never did we anticipate the fact that by the time our average of \$300 to \$350 in fees a year had built up a fund of \$10,348, our interest receivable from the fund would amount to \$540 every year. I need hardly emphasize what a substantial help this has been to a small and struggling parish of less than 100 active communicants in a congested urban area.

Of course, there are cases where it might be felt that the clergyman should feel free to use all such unsolicited fees personally or for his family. Each parish should consider this question from the several angles that are obviously involved. But basically is it not wiser to accept all honestly offered gifts from grateful persons; and then incumbent upon the particular parish in its special circumstances to decide what would make the best use of such supererogatory but not superfluous income?

- NEW BOOKS -

E. John Mohr
Book Editor

A TIME FOR CHRISTIAN CANDOR, by James A. Pike. Harper & Row. \$3.50

Everyone who reads this book will hear it say something to his own particular interests and concerns. Some of the statements in it, when isolated from the text as a whole and when read apart from any personal knowledge of Jim Pike, will be startling and even shocking. It is not, nor was it meant to be, systematic theology. Nonetheless the grasp of theological principles on the part of the author appears often impressive. I would not attempt to defend it on the terms required by trained theologians nor am I qualified to evaluate it on those terms. But for the run-of-the-mill layman and parish priest it is provocative, stimulating and welcome.

It says so many things that one wants to say and often doesn't for fear of appearing either ignorant, iconoclastic or unpleasant. What he has to say about the doctrine of the Trinity is only incidental to and illustrative of the main gist of his message. I am satisfied that he is attempting quite earnestly and conscientiously to make the doctrine more understandable and to strengthen rather than to weaken people's faith in it. He warns against the pitfall of the heresy of tri-theism whereby people can end up with a concept of three gods instead of one God.

Some people will take offense at the impropriety (or they may even call it sacrilege) of using the term "committee god." I can only recommend that they limber up their sense of humor because I believe God (Father, Son and Holy Ghost) has given us evidence in his creation of a great sense of humor.

The text of Bishop Pike's new book, about which the whole message centers and which he has also used as the text of his sermons, is from the fourth chapter of the Second Epistle to the Corinthians: "We have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellency of the power may be of God and not of us". It is an important text upon which much preaching has been based and which has something to declare that we all need to recall and to accept again and again.

Bishop Pike is discussing primarily

the danger of overemphasizing the value of the earthen vessel at the expense of our regard for the treasure itself. And he classifies the earthen vessels as code, cult and creed. This might be summed up very briefly by saying that codes of behavior and procedure, cults of ceremony and ritual, and creeds of doctrinal formulation can, if we are not careful, come to usurp the chief place of reverence and loyalty which rightfully belongs to God alone and to claim more attention than the actual glory of the Gospel message itself. Anything which interferes with or gets in the way of or distracts attention from the absolute priority of God is heretical. The Church itself can very easily and often does usurp the place, or some of the place, in men's affections and loyalties that is meant for God alone. The distinction often appears subtle but is nonetheless unfortunate.

The ceremony and vestments and attendant trappings in our services of worship can often loom larger in men's concern than the attitudes of heart and mind among the worshippers and in the fellowship of the Spirit. Methods of celebrating and administering the Holy Communion can appear more significant and require more attention than the obligations of repentance, steadfast purpose to lead a new life, a lively faith in God's mercy and a genuine charity toward one another which the Prayer Book sets forth as essentials. The creeds can come to be regarded as shibboleths of orthodoxy and can readily become the tests of true Christian piety rather than living in holiness and righteousness all our days. The creeds can become objects of idolatry, in this way, rather than the human formulations of the revelation of God in Christ by which we are called to live. Certain standards of respectability and of conventional decency are perhaps most generally and easily enthroned in the place of true religion because such readily attainable objectives make the excellency of the power to appear of us rather than of God.

The vessel is in common clay for the very purpose of revealing the excellency of the power of God by contrast. The very fact that the earthen vessel is able to contain the glory of the message without being immediately shattered into a million pieces is only by the grace of God and the excellency of his power. The real mystery is to be glimpsed through the idea of God's condescension and self-emptying as he deigns to create an earthen vessel, to fill it with the excellency of his power and to entrust it to the care of men.

We human beings are constantly

prone to glorify the vessel, to add more vessels of our own making, to adorn them with all manner of trappings and irrelevancies, to create a large household of tributary equipment and then to carry the whole "kit and caboodle" wherever we go. Although the motive may be exemplary and nothing less than the desire to respect and to reverence and to enhance the heavenly attributes of what the vessels contain, still we slip, almost without knowing it, into the way of idolizing the trappings. This not only violates the first two commandments but it also clutters up God's agency for redemption, which is the Church, with so much excess baggage and surplus impedimenta that the very purpose of her existence is frustrated.

The formula of the Trinity is disposable. What it has to say about God is not. The doctrine of the Trinity expresses very imperfectly the inexpressible glory of God. We regard it with reverence only because it is the best we can do and only because it is an attempt to express the nature of God. The dangerous, sacrilegious and heretical situation which we must avoid at any cost is attempting to fit God into the mold of what we have preconceived the doctrine of the Trinity to mean.

— FREDERICK M. MORRIS

Dr. Morris is rector of St. Thomas Parish, New York.

Book Notes

A Practical Church Dictionary. Compiled by James M. Malloch. Edited by Kay Smallzried. Morehouse-Barlow. \$13.95

Most of the material for this thorough work was assembled by the late dean of the Fresno Cathedral, but it was supplemented for publication by the editor and distinguished list of consultants. As the title indicates it is working dictionary for clergy and laymen for all matters concerning the church and the church's relations in life. Dean Malloch was adept at communicating ideas and meanings with snap and succinctness, and these characteristics carry over into this work. The material covers all liturgical, ecclesiastical and historical terms, doctrinal definitions, historical and biographical sketches — everything. The last word is *Zymite*, from those people who had words for things. The work will be a highly useful addition to parish libraries.

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