

The **+ WITNESS**

APRIL 8, 1965

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NEW YORK CITY

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Story of the Week

Misleading Report of Council Action in Official Magazine

By E. John Mohr
Editorial Assistant

★ The indispensability of the independent press in the church has been demonstrated again by the misleading reporting in the *Episcopalian* magazine for April on the February meeting of the Executive Council.

The magazine quotes extensively from discussions at the session on the 1965 race fund matter, but in citing the action of the council says only that "Episcopalians working in race relations programs, particularly those under interchurch sponsorship, should now notify, and consult with, the bishop of the area into which they are being sent."

Not only is this incorrect; it is grossly deceptive concerning the real action the council took.

The significant action of the council, in rescinding provisions of its December, 1964, resolution on the race fund, was that the local bishop would not have a veto power, or any other power, over the staffing of ecumenical projects. The *Episcopalian* has not a word on this.

The substance of this was clearly reported in the independent church press, as well as in the secular press, which had sent reporters to the meeting after being alerted for possible sensations. The *Witness* had a full report of the council meet-

ing in the March 4 issue on this and subsequent pages.

Since the *Episcopalian* had ample knowledge of what transpired the distortion and suppression of the council actions must be deliberate.

What the paper does report refers to standing policy first adopted by the council more than a year ago, in December 1963.

Under this policy staff members carrying out the council's programs may not enter a diocese without the consent of the local ordinary, and such members, when entering a diocese as part of an interchurch group, must notify the ordinary.

In preparation for the rescinding of the December, 1964, conditions — giving the local ordinary indirect veto powers over ecumenical project staffing — the council reaffirmed and made some changes in the 1963 statement. These changes provided that the ordinary be consulted as well as notified, and that this consultation should be held also for workers in ecumenical agencies who are not connected with 815. It is to this latter item that the *Episcopalian* refers, incorrectly reporting that the workers are to consult with the local bishop when in fact it is the staff at 815 that is to do the consulting, and then only if

it has some prior knowledge of an engagement.

By reporting an inconsequential item and suppressing the significant action the *Episcopalian* withheld from its readers this precedent-setting action:

● The council withdrew from the local bishop the power it had previously given to exclude clergy of the church from ecumenical projects, through control of funds.

● The council supported in principle and practice the existence of an autonomous, supra-denominational, ecumenical ministry — in this case that of the National Council of Churches — in the same territory as the denominational ministry, without subjecting the former under the latter.

The *Episcopalian* magazine is not to be brought under reproach here. What is said here is to recognize the limitations under which "official" denominational publications must operate. The *Episcopalian* receives an annual operating subsidy from the executive council — \$185,584 this year — by authority of General Convention, and large amounts from institutional advertising of the executive council and semi-official agencies.

The bulk of The *Episcopalian's* subscriptions are not from individuals but are given gratuitously through plans in which the parish pays to have the paper sent to pledgors or the

entire parish list, whether the individual recipients wish it or not.

That the paper and the method of financing and distribution afford the church a fine medium for education and propaganda is not to be questioned. But these conditions

also make it unavoidable that some things must be left unsaid, significant though they be, or that they be said in such a way as to make them seem agreeably insignificant.

It is left for the independent church press to say them, and say them significantly.

New Book by Bishop Robinson Stirs Controversy in C of E

★ A controversy which may spread to the United States soon is building up in Britain over a new book written by Bishop John Robinson of Woolwich, whose sensational book, *Honest To God*, reportedly shook the Church of England "to its foundations" two years ago. His latest book — *The New Reformation?* — carries a stage further the great religious debate initiated by *Honest To God*.

One Church of England writer has condemned the bishop for expressing "provocative exaggerations," said he is guilty of "vulgar concern with novelty," and charged that far from being challenging and courageous he is, in fact, hesitant and timid. Another writer recently speculated whether Bishop Robinson or any fellow bishop could be "relieved of his episcopal responsibilities" for expressing unorthodox views.

The New Reformation? will be published in the U.S. by Westminster Press. In it, Dr. Robinson declares that increasing numbers do not accept the gospel as preached today because it evokes no sense of "good news."

The world, he says, is not asking "How can I find a gracious God?" but "How can I find a gracious neighbor?" In this situation he says the biggest question for the future of Christianity today is how the

gospel of Christ is to be preached and what is the place of the church.

"Fundamentally, I believe that we can and must accept the new starting point. In other words, we must recognize the fact that man's question is in the first instance a question about man and not about 'God' — a word which is becoming increasingly problematic to our generation and which has to be 'brought in' more and more unnaturally into any discussion."

In another section, Dr. Robinson recalls the former Reformation of more than 400 years ago. The divisions between the Roman Catholics and the Protestants still exist, he says, but the atmosphere is different and they are fighting a different war.

"We realize as we watch the Vatican Council, and as Roman Catholics watch, and catch up on, many of the movements in the Reformed Churches, that their advances are our advances and vice versa.

"No longer do we feel that ground can be gained on one front only at the expense of the other. The period of civil war in western Christendom is rapidly drawing to a close, engulfed in a larger campaign in which we can no longer afford to be divided — and no longer want to be."

Thus Dr. Robinson leads to the question of a new Reforma-

tion in prospect. "Everything is tending in that direction and the prayers and actions of all Christians must be engaged in furthering the movements towards organic unity at every level. But this will not of itself add up to the new Reformation.

"The process of reunification could simply mean a shortening of the lines, a contracting of the church's perimeter, and a hardening of the shell. It could strengthen the church against the world rather than release it for the world. And this indeed is what I fear if the biblical, liturgical and ecumenical movements of our time are not accompanied by a new Reformation."

Of the church, Dr. Robinson says the real trouble is not that it is too rich but that it has become heavily institutionalized, with a "crushing" investment in maintenance. "It has the characteristics of the dinosaur and the battleship," he says. "It is saddled with a plant and a program beyond its means, so that it is absorbed in problems of supply and preoccupied with survival."

Of the Church of England, he says that "establishment" is more of a handicap than a help and in terms of its internal freedom disestablishment would be a great gain. He also says he would like to see subscription to the 39 articles, which define the Church of England's attitude to religious liberty, abolished, "as it has been in other parts of the Anglican Communion without disaster or loss of definition."

Of the liturgical movement, Dr. Robinson says it will not of itself meet the demands of the New Reformation. "When one sees at first hand the utter irrelevance — and indeed positive deterrent—which the whole idea of 'going to church' presents to many of our generation

in their search for a meaningful theology, one can only be appalled that 99 per cent of the church's money, time and ministry appears to be geared to the object of getting them there."

Future of Church

And of the prospect for the church, he declares "I become increasingly convinced that the flags of dawn are likely to appear only out of a night a good deal darker yet. For it is not only academic theology which has been living on its own fat. The supply of fat is running out also for the church. It will be a night in which the pre-suppositions of Christendom, of a traditional power-backed establishment, are likely to vanish at an accelerating pace. The politeness, the respect, the goodwill on which the church as an institution has been able to presume — and from which it has sought to impose the terms of the debate, culturally and morally — are visibly dissolving."

Dr. Robinson says that everywhere he sees "a ferment in the church which even a couple of years ago no one could have predicted."

By his latest words he has now created another ferment and already most religious journals and many lay newspapers have reacted editorially to his views.

Church Times

A writer in the Anglican Church Times said: "There is the same attempt to shock the reader by revolutionary and provocative exaggerations, and then to disarm criticism by admitting that the traditional position will no doubt still satisfy certain old-fashioned people and even that at times the bishop feels very much as they do, at least with some parts of his being."

This writer concluded that

as one looks back on both Honest To God and The New Reformation? "one is left with a feeling akin to pity for the impoverished and restricted character, as regards both space, time and content, of the world of the bishop's demythologized and secularized religion in comparison with the riches and fulness of that of traditional Christianity."

C of E Newspaper

A writer in another Anglican journal, The Church of England Newspaper, said: "The Bishop of Woolwich's theology has caused alarm, particularly his views on Person and Incarnation, and this has frightened people away from anything he has to say. His solutions may be alarming, but his diagnosis is shrewd."

This writer referred to Dr. Robinson's contention that the atheist of the secular world today believes that God is intellectually superfluous, emotionally dispensable and morally intolerable, and that these objections must be cleared away before people can be brought to believe.

Secular Papers

The Times, influential daily, said that many of the bishop's criticisms, if made by people outside the church, might apply stimulus to a church which no one could say was not in need of it. But, it added, "Coming from a bishop, the indictment seems cruelly discouraging to many Christians. Is it for one of our fathers-in-God, they might ask, to wash our dirty linen in public?"

Another secular newspaper, the Daily Telegraph, asked whether Dr. Robinson had best served the aim of Christian renewal which he "has so passionately at heart" by giving a

trial run to his rapid thinking before a largely uncomprehending public.

It added: "Already word has gone about that the bishop is himself an atheist. Now that he asks, with cogent reasoning, whether a truly contemporary person can help being an atheist, there will be added reason for ordinary people to ask whether Dr. Robinson, if he is to continue his exciting speculations, should not do so in freedom from episcopal responsibility."

The Daily Mirror, which has Britain's largest newspaper circulation, believed that "the bishop's new book agrees with the modern idea that you don't have to go to church to be a Christian," while the vicar of Leeds, Canon Fenton Morley, stated that the color of The New Reformation? was nearer to "shocking pink" than to the "revolutionary red" of Honest To God.

CAPITAL PUNISHMENT IN NEW YORK

★ Chances for abolition of the death penalty in New York have never seemed brighter, and the department of Christian social relations is giving top priority to the campaign for favorable action at this session of the New York legislature. Bishop Donegan has urged such action in a letter to Governor Rockefeller and other legislators.

Sentiment for abolition is strong in the legislature, especially in the state senate, but legislators need to be assured of popular support. The governor, on the other hand, has not announced his position on capital punishment, and he especially needs to hear from concerned churchpeople, according to a spokesman for the New York diocese.

Spiritual Idealism Held Vital To the Anti-Poverty Program

★ Unless the ingredient of "high spiritual idealism" is strongly evident in the national anti-poverty program, the effort could develop into one of the "biggest grab-bags and pork-barrels ever," a national Protestant leader declared.

Samuel D. Proctor, associate general secretary for communication of the National Council of Churches, stressed the vital importance of realistic confrontation with poverty in a keynote address at a one-day religious leaders conference on the volunteers in service to America program.

Sponsored jointly by the NCC's commission on vocation, the National Catholic coordinating committee on economic opportunity and the Council of Jewish federations and welfare funds, the meeting brought together some 70 social action executives and workers of the various religious groups.

"One cannot save this country with gimmickry and gadgetry and smooth-sounding projects," Proctor stated as he called for insertion of spiritual "muscle and sinew and fibre" into the various anti-poverty programs.

The conference was called to discuss the effort of the agency which helps to recruit and train people who have volunteered to work with persons in disadvantaged areas.

Volunteers are men and women over 18 with special skills who will work with mothers in homes, as recreation leaders, in mental hospitals, with elderly people, as tutors, with migrant workers or in other situations where personal assistance will aid in breaking the poverty cycle.

Proctor, citing the existence

of a continuing "spiral toward futility" in poverty-stricken areas, stressed the need for recognition of individual talents and values and said that churches can make a valuable contribution through providing "inspiration, orientation and the overarching concept of the person being fulfilled."

As many college athletic coaches have given new confidence to Negroes by offering opportunities to gifted ghetto inhabitants, he said, churches can gain "spiritual victories" through effort aimed at eliminating the fear and pessimism that grips poverty victims.

"Fear is real to the fearful," he commented, "it is not an illusion."

Key to Program

The director of the program, Glen Ferguson, called on religious groups to aid the effort in a two-fold way: by encouraging volunteer participation and by "helping us identify where the need exists."

The key to the program is in providing volunteers to "live and work with people who are poor," he said, stressing that the "confrontation of peoples ... must precede social change."

In too many programs, Ferguson maintained, the volunteers engage too busily in trying to superimpose their "middle-class values" on people who are poor.

"We are not dealing with a manifestation of the dole but with a lack of opportunity," he said, describing the goal of "converting existing skills to the reality of poverty."

The director also pointed out that as volunteers bring their values to the poor, they too will gain as they confront the attri-

butes of patience and tolerance that sustain many ghetto inhabitants.

At present, Ferguson said, there are 60 volunteers at work in 15 states. By June 30, it is expected there will be 2,000 on the job and this will more than double by June 30, 1966. Among the current 13,000 applicants, he added, about 20 per cent are over 60 years of age and 30 per cent are between 18 and 20.

Much of the work will be with young people, the director stated, pointing out that 42 per cent of the poor in the country are 15 years of age and under.

During a panel discussion on the role of religious institutions, Shirley E. Greene, staff coordinator for the NCC's anti-poverty program, urged that the programs "minimize political partnership" and avoid a "paternalistic" attitude.

"We of the church don't have a very good record on this, you know," he commented.

Thomas Hinton, executive director of the Catholic coordinating committee on economic opportunity, described information and education programs being launched to acquaint local parishes with anti-poverty programs and advise them as to participation.

Philip Bernstein, executive director of the council of Jewish federations and welfare funds, urged that anti-poverty programs be supported on interreligious and interracial lines and with an emphasis on increasing public understanding of human need.

Churchwomen Meet

Anyone today who wants to see the world at peace and civil rights guaranteed to all citizens runs the risk of being labeled a "comsymp" — the rightist term for Communist sympathizers, Proctor stated at a meeting in

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EDITORIAL

Challenge of Holy Week

AS WE ENTER upon Holy Week we are apt to ask ourselves why the Son of God should put on the garb of poverty and walk in the paths of humiliation and end his ministry in the gloom of apparent failure. To give any adequate answer to these questions we must go back to the purpose of creation and redemption. Why did God give us an unfinished world?

In traveling across the waste places of Nevada, we asked ourselves that very question, for we fancy at one period in creation, the whole world had the same appearance of desolate incompleteness that Nevada possesses today. Why didn't God give his creatures a finished world in which we could all have the sense of proprietorship that millionaires give evidence of having? Then there would have been no struggle, no conflict, no misery. And the answer that we gave to ourselves is that, if he had done so, man would have had no initiative, no invention, no industry.

He gave us the opportunity of co-operating with him in creating a world that in a very real sense would be our own creation. For while God made the metals and the steam and the electrons, man has invented many wonders, including space-craft to fly to the moon and beyond, and out of these inventions has come the sense of conquest and victory.

Man's creative genius is his most cherished possession but it could have become only at the price of effort and toil. It is a great privilege to have been partners with God in creation.

And then why is man himself an unfinished creation?

For the same reason. Character building is like all other creative effort; it involves struggle and conflict but it has produced that which evidently God himself may not create — a righteous man — for God includes us in producing this thing. God has created innocence, but we must participate in creating righteousness.

And why then did Christ become man?

Because he loved the natural man in his upward struggle and would supplement law with grace; not doing it all for us, but co-operating with us in our struggle to become like the ideal that he gave us.

And why did he choose to become poor and to

suffer humiliation during his stay upon earth?

Well, just because God is too great and powerful to come in the plenitude of his power. You know how very difficult it is for men who are very powerful or very wealthy to have many friends; not we fancy because they do not want close personal friends, but just because the motive of friendship with the rich and powerful is so very mixed. Unconsciously almost we draw near to them in order to use them in our own designs, not merely selfish purposes but also altruistic schemes. A rich man is bombarded with supplications, not because he is good but because he is wealthy.

If he is both wealthy and good he leads a hectic life. That is why it is so hard for the rich to enter the Kingdom of heaven. It is hard for them to discriminate between becoming benevolent philanthropists and easy marks. Not that God would be bothered by our supplications or be dubious about his benefactions, but he came to make men good and it is not easy for those who use the rich to really love them.

Somehow Americans seem prone to use God rather than to love him. The Hebrews localized God, the Greeks reduced him to an abstraction; the Romans flouted him, but the Americans use him to make their investments more secure.

So we fancy he became poor and suffered humiliation and was crucified so that his followers would be put to the acid test as to whether they really loved Christ or wanted to use him. After all, he came for our sakes, and he knew what was in man and needed not that any man should tell him, and he knew how hard it is for man really to love some one whom they are merely using.

So he told the rich young man whom he loved that if he sought perfection he had better sell his goods and give to the poor, so that he might develop himself free from this hindrance. Of course, Christ did not tell him that he must give away his fortune to be saved, but that if he wanted to follow the counsels of perfection he had better rid himself of that which would probably be the source of many mixed motives, both on his part and that of his friends.

The whole scheme of creation and redemption seems to be based upon the maximum of effort, free from entangling motives, in loving Christ.

THE THEOLOGICAL CURRICULUM

By John Pairman Brown

Professor at American University, Beirut, Lebanon

IS THE SEMINARY DOING ANY- THING MORE IMPORTANT THAN KEEP- ING THE KIDS OFF THE STREET?

FROM MY LISTENING-POST in the Middle East I hear a lot about institutes for the study of Islam, Buddhism, etc. With the motives that have led westerners to finance and administer such outfits I'm not concerned, but only with the way they're set up. Some decent show is made of introducing the student to the original tongue of the sacred texts, and to the texts themselves in translation. Care is taken to lay before him the history of the movement, both as it actually was — so far as *can* be told — and as it is imagined to have been by the minds of the faithful. Distinguished native adherents are asked to lecture on its theology and philosophy, to ensure an authentic and sympathetic presentation. Something is said about the monuments of literature and art it has inspired. Male members of the institute attend improvised religious services, while the ladies watch demonstrations of picturesque customs and dress, and try their hand under supervision at preparing traditional native delicacies. And the institute closes with a survey of problems faced by the faith in its own lands, and of the lines along which its more thoughtful members are seeking a solution.

"Just like a seminary". What in fact distinguishes the institute from the seminary? Not the personal commitment of the instructors, for I know of seminaries where a learned rabbi from next door is asked in to lecture. Nor yet the personal commitment of the students, for there are also seminaries where "inquirers" are welcomed at least on special status. Seminaries do indeed give training, under simulated conditions, in conducting the services of the church. But my impression is that in fact their graduates always conduct services instead in the manner of the parish where they worked on Sundays to pay their way through — which was either further right or left, higher or lower, than either the

seminary or the parish they were brought up in.

The great point is, whatever personal commitment is required of students or instructors at the seminary, it is not allowed to affect the academic curriculum. The courses could be attended with a clear conscience, and the examinations written, by members of a Moslem institute for the comparative study of Christianity, if such a thing existed. In fact, the theological schools attached to our better universities do serve precisely such a function for the academic community. Instead of laying on Hebrew courses, the linguistics program allows its students to go over to the seminary; Ph. D. candidates in scholastic philosophy drop in on lectures about medieval church history; sociologists attend symposia on the American Protestant parish. The seminary welcomes these visitors with the tacit hope that conversions may result; and I suppose sometimes they actually do.

Departments of Religion

BUT THE RESULT is a kind of schizophrenia in the theological curriculum. On one hand, the seminary must be at pains to provide competent instructions in subjects like Ugaritic or Nominalism, which can only be treated on a purely objective academic level. On the other, the pious hope or fiction is kept alive that the sequence Bible, church history, systematic theology, apologetics, Christian ethics makes up a consistent scheme — even though it doesn't exist in the head of any one of the professors, but only with the students! But of course the only golden thread which can be guaranteed to be running through the scheme is a greater or lesser degree of objective historical method, and the private pietisms or enthusiasms of the professors will tend to cancel each other out.

This professionalizing of the curriculum has

been aggravated by a recent innovation: the planting of departments of religion in the colleges — usually by spoiled parish priests or failed theological professors. And of all the people who ought not to be majoring in them, of course you will find the pre-seminarians. Law schools in contrast, where there is a definite body of complicated material to be mastered, are wise enough to want students with a broad and accurate college education. I hesitate to inquire into the motives which have led theological schools to encourage, or allow, their prospective students to insulate themselves as far as possible from the exact sciences, ancient languages, and political history. Anyway, like most motives which will not bear up under close scrutiny, this one has backfired. The college department of religion must of course give a fully objective account — however sympathetic — of its subject-matters, in which no requirement of personal commitment can be made; and from what we have seen, the same attitude has spread upwards to infect the seminary.

I do not mean to be merely satirical, for there is a real dilemma here, which has come about partly as the result of genuine honesty and goodwill. Can we do alien religions the slight of studying them with less attempt at sympathy than we bring to our own? Can we be so lacking in honesty as to apply a less objective criticism to our own religion than to somebody else's? It might seem though as if those moss-backed traditionalists on the Roman Curia were right; any kind of rapprochement with other peoples' views will inevitably mean that our grasp of our own views is weakened.

Ignoring Conclusions

COMPLETE OUTSIDERS to what the New York Times Book Review calls the "field of religion" might naturally conclude that a really sympathetic mutual study of religions would result in their mutual abandonment — or their replacement by some vaguely defined pan-religious system, inoffensive and presumably ineffective. But in fact it doesn't. Why? We all underrate the power of the human race to ignore the conclusions to which careful study has just led it. I just trapped myself into talking about "our own religion". It comes as a surprise to the seminarian, in the course of his comparative studies, to learn that the American Protestant parish

bears comparatively little resemblance to traditional Christianity. For the first time he discovers what his own religion is, and cheerfully acquiesces in it, looking no farther — not as having been proved superior to Islam or Buddhism, but simply as being his own, like drinking coca-cola instead of arak.

Here is the triumph of the college department of religion; which secretly behind the scenes is really a head of that hydra, the department of sociology. The sociologist is the person who is allowed to define what a religion is, and we accept his definition whether it applies to something we are studying from outside like Islam, or in theory from inside. The Turks were the first sociologists, and they ingeniously governed the Ottoman Empire by deciding what the religions were, and giving the priests of each one enough authority over the lives of the faithful to keep them on the side of the government. The best living deposit of the scheme is the state of Lebanon where I am now living, in which a man's religion is a label given him at birth which determines who he shall marry and do business with, which set of ecclesiastical courts shall have jurisdiction over his marriage and inheritance, and which seat in Parliament he will be represented by. It serves admirably the great desideratum of all political theory, limiting the powers of the state: if we could only introduce something along the same lines in America it would paralyze the operations of the atomic energy commission in five minutes.

Status of Religion

AND IN GENERAL the status of religion in the world today ought to be highly satisfactory to everybody except the few eccentrics who, like myself, have this funny attachment to the Hebrew Bible and the Greek New Testament, as well as to certain other books ancient and modern. I recognize perfectly well that it is the nature of religions at all times and places to suppress the things written in their sacred books in favor of something else which will be more useful to the ecclesiastical authorities. (Although some sacred books give the priests less trouble than others.) It might seem as if the seminary was a poor place to begin to get people to read the New Testament in the sense that it was written.

But the university is equally capable of stultifying the study of Shakespeare if it really puts its mind to it, as it often does; still it is worth

the candle to try humanizing even the Ph. D. in Elizabethan literature.

It is perfectly plain that Amos and Jesus were not planning to set up a private in-group whose great attraction was going to be all the classes of people who would be excluded from it. They were struggling to express a vision of how the whole Cosmos fitted together, and to tell anybody that was interested about it — while retaining a realistic appreciation of the fact that most of their potential hearers had a vested interest in not learning how it fitted together. For those of us who accept their claim, and who put Thucydides and Vergil and Pasternak on the same level, the absolutely primary mission is an attack on the unholy alliance of the sociologist and the ecclesiastic.

While professing to reject each other's viewpoint, they agree, one from the outside and one from the inside, in telling us that Christianity is what it has been and what it is. On the contrary, we will say that unless it makes a place in itself for everything that is going on in the Cosmos we will pull out and turn it over to them. In that case of course it will die eventually, in a hundred years or ten thousand, as the religion of Babylon died and Zoroastrianism is on its last legs, because everybody was so exclusively interested in doing things the way they had always been done that they couldn't take a half hour off to ask if they were worth doing.

Theological Training

I AM THUS led to the paradox that theological education is true to itself, true to its subject matter, only to the extent that it includes non-theological subjects in the curriculum. The seminary is an academic institution; any real change must reflect itself in the actual courses required, or the students will treat it with the justified contempt that non-credit subjects always receive. In Rome, or Concordia, Missouri, or Germany I suppose it is still possible to put together a theological faculty who all think according to the same scheme. But nothing could be less constructive. What would you think of a textbook on Christian ethics which was not dominated by concern over the atomic energy commission, colonialism, the destruction of the natural environment and over-population, and class injustice? But I can personally testify that no such textbook exists. We have then no recourse but to read the modern novelists who are

dominated by such concern, and the ancient poets, prophets and historians who by intuitive genius saw that such problems would one day arise.

Things may of course possibly have changed in the seven years I've been away from the seminary, but I doubt it. Academic institutions — and this is their great value — are the sort of things that don't change unless somebody takes a firm hand to them, in which case you will hear about it. Anyway, when I left, theological students had a series of important blanks in their knowledge and skills — and there is no knowledge without a corresponding skill — in areas far more important for the correct putting together of the Cosmos than the history of the chasuble, or the conciliar movement, or even than the institutes of Calvin. So today I don't count on their really knowing anything about ecology, genetics or nuclear physics; or the religious teachings of Greek tragedy; or on having heard, much less answered, the agonized question that Camus threw out to them in "The Plague"; or on their understanding why Americans are disliked abroad; or on being able to write their mother-tongue.

First Things

"All very well, but first things come first." Yes. And these are the first things. We don't run any seminars to teach bishops how to be bishops; they figure it out all by themselves. Robinson Jeffers, an honest voice in the state of California, says in words which do not need to be apologized for, but taken to heart: "I will praise the Greeks for having pared down the shame of three vices / Natural to man and no other animal, cruelty and filth and superstition, grained in man's making". Priestcraft comes naturally to seminarians; no anxious thought need be taken for the continuance of religious services, they naturally continue themselves. What is needed is above all to present students with some of the data of which the New Testament is the explanation.

Seminarians deserve, if not the best, at least considerably better than they are sometimes given. It is true that some of them are boys from lower middle-class families making their way up in the world; and that others are Lady Bountifuls condescending to do some good. Even through those understandable motives, their original decision to come to seminary was as honest an impulse as you are likely to find easily,

and it is worth while to prevent it from being plated over with successive layers of compromise, as it usually is.

There they are, a captive audience for three years, in duty bound at least to be polite and attentive. Might we not find more hopeless prospects before whom to set the best visions, projected by Spirit or Muse, of the real character of this creature of mud and fire? Would it not be the biggest kindness we could do a congregation to tell the man it will listen to for forty years that "group dynamics" is a name for cynical manipulation; that "existentialism" is meaningless jargon outside Tuebingen — and maybe there also, for all I can tell; and that "mountain-top experience" is drivel? Would it not on every level be helpful for the clergy to realize that every move of the sheriff of Selma, Alabama is chronicled in the papers of Accra and Khartoum, and every pronouncement of the atomic energy commission commented on in Hiroshima?

In the World

SOMETIMES I used to get the impression, that for all the use that could be made of big chunks of the seminary curriculum in the parish or in a man's own head, he'd be better off working on the assembly-line in Detroit for three years, like Simone Weil. Is the seminary really doing something more important than keeping the kids off the streets until they're old enough to be ordained deacon? I was at seminary once myself, whole semesters of which seem to have vanished from my head without trace; and the trouble wasn't in the instructors, it was in the subjects which sociology and church tradition say ought to be taught. Instead of fooling around with inkblots, buzzgroups and flannelboards, I wish we could have been brought out to the Lebanon and seen what it means to a people when its flora, its roots in the soil, are cut out and the soil itself washed out to sea. I will do my best personally to see that California seminarians find out about the Sequoia.

Many hard things are said about the Jesuits, and I have said some myself. But nobody can say they don't encourage their members to acquire accurate information about subjects of concern to the human condition. Nothing particular would be known about Phoenicia in the time of Jesus if Fathers Mouterde and Jalabert

here in Beirut had not spent their lifetimes collecting the inscriptions of Syria.

I suspect that Father Teilhard de Chardin's "Phenomenon of Man" is the most important step forward in our understanding of our place in the Cosmos since Darwin. Where would an Episcopal clergyman acquire equal competence in palaeontology? or an Episcopal geologist in the New Testament?

A way has got to be found, that's all. I offer a friendly but dead serious challenge to anybody involved in theological education: please read that book and ask yourself; "How can the students I am responsible for be educated to do the same kind of job, only better?"

Fresh Bait, Lures And Other Tackle

By Thomas V. Barrett

Professor at Church Divinity School of the Pacific

ONE OF THE JOYS of childhood, which I suppose is known the world over, is in blowing bubbles. I do not know how this came to mind exactly, except that I was looking at a packet of letters from my father, and then floated down a stream of consciousness to a dream-like sea of the past. And there was I blowing bubbles upon the shore of the living room, watching them float and lift and rise and fall gently upon a piece of flannel spread upon the red-carpeted floor.

In those days we did not have prepared solutions of chemicals, but we had pipes that made clusters of bubbles, and with some skill and discipline of breath we made great chains of bubbles and released them intact to watch them wobble lightly, almost whimsically in the morning light.

We used to see how big a bubble we could blow, those of us who were interested in size without attention to quality. The biggest bubbles never had much glory in them. They were the first ones off the pipe. The real joy was in working toward that last fragile, shimmering wonder that seemed lighter than anything on earth could be. When it rode upon airy wings through the sunbeams what glints of bronze and gold, of ruby, amethyst, jade, silver, and sapphron! You couldn't bear to see it break and all its beauty vanish; at least you thought you couldn't. And when it did, you had to try to blow another just as good or better.

Sheer childish nostalgia! Perhaps I have a secret yearning to climb back into the security of childhood, and avoid the problems of this confusing world. But out of this nostalgia came three little thoughts.

How we strive for perfection, even as children. The big, fat, wet bubble with the drop of soapy water in the bottom of it, will not suffice. We have to work toward the last pluperfect splendor in spun-gold!

How we desire to share the gift that in one sense we have helped to fashion, and in another sense seem simply to have discovered, a response of joy to the mystery of being which just appeared. There it is; we see it and rejoice. "Oh Mommy! Daddy! Look . . . look . . . look at THIS ONE!"

How we experience, even as children, the meaning of adoration. The soap bubble is of no utilitarian value. We cannot own it, encompass it, or get it to do things for us. We just look at it, and love it for its own sake because it is a holy thing.

Perhaps in this is a parable of Christian worship. Here we seek perfection and strive to reach it in art, architecture, music, poetry and story, working toward that beauty which will enthrall and give meaning.

Here we desire to share the wonder we have found in a place become holy within the rich multicolored heritage of the Church's liturgies, within the place and places sanctified by the prayers and songs of the faithful. "Look, look at this one; this act of worship which gives beauty and meaning to our life. Come share it."

How we come to know, through this striving after perfect being, and this sharing, the gift of adoration which is the end of all our endeavor; when we kneel before eternal beauty, and eternal truth, not encompassing, not possessing, not using, but loving God for what he is, and praising him.

Perhaps the soap bubble to the small child is an image of the eternal beauty. And the most magnificent worship of this earthly Church is but an image of that adoration of the saints in eternal joy. Correct images, small revelations of the Power and the Glory.

"Respond ye souls in endless rest
Ye patriarchs and prophets blest,
Alleluia, Allelui!
Ye holy twelve, ye martyrs strong,
All saints triumphant raise the song
Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia!"

ON LISTENING TO GOUNOD'S GALLIA

By Leon C. Balch

Rector of Grace Church, Chattanooga, Tenn.

WE HAVE BECOME SO OBSESSED
WITH GIFTS THAT WE HAVE BE-
COME INDIFFERENT TO THE GIVER

GREAT MUSIC evokes something more than momentary listening pleasure. Gounod's motet, *Gallia*, speaks directly to the travail of souls caught up in a value-starved milieu of technology and commerce.

We are something less than human when a healthy sense of human values is lacking. This is our lack today. At least one reason for it is plainly seen. We have forced science and scientists into a role that is impossible of fulfillment. We have bestowed a degree of ultimacy

upon scientific knowledge. Bertrand Russell wrote these words in 1927, before Alamogordo and Hiroshima: "Science can help us to get over . . . craven fear in which mankind has lived for so many generations. Science can teach us . . . no longer to look around for imaginary supports, no longer to invent allies in the sky, but rather to look to our own efforts here below to make this world a fit place to live in, instead of the sort of place that the churches all these centuries

have made it." (from *Why I am not a Christian*).

Time and time again our best and most articulate scientists and philosophers have tried to tell us that ultimate answers are not available in terms of scientific reference. Alfred North Whitehead, for one, has told how we have let the materialistic basis of science direct our attention to things instead of values, and how this mis-placed emphasis has been allowed to coalesce with certain abstractions of politics and commerce so as to exclude ultimate values. This coalescence is exemplified for the twentieth century by the elder Henry Ford who said, "We now know that anything which is economically right is also morally right: there can be no conflict between good economics and good morals."

Today we grope in the travail brought on by this exclusion of human values. Scientific knowledge has been used with great success to feed our technological civilization, to fill our horns of plenty, and to glut us with gadgets. For much of this we are, and we ought to be, thankful. But in the process we have also created for ourselves a vacuum of values that cries out for filling.

Piercing the Heart

A CULTURALLY emaciated people is unable to penetrate much below the surface of its materialistic crust. A machine-minded, money-minded people disdains art as the vehicle for expressing the deep things of life. The same people fail to realize that the greatest expressions of the greatest scientists have a poetic quality in their depth and in the fervor of their expression. It is just as notable that great poets have been moved to give expression to the wonders disclosed by science. Shelley wrote that

... the touch of Nature's art
Harmonizes heart to heart.

(from *The Invitation*)

If Wordsworth were writing today, he could do little better than to say, as he did, that

The world is too much with us; late and
soon,

Getting and spending, we lay waste our
powers:

Little we see in Nature that is ours;

We have given our hearts away, a sordid
boon!

(from *The World*)

Only one who is hopelessly indifferent to human values could fail to be moved by the poetic and musical depth of such a work as *Gallia*. Its music and words have instant appeal:

Solitary lieth the city . . .

Sorely she weepeth in darkness . . .

Is it nothing . . .

Behold and see if there be any sorrow
that is like my sorrow.

The words of holy scripture are taken from *The Lamentations of Jeremiah*. They pierce to the heart of all indifference toward human values.

Solitary lieth the city. Lonely sets the city. She weeps bitterly in the night. Let us ask with expectancy, "What city?" Clearly, the city must be Jerusalem of old, against which a not so gentle Jesus, approaching his last fateful days, said,

Woe unto you . . . hypocrites! for you build the tombs of the prophets and adorn the monuments of the righteous . . . O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, killing the prophets and stoning those who are sent to you! How often would I have gathered your children together as a hen gathers her brood under her wings, and you would not! Behold your house is forsaken and desolate.

Here indeed is disclosed the apogee of indifference. And Americans who hear the words read in their comfortably appointed church houses are wont to echo, "Yes, Lord!" For Americans are always on the side of the "underdog." Having piously so said, it is possible to leave church feeling very holy, very heroic, very moral, very respectable, and very "Christian."

The city of Pompeii sat lonely in 79 a.d. She too was full of people until the huge volcanic eruption buried and roasted alive the two thousand souls who did not flee in time. Here was another apogee of indifference to deep human values. Sensual minds even today can feast on certain sexy wall paintings amid the ruins.

Memory is Short

BOMBED-OUT BERLIN sat lonely in world war two with her Nazi leaders fled or dead. She was at the heart of a nation that had rejected human values in favor of a religion of blood and soil. Did not some of us think then that she but reaped the fruit of her own sowing? Were not some of us smug and self-righteous because she

lay solitary, in ruins, her people weeping in the night?

Ah, but memory can be short. We too were present at Versailles in June of 1919. We were present with a vengeful indifference to the human needs of a late enemy. We contributed by our indifference to the demise of mankind's first bold attempt at world community. It is strange, though — or perhaps it is not at all strange — how the best of things, although they are put to death, are brought to life again. A generation ago it was the League of Nations. Today it is the United Nations.

Perhaps we had not quite the same feeling toward lonely Stalingrad as she lay under German siege in world war two. An ally yet! No matter then that she too was of a nation whose leaders formally and officially constituted themselves under militant atheism.

All of these come more or less remotely in time, and we can view them today with a degree of equanimity. Should we, then, consider others that are less remote in time? Algiers today is gutted by indifference, hatred, and human slaughter. Leopoldville is the same. Havana reaps the ugly harvest of indifference to human values and hatred of the deepest things.

These are less remote in time, to be sure, but it may be that for us they are yet too remote in distance. Let us turn then to America the beautiful, to the land of the free and the home of the brave. How beautiful, how free, how brave?

America the Beautiful

THERE WE FIND a northern city where free, country-club Christians barred another Christian from their beautiful club because his parents were Jewish as was Jesus.

There we find one eastern city where teenage gangs manifest the bloody and ugly heritage of indifference, hatred, and inhumanity. We find another one where office workers in a downtown church have to work behind locked metal barriers for protection against thugs.

There is a southern city where white men loose vicious dogs against black men in an atmosphere wherein generations of indifference to human values have long since given way to a reign of fear and hatred.

There is a western city where signs in shop windows read, "No Indians Allowed."

And finally we must — each of us — turn to that city that we call home. For we know that

the word does strike home. We know that
All we like sheep have gone astray;
we have turned every one to his own way.

(Isa 53: 6)

Lonely sets your city. There are people within her who weep bitterly in the night, seeking hope and comfort and strength to find the ultimate meaning of life.

To what have we turned? What is the way into which we have strayed? It is the way of a people who have received great gifts from God, and who have become so obsessed with the gifts as to become indifferent to the giver. To a painful degree we "have exchanged the truth about God for a lie and worshipped and served the creature rather than the Creator (Romans 1: 25)." The inscription on our coinage still reads: 'In God We Trust,' but we do not really trust him very much. No longer do we as a people pray for daily bread. No longer do we pray much at all. We rather slave- consign our very lives to the senseless struggle — for security in money or in lands or in position, for perpetual youth and for all the artificiality that goes with the refusal to mature in years, for great institutions — even churches — where human values are often subordinated to material goals.

A Lonely People

AMERICA would not reject Christianity. Not we who love to invoke the name of God and Christ at all sorts of times and places. Reject it? Never! But, then, we should be scared out of our national wits if someone were seriously to advocate that we actually practice Christianity. We are not ready for that. Change is painful in some ways. And any man or woman who has ever heard the gospel — really heard the good news of Christ — not those who taste sermons and compare preacher to preacher — knows that his or her life after the hearing has never been quite the same and never will be.

What do we find? We find a mass of indifference. We have a basically lonely people who refuse to hear the loving, seeking voice of the Christ. They turn a deaf ear to him in their homes, their offices, their factories, their clubs, and even in their churches. The loving, seeking voice asks, as it were, "Is it nothing to you . . . ?" And they hear him not, neither do they obey him in whom is grounded the ultimate values of human life.

The word does strike into our very churches. What do her people really worship on the Lord's

day? Where are they on that day? It is distressing to encounter a non-Christian who is seeking. There are non-Christians in this world — in your city. It is a fact that some Christians seem not to realize.

A typical comment from one of these scrupulously honest and quite intelligent persons went something like this: "I am not at all sure what I believe about divinity, but I do know that an awful longing exists within me, and it is not satisfied by what I have found in your Christian churches. Often on Sunday mornings I have found what, to me, is nothing more than superficial togetherness involving little real communication but much idle chatter before, during, and after the proceedings. Someone may smilingly poke a hymnbook at me, but the words say little to me and neither does the sermon or the long prayer. Or they may poke a cup of coffee at me and engage me in the most trivial of talk — the likes of which one can find almost anywhere — and from which I should like to flee. Or the next day someone may call to see me — with good intentions, I am sure — asking me to join something or to help pay off the mortgage on the church building."

The same person went on to say, "My search is for something with depth. I have not yet found it. I do not see it in the lives of these people."

Bertrand Russell's indictment of the churches does contain an element which ought to put her people to shame. A church bulletin for Passion week reported how many cups of coffee had been served to her worshippers during Lent. How trivial to glorify such a simple pleasure into a church statistic for all and sundry to read.

Recently a 'pillar' of the church was asked to intercede with an employer in behalf of a penitent, struggling, child of God. His reply: "He is nothing but a drunk, and he's not worth the trouble." The voice of love cries, "Is it nothing to you . . . ?"

INDIFFERENCE cannot sustain itself; and, therefore, it is a cause for grave concern. Indifference can no more remain indifference than a rosebud can remain a bud. The bud must either blossom into full growth or it must rot in death. Spiritual indifference must inevitably turn into passionate concern fed by the inexhaustible springs of God's love, or else it turns into hatred and renunciation as one goes his way alone.

Indifference is thus the great danger to the church today. There has never been greater

depth and degree of indifference than when Christianity first stepped out into the great pagan world of Rome in the first century. The blood of the martyrs became the seed of the church to which Christians claim membership two thousand years later.

Today we increasingly face the same sort of indifference — that vast ocean of indifference which surrounds the church in a society composed largely of practical atheists. In addition there is a soul-depressing indifference and lukewarmness in the very church itself.

It will not endure. It cannot endure. Perhaps a new day of martyrdom is in store. It may come to America, the leader of today's world, as it has already come in this century to German Confessional Christians who kept the faith under Nazism, even unto death. God grant us mercy against that day, and steadfastness in the face of whatever trials may be in store for us. And God be thanked whose saving love is made manifest in Jesus the Christ who died and rose again.

It is a love so deep that it will not let us remain in the self-imposed slavery of indifference to human values. Be it known to agnostics and to honest doubters who justifiably despise the triviality and the indifference to be found within the churches, that a measuring rod is placed against those of us who claim to comprise the church. It is not a trivial standard by which we are measured and judged. It is the antithesis of indifference. It is the standard of holy love relentlessly seeking acceptance. A wise Jewish-Christian early in the Christian era put it like this:

To the angel of the church at Sardis write: These are the words of the One who holds the seven spirits of God, the seven stars: I know all your ways; that though you have a name for being alive, you are dead. Wake up, and put some strength into what is left, which must otherwise die! For I have not found any work of yours completed in the eyes of my God. So remember the teaching you received; observe it and repent. If you do not wake up, I shall come upon you like a thief, and you will not know the moment of my coming. Yet you have a few . . . who have not polluted their clothing. They will walk with me . . . for so they deserve. He who is victorious . . . I will never strike off the roll of the living, for in the presence of my Father and his angels I will acknowledge him as mine. Hear, you who have ears to hear, what the Spirit says to the churches!

ANTI-POVERTY PROGRAM

(Continued from Page Six)

Washington of a committee of United Church Women.

"Many good people have fled into hiding and left the super-patriots to flog the clergy, the National Education Association, the Civil Service, the United Nations, the Supreme Court and the PTA," he declared.

While conceding that churches should never align themselves with political parties, Proctor warned that they "cannot be timid about pursuing moral objectives that may also be identified with a candidate or a party."

"The big issues will always divide us into sheep and goats, and we should not cringe if sometimes we find ourselves with the sheep and at other times with the goats," he said.

He said that "individual Christians must join forces to marshall a united front," to be effective against the complicated social evils of today . . . "Those who insist that the world should be changed only by sending single-handed Christians head on into massive social evils have an ox-cart, oil-lamp, stage coach view of society."

He suggested that religion has had more influence on na-

tional life than is immediately apparant. He listed the peace corps, the red cross, the government poverty programs, the community chest and the "overwhelming expression of indignation" over incidents like Selma as the "fall-out" of the "prophetic ministry of the churches and synagogues over many years."

Help from Africa

Another speaker, Mrs. W. Murdoch MacLeod, executive director of the department of United Church Women, announced that her organization has been notified that a group of Asian church women want to contribute to the race relations program of the UCW. She said this was an indication that "missions" have come full circle in the Christian church.

Mrs. MacLeod declined to elaborate further on the Asian gift, but indicated that details would be announced later.

Instead of pioneering in missions, today's church woman must work for church unity and for the application of Christianity beyond the walls of the church, Mrs. MacLeod said.

"We must be the 'body of believers' in the four walls of the church building, but also in the community, the shop, the school,

in business and industry," she said.

The committee of 100 is a selected group of United Church Women who carry out nationwide interpretation of UCW and National Council programs.

Appalachia

An executive long engaged in helping the poor of the nine southern states in the Appalachian region, said the scriptural admonition that Christians are their brothers' keepers implies also that they are their "brothers' developers."

Perly F. Ayer, a professor at Berea College and executive secretary of the Council of the Southern Mountains, Inc., told the women that the war on poverty must be a war on the causes of poverty.

He defined poverty in broad terms, indicating in that interpretation the root causes of much of its physical manifestations. He said there are Americans afflicted with "poverty of opportunity of every kind, poverty of hope, poverty of aspiration, poverty of spirit in terms of ultimate human purpose."

Ayer said his organization operates on the principle that "either each individual person in the world is born with divine significance and underdeveloped potential, regardless of economic and cultural environment, or nobody is." He added that it is his belief that all men are born with purpose. "Men are born to be great, to be significant, until our culture allows them to atrophy."

If a child does not learn well in school, he maintained, it often is not so much the fault of the child as it is the system which attempts to teach him but fails to make the proper approach. Many who would help others lack the knowledge to make the recipient realize his potential, he added.

A BISHOP PARSONS' ANTHOLOGY

Selections Made By

Massey H. Shepherd Jr.

Professor at the Church Divinity School of the Pacific

Being used in several theological seminaries and will make excellent material for use in parishes with adult classes and discussion groups.

There is as much material in this magazine size leaflet as in many books that sell for \$2 or more.

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THE WITNESS

TUNKHANNOCK

PENNSYLVANIA

"From the practical standpoint, leaving aside religious and humanistic values, mankind is impoverished across the board to the precise degree that millions of individuals, to the last one, are living and participating and are being fulfilled at anything less than their utmost," he said.

Ayer declared it is the business of the church and the nation to see to the "development of every last person, advantaged and disadvantaged, rich and poor, inspired and without hope, to the ultimate of his potential.

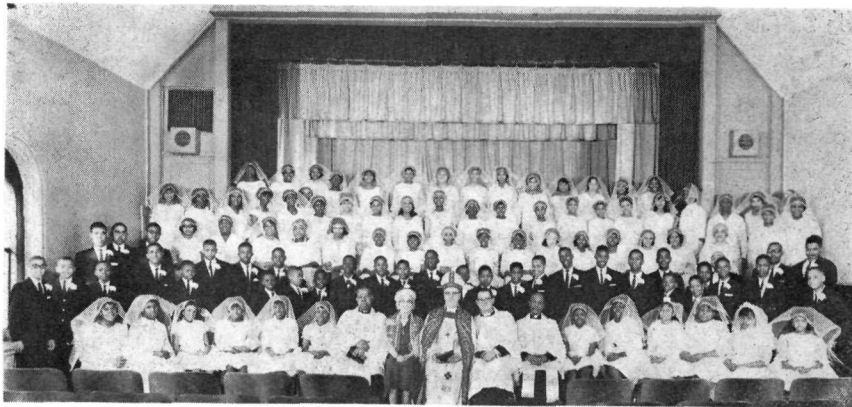
"To the degree that we are effective — oriented to this goal — gross poverty in material things and in mind and spirit will not continue to be the norm for unnumbered millions of our people."

The agency he heads has more than 2,800 individual and institutional affiliates, he said. It has received several federal grants from the office of economic opportunity for its work in the Appalachian areas.

News Notes

A Bo-Bo to a printer means a mistake and even a simple one usually multiplies several times. Last week the type for page 16 was put on page 17. Result: you have to read from 17 to 16 and then turn to 18 to get any sense. The whole job was done before we caught the bo-bo and it was too late then to do anything about it. We make mistakes of one sort or another every week so we're thinking of offering prizes to readers who tell us about them — instead of doing cross-word puzzles just sit down with the Witness and hunt for bo-boes.

Bertha E. Savory was in these notes last week, but you had to read from page 16 to 18 and we felt particularly badly about



MRS. BERTHA SAVORY at the right of Bishop Wetmore with the Rev. David Johnson, rector of St. Martin's at the bishop's left. The Rev. Tollie Caution, an executive at national headquarters is at the rector's left, and at Mrs. Savory's right is the Rev. Herbert Banks of the staff of St. Martin's. Not in the picture is the Rev. John Johnson, rector for many years and still a hard working member of the staff

that. She was director of religious education at St. Martin's, Harlem, New York City, for over 30 years and prepared 2500 children for confirmation. What she called "one of my

best classes" was confirmed on February 28. She died five days later at age 78. Pick up our April 1 and find more facts about her. The picture above shows her with her last class.

WHAT IS THE TEMPORARY PROTECTOR PLAN?

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John Pairman Brown is now a professor at American University, Beirut, Lebanon. We reported here several weeks ago that he becomes professor of ethics and N.T. at Church Divinity School of the Pacific in Sept. We repeat this because of his article in this number. He was editor of *The Witness* from 1955 to 1958 and is the author of *The Displaced Person's Almanac*, mostly editorials that appeared in these pages. Dean Sherman Johnson, we're told, likes the book and we think you will. Beacon Press, Boston, or as the ads say, "From Your Bookstore."

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Robert W. Spike, head of religion and race for NCC, speaking for a large number of church organizations, urged the passage of a stronger voting rights bill than the one presented by President Johnson. He told a committee of Congress that any provisions delaying or complicating registration would be intolerable and stressed the necessity for making access to the services of federal examiners immediately in areas where they are needed.

Faith And Order conference was held in San Francisco, March 8-11, attended by 210 delegates. It was the first to be held with joint planning and sponsorship by Catholics, Protestants and Orthodox. Keynoters were Chaplain George Benigsen who ministers to Orthodox students at U. of C. at Berkeley; Prof. James Robinson at Claremont graduate school, and Fr. Joseph Cahill, professor at the school of theology, Loyola University in Illinois. Each day opened and closed with services conducted by one of the participating traditions — Methodist, Lutheran, Baptist, Orthodox, Catholic, Anglican. A mass in English

was celebrated at St. Mary's in Chinatown; the closing service was at Grace Cathedral with Bishop Pike celebrating. Archbishop McGucken of San Francisco was there to express hopes for ecumenical understanding and cooperation. Fifteen Episcopalians were delegates representing the four dioceses in the state.

Selma, six weeks afterwards, is something we have in mind for the future. What is it going to be like after everybody has gone home? As of now we learn that 500 P.E. parsons were there in one capacity or another, including Bishops Hines, Creighton, Myers, Pike, Millard. And four Negroes, none Episcopalians, worshipped at St. Paul's on March 28, following some prodding of the vestrymen by Bishop Carpenter of Alabama and the rector, the Rev. T. Frank Mathews. After the service, relaxed in his study, he said has been more nervous than before he preached his senior sermon at Virginia Seminary. The Presiding Bishop issued a statement from N. Y. headquarters commending the rector and vestry for their action.

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--- BACKFIRE ---

Florence V. Miller

Churchwoman of Wilmington, Del.

I couldn't agree more with the comments of the Rev. Benjamin Minifie, in the April 1st issue of *The Witness*, upon Bishop Pike's "California Customary". If he thanks God that

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he is not a presbyter in the Diocese of California, I certainly am equally grateful not to be a member of the congregation in one of the missions there!

The whole business strikes me as being an unattractive hodge-podge. And certainly one of my major negative reactions has to do with all this singing, or intoning, of so much of the service — except for the hymns which apparently are largely to be ignored.

Always I have felt frustrated at a "sung" service because I can't really take part, and many others have agreed, that the people in the pews do indeed, as Mr. Minifie suggests, "feel left out, and can only watch from afar or make faint noises."

Also, to order this odd form of service seems unduly dictatorial on the Bishop's part, and I, too, am confident that a large majority of the laity, even in California, if consulted, would support the rector of Grace Church in his advocacy of "the rhythm of the old, familiar order of first Sundays and great festal days (also special Saints' days) for the Holy Communion, with morning prayer on other Sundays." After all, practically all parishes have a weekly early service of Holy Communion. And what about the "priesthood of the laity?"

Granted that the service of Holy Communion could well be shortened; for example, the two lengthy prayers following the consecration which are repetitive and could well be combined.

Nor would I agree to a ten minute sermon as the norm, although anything over twenty minutes is too long in my view!

Let us hope that the "California Customary" will remain in that state and not become "customary" outside that diocese!

Wolcott Cutler

*Rector Emeritus of St. John's
Charlestown, Mass.*

Apropos of your recent evaluation of the undeclared war in Vietnam, I am moved to remark that when a little boy comes home, obviously the worse for wear, and protests innocence of evil intent, on the basis of the excuse, "It was all his fault: he hit me back," a knowing parent is likely to suspect that some corrective thinking is called for.

When the United States government claims that escalation of the undeclared war in Vietnam is justified because our client governments there are increasingly ineffective in defending American interests against Communism, unprejudiced observers all over the world may be pardoned if they question our reasoning.

After all, why should the farmers and the middle classes of South East Asia desire to make life-long and perhaps deadly enemies of their fellow Asiatics in order to further America's frantic aim to contain China and even to thwart every effort of any form of Communism to succeed economically or otherwise. Maybe the Vietnamese would rather rejoin their artificially separated Indo-Chinese brethren and do normal business with neighboring lands than help us westerners to prove our type of free enterprise to be the best economic and political system for the world.

In any case, is it any more unnatural for Russia to arm and protect Cuba in the western world than for the United States to arm and protect South Vietnam or Taiwan in the eastern hemisphere? Granted that each nation, in the absence of any acknowledged superpower, tends to believe its own type of freedom to be best for all the world and worthy of expansion

by any means and at all costs, still there are certain principles of human justice and fair play that will ultimately be weighed in the scales of historic judgment.

Can the U.S.A. afford to flout the good opinion of mankind?

Frances A. Benz

*Churchwoman of Cleveland
Heights, Ohio*

The Rev. J. Robert Zimmerman's "Best Talkers — Worst Doers" is the most encouraging article I have read in a church magazine in a long time or at least since that Pre-Space Age time about 12 years ago when Prayer Book revision was a popular discussion topic. I remember how our group agreed that the Epistle for the Fourth Sunday in Lent, the one about Mt. Sinai which is in Arabia, should go — at once.

We still have that Epistle, the gloomy prayers to be used in visiting the sick, and many other things we thought would soon be changed, but we have made some progress. Now we stand, first on one foot and then on the other, through the Prayer for the Whole State of Christ's Church and the Invitation so we can drop to our knees and really begin to pray at the words "devoutly kneeling."

But there is a good reason why change is so slow in coming. We do not know how to express our modern concerns and aspirations in the mighty yet simple words which move the soul. We are able to paraphrase the parable of the Good Samaritan, not create it. We can agree with Shakespeare that mercy is like the gentle rain from heaven but had he not called our attention to this, we would not have discovered the simile.

This does not mean we lack words, or scholars, or ideas to express — what does it mean?

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