The WITNESS

JANUARY 19, 1967

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JANUARY 19, 1967

FOR CHRIST AND HIS CHURCH

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Story of the Week

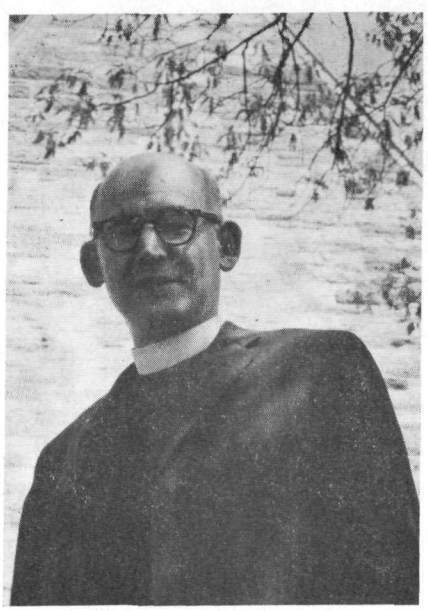
Theological Education Challenge Presented by Dean E. G. Harris

An address delivered by the Very Rev. Edward G. Harris, D.D., Dean of Philadelphia Divinity School

When the author of the final book in the New Testament said in the late first century, "I saw a new heaven and a new earth,"[1] he could not, even by the wildest stretching of exegetical imagination, be said to have been referring to theological education in the seminaries of the Episcopal Church. When, however, that same John heard the voice of God declaring, "Behold, I make all things new"[2] he was, even though he could not know it, encountering the authentic principle which must govern theological education at this point of the twentieth century.

For the fact of the matter is: theological education today cries out for a bold and fresh design. It has not after all undergone much basic change for the past few hundred years. It wants and needs to be made new. And the plain truth is that this will be achieved, if at all, only in the creating, renewing power of God and for His sake.

In one sense, what goes on in our seminaries can be viewed as a mission to tomorrow. Quite obviously, in educating men for the ministry our seminaries are engaged in preparing the human leadership and quality of tomorrow's church. As one who was born in the first quarter of this century, I am still brought up short by the realization that the students in our seminaries today will actually be ministering in the world of the twenty-first century. Or to put it another way, the course and character of the church for the next one hundred years are, for good or ill, being largely determined by what happens in our seminaries now and during the ensuing twenty-five years. Theological education is truly a mission to tomorrow.



DEAN EDWARD G. HARRIS

But there is another sense, and it is this: the mission to tomorrow depends upon the achievement of today; it depends upon the thinking and praying and doing of the present. There is no escaping that. And it is within this context that I want to present for your consideration this morning an outline description of five elements in the new design which, as I see it, is urgently required for theological education. There are, of course, additional things that press forward and want to be said, but these five are, I think, basic elements, absolutely essential for the new structure so badly needed by our seminaries. And they are elements which, albeit in small measure and early stage, are yet already beginning to emerge in certain instances.

Let us get at the first element by way of a series of observations. Professor Huston Smith of the Massachusett Institute of Technology has recently called attention to the astonishing phenomenon that no fewer than two million new discoveries or scientific experiments are being reported annually.[3] He has also observed that, if the Massachusetts Institute of Technology were really on its toes, it would be subscribing to seventy-five thousand scientific journals. The Widener Library of Harvard adds an average of eight hundred books to its collection every

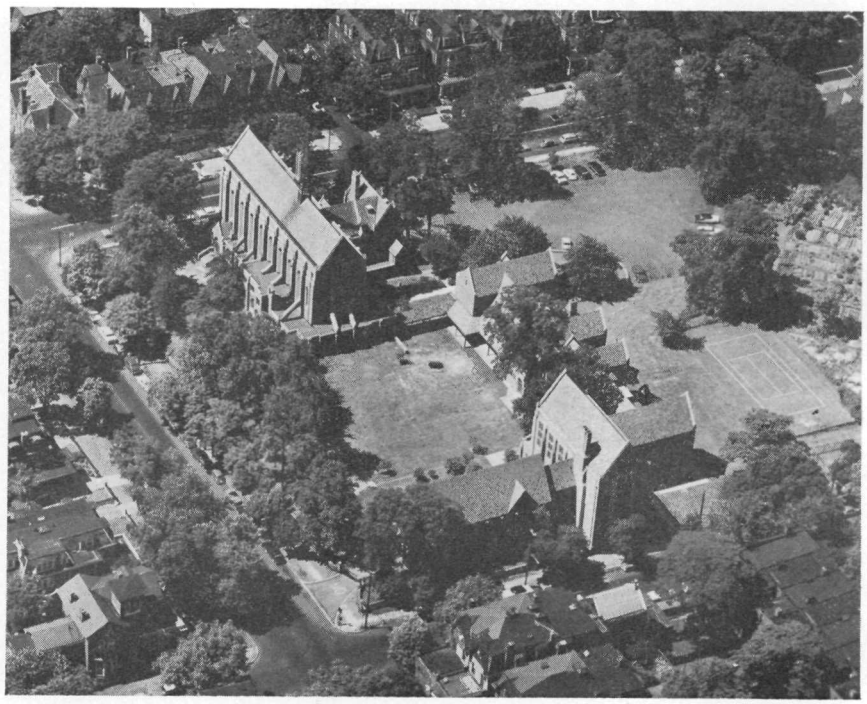
day. It is reliably estimated that knowledge in virtually every field is doubling every ten years. The alarming thing is this: teachers and students are being crushed by the sheer quantity of their materials.

The Need for "Depth Theology"

Now making due allowance for the fact that other fields develop and produce more rapidly than those of theology, it is still true that there is swiftly multiplying knowledge in the study of the bible, of church history, theology, ethics, and the various pastoral fields of communication, listening, counselling, and the rest. Already there is far too much to deal with in the three years a student spends in seminary. It has become abundantly plain that even in theological education the sorting of facts is at least as important as the amassing of them. What is now desperately demanded is selectivity and relevance, the achievement of synoptic vision, that is, the forging of facts into meaningful and relevant syntheses. To put it bluntly, theological education which has heretofore been conducted to a great extent through general, survey courses attempting to skim over the whole area must be reshaped into studies in depth of selected subjects which are of crucial importance and provide informing entrances into the total body. Vast, thin courses which try to cover the entire field to the end that the student hears everything at least mentioned and has a nodding acquaintance with it all have become futile and ridiculous. What we must have in their place is concentration on what might be called "depth theology," the centering down upon carefully chosen subjects and themes which are treated thoroughly even though this means that a good deal else does not get mentioned at all. Survey knowledge must be replaced by knowledge in depth, not in order to exclude but in order to center down in richness and manageability. Obviously seminary education involves the possession of factual knowledge. Just as obviously it involves the breaking forth of insight so that through reflection, and wrestling, and internalization, information may mature into understanding and understanding may be transformed into wisdom. No seminarian, for example, can in three years learn everything there is to know about all the events which have determined the history and tradition of the church. But every seminarian can master and in turn be mastered by a selected number of chief events which have been well-springs of shaping power and decisive spiritual renewal for the church. Nobody in the ministry today can know everything about the bible and the church, about the theological disciplines and the pastoral ministries to human need. What the seminary must do above all else is to plunge the student into a study in depth of selected, representative themes in these fields and so guide him that he grows his own appetite and skills and undertakes an independent research of his own which will be carried on all throughout his ministry.

Post-Ordination Education

This first element leads directly into the second one I wish to mention, that of continuing education for the clergy. Says a study conducted by "The Fund for Theological Education":[4] "The fact is that no profession is more besieged by demands for leadership than is the ministry: from children, from adult



AN AERIAL VIEW of the many beautiful buildings which make up the Close of the Philadelphia Divinity School. The most outstanding of all, of course, is the Chapel, which is one of the most beautiful Gothic churches in our country.

study groups, from those with personal problems, from those who expect a fine sermon, from communities which look to the pastor for civic leadership." If a clergyman is to be competent in his duties, his entire active ministry must be fortified by continuing and systematic education. The seminary simply cannot be any longer (if, indeed, it ever could be) a loading yard where in the space of three years a man ships aboard enough freight to last for a forty year ministry. In nearly every vocation, individuals who fail to keep pace with accelerating change are being made obsolete. Dr. James Killian has estimated that already several hundred thousands of engineers are obsolete. It would be wishful thinking to assume that clergymen, as a class, are any better off. If a man's knowledge stands still, change will soon overtake him and render him obsolete. One important new element in theological education must be a real acting upon the recognition that the spiritual strength and intellectual competence of the clergyman have got to be renewed by regular periods of study, of prayer and meditation, of personal re-creation. This can be accomplished in part, for example, by the minister setting aside periods of study each week in the midst of the regular parish work calendar; and the congregation must support him in his desire to save such time for reading and spiritual discipline. It can be accomplished in part through diocesan programs wherein bishops, with the guidance and participation of seminary professors serving as directors of study, set up for their clergy regularly occurring courses of reading and appointed times of meeting for discussion. But beyond this, and here is what will take real time and money and imagination, it must be accomplished through sabbatical leaves being provided for clergymen so that they may be away from their parish for a semester in order to return to the seminary or university to undertake programs of intensive study and research under direct faculty guidance. Congregations as well as seminaries must understand this necessity for regular study by the clergy; they must expect this of their ministers and enable them to enter into it. Seminary education must increasingly be planned not only to provide for this, but also on the basis of being able to count heavily upon this kind of continuing education of the clergy in definite programs actually being carried out. This is a vital element in the reshaping of theological education.

Ecumenism in Theological Education

The third element in the new design for our seminaries is the engagement in dialogue with other theological commitments than our own. In current American society, the existence of religious pluralism is the emphatic order of everyday life. This necessitates a new understanding of the relationships between the various communities of faith. The growing awareness of the universal church and the attempts to practice its unified life make it mandatory that in seminary itself and as an integral part of theological education the dialogue of Protestants and Catholics, of Christians and Jews be fully entered. No Episcopal seminarian should be graduated today who does not have a working understanding of Roman Catholicism and Judaism. This inter-religious encounter and this education in the faith-commitments of others in no sense means neglect of our own Anglican heritage. Instead it means a deeper plunging into it through the understanding of other traditions and through active participation in what is the actual life-situation of the church in America. I shudder to think of what the Philadelphia Divinity School has missed of this in the past, for metropolitan Philadelphia provides superb opportunities in this regard, with its rich resources of Roman Catholic, Jewish, Lutheran, Presbyterian, and Baptist theological schools, to name but some. In growing measure, this dialogue with other theological positions must engage our seminarians and inform the renewing of Episcopal theological education.

Theology's Renewal

The fourth element I mention now is the entering into dialogue with other intellectual disciplines than that of theology itself. This, to be sure can best be accomplished in concert with the resources of a great university, so that head-on exchange may freely occur between theology on the one side and on the other the natural sciences, law, politics, fine art, business and finance, the mass media, the social sciences, medicine, etc. No seminarian should be graduated today who is not open to and hearing attentively the insights of some of these great disciplines which largely determine the structures of modern industrial society. To be truly creative, theology must be involved in this inter-disciplin-

ary discourse which characterizes a university at its best. If theology is to deal with the meaning of life as it is expressed in man's total activity, it must deal not only or even primarily with religion itself in an isolated corner but precisely with the raw materials of human experience which are growing in science and politics, in the arts and in psychology, in industry and in sociology. Here are the areas in which are being made each day the decisions which powerfully mould the shape of society and the destiny of individuals. Think of those who bear the tremendous responsibilities of making the decisions of large corporations which employ thousands of wage earners; the physician who must decide whether to keep a body alive after meaningful spiritual life has vanished; the statesmen whose concern is issues which alter the face of life for millions. Theology must increasingly immerse itself in conversation with these in such a way that men may find new meaning and undergirding unity in these various realms which now seem to be going their own uncoordinated directions. For God is to be found, not only in church and in religion, but as He breaks forth in the thousand and one places in which men live out their daily existence. Theology and the church must address themselves, not so much to a cautious preserve of religion, as to what happens in those areas which we mistakenly think of as non-religious; it is in them that we are called to discover the meaning of God and His unfolding purpose for us. As "The Report of the Second Assembly of the World Council of Churches" (1954) says: "God's conversation with His Church is a conversation about the world. The Church must be prepared to speak about the world if it wants to speak with God. The world is the object of God's activity." God speaks with His church today in the so-called secular issues and events; these are the arena of our ministry and a proper concern of seminary education. In a profound sense, today's clergyman is called to be a translator. He must be able to translate between the church's language and the language of the world, between the Word of God and the community which is called to receive and live that Word. As Professor Franklin Littell of the Chicago Seminary has suggested:[5] the clergyman studies the Old and New Testaments, not as fixed objects, but in order to make the bible live in the church; he studies church history, not to become a research scholar, but to discuss intelligently the situation in which people find themselves now; he studies theology, not to use the special language of a special discipline, but to further the intellectual and spiritual growth of his people. There is just no getting away from the necessity for seminaries to involve theological students in first-hand, open encounter with other disciplines so that they may be informed through hearing what is being asked and said by those who are responsible for them and then may move on to interpret theologically what is happening in people and events in all walks of life. This event is crucial to the new shape of the teaching ministry of the seminary.

These first four elements I have been discussing have been concerned largely with the teaching aspect of the seminary, with its obvious and central task of educating men for the ministry. There is, however, another function integral to the seminary, equally basic and life-giving, and it constitutes the fifth and final element I have time to mention. This is the function of research. The seminary must be a vital and generative source of Episcopal Church life, the center for the church's creative thinking. It is the place where scholars must work together in investigation and study, in scrutiny and criticism, in reconstruction, in teaching and writing, in the opening up of new ideas. For the seminary is the intellectual center of the church's life. As such, its task is not only to preserve and transmit the tradition of the church; it must also through growing research recreate and re-shape that tradition anew. Fundamentally, the seminary is the church studying the gospel. Here is where the church seeks to understand its own commission from God and in the light of this moves on to search out its mission to the world and the nature of its ministry. The seminary is the church studying the gospel and exploring its relationships to all sorts and conditions of men in all sorts and conditions of existence. This task of research is inescapable and it is of the highest priority.

The Need for Theological Research

Yet the present situation is that our seminaries are engaged in very little research at all and certainly have no systematic approach to it nor any overall view of it. Just imagine if that were the case in medicine, in economics, in natural science.

(Continued on Page Fourteen)

EDITORIAL

Two Seminary Deans Speak Their Minds

WE ARE GRATEFUL to Bishop Alfred L. Banyard of New Jersey for permission to reprint Thoughts on Theological Education by Dean Edward G. Harris of the Philadelphia Divinity School, which appeared originally in The Church News, monthly of that diocese.

A dinner was held recently at Trinity Cathedral, Trenton, at which a large number of clergy and lay people were guests of Bishop Banyard. Dean Harris, speaking informally, spelled out the tasks before the seminaries in the years ahead and the responsibility of the whole Church to get behind the adventuresome reconstruction that is long overdue.

Theological Education Sunday is January 22 and we think we can serve the Church and our seminaries best by urging a careful reading of the challenge presented by Dean Harris.

Along similar lines was an address given in Washington by Dean Samuel H. Miller of Harvard Divinity School, in which he also called for sweeping changes in theological education.

He urged a "vast and critical review" of theological schools "with an eye to reducing their numbers, redeploying their resources, diversifying their functions, relocating their services."

"We need," he said, "fewer schools, more strategic concentration of resources, radical changes in teaching, and a far higher demand in society and in the Church for excellence in professional religious work."

Dr. Miller also contended that foundations, as well as Churches, have failed to support innovation in theological schools.

"The easy assumption that if all theological schools are helped, the level of religious training in the U.S.A. will be raised, is simply not true," he stated. "Such generalized methods of philanthropy only tend to support the status quo and to smother with small repairs and minor changes the basic need for a radical and thorough-going revolution in the whole system."

Concerning Church support for theological education, Dr. Miller claimed that this has been "vastly erratic and inefficient." He said the "present pattern has neither rhyme nor reason, except in terms of the selfish and limited concerns of specific groups, without regard for ecumenical advance or the need of modern society."

But, he continued, if the Churches have been slow in facing the "crisis" in theological education, "it is even more surprising that the great philanthropic foundations, now the primal source and distributors of society's excess wealth, almost without exception have consistently repudiated their responsibility in this area."

Foundations, he said have "retreated behind the bugaboo of 'not being able to help one without helping all' — as if this ever interfered with any parallel discrimination in regard to scientific projects or art programs. There are enough institutions of excellence in the three major religious groups in America to make this kind of rationalization patently absurd."

Dean Miller went on to observe that theological education today stands "precisely where medical education stood prior to the Flexner report of 1910." This was a reference to a study by Abraham Flexner that resulted in sweeping changes in curriculum and teaching methods in medical schools.

"Perhaps we shall need," said Dr. Miller, "as medical education did, the thunderous hammer of a Flexner, exerted by a layman, before we move toward the large-scale housecleaning necessary to make us fit for the huge task of generating a set of religious leaders capable of contributing to the solution of the massive problems of our secular age."

This journal of opinion, over the years, has probably devoted more space to the needs of our seminaries than to any other subject. Their need for money was the subject of an editorial last week, with one suggestion, among several, being that tuition fees be doubled.

We also refer back to a potent article on Biblical Research and Renewal (11/24) by O. Sydney Barr of the General Seminary faculty in which he urges the Church, in its plans for the future, to give prior consideration to the education of its clergy. We only hope his analysis of the

situation received the attention it deserves from President Pusey of Harvard and others who are working on the problem.

In any case, in the light of what Sydney Barr and Deans Harris and Miller say, it is obvious that something more drastic has to be done money-wise than collecting pennies on Theological Education Sunday.

LEARNING TO OBEY IN SEMINARY

By Arthur Lichtenberger

Professor at Episcopal Theological School

THE FORMER PRESIDING BISHOP IN A SERMON AT EPISCOPAL THEOLOGICAL SCHOOL TELLS SEMINARIANS WHAT IS THE HEART OF OBEDIENCE

HERE WE ARE, most of us, either students of theology or in the ordained ministry. Why are we here, and for what purpose?

Let me answer the first question quite quickly and I hope, directly. In the deepest sense, we are here not because we chose to come, but because we could not do otherwise. We did not choose Christ, but he chose us. But how does anyone of us know this? Ordinarily not by any sign or tangible proof. To look for an evident external sign of God's call is itself an act of doubt. When I was ordained deacon here in this chapel, Dr. Edward Drown preached the sermon, which I have always treasured.

He said in part: "It is not to be supposed that this choice by Christ comes to us — independent of our own wills and purposes. He calls us as free men, not as things, but as persons. It makes little difference in what way the conviction of a divine call has come. It may have been through the use of your mind. It may have been through the force of circumstance; those things which we tend to call accident; you may seem to have drifted into the ministry. And then you may have found that the drift was really the current of the divine love, the surface of that river whose streams make glad the city of God. All that matters little — what does matter is your certainty that behind and beyond and above any or all of these forms of experience there is the will of God who has called us to this ministry. God did put it into our hearts to come here."

Now for what purpose, then, are we here, or rather what, basically, are we to learn here? I am not concerned now with academic studies, with that particular goal of theological education. Our present curriculum is on trial use and the faculty and many students are concerned that whatever form the curriculum may take in the future, that it will offer to those who study here an opportunity to understand the meaning of the gospel for our world now. But as I have said, I am not talking about this, but about something which underlies this and makes such learning possible.

Learning How to Obey

WE ARE HERE, then, to offer ourselves to God, with no conditions attached. This self-offering does not begin here, certainly, but it should be deepened and continued in a new dimension here. This self-offering will be made over and over to the end of our days. This is a process, learning how to obey; learning how to say yes to God, giving repeated assent of mind and will.

With all who call themselves Christians, we are to believe and obey, or rather to believe, which means to obey, for we are to do the truth.

Now the first and most obvious thing to be said is, as I put it a few minutes ago, that we shall be learning what it means to obey all our life long. We are not, as we certainly know, disobedient, rebellious, on one day and then by an act of the will or even by the grace of God, transformed into obedient servants, the next day and kept that way. We are each day, God's obedient, disobedient children. There is that civil war in us which Jeremy Taylor knew, "I'm not a man," he said, "I'm a civil war". "I have the will to do good, but not the power. That

is, I don't accomplish the good I set out to do, and the evil I don't really want to do I find I am always doing." (Romans 7:19 — Phillips translation)

And it is a terribly long, slow, process — this learning obedience. George Bernard Shaw in Back to Methusala has Eve in her old age say of her grandson Enoch: "Enoch walks on the hills and has given up his will to do the will of the Voice, but it took Enoch 200 years to learn to interpret the will of the Voice."

200 years! That's too long for us. But the time it takes is really not important, the time it takes for us to be conformed to God's will. What is of the utmost importance is that we see each day as an opportunity of offering our will to God, however imperfect that offering may be, for the only time we have to say yes to God is now. Now, today and not tomorrow.

"Tomorrow is a misty kind of chasm,
In which we plunge to wake up in today,
Tomorrow is a kind of ectoplasm,
Faces the rear and runs the other way.

I hold tomorrow in between my mittens,
And listen to it purr and stroke its head,
And then quite suddenly the cat has kittens,
And I am holding yesterday instead."

Now is the Time

Now. We pray each day in Advent — "Give us grace that we may put off the works of darkness and put upon us the armour of light, now".

Then the second obvious thing about obeying God is that it is the bending of our wills to his that really counts. But how in the world can we do this? We can't! In the address to a deacon who is about to be ordained priest, the bishop says: "You cannot have a mind and will thereto of yourself, for that will and ability is given of God alone." Obeying God is not a simple matter of doing this, or not doing that. Obedience is loving God and trusting him, and if we come to love him above all else, it will be but our response to the love which he has poured out upon us. God is not only the initiator, but the ground of our obedience. Obedience then, the direction of our mind toward God and his purpose: — this is a product, it grows in us in the measure in which we respond in trust and love to God's love for us.

Now what does this mean specifically for us? First, I am sure it means training ourselves to wait upon God, having regular times for prayer and meditation, times of withdrawal.

Arnold Toynbee in his Study of History devotes over a hundred pages to a description and an analysis of what he calls the Movement of Withdrawal and Return. He studies this movement in St. Paul and a number of other Christian saints, and in such unlikely persons as Caesar and Hindenburg. He traces the rhythm in national states and in the history of civilizations. He sees this same rhythm also in plant life translated into ritual and mythology, in the growth of societies and in the life of creative minorities within a society. In the case of the mystic, it is the rhythm of passing first out of action into ecstasy and then out of ecstasy into action again.

"The return," says Toynbee. "The return is the essence of the whole movement as well as its final cause." No doubt that is true. "Go home and show there what great things God has done for you." But I find in myself much more resistance to the withdrawal, rather than to the return. And from what I have observed in the lives of many of the clergy and professional Church workers, when the pattern of the movement of withdrawal and return is broken it is because of resistance to the withdrawal, not the return. It is the disengagement we find so hard.

The Professionals

ARE WE really too busy to pray? The worship of the Church is, of course, a basic part of our obedience, but do we think that the services of worship in the Church will suffice? Or do we believe that work for the Lord will take the place of attending to him? I don't know why we neglect our prayers, but many of us do. It is the withdrawal, made possible and in time fruitful by discipline, by a rule, that will keep us from becoming professionals, with the feeling that we're pretty good; there isn't much we don't know. The professional parson, or the professional Church worker is always so sure of his ground, he always has the right word, for any occasion. He is never at a loss, for he avoids the unfamiliar and will not let himself become involved. The professional parson is the hollow man.

Last spring when I preached here in the chapel, I used an illustration. I'm going to use it again because it makes my point better than anything else I know.

When I was teaching at the General Seminary, about sixteen years ago, we had a question in the comprehensive exam about ministering to

the sick. One of the students who was particularly interested in the use of unction, discussed the matter and then wrote: "It may be some time before the priest is able to function with unction." Well — some do at once. That professional air of being on very familiar terms with holy things — and holy words — how different this is from the openness, the feeling of expectation, the humility which comes when we wait upon God, when we look for his appearing — now. We cannot depend upon the public services of the Church to save us from the hard crust of professionalism. If this is the only time we pray, we are in great danger, because the services of the Church, particularly when we are leading them, without our own times of prayer, do become terribly familiar ground.

Do you know the story about the man who was watching for the first time a Corpus Christi procession in France? He looked and saw everyone on his knees, save one man who stood quite unconcerned. So this stranger said to the man next to him, "Who is that man standing?" "I don't know," came back the answer, "but he must be either an atheist or a sacristan."

Whatever the means or the forms of our withdrawal, this does not matter; these are only aids. The essential thing is the constant and unrelenting act of turning, of asking God to turn us to himself. This is an essential part of our obedience.

Way of Obedience

THERE IS one other way of obedience I speak of now. It is this: learning to accept ourselves as we are in our present situation and working there, believing that God has called us as we are to do the work where we are, and that when God wants us to do something else, it will become evident. Someone once asked William Temple how he s h o u l d move about in the sanctuary when he was leading the service of worship, and Temple replied, "I stay where I am until there is some obvious reason why I should go elsewhere". So it is with us in our work in the Church.

And how futile it is to complain because God has not given us different capacities and abilities than he has given us. In the 3rd chapter of St. John's Gospel there is this conversation between John the Baptist and some of his disciples: they say to him: "Rabbi, there was a man with you on the other side of Jordan, to whom you bore your witness. Here he is, baptizing, and crowds are flocking to him." John's answer was: 'A man can have only what God gives him.' "

This way of obedience is very hard. It is just as hard as it is to avoid those sidelong glances at other parishes and other jobs and thinking: "If only I had a chance like that." Sometime ago I read an article called The Parson Leaving. "The parish priest of today," the author wrote, "The parish priest of today, must to some people appear to be the world's greatest pessimist, for his present parish is always unique, no other parish is so difficult or has so many problems, but he is in fact the world's greatest optimist, for he is always ready to move to another parish, where with the grace of God he expects to overcome all difficulties."

Our method of placing clergy certainly does not put every man in the place where he can do his best work. But is it generally the parish, the people, the circumstances of our work that robs us of enthusiasm and blocks our obedience? In every diocese there are parishes which require of a priest or a Church worker the utmost patience and long suffering and faith to believe that God is using us there in that place. This is very hard and I have the greatest admiration for people who continue faithfully without complaint in such situations. I know that some of you in this community are troubled: Why am I here, what good can I possible accomplish here, or in whatever form of ministry lies ahead?

Going Deep Down

BUT EVEN including these most unpromising places, and situations, the root source of our disobedience, when it comes is this: we think if only the people in some other place knew what my real abilities are, if only my bishop knew, if only God would remember; I wouldn't be limited to this. It is not our circumstances, it is our rebellion, our failure to obey God that keep us from putting ourselves at God's disposal.

Gabriel Marcel has put it like this: "You feel yourself hedged in, you dream of escape, but beware of mirages. Do not run or fly away in order to get free; rather, dig in the narrow place which has been given you; you will find God there and everywhere. God does not float on your horizon, he lives in your substance. Vanity runs, love digs. If you fly away from yourself your prison will run with you and will

close in because of the wind of your flight; if you go deep down into yourself it will disappear in paradise."

"Vanity runs, love digs". Digging, digging, in the place God has given us, this is the heart of obedience. Obeying, not with a resigned and doleful air, but in confidence and deep joy, we do what God has given us to do and we leave the issue to his wisdom. For our first and constant business is to confess him, to love him, to enjoy him, and to obey him.

Let us pray:

O God, set our hearts at liberty from the service of ourselves, and let it be our meat and drink to do your will; through Jesus Christ our Lord.

THE RIGHT TO DIE

By Benjamin Minifie

Rector of Grace Church, New York

A DISCUSSION OF ONE OF THE MOST CONTROVERSIAL QUESTIONS FACING THE WORLD OF TODAY

SOMETIME AGO a chaplain in a general hospital said, "The problem today is not death or the fear of it. The problem is rather that of not being able to die, the fear of living on and on in helpless dependency."

The chaplain was speaking of an increasing situation in our fast-changing world, one which pertains to the lengthening span of human life and the ever larger numbers of old people, people in their late 70s and well beyond, in our midst. Many of these carry on to the end of this mortal life in health and vigor, but many others of the same wind up in nursing homes, bed-ridden and forlornly miserable. Often these latter wish they could die, but they can't, and even to voice such a wish is contrary to the moral code under which we live.

I'm sure all of us have ministered to persons of this kind as well as to others much younger yet stricken with some fatal illness, waiting to die and aware of the hopelessness of their condition, half wishing the end might come soon rather than be painfully drawn out. However, the mores and customs of society, indeed the moral law as set forth by the Church, all stand opposed to any release from suffering and slow decease by one's own hand or with the cooperation of a medical doctor. Suicide is not condoned among us, there is a stigma about it on any grounds, and meanwhile nothing can be done in behalf of multitudes who languish in beds of pain, reduced, some of them, to an embarrassing and humiliating level of life.

Alternatives

I REMEMBER a few years ago visiting as often as I could a man in his late 50s who was dying of cancer. It was all over the pelvic region, and while there had been surgery there was no stopping the spread of it or the pain except very briefly and temporarily. The poor man could not sit down for more than a few minutes at a time, he paced about feverishly, never a very patient or devout person he was now beside himself with discomfort and despair. I confess I was not too surprised when I was called early one morning with the word that he had shot himself in back of his suburban house. He could not bear the agony of it any longer, and had done what he threatened more than once to do. It was understandable, and yet we were all shocked by the violence of it. Somehow it seemed rather disgraceful his doing what he did, there was the disagreeable messiness of a gun-shot wound in the head, the talk in the neighborhood.

My question is, Should not this doomed man have had the option to make his exit legally and gracefully over against the alternatives of being destroyed by inches or going out in the back yard and blowing his brains out, thereby calling down upon himself the censorious judgment of the community?

Long before he was famous for his book on Situation Ethics, Prof. Joseph Fletcher of the Episcopal Theological School in Cambridge, Massachusetts, wrote a volume in which he took up, among other subjects, this very one of a man's right to die. It bore the title, Morals and Medicine. Dr. Fletcher, as I remember, carefully distinguished between having friends and relations decide that another should be put out of his misery, and permitting the person himself to have that option.

Real Problems

THE FORMER would be fraught with possibilities of abuse. As age came on or in a time of severe sickness I might well become suspicious of my doctor or of members of my own family standing around the bed-side, if it should ever be that other people could determine that I had lived long enough and be legally empowered to dispatch me. There are many cases, of course, where it would be more merciful to deliver a helpless person, for example, from a long extended coma, or from a state of sheer incoherence and extreme senility. But this is a problem other than the one I am posing, and I still feel the dangers of abuse here are so serious as to hold me back from endorsing euthanasia without the subject's knowledge and request.

Fletcher, it seemed to me, made a strong case for the latter position, and I have increasingly agreed with his arguments as the years have slipped by. He would have it that when a person is a victim of some illness for which there is no known cure, where the outlook is hopeless and the future can only mean increasing deterioration of body and even mind and at last the total failure of the flesh — that person should be permitted the dignity of departing this life while he is still in his right mind and not a physical wreck in a hospital bed. Such permission would not be granted lightly, but only after two medical doctors had concurred in the prognosis.

It strikes me that there is merit in the Fletcher argument that man was not meant to stand by passively while nature runs its course. Man's role is to penetrate the secrets of nature, to subdue and control it, not to acquiesce in its sometimes ruthless ways. Hence we dam rivers and move mountains and roll back the sea, we wear spectacles, we cut out malignant growths. Why should it be considered moral to keep a person alive who wants to die, to whom life is torment and a down-hill road to embarrassing helplessness? Why should spirit not be master of nature at this juncture, be enabled to maintain its integrity and let go of this life while it is still in command of the situation?

When Life is Hell

TO BE SURE, there are dangers in what I am proposing here, but I am not convinced the dangers are such that in all instances we must keep people alive against their will. I think of an older woman who for reasons no medical doctor or psychologist has ever been able to explain periodically descends into an emotional black hole of Calcutta. Ordinarily she is a gay, highly literate person, but when one of these unpredictable spells is upon her she is in absolute agony of soul for a week or longer. Life becomes hell and she yearns for oblivion. More than once she has telephoned me from a distance to say she could not bear such suffering any longer, and to ask me to give her a reason why she should. I have usually tried to reassure her that, despite her unbelief, this dark mood would pass away as it had a score of times in the past. More recently when she said she wanted to die, I came back reminding her that she was not herself at such a time, and that therefore she could not make a decision so momentous and irrevocable. She seemed to accept this in a surprisingly acquiescent way.

A case of this kind perhaps points up a danger attendant on making it legal and respectable for a person to quit this life of his own volition. In a fit of sheer depression who has not considered suicide? And were suicide to become a more acceptable way out, would we not—it might be said—be encouraged in compulsive moments, in passing moods? Of course, the same argument could have been used against the adoption of the more liberal New York state divorce law of 1966 with which, I expect, we are all in sympathy. The conservative is wont to say, Don't let the bars down. If you do so you will open the flood-gates to easy divorce. If he had his way he would permit no exceptions, regardless of the hopelessness of some marital situations. I am for mercy in the exceptional case, spelled out in wise laws.

A Hopeless Case

THIS WHOLE MATTER became a more personal one in our family a few months ago. A relation of ours in her 85th year went off one

afternoon to a tea party with old friends. In the midst of the goings-on somebody noticed that she was not herself. She had just had a paralytic stroke and could neither move nor speak. A doctor was called immediately, and she was taken to a Boston hospital by ambulance.

For eleven months she lay in a hospital and finally a nursing home bed, one side of her body totally paralysed. Her speech gradually returned, but she could hear nothing, not a sound. She had been a delightful person, with a fund of stories which she loved to tell, widely read, one who loved life and entered into it with great zest. Now she lay absolutely helpless, requiring constant nursing care. One had to write notes to communicate with her. Because of her age attempts to get her to exercise the hand and foot that would not respond proved too much, and her case was soon diagnosed as quite hopeless.

The poor woman was uncomfortable much of the time. Time stood still for her as days and nights blurred into each other, gradually she lost ground but all too gradually. Somehow she put on a brave front when people came to see her, and remained heroically patient and appreciative of little favors, but once she broke down and calling me by name said, "I wish I could die. This is such a trial, and I feel so trapped." Another time, some weeks later, she looked up at me and said, "I wish I knew how to let go, but I can't seem to be able to do so."

Although she ate but a morsel of food and a bit of tea at meal-time she lingered on in this condition for eleven months. At the end she had wasted away to a shadow of the vibrant person we had known so well, her mind wandering, her spirit scarcely present in the last days. The question came to me more than once during that cruel ordeal, Why must this woman suffer so needlessly? Why should it not be permissable for the medical doctor to leave her a pill to swallow, and set her free? Why could she not press the point, but only speak of it half desperately and half hopelessly, too, and, yes, not without a sense of guilt, for suicide is a bad word among us, something taboo?

Sentimental Ideas

SOME OF YOU may want to say to me that pain and suffering can be used redemptively. Surely this is one of the lessons of the cross which Jesus used heroically and even to do the will of God. I am aware of this great Christian truth, namely, that over against rebelling against suffering or merely enduring it stoically, in Christ we learn a better way: suffering used in a redemptive way, to purify, to bring men to themselves, to turn us in faith to God, etc. Someone has said that a world without suffering would be a world morally impoverished. It would be a world without compassion, without sympathy, without courage, without love.

I subscribe to all this, but I am afraid that a good many false and sentimental things have also been spoken of in church pulpits on this subject. For example, it is not accurate to identify sickness and disease with the cross. The cross was the price Jesus was willing to pay for the sake of the cause he came preaching. Sickness is an affliction we ordinarily have no choice whatsoever about, and in many cases, particularly where an illness is prolonged, destructive and hopeless, it is pretty hard to see how this can serve any spiritually therapeutic purpose. To the contrary it can be and often is dreadfully undermining of morale and of what it means to be a person.

Some others may say that what the Joseph Fletchers are advocating is suicide, pure and simple, and that this will ever be against the sixth commandment. I must say this argument impresses me not at all. To ask and be granted leave to make one's departure while still capable of making decisions over against the alternative of becoming a helpless shrunken thing of skin and bones is by no stretch of the imagination the same as murder. I am reminded, too, that Jesus of all people was not a legalist. He upheld and honored the moral law, but at the same time he was invariably merciful and understanding in the individual case.

How could a law permitting what I am urging here ever be drafted, a law merciful enough to save human beings, where there is no hope, from the harrowing, unnecessary suffering we have all witnessed time and time again, a law also wise enough to maintain reverence for life, not to be an excuse and justification to a person tempted too soon to give up?

I don't have the answer to that, but I cannot believe such an assignment is beyond the combined abilities of lawyers and theologians. Of the need for some relaxing of our present-day hard and rigid customs in dealing with the helplessly and hopelessly ill I myself am wholly persuaded, and I am impatient to see some radical changes in the name of compassion.

THOUGHTS ON THEOLOGICAL EDUCATION

(*Continued from Page Six*)

In a number of businesses today, for example, more people are working on the product that is planned for production ten years from now than are working on the product for tomorrow's distribution. In our seminaries, however, what goes on now by way of research (and there is precious little of it) depends simply on the chance interests of particular faculty members and on the infrequent sabbatical leaves which they are able to obtain.

Two kinds of research are obviously called for, pure and applied. There must be free and wide-ranging investigation in the Bible, in theology, in ethics, in history, in the pastoral disciplines, a following of investigation wherever it may lead and with no concern as to whether its result will be useful, asking only whether it is true. This quest to lift horizons and plough new ground is the very life-blood of scholarship. The seminary must be the seedbed of new ideas, giving birth to new intellectual and spiritual refreshment for the church, becoming the place of origin for the impact of the Christian faith as it is received in our church upon the culture and the community in which we find ourselves. Here is the germinative source of our church's life from the human side of things. Out of this research alone will emerge the provision of stirring religious leadership for the American community as well as the extension of the church's own intellectual and spiritual contributions. For theology must not only keep pace with the growth and change of American society; it must in originality and creative effort actually lead society toward desirable change. Only thus shall we be raising up men who are able to discriminate between the church as it is and the church as it should be, men of competence and authority sent out to lead the church rather than merely to accommodate themselves to it. It is out of this pure research that there grow what Dean Miller of the Harvard Divinity School has called the resources of theoretical knowledge by which the church is able to make a lively criticism of its own practice.[6] Here is the power by which religion is enabled to disclose meaning in that wherein God's meaning has not hitherto been perceived.

Then, too, applied research is needed, the undertaking of studies directed to specified ends and dealing with particular problems of the church which are capable of being identified. The seminaries must assume responsibility for undertaking research devoted to the special problems facing the church: For example, what is the proper nature and function of the ministry for which we profess to be preparing men (educator, preacher, counsellor, priest, confessor, community leader, institutional administrator, etc.)? What is the controlling factor in the minister's role? We need elemental information such as could be provided by studies of the church's projected needs in terms of the ministry and its own future. How many men do we have to ordain in 1970, 1980, 2000? What kind of recruitment for our seminaries is required to meet these goals? The best information we have now is that as of some months ago our bishops reported 268 vacancies out of 7,503 places and that we are supposed to be shortly coming into a sharp rise in the number of clergy going into retirement. What are the new areas of work that need to be opened up? What new shapes of the ministry need to be imagined? How shall we minister to the urban situation? What are our needs for post-seminary graduate studies to prepare men for teaching in colleges and seminaries? What are our needs for the parish ministry and for the institutional ministries of hospitals, prisons, industries, the armed forces? What about the theological education of the laity and the continuing education of the clergy? The seminaries must become responsible for undertaking these special problems of research which are of direct usefulness to the church in the midst of present and on-going problems.

The point is, where will the spiritual, moral and intellectual leadership of the Episcopal Church come from in the future? It will come from our seminaries or it will not come at all. The point also is, from what source within our seminaries will such leadership emerge? It will come from research both pure and applied or it will not come at all. It will come from the joint efforts of scholars, thinkers, teachers, writers and doers working among themselves and with their students so as to be engaged in the task of inquiring into the problems of modern man in the spiritual, personal, moral and social character of those problems. Our seminaries must increasingly be made centers of research, centers of religious and moral inquiry to which scholars and students,

clergymen and lay persons, and the community at large can relate and to which they can turn for aid in answering these very questions which press upon us. This element of basic research is simply indispensable for the reshaping of the seminary today.

The Church's Responsibility

Just two short and thrusting observations by way of concluding; first, this kind of adventuresome reconstruction is not going to be achieved simply by taking a hitch here and there in the seminary curriculum. It means rebirth, with all the pain and joy which that entails. It means coming alive with the strength and relevance which mark the best in higher education today, as in field after field centers of learning and fresh thought are being looked to as never before for progress and advance in a fierce determination to put new learning to work. This is going to require of our church that which churches come by only with great difficulty — namely, the imagination and flexibility to experiment and become new. The other thing is this: the job is not going to be accomplished by the kind of financial support which is now being given to our seminaries, the annual thirty-seven cent average per communicant gift to Theological Education Offering. No thirty-seven cent effort will any longer do for the Episcopal Church. Our seminaries have got to be made resourceful enough and strong enough to forge a new excellence for Christ's sake. And plainly that is going to require massive financial support in terms of millions of dollars, and we had better face up to it squarely. The times and the needs, the opportunities and the call of God unite in urgent demand for bold and decisive action. Only as we give ourselves and our substance in vigorous response, do we serve the God who alone can say in majestic fact, "Behold, I make all things new."

1 Relevation 21:1.
2 Revelation 21:5.
3 "Education in Our Changing World", from "Consultation on Continuing Education for the Ministry", Andover Newton Theological School, June 1964.
4 "Continuing Education of the Minister", February 1964.
5 "The Apostolate of the Laity and Theological Education", The Interseminarian, May 1963.
6 Samuel H. Miller, "A Philosophy of Theological Education", Encounter, Summer 1964.

Youth Conference in New York Debate Black Power Issue

★ An unprecedented American-Canadian multiracial and ecumenical conference of 161 youths at the Cathedral of St. John the Divine produced heated debate over statements by an Episcopal Negro leader that white Americans have been "barbarians" in their treatment of Negroes for 300 years.

At a discussion on black power during the three-day conference, sponsored by the home department of the Church's executive council and the New York Cathedral staff, Nathan Wright Jr., executive director of the Newark diocese's urban department, urged the equitable extension of power by whites to Negroes.

In the course of his plea, Wright shook up his audience by referring to a number of white youths and adults as the products of a "racist ridden" culture which "says that some people must be dehumanized."

"American Negro people have been subjected in a willful, malicious way to barbarianism," he charged.

At another point, he remarked that "any time I look at a white man, I look at a man who wears the stamp of barbarism, at half a man who thinks he is something he isn't."

During the heated discussion that followed, the Rev. Floyd Green of the Anglican parish of Newboro, near Kingston, Canada, rose angrily and noted that Canadians "also have problems of race." Green was one of some 50 Canadians at the conference, 34 of them French Canadian Roman Catholics.

"I don't think," he challenged Wright, "that you can work out the gospel of Christ—the work of reconciliation of man to man — by standing face to face and calling each other names."

"I'm saddened," Green said, "because you have before you young people who are pretty concerned about this whole problem. They have a pretty keen desire to meet one another as persons, as human beings, and men before God . . . "

Wright replied: "Your conduct has barbarized your people, and I am ashamed of the inheritance which is yours. And I hate to see people like you in the Church — instead of being humble and penitent — walking around as though they were the lords of creation. This, to me, is an affrontery."

Said Green: "To me, that is an affrontery, too, because you don't even know who I am . . . you are suggesting that some of us aren't even making the attempt."

Wright then said: "The attempt has been made for 300

years . . . If it had been successful, well, the proof of the pudding is in the eating."

A French Canadian youth, Michel Lizee, 16, a sophomore at St. Mary's Catholic College, Montreal, questioned Wright as to whether his views did not perpetuate "the idea of being black" as something different. Another teenager, Bobby Cameron, 17, of Sewanee, Tenn., asked the speaker whether his remarks were "leading toward dissension" among Americans in the group.

The pioneering meeting was deliberately planned along intercultural and interracial lines.

Upon learning that he would be housed interracially in a two-room suite with an American Negro, a French-Canadian and a Northern white teenager, one teenaged boy from a Mississippi city, immediately took a plane back home. Declining to give his name, conference officials expressed hope that the youth would return to next year's meeting.

Lectures and group discussions covered the use and misuse of alcohol and drugs, teenagers and sex and racial justice. The entire group attended a holy communion service celebrated by the Rev. Edward N. West in St. James' chapel of the Cathedral, and a Roman Catholic mass offered by Fr. James Welby of the clergy staff of the Church of the Ascension. They toured New York and many saw the New Year "in" at Times Square.

The youths met in several parts of Manhattan — the East Harlem Protestant Parish, the Episcopal Church Center and the Cathedral. They were housed at the Cathedral hostel and in near-by hotels. They also attended a Broadway play, "My Sweet Charlie" and visited the Cheetah, a dry, avant-garde night club.

Canadians Puzzled

In his remarks, Wright traced the origin of the term "black power" and said that to Negroes, it means "the equitable extension of power throughout human life." It is a "counter racist phenomenon" that is "good not only for the life of the nation but for the life of the world."

In introducing Wright, Carroll Greene Jr., assistant ecumenical officer of the executive council of the Episcopal Church, observed that "our whole concept of history is out of focus" regarding the physical brutality and "denial of personhood" accorded Negroes in the U.S.

During the verbal clash between the Canadian priest and Wright, Greene noted that it was "unfortunate" that the controversy had involved a Canadian and an American. A number of Canadian youths at the meeting confessed that they had been "confused" by the Negro "revolution" because the Negro-white question is alien to their upbringing.

Leaders at the conference referred to the differences expressed, however, as "healthy." Wright, they said, usually rouses his audiences with challenging statements to get them to express themselves.

"In no other circumstances would these kinds normally be brought together," commented Canon Walter D. Dennis of the cathedral staff. He noted that for some of the Catholic teenagers, from Toronto and Montreal, the mingling together was

A Call to Clergymen ---

VIET-NAM:

THE CLERGYMAN'S DILEMMA

An Education-Action Mobilization

January 31 — February 1, 1967 — Washington, D.C.

Dear Friend:

Scripture warns that "where there is no vision the people perish." The failure of vision regarding Viet-Nam is a blindness to realities no less than to ideals. The threat of this moment is a preoccupation with the enemy that destroys our society's power to understand itself or its foes. In such a time leaders in the religious community of this nation must risk the displeasure of the powers that be in order to challenge dogmatisms that imperil ourselves and our world.

We want you in Washington with us on January 31—February 1 to gain new insight for local involvement through workshops, to meet with both elected and appointed government officials, and to stand with members of all faiths in a vigil for peace.

Dr. John C. **Bennett**
President, Union **Theological Seminary**

Rabbi Abraham **Heschel**
Professor, Jewish Theological Seminary of America

Father John **McKenzie**
Notre Dame **University**

Dr. Robert McAfee **Brown**
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Chaplain, Yale **University**

Rabbi Maurice **Eisendrath**
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This mobilization is sponsored by Clergy and Laymen Concerned About Viet-Nam—A National Emergency Committee. We intend to assist local groups in arranging chartered transportation wherever possible. If you cannot come and would like to help defray the cost of the mobilization, checks may be made payable to: "Clergy and Laymen Concerned About Viet-Nam."

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not only their first trip to the U.S., but a rather rare dialogue between themselves and members of the Anglican Church of Canada.

Accompanying the Catholics were Fr. Thomas McKillop, youth director of the archdiocese of Toronto, and Fr. Pierre Ringuet of St. Mary's College, Montreal.

The conference, Canon Dennis commented, served to put the Episcopal Church firmly on the side of interracial justice, in the eyes of both Southern white youths and Negro teenagers from various parts of the U.S.

"The kids weren't supposed to come here as segregationists and leave as integrationists," he said. "But their centers of reference were moved. And, curiously, we also found that the provincialism of the French Canadian is not unlike that of the Southern kid."

"This meeting has made a tremendous impact on these young people," observed Fr. McKillop. "It sort of tore off their masks. Our own young people are now more sensitive to the facts of taking on responsibilities, so they can discover who they are."

"We can't afford to wait for the theologians," said Fr. Welby, 30, of the ecumenical aspect of the meeting.

The youths themselves were articulate about the discussions. "Now I understand the idea of black power as a more equitable distribution of power among whites and Negroes," said Michael Lizee, the Montreal boy who had challenged Wright.

"I resented being called a barbarian — I don't think it's my fault it's happened," commented Jack Young, 15, a 10th grade student at Greenville, Miss. High School.

His companion, Warner Ballard, 17, said he felt Wright "was prejudiced" in his presentation and added: "What people don't understand about our state is that we're not as bad as we're played up to be. You have people who do not necessarily believe in integration but will go along with something for the common good."

Two years ago, Warner said, Greenville High School, which he also attends, was integrated. "You'd think there would be an uproar," he continued, "but it's as natural as anywhere."

An 18-year-old Anglican from Montreal found the Negro rights debate during the conference "very confusing" and "very hard to follow." Of all the discussions at the conference, he added, the one on narcotics use "had a real meaning" because he knows of a teenager who takes drugs.

"It worries me, because I like him very much," he said. "And he's talked to me about it — he went from pep pills to dexedrine and he takes 'pot.' He says 'I don't know what I'm going to do, I need it,' and I don't know what to say to him."

"You can get any kind of drugs you want at my school," said a 17-year-old girl who attends an up-state New York high school.

THEOLOGICAL EDUCATION BREAK-THROUGH

★ Calvary Church, Pittsburgh, has made a direct gift of $600 to each of the eleven accredited seminaries of the Church for theological education scholarships and a grant of $1200 to Union Theological Seminary, New York, for a fellowship in theological graduate study. It is expected that these grants will be annual grants and will in due course be doubled.

The rector, vestry and people of Calvary are keenly aware of the rising cost of theological education and the difficulty our seminaries have to compete for the endowment dollar. It is the hope of Calvary Church that as many as 100 Episcopal parishes might enter into a similar program on a voluntary basis, thereby making approximately $780,000 available for scholarships every year. This would be the equivalent of well over $15-million of scholarship endowment.

Coming just in advance of theological education Sunday, this will be a real boost to the seminaries and could lead to a real break-through in the financial support of seminaries.

The Calvary scholarships honor past rectors, including the late Dean George Hodges; the late Bishop Boyd Vincent, one-time bishop of Southern Ohio; the late Rev. William D. Maxon, later rector of Christ Church, Detroit; the late Rev. Edwin J. van Etten, a graduate of the Episcopal Theological Seminary, Cambridge, and later dean of St. Paul's Cathedral, Boston; the late Bishop Arthur B. Kinsolving, one-time bishop of the missionary district of Arizona; and the late Rev. Samuel Shoemaker. The scholarships are also in honor of the Rev. William W. Lumpkin, rector of the Church of Our Saviour, Rock Hill, S. C.; and Bishop Lauriston L. Scaife of Western New York, both of whom were one-time rectors of Calvary.

Calvary Church was also instrumental in starting and contributing to a program in continuing education for clergy through internships in the diocese of Pittsburgh. These programs are under the direction of the Pittsburgh pastoral institute and are for clergy in the first two years after ordination.

Gifts of the parish to others in 1966 totalled over $117,000.

The rector of Calvary is the Rev. John Baiz.

---BACKFIRE---

Charles R. Supin

Chairman Communications Committee, MRI Commission, Diocese of Long Island

Regarding your editorial, 5 January 1967, even though I think you try too hard to be too hard on many of us here in the diocese of Long Island, I am an enthusiastic if not fascinated reader of the Witness, and will continue to be so. We are all in the same Church, by the grace of God; as we learn what this is we will also learn all about MRI.

May I submit the following to show that despite our many failures, shortcomings and limitations we are earnestly attempting to meet the genuine demands of MRI, which indeed do go beyond the money-gimmick deal.

● With a diocese as large as ours it is vital to get to know how each person lives, so it does make sense to make a beginning by having the children swim, eat and discuss some problems together. There was no intention to make a lady-bountiful type outing.

● In order to break down the horrid disease called parochialitis we are making every efforts to encourage everyone to find out more about the life and work of other churches, especially those near one's normal place for work and shopping.

● As producer of the television program featuring the bishop, let me report that the story was found on the MRI page of our paper because the point of view of the program was MRI: how each separate unit of work is related to all the others.

● We have set in motion three specific financial projects with the diocese of Uganda; one of which is accomplished.

● For more than a year we have been in conference with members of the diocese of Southern Ohio to exchange ideas on stewardship, convention procedures and churchmanship to name only three. Our dioceses are enjoying, for perhaps the first time, an informal but very vital companionship.

All these are genuine attempts at MRI; and we solicit your good wishes and prayers for our continued work; knowing that our work, not unlike the content of your articles, does not always go far enough.

Mary Steele Hart

Churchwoman of Bethlehem, Conn.

Thanks for the January 5 issue all about MRI. I never could make out what it was all about before.

Lewis E. Coffin

Vicar at Pipestone, Minn.

May I share a useful tip with fellow clergy?

Plastic collars pick up stains from black shirts and/or rabats which no amount of scrubbing with "gritty soap" will efface. Nest several such stained collars — top edge down — in a glass or ceramic mixing bowl and pour on Chlorox solution — a third to half a cup to a quart of cold water — sufficient to cover the collars. A dish smaller in diameter than the bowl will sit on top of the nest of collars, holding them under the surface of the liquid and also preventing evaporation. After a week or ten days, rinse and dry.

Bleach weaker than Chlorox —or that type — will not affect the stains. You do get a very faintly yellow tint, but it is not noticeable until after several such treatments. Meanwhile, you have several good weeks or months of extra service from each collar.

Well-heeled clergy can just throw offending collars away, but for most of us this is a device worth knowing.

Elizabeth Bussing

Secretary to the House of Bishops Committee on the Ministry of Women

I have been waiting for the end of delays in San Francisco's mail to tell you how much I appreciate your constructive coverage of the ordination of women report (12/1). It seems to me that your story is truly epoch-making.

James Wills

Layman of New York City

I am just now catching up with my reading, having been in Europe for some months. I am delighted with The Liberation of the Church by John Pairman Brown. And since you state that there are reprints kindly send me ten for distribution. A check for $2 is enclosed which I understand is the price in lot of ten or more.

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