

The **+ WITNESS**

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Story of the Week

Church Union Consultation Says Draft Plan is Essential

★ Agreement on the plan of union for the 10 denominations participating in the Consultation on Church Union could come in the next decade, the Consultation's new chairman said.

Bishop James K. Mathews, Methodist of Boston, was unwilling, however to predict a specific target date for union.

It is realistic to assume, he said, that denominations — some with general conferences meeting triennially or quadrennially—would want more than one look at the plan.

The session which met in Dayton, Ohio:

- Mandated a draft plan of union by 1970 at the latest

- For the first time, doubled its 1969 budget to \$81,500 to hire full-time staff

- Required that one of each denomination's delegates be no older than 28.

The decision of the consultation to push ahead with the draft plan of union came as a surprise to some observers. But Bishop Mathews and other leaders said there was a feeling among delegates that they were going over too much old ground

led to the groundswell for preparing the draft.

"The process will be expedited once we get down to the nitty-gritty," the bishop said. The draft plan is essential now, he claimed, "because people at the grass roots need something specific to get their teeth into."

"Some sparks will fly," he added, but suggested it may not be until the spark-flying stage that fruitful discussions can begin.

Bishop Robert F. Gibson Jr. of Virginia, a past chairman and head of the committee recommending the budget hike, also recommended that the consultation establish central, permanent offices in the New York area.

A major debate centered on whether a provisional assembly, to be formed when the plan of union is adopted but before a constitution is ratified, should allow participating denominations equal representation or representation proportional to their memberships.

A work group recommended each denomination have a minimum delegation of 25 plus two additional delegates for each half million or fraction of a half million communicant members in excess of one million.

In a 38-37 vote, the consultation voted down the additional members and approved a flat 25 delegates per denomination.

Another major debate focused on the requirement that members of the united Church subscribe to the Apostles' and Nicene creeds.

The plenary session finally agreed to amend one report to recognize "the principle that the creeds are for the guidance of the members of the Church and are to be used persuasively and not coercively."

The Lord's Supper

A new order of service for the Lord's Supper was used.

Worked out over the past three years by a commission including representatives of all participating Churches and observers from other Churches, the service is one of a number which will be developed.

"These services are being developed to meet the consultation's principle of diversity in worship," according to Paul A. Washburn of Dayton, chief ecumenical officer of the Evangelical United Brethren Church and a chairman of the commission that prepared the service.

"We have tried to develop a service which in its constituent elements is faithful to Christian tradition, but one which is in more contemporary language than the services of most Churches," he added.

Stressing that the service is

"not to be considered in any way as a definitive liturgy, and certainly not one that will be imposed upon the uniting Churches as a condition of their re-

union," Consultation leaders hope that it will be a means "toward the common goal of understanding and reconciliation."

situations in which they find themselves.

At the same time, however, in order to make Christian ethical guidance more concrete and relevant, it was suggested that the church's unique theological understanding must be confronted with, and transmitted through, a critical analysis of the human sciences and the contemporary experience of human reality.

Fruitful but inconclusive discussion was devoted to "the human" as a normative criterion for judging economic and social change.

A wide variety of views was expressed on whether there is a distinctively Christian understanding of man. Some theologians grounded man's uniqueness in his capacity for faith in God and love of neighbor. Others stressed man's creative activity, suffering and search for identity.

Still other speakers emphasized man's freedom, reason and sense of responsibility. A final group insisted that man could not be defined at all since the mystery of his nature lies precisely in his ongoing self-realization in radical openness to the future.

The conference agreed to propose to the Uppsala Assembly that the subject of "the human" deserves much more ecumenical study.

Finally the theologians and social scientists attempted to clarify some of the meaning of the ambiguous term "revolution," and to begin to provide some ethical guidelines for Christians involved in various forms of revolutionary ferment at work in the world.

This task was considered essential before the Uppsala discussion because of the confused and inflammatory charges and counter-charges exchanged in the mass media that followed the Geneva conference.

Issues of Church and Society Debated Prior to Uppsala

★ Who speaks for the church? What is the unique contribution of the church toward solving controversial public issues? How should Christians relate to the social and technological revolutions of the time? How will the church's call for more Christian involvement in divisive secular struggles affect the simultaneous quest for more church unity?

These were the chief questions analyzed by a group of 35 theologians, economists and sociologists in a consultation in Zagorsk, U.S.S.R. on theological issues of church and society. The consultation was sponsored by the World Council of Churches.

The consultants looked back on the political and economic issues raised at the 1966 Geneva conference on church and society, and looked forward to the 4th assembly of the WCC in Uppsala, Sweden, this July.

Many of the questions were those prompted by Geneva's explosive debate dominated by Christians from the "third world" — the developing nations of Africa, Asia and Latin America.

Those attending were invited guests of the Russian Orthodox Church in the first interreligious gathering ever permitted on Russian soil by the Soviet government. They came from 16 countries, and included seven official Catholic observers.

Dean William H. Lazareth of the Lutheran Seminary in Philadelphia was one of five U.S. theologians attending the con-

sultation. The conclusions of his report to Religious News Service follow:

Turning first to the issue of who may speak for the church, the consultation reaffirmed the right and responsibility of a variety of forms of Christian social witness to the world.

There exists a rich diversity of ecclesiological types in the World Council. It is therefore necessary for members of differing church traditions to distinguish clearly between the juridical question of a social statement's authority and the evangelical question of its authenticity.

It is the clarity and urgency of the particular issue at stake that will likely determine whether the individual or corporate response of Christians should be a pastoral word of consolation, a didactic word of guidance, or a prophetic word of judgment.

Regarding the methods of Christian social ethics, the conference refused to endorse uncritically either a purely deductive pattern based on permanently valid principles and social order, or an exclusively inductive approach popularized in situational or contextual ethics.

Rejecting both legalism and libertinism, an alternative method of "dialectical interaction" was proposed. It affirms that Christians cannot do without a certain framework of basic principles of human existence as working criteria with which to assess the different

Different accents in the global use of the term "revolution" were noted. In the classical-historical sense, it refers to the dynamic process of changing the social class holding economic and political power by transforming the system of property and by replacing the political leaders.

In opposition to the "hidden violence" of an unjust establishment, this form of revolution may or may not involve overt violence.

"Revolution" is also widely used today to describe all the massive changes — especially technological — which radically disrupt old structures and patterns of social life, particularly among the underdeveloped countries of the world.

The word is also employed, even in the industrialized nations, to signify the protests of groups against their exclusion from the society in which they live, without having a part either in the rewards of its development or in responsibility for its decisions or in the making of its laws.

Four points were made at Zagorsk by way of initial theological response to these distinguishable but interrelated worldwide phenomena. These were:

- Christian theology warns against sacralizing either the status quo or the revolution. Men should be guarded against the temptations of false messianism and the fury of self-righteousness. At the same time, theology should free Christians and the churches for interpretations of creation, providence, and law which have generally exaggerated the importance of order relative to justice, in order to make possible a more dynamic relation between order and justice.

- Christians in a revolutionary situation have a moral duty to do all in their power to exer-

cise a ministry of reconciliation to enable the revolutionary change to take place non-violently or, if this is not possible, with a minimum of violence.

- Christian theology cannot remove the ambiguity of political ethics in a revolutionary situation. Nevertheless, it should relate the universality of the church, which includes political opponents, to the Christian's special responsibility as a matter of vocation.

- The ecumenical idea of a responsible society still has

relevance to the new structures established after the revolutionary overthrow of old ones, when it becomes necessary to make power and technology responsible and to allow for a permanent renewal of structures without the disruption of order.

The theological perspectives of Zagorsk may serve to guide and direct the social passion of Geneva. Delegates at the WCC's Uppsala meeting will then be enabled to rededicate the churches to the mission of Christ in a revolutionary new age.

Two Years of Outside Service Proposed by Seminary Deans

- ★ Seminarians are exempt from the draft — which does not mean deferment — they are automatically classified IV-D.

Thus to be treated differently from other students has bothered some seminary students to such an extent that they have declined IV-D classification and insisted on being treated like everybody else. And there are several instances where these seminarians have been drafted and then joined the protestors against the Vietnam war by sending their cards to the U.S. justice department, thus risking prison and a fine.

Deans of the twelve Episcopal seminaries dealt with the matter at a meeting at General in February. Their statement, unanimously adopted, declares that "for the great majority of students questions about the draft and the war are the central questions of their existence. Student unrest cannot, we believe, be dismissed simply as dissent by a disfavored minority. It reflects a genuine concern for a more just social order and their pro-

test springs in part from their integrity."

The recommendation of the deans, in the hands of the Presiding Bishop and the governing bodies of the seminaries, is that the period of preparation for the Episcopal ministry be lengthened from three to five years for men who have not served in the armed forces or some equivalent form of service in the alleviation of human need.

Several examples are listed: Peace Corps, Vista, Friends Service Committee, International Voluntary Service, and, to quote, "other agencies, both secular and religious, whose purpose is to serve mankind and alleviate human suffering."

The intention of the recommendation is obviously not to require seminarians to serve in the armed forces. It is to insure a genuine identification with this generation's hopes and turmoil in order that they may better minister to it.

The deans state that they themselves are prepared to give some portion of their leaves of absence to this program. They will encourage faculty members

to do the same thing during sabbatical leaves.

The Witness is informed that the statement has been favorably received by trustees, faculty members, student bodies.

GHETTO BANKS CHOSEN FOR \$15,000 DEPOSITS

★ The finance department of the Executive Council has originated a program to encourage wider investments in ghetto areas, according to an announcement by Presiding Bishop John E. Hines.

The program will be launched with individual deposits of \$15,000 in Church funds in selected banks in Negro communities throughout the country, to act as "multipliers" with the hope of encouraging further deposits from parishes, dioceses and individual church-goers in those banks.

The interest-bearing deposits will be made in Negro-owned and/or managed banks and savings and loan associations. A list of institutions which will be queried by the Church about their policies includes the majority of Negro commercial banks and Negro-managed federal savings and loan associations.

The purpose of the deposits is to encourage more loans to worthwhile business in those areas, more investments in small businesses in need of funds and aid to enterprises that will benefit the community by helping Negroes to build a more viable economy in the areas where they live.

The deposits, plus matching ones from dioceses and parishes, would increase the lending power of the banks and are fully insured by the Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation.

The first step in the plan, according to Lindley M. Franklin Jr., treasurer, is to ask the banks for their cooperation in this program.

Michigan Hold Crisis Meetings Preparing for Hot Summer

★ Bishop Richard S. Emrich of Michigan, acting in concert with a resolution of the executive council of the diocese, has scheduled meetings on a regional basis to interpret to the clergy and lay leaders the reality and gravity of the crisis America faces; the necessity for the Church to respond with faithfulness and integrity; and to present the current diocesan urban program and receive the thoughts and suggestions of members of the diocese. Serious thought is also being given to the "summer".

So far four of the meetings of this "crash program" have been held, with a very large attendance at each. Every active clergyman in the diocese has been requested to bring with him from three to six of his laymen who are important decision makers or opinion setters in his congregation.

Bishop Emrich's column in the March issue of the Record, diocesan newspaper, was devoted to some of these crisis matters.

The bishop says "There are unhappy predictions about what may happen in our cities this summer, and it is no exaggeration to say that an atmosphere of fear and apprehension is widespread. But we should remember that what we fear is by no means inevitable, and that at the moment the greatest threat is the fear itself. Fear can bring chaos, for it is the mother of wild rumors and of bad decisions. Since I believe that the Church should be the quiet conscience of the community, let me, therefore, share with you some observations."

The observations include:

● "Part of our danger is due to the absence in Detroit of our

great newspapers; for we find ourselves in a position where destructive rumors cannot be answered, where we are deprived of interpretive editorials, and where television and radio by their nature cannot report in depth"

● That the great danger before us as a nation is that we will continue to polarize, and that violence will create wounds almost impossible to heal

● When we see the city as a whole, we know that any man who arms himself in city or suburb is a traitor to the common good, part of the problem, contributing to the area's sickness

● In such a predicament the Law, which overarches us all and binds us together, is our only hope

● The only hope for America is that we go forward together as a united people

● The racial antagonism of our community is a moral problem.

Bishop Emrich then requests that every man in his prayers, and every church in its corporate worship, pray for peace at home and abroad. "Listen to no hateful words which injure your brothers, and be governed by a sense of God's mercy and his judgments."

Due to the extreme interest in these crisis meetings, it is possible a follow-up series may be held later in the year.

MAINE'S BISHOP WILL RETIRE

★ Bishop Oliver L. Loring of Maine, has resigned, effective May 13, due to "seriously impaired health and on the advice of my physician."

EDITORIAL

The Love Story of God

CHRIST our Passover is sacrificed. So the Easter anthem begins, but its relevance for modern life seems to stop right there. What meaning does the Easter message have for contemporary man? Modern man is a queer combination. At times he is self-contained and self-confident, encased in an armor of self-esteem that nothing can dent. The world is his oyster and he pries it open and gulps down its contents.

This humanistic cult of man and superman meets us all the way from the comic strip to the cosmic scientist. Tomorrow the moon and next week, Mars! Every day in every way we are getting bigger and therefore better. Quantitative achievements have taken the place of qualitative values. Just a little more social engineering and we shall attain the millennium. What price sacrifice now?

But with all our unbounded enthusiasm, there is an underlying dis-ease. There is the worm in the apple and we see it in so much of our modern art, music and literature. The artist reflects the fractured, disordered, aimless world in which modern man wanders like a homeless waif. This is the strange paradox. Whereas science is showing us a world which is structured and ordered from the smallest atom to the most distant galaxy, man is bewildered and afraid. Life seems a jumble of absurdities lacking sense or significance.

Ancient man was also afraid. So frightened was he by the powers of nature surrounding him, that he sacrificed to them his first born son. He lived in a world of cruelty and caprice, a slave and sport to forces he could not understand. But in the tradition of Abraham and his attempted offering of Isaac, there is a new insight into the ways of the universe. The outside world is not hostile but friendly. God does not demand human sacrifice. He cares for man and is concerned for his welfare.

The primitive Passover observance bears witness to the new revelation. Each spring as the nomad ate of the slaughtered lamb, he daubed the tent post with its blood in faith and hope that the angel of death would accept the animal

substitute and pass by in mercy. As the new moon appeared over the horizon he greeted it with the shout of hallel, praise to a beneficent God. Today at Easter we still echo his age old cry as we repeat our own Hallelujah, Alleluia, praise to the Lord.

How soon the ancestors of the Hebrews came to this belief in a loving God, we do not know. The peoples round about still practiced child sacrifice down through biblical times but Israel worshipped a God who so loved mankind that he abrogated the ancient due. This note of love is the golden thread which runs through the entire Bible. The scriptures have been called, quite aptly, the love story of God. This theme of God's providential care reaches its climax in the words of St. John "For God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son". It is to that offering of love that St. Paul refers in the Easter anthem, "Christ our passover is sacrificed for us". Passover-Easter is the feast of God's love for man.

The Easter anthem contains a tragic irony. God, who refused man's sacrifice of his first born son, has himself given his only begotten Son on man's behalf. Christ has become the Passover lamb, the substitute for man himself. Easter commemorates not the capricious wrath or the grim justice of a jealous God but the love of a father.

The universe is not hostile to man, jealous and begrudging every bit of joy and happiness he may achieve. It is not even neutral, some kind of gigantic machine, grinding away impersonally, indifferent to the fate of anyone who gets in the way. Rather, there is ultimate purpose working throughout. The universe makes sense. There is a mind behind it all. But above all there is a heart. With purpose goes concern.

The primary lesson of Easter, as indeed of life, is love. Love is not a silly gimmick that Hollywood contrived, but it is the very basis and ground of all being. It is not a glib term for a soft and sentimental way of life. It is dangerous and difficult. It demands a price. But because love is at the center of reality, we must exercise it in our dealing one with another. There is no other workable way.

In the light of the Easter message hate and

force are the silly, foolish ideas. It is only as we purge out the old leaven of malice and wickedness that we can hope to keep the feast of life.

— **Corwin C. Roach**
*Director of School of Religion,
Fargo, N. C.*

The Clean-Up

By **W. B. Spofford Jr.**

Dean, St. Michael's Cathedral, Boise, Idaho

I'M SURE that it was an act of hospitality on the part of my husband. He had been hearing about this group for a long time and, once, he went away, to the north, to find out about it. When he came back, he changed somewhat. You know, he wasn't so aggressive and demanding and grasping. From a personal point-of-view, the biggest change was that he started to listen to me. Up until that time, in our marriage, he . . . well, the word is that he used me. I did the house-keeping chores, had the children, cooked the meals, listened while he prayed and, then, was forced to make my own private devotions. I was around, you see, but so were the sitting stools and the oven.

But, after that trip north, he helped out a bit. He suddenly discovered the children and was interested in what they had been doing during the day, while he was about the city looking after various pieces of property. When they were put down in their sleeping nooks, following the evening devotions, he would ask me what important things had happened in my day and to me. When he would ask, often, I would be embarrassed because, actually, there weren't many important things . . . or, rather, they were the same old things. A broom, an oven, a wash basin and, now and again, a scuffed knee to be tended or a children's squabble to be settled: these were the stuff of life. But, suddenly, by listening, he seemed to make them important and, because I was involved in them, I was a person that was important.

So, too, he began to share more of his life with me. It came out in his attentions, in his talking about the needs of the people he had met during the day, in his concern for, and anxiety about, the Kingdom. It was an idea which he had mentioned often in his prayers

before, but now it seemed to have a different quality and a greater intensity and urgency.

I don't know, really, what happened up north or whom he had met. He simply changed, and I must say for the better.

So, when he said that he had invited some wanderers into the house for a private Passover supper, I was quite willing. He sent Amos, our jack-of-all trades servant, down to the well for water and two men, unkempt, rather scruffy, and quite strong looking, came back with him. They said but one sentence: "The Master says, 'Where is the room reserved for me to eat the Passover with my disciples?'" It was obvious that my husband was expecting them and, after showing them our upper room, they went away.

That evening they came back, somewhere about ten or twenty of them. I was scuttling about, getting wine and bread, pieces of lamb and salad greens, so I didn't get an accurate count. I did see the leader — he was strong and gentle appearing, and somewhat weary. He did ask me whether I knew **Mary and Martha in Bethany**. I replied that I knew Martha quite well, since we had a lot of interests in common — the busy work of women — but that I had never gotten very close to Mary. Her interests were of a bit different sort and much more devotional and mystical, if you know what I mean.

Anyway, they all went to the upper room and shut the door. They were in there for quite a while. During the meal, I remember, one of the members dashed out in a great hurry and, as he passed the room where we were having our family meal, I thought I heard him crying.

Finally, we heard them sing the Passover hymn, and how strong a mens' choir truly is, and then they left, quietly and in order.

My husband, who had had a difficult day, went to bed and the children were quietly sleeping. I went up to clean up the upper room. There wasn't too much work to it, which was a good thing, because I, also, was weary.

It was simply a matter of pouring some wine left over in a cup back into the bottle, rewrapping in some wet leaves the loaf of bread that was still in the center of the table, brushing up some crumbs and dowsing a candle which they had forgotten to extinguish and which had pretty well burned down. And, yes, there was a sop of wine-soaked bread which someone, through carelessness, had dropped on the floor. Luckily it didn't fall on the Arabian rug which my husband had bought for me on our eighteenth

anniversary and which, as the only really precious thing we own, he had insisted that it be put in the upper room that night. As sort of an offering, you know.

When I climbed into bed, my husband turned over and chuckled. He said: "Sarah, I guess it's true. A woman's work is never done."

The Easter Forward

By Benjamin Minifie

Rector of Grace Church, New York

THE EASTER Forward booklet looks quite good. Not an easy job is it to write a tract for thousands of assorted readers to use devotionally day by day, one that will satisfy all or most in such a diverse audience. But too often Forward has been only so-so, not too helpful or readable. Who writes them, and why their anonymity?

I glanced through the Easter one the other day, and my eye caught two statements which are questionable. The first went like this, "Since God died on a cross . . ." And then a little later I read, "The birth of God into man as Jesus of Nazareth . . ."

Isn't this bad theology? And doesn't it give a wrong impression of what the New Testament is all about? The Christian faith is not that God masqueraded as a man. He was not God "veiled in flesh" as the Christmas carol heretically puts it, God pretending to be a human being. Jesus was a man, entirely and wholly so. This is the record of the New Testament, especially of the first three Gospels and of the letters of Paul.

To be sure Jesus was a unique person. The Christian ages have rightly regarded him as a revealing, a saving person. In him, we proclaim, is the knowledge of the love of God as nowhere else before or since. In him we find salvation and the fulfillment of life. But, once again, he was a man, born of woman, one of us, not God in disguise. And the good news is that here in this historic person the Living God, ever seeking after the likes of us, found one so open, so responsive, so obedient and faithful to the promptings of love in the sense of caring, that he was able to break through all the usual resistance and selfishness of our stubborn human nature. Here I would insist the Robinsons and Pikes have been very helpful!

Is it really fruitful to try to define where or

when the divine begins and the human leaves off in the mystery and wonder of the person of Jesus? Donald Baillie dealt with that conclusively — did he not? — in a book which has since become a classic, *God Was In Christ*. Therein he pointed out, as I remember, that in every person's life a dialogue goes on between one's own will and the will of God. There is both resistance to and acceptance of the one who ever seeks after us — the voice of duty, the hard right against the easy wrong, altruism versus hedonism, caring versus selfishness. The same is a clue to the relationship between the divine initiative and the human response in Jesus, except that in him the latter was complete and total.

In Christ there was the Father's loving concern which has been from the foundation of the world and which found in Jesus a perfect means of self-expression in human terms. But there was also the affirmation of Jesus himself to the Father's will, his saying "yes" out of the fierce struggles in the wilderness and again in the garden. We see him as man making the perfect response to God, and thereby becoming one through whom the love and truth at the heart of it all was enabled to act decisively and redemptively in history.

I find something like this a more compelling and believable Christology than one which would make of Jesus scarcely more than a robot going through a pre-arranged drama.

Hopelessness Causes Revolt

Bayard Rustin

Director, A. Philip Randolph Institute

IF THERE is violence it is because whites teach Negroes that they can't get anywhere without violence. People ask me if there will be more violence. I have to reply, "Don't ask me to change the law of God, and twist it upside down."

The Old Testament teaches that where there is justice, social order will prevail, and that where there is injustice, social disorder will be inevitable.

The black power movement is a response to the Negroes' hopelessness, whose influence would lessen if whites who have the money and power would act immediately to help the poor. But it is up to white society, especially Congress, to take the first steps towards reconciliation.

JESUIT SCHOOL STUDENTS ELECT NEGRO PRESIDENT

★ A Negro has won for the first time the top elective student office, president of student government, at Jesuit-sponsored, nearly all-white University of Detroit.

Harry Minor, 21, of Washington, D.C., conducted a low-key campaign and had so little confidence he could win that he didn't even show up for the vote count.

The junior psychology major also didn't expect to garner 783 of the record 1,800 votes cast. He won when the two white candidates split the remaining votes almost evenly between them.

Only about 5 per cent of the university's 10,000 registered students are Negroes.

CATHEDRAL UPKEEP BEING STUDIED

★ Problems involved in the upkeep of English cathedrals and parish churches are to be studied by a new commission established by the Church Assembly. It will also consider future policy on the preservation of church buildings.

An official statement on the

commission's establishment referred to the "continual need" to provide for the upkeep of ordinary church buildings as well as great cathedrals and outstanding parish churches.

"The Church," it said, "is faced with the question whether in the future it can continue to bear the whole responsibility of perserving buildings whose architectural and historical importance make them part of the national heritage."

The Church does not receive state aid in the upkeep of its establishments.

BRETHREN BACK KING DRIVE

★ The Church of the Brethren's general brotherhood board has backed Martin Luther King's poor peoples' campaign—contingent upon the campaign's adherence to nonviolence.

The 27-member board also channeled \$200,000 of investment funds to ghetto development, endorsed the National Council of Churches' urban crisis program, and initiated several domestic projects.

Constituent parishes were urged by the Brotherhood Board to send both Brethren and non-Brethren poor to the Washington, D.C. demonstration, and congregations in the East were asked to help with shelter, food, transportation, medical, legal and spiritual services for those participating in the demonstration.

The board voted \$15,000 to

support volunteer workers and marchers in the effort. Another \$15,000 was voted for support of the NCC urban crisis plan.

--- BACKFIRE ---

Ralph W. Jeffs

*Episcopal Chaplain, University
of Southern California*

I have just read Alfred Starratt's "Too Much Morality" in the March 21 issue. It's great. We need desperately in this country to make clear the distinction between religion and morality, especially when morality is interpreted, as it usually is, in terms of prudence.

Eldridge H. Taylor

*Minister, Emmanuel Reformed
Episcopal Church, Baltimore*

I have been a reader of the Witness for years. I have never before ventured to express either commendation or criticism of the material published. I accepted it for what it was worth, either dissenting or approving.

However, the March 28th issue contains material relating to the so-called "Ordination of Priest" for the Free Church, and the purported ordination sermon, entitled, "God is Doing His Thing" disturbed me deeply.

For reasons of conscience I left the Protestant Episcopal ministry to accept work in the

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Reformed Episcopal Church, not because I love the Church less, but because I love it the more. I am deeply concerned for the Church's true mission; and anxious to reach men for Christ; but is this the way?

My reaction is summed up thus: I can respect honest criticism of the Church; I can endure the cruelty of indifference to the Church; I bitterly resent making the Church the subject for burlesque. If the scenes described in your articles are anything less; I fail to see it.

L. W. Reynolds

Layman of Syracuse, N. Y.

After just reading your Story of the Week (3/28) I am revolted and actually sick to my stomach.

As long as I have been able to I have contributed as generously as possible on theological Sunday. However after reading and seeing what our clergy are doing these days and what is coming out of seminaries, I refused to make any contribution this year.

If I had and then read the above article I would have recalled my check. With all sincerity I can only say, "May God have mercy on us; Good God deliver us."

Frances (Mrs. H. W.) Benz
Churchwoman of Cleveland, Ohio

Dean John C. Leffler writes in "A Prayer for Today" (Witness 3/21), "No age in history has been more dangerous to life, limb and soul than this one, and none more clouded by the possibility of disaster." And then later in the same article to help us weather these terrible times, he says, "It is fear of danger, rather than danger itself that matters."

It is amazing how many of us share the view that life today is unusually precarious even though the doubling of

both life expectancy and population in this war-torn century proves how much more effective the forces which preserve life have been compared to those causing premature death.

How can it be that we have forgotten so quickly the terrors and agonies that beset daily life before anesthesia, antibiotics, electric power, eye glasses, hearing aids, rapid communication, synthetic materials, and welfare programs to name just a few of the modern answers to age old prayers?

Of course the world is not perfect yet, but it seems likely that the determining cause of our present dismal attitude is not fear of possible nuclear war or overpopulation but rather our loss of gratitude. Traditionally, we are admonished to be thankful for every dry crust, now, however, most of us consider loin lamb chops to be our due.

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