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THE WITNESS is published twice a month by the Episcopal Church Publishing Co. on behalf of the Witness Advisory Board.



The subscription price is \$4.00 a year; in bundles for sale in parishes the magazine sells for 10c a copy, we will bill quarterly at 7c a copy. Entered as Second Class Matter, August 5, 1948, at the Post Office at Tunkhannock, Pa., under the act of March 3, 1879.

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MORNING PRAYER & HOLY COMMUNION - 7:30 a.m. SATURDAY & HOLIDAYS

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Story of the Week

Fundamental Issues Are Shifting Leaders Tell WCC Conference

★ Thomas Stransky, president of the Paulist Fathers, challenged those who say the ecumenical movement is on the wane. Ecumenism has shifted from a quest for unity for its own sake to a concern for bringing together resources for tasks needing to be done, he told a meeting held in connection with the annual U. S. conference for the World Council of Churches.

The ecumenical movement, he asserted, should be seen as a healthy child venturing forth on uncertain steps, rather than as an "arthritic old man with brittle bones and tired blood." The Roman Catholic priest said that striving for undefined Christian unity and for mission, which he described as doing things, are both difficult in the present world.

But he saw the possibility of "unity for the sake of mission through renewal." Stransky said that Christianity has a "crisis of hope" instead of a "crisis of faith" and the more faith is renewed the closer churches will become.

The Paulist leader spoke at a gathering arranged by the commission on ecumenical relations of the Toledo diocese during the WCC meeting.

The conference was opened by a service of worship, attended by 2,000 persons, in the Catholic Rosary Cathedral. Philip A.

Potter, head of the council's commission on world mission and evangelism, spoke.

Stransky's observations on a shift in ecumenical focus were shared by Eugene L. Smith, head of the WCC's New York office, in his annual report.

The fundamental issues that confront the World Council, made up of 255 Protestant and Orthodox Churches, have changed from evangelism and unity to those of faith and justice, according to Smith.

And he added that "to deal with faith apart from justice is apostasy ... to deal with justice without faith is self-defeating."

Asked whether his organization is "really dealing with the issues of faith and justice," Smith said it was not at some points.

In many sections of the WCC, he continued, the attitude "toward half of the human race which happens to be female is almost unadulterated medievalism."

In order to deal adequately with faith and justice, he said, persons must experience "a new transforming impact with the person of Jesus Christ."

"The conviction about the centrality of that impact is absent from many of our assemblies, and in many of our congregations," he said. Only in the joy of that encounter can we

discover the meaning of Christian faith. Only in the reshaping which comes from such an encounter will we have the courage to deal with the question of justice."

In his remarks at Rosary cathedral, Potter said Christians should move away from the easy practices of issuing statements toward more difficult questions involving concrete action.

He said that technology, corporate states and concentrated political and economic power are among the problems that churches must face in seeking to preserve individual freedom and dignity.

"Angry conservatives" continue to make noise in local congregations and church meetings "but they seldom win when votes are taken," the president of the National Council of Churches said at the conference.

Cynthia C. Wedel believes the tide is with liberal thinking and Christian social action, but she also said that along with this she sees a trend toward greater interest in "prayer, mysticism, evangelism and in theological reflection."

Of liberal conservative forces in U. S. religion, she said that she did not think conservative opposition to church social action is as strong today as it once was, or as church leaders thought it was.

She added that today churches or councils are criticized as much or more by those who see them as "too traditional, estab-

lishment and unconcerned with the real issues of the day."

With both conservative and liberal critics, she said, "at the moment we can't win — no matter what we do. But indications are that the American people — and perhaps people everywhere — are moving toward a more liberal stance. This will be of major significance to the ecumenical future."

Better information, activist youths and a general anti-institutionalism are convincing more and more church members that "the church in a free country must act as the conscience of the nation and speak out against injustice, oppression and inhumanity," she said.

Dr. Wedel also explained that she believes Christians involved in social action are compelled to seek the will of God in the Bible and theological reflection. "And when we really study our Bible, pray and try to witness, we soon find ourselves faced with the injustices and inequities of a world made up of sinful, self-centered human beings."

A WCC official from Geneva said that the greatest challenge the church faces today arises from inactivity of Christians on the issues of justice and peace.

The Rev. David M. Gill, secretary for church and society, said a lack of conscious action is more challenging than the fact

some Christians are acting non-violently while others are resorting to violence in the name of peace and justice. He said: "Those who claim the name of Christ in Europe have the power — if they cared — to bring down the Ian Smith regime in Rhodesia tomorrow, thus averting the carnage which looms so threateningly for Rhodesia."

"Those who claim his name in the U. S. have the power — if they cared — to end the unspeakable carnage in Vietnam."

Gill, an Australian Congregationalist, said the churches must arouse public discussion of moral issues and clear up its own thinking on topics such as violence.

"The ideological blinkers worn by many white, western Christians enable them to see very clearly the violence which may be employed by people rebelling against a particular social order," he said. "But the same blinkers screen out of the field of vision other forms of violence and thus produce a grotesquely deformed analysis of the issue."

In the non-violence/violence debate, he concluded, neither can be complacent but "each has to face awkward questions from the other" and must be challenged by the quest for justice and peace.

such "actual and eternal questions" as justice, reconciliation, peace and salvation.

Dialogue, according to Juva, "not only presupposes a willingness to listen, it also presupposes a willingness to change. This willingness or openness to change is the crucial mark which distinguishes communication in its proper sense from all propaganda and from most established public relations as well."

The Lutheran leader said the church, through its communication service, should give voice to those who have no voice.

He warned against putting too much emphasis on information "about what happens in the churches and by the churches and for the churches" in communications operations.

Archbishop Martti Simojoki of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Finland, urged church information workers to have a "critical attitude toward their sources of information If we are indifferent, misunderstandings grow like a rolling snowball."

The conference also heard President Urho Kekkonen of Finland. He said that the basic purpose of ecumenical cooperation is the "furthering of humanity," adding: "The noblest message of the Christian faith is: 'Love thy neighbor as thyself.' The most valuable aim of Marxism is a world in which peoples are brothers together. Ecumenical cooperation may help in finding a synthesis which is man, the neighbor, near or far, in Europe or in other continents. It is man that is most important, not religion, idea, system or sphere of culture."

Also commenting on ecumenism, the Rev. Werner Simfendoerfer, chairman of the education and communication unit of the World Council of

Journalists and Theologians Hear Communication Experts

★ The church's communications responsibility is to invite those inside and outside to take part in dialogue on questions most acutely affecting humanity, the president of the Lutheran World Federation said.

Mikko Juva, a professor at the University of Helsinki, addressed 70 Protestant, Orthodox

and Roman Catholic journalists and theologians from 13 nations.

He told the ecumenical workshop for information in Europe that the church must never be content to use communication only as an instrument of teaching or to voice its theological and doctrinal positions.

Dialogue made possible by the church, he added, should cover

Churches, called for a return to an earlier goal of trying to create a community of churches which might speak together on universal questions. He felt this ecumenical purpose has been minimized by excessive stress on church union.

Simfendoerfer was also concerned that theologians and bureaucrats usually decide what issues will be dealt with in public. If the church is concerned about the voiceless, he said, then the voiceless should have a greater role in defining information.

The issue of communication between Christians and non-Christians was discussed by Fr. W. M. J. Roos, secretary of the

Roman Catholic bishops conference in the Netherlands

He described several barriers causing Christians to get a "false picture of the real facts in Socialist countries and non-Christians or Communists to get a false picture of the real situation on the Christian side."

He rhetorically asked how the truth can break through rigid party lines. "The Bible says, 'The truth will make you free,'" he stated. "It is a tragedy that those responsible in the Christian and non-Christian world — for tactical reasons, they say — sometimes pass on only half-truths, and in doing this are convinced they are being loyal to their rules or the gospel."

Diocese of New York Receives Gifts from Trinity Parish

★ The vestry of the Parish of Trinity Church in New York has voted to commemorate its 275th anniversary with a pledge of a gift to the venture fund of the diocese which could amount to \$1,000,000 over the next three years.

Formed recently by the diocese, the venture fund will seek to provide financial assistance to "creative approaches and innovative programs in such areas as human services, individual and community development, social concern, and evangelism, especially in the poorer sections of the ten counties that compose the diocese." The fund will solicit and disburse money independently of the regular diocesan budget.

Public announcement of the gift, the first in a \$3,090,000 charter funding campaign just launched for the fund, was made jointly by Bishop Paul Moore Jr. of New York, and the Rev. Robert Ray Parks, rector of Trinity.

The announcement was timed

to coincide with the beginning of Bishop Moore's tenure as bishop of New York, a post to which he succeeded automatically May 1 upon the retirement of Bishop Horace W. B. Donegan.

According to Parks, Trinity's gift will be in two parts. The parish has pledged \$500,000 outright as the complete responsibility of Trinity toward the \$3,090,000 goal, to be distributed as follows: \$200,000 in 1972; \$150,000 in 1973; and \$150,000 in 1974.

Parks said that the second part of the gift is a pledge by the parish of an additional dollar for each four dollars pledged by other parishes, persons or institutions to the venture fund by November 1, 1972. The aggregate additional sum would not exceed \$500,000 and would be disbursed over a three-year period, beginning with \$200,000 in 1973; \$150,000 in 1974; and \$150,000 in 1975.

The vestry, according to Parks, wanted to make a sig-

nificant symbolic act of thanksgiving on behalf of the people of the parish to mark the 275th anniversary of the charter of Trinity, given in 1697 by King William III.

"Even with our many chapels, special ministries and other programs, we are deeply conscious of our being a part of the greater family of the Episcopal Diocese of New York," he continued.

"We believe it is important that we coordinate and cooperate with the diocese in our programs and that we express our loyalty by assuming our share of the financial needs as well as fulfilling whatever volunteer needs are placed upon us.

"The diocese is the focal point of the Episcopal Church," Parks noted, "and it is incumbent on all parishes and individual members to recognize their responsibility as members of a diocese to their bishop and his programs. Trinity means to do just that."

Responding both for himself and for the diocese, Bishop Moore said: "We appreciate more than I can put into words the magnificent contribution Trinity has made to the venture fund, not only because of the size of the gift but because it expresses the loyalty and concern of this great parish toward the work of the diocese in this area.

"Father Parks is continuing the broad gauge leadership which he exemplified in Jacksonville and which characterized former Trinity rectors. The vestry is acting out a philosophy of mission and a social concern which they have stated with conviction so often in the last few years. We are profoundly grateful."

Trinity observed its 250th anniversary by restoring the roof on St. Mary-Le-Bow in London.

The roof of that historic church had been destroyed during world war two.

The parish, which has been instrumental in starting hundreds of new churches in the U. S. and abroad, now has four chapels on Manhattan Island, in addition to Trinity Church; owns and maintains a chapel on Governor's Island; and supports special ministries in such diverse areas as advanced theological training, camping, urban work, and the courts.

Mission Questions of '70s Are The Same, but Radicalized

By Tracy Early
RNS Correspondent

★ Questions facing missionary work in the 70's are the same as in the 60's but have become more "radicalized," according to the director of the World Council of Churches commission on world mission and evangelism.

"The issues surrounding the relation of proclamation to struggles for social and racial justice are now joined not just in theory but in very concrete terms," said Philip A. Potter in an interview.

For the U. S., he said, this means that whereas the churches could agree in the past on statements condemning racism, they must now deal with such concrete questions as whether whites should work in black ghettos or whether churches should contribute to the defense fund of Angela Davis.

"The conflict is even sharper in places like South Africa and Latin America," he added.

Potter, whose office is at the WCC headquarters in Geneva, was in the country to attend the annual meeting of the U. S. conference for the WCC in Toledo and a meeting of the

In the 275 years since the granting of its charter, which stipulated that Trinity could have the use of the land, now at Broadway and Wall, for the annual rental of one peppercorne, the parish has — in the words of Dr. Parks, its 15th rector — "been richly blessed." Its vestries and 14 rectors exercised responsible stewardship of lands and endowments enabling Trinity to be in a financial position to support the work and needs of the diocese in this way.

commission on the program to combat racism.

He took time out to discuss some of the questions that will be on the agenda of the international meeting to be held by the commission on world mission and evangelism in Bangkok, Thailand, from Dec. 29 through Jan. 8, 1973.

He declined to comment on reports that he is a probable nominee for the post of WCC general secretary. Eugene Carson Blake, the current general secretary, has announced his retirement, and the WCC central committee is scheduled to choose his successor when it meets in August in Utrecht, the Netherlands.

Since the first general secretary, W. A. Visser 't Hooft, was a European, and Dr. Blake is an American, it is expected that someone from the third world will be elected this time. Dr. Potter, 51, is a black Methodist clergyman from Dominica, an island of the West Indies.

In addition to being director of the commission on world mission and evangelism, he heads the WCC's program unit I on faith and witness, which was formed in a reorganization last year and combines units dealing

with faith and order, mission, dialogue and other living faiths and church and society.

At Bangkok, the first such gathering since a 1963 meeting in Mexico City, the commission will adopt a new constitution to take account of the reorganization.

The 15 days of the meeting will be divided into an 11-day conference on salvation today, which will be attended by about 250 people, including up to 100 who are not members of the commission, and a four-day assembly in which the commission will review its activities and make plans for future work.

"The meeting will attempt to understand afresh what salvation in Christ means today in relation to the longings, cries and struggles of men, and what is the nature of a missionary church," said Potter.

The program has been planned to give most of the time to sharing of experiences, case studies, and reflection, with few speeches, and he hopes that the meeting will produce guidelines for concrete action.

Questions about the long-standing evangelism vs. social action debate are brushed aside impatiently by Potter. "That debate is not significant," he said. "It's a game the churches play. What's important is what's really happening with men and women in the ghettos. That's real."

At the same time, he said, an important aspect of the current situation that the conference participants will deal with is the "hunger for meaning that does not exclude the search for justice."

"In spite of all people have said about secularization, the death of God and so on, there is tremendous resurgence of interest in the search for meaning," he said, citing widespread

(Continued on Page Nine)

Reasons for Joy

By George W. Wickersham II

Rector, St. Luke's Church, Hot Springs, Virginia

I THINK IT ONLY FAIR to say that there is a great deal of gloom and doom in the church today. Goodness knows, there is plenty of reason for it. The problems brought about by the population explosion alone are enough to stagger the imagination.

Human sin has always given the prophets of judgement ample store for thunder, but now that there are so many people in the world, there is so much more of it. And beyond all this there looms the question of whether the planet can bear continued uncontrolled exploitation. Will there be enough fresh water? Will there be enough uncontaminated sea water? How long can nature survive our unlimited inroads on her balance? Our prosperity: is it a boon, or is it a bane?

A recent issue of *The Witness* appeared with but one title on the cover. There it was, four big words: "Is The End Near?"

Gloom and doom — and not without cause.

It seems clear to me that the church must draw attention to the sins of mankind, as well as to its peril. To do less would be to do disservice both to God and to his people.

At the same time, however, the church must never forget to emphasize our reasons for joy. For if she neglects to lay stress on that joy which is at the very heart of her message, humanity will soon become discouraged. Even the brave will surrender to despair.

"What's the use?" mortals will cry. "Our sins run so deep, our problems are so complex, it simply is not worth it to struggle." And as for the church? "The church! Why bother with it? All that it does is to underline what is already obvious."

Rejoice in the Lord

BUT THE CHURCH, thank God, has so much more to declare than woe.

"God so loved the world . . ." And not only does he love the world, but he also loves you and me. The very hairs of our heads are all numbered.

I think that this is something to shout about. It throws the ills of the world into their proper perspective. It provides us with a tremendous assurance. "God is our hope and strength, a very present help in trouble. Therefore will we not

fear, though the earth be moved, and though the hills be carried into the midst of the sea . . ."

Some have accused us of escapism, and have labeled religion as an opiate. While the world falls apart, they say, we huddle together chanting, "We have God!" I suppose that this does look like escapism, and perhaps with some it is. But if it is earnest, it does not work out that way.

God is not an object, an object to be possessed; He is a spirit, a spirit to be lived. His leading characteristic happens to be love. Consequently, those who come within his orbit he turns right around and sends back out again — back into the world and all of its problems.

But there is a tremendous difference in the point of view of those who labor under his influence. Instead of going into the world out of some compulsion to do good, out of self-assertiveness or guilt or fear, they venture forth out of desire, because they love mankind. And love, we must remember, is basically a happy emotion.

This is the wonderful thing about love: it gets pleasure out of people. So you do your part without any particular sense of sacrifice. Life is essentially a joy to you. You are doing what you want to do.

And may I add? There is nothing more winning in a person than his happiness.

Again I Say

WHICH BRINGS US to one more item, which is this. Because you find joy in life, others will also, but not all others. Sometimes in all love, you have to raise some dust. Jesus raised a good deal. There are issues to be met, evils to be dealt with. And, furthermore, no matter what we do in love, someone is going to object, out of jealousy, out of greed, out of offended pride.

We will be criticized, lied about and perhaps even physically assaulted. The Master went through it all. But the point is that, while we care for humanity and want things to come out all right, we are not shattered when they come out badly. If we please no man, but still love men, we are home free.

One need never be anxious.

God calls us to a joyous work and, what is more, he enables us to do it. Things may not turn out just the way we want them to, but frustration is never ours. Love is what we live for, not results.

Thus our ultimate joy is in him. It is the spirit to whom we respond. This is why psalms are written, hymns composed and cathedrals built. Rejoice.

Gloom and doom? Yes, we have it, and in

rather abundance. But what the church must iterate and reiterate is that, ultimately, gloom and doom are swallowed up by joy.

What is the Eternal?

By Alfred B. Starratt

Rector of Emmanuel Church, Baltimore

LIMITED AS WE are in time and space, it is natural that we conceive of knowing truth and beholding beauty as a remote experience. Reality, we think, lies beyond the borders, hidden behind the farthest star. It was "once upon a time" before Adam, and will be in some far-off future sublime event. We who are imprisoned in the present scene can only hear stories of men who by some miracle saw the glory that touches us only as a faint afterglow.

Yet the eternal is not an endless succession of days and years. The eternal is the fullness of now. It is a continuous present in which before and after have no meaning. The essential reality of all other places is here. The vital essence of all other times is now.

The infinite self of the universe dwells in eternity. Those who travel to seek him only leave him in order to find him. Those who wait for him in hope only ignore him in order to concentrate on expecting him.

The amazing wonder of our bodily existence is his present action. He moves our muscles, circulates our blood, vibrates the dancing energy patterns of our minds, lives us in every aspect of our being.

Through our sensory awareness he weaves a tapestry of meaning less substantial than light yet more powerful than the solid bulk of earth itself. Flowing patterns of transformation, we move and the most distant star is touched. We are still and the universe moves us. The tides of all time and space flow into the pattern of our individual existence, to whirl and dance outward into other forms of the one being.

We live in him who lives us. His friendship is in the hand of any person we meet with affection. His beauty is in any face we look upon with love. His faithfulness is in the continuing and dependable aspects of the natural world. His playfulness is in all that is unpredictable. He gives us darkness as the velvet setting for precious gems of delight. He creates laughter out of tears, greeting out of parting, victory out of defeat.

In the eternal there is no near and far, so we did not come from him and we do not return to him. The form changes. The reality does not change.

Be still, and know that because he is God he is in, through, and around you. Listen! The almighty is beating your heart, whispering in the wind, moving mankind, carrying the world through space. Look! He is the light that gives you vision and all that you can see. Love him in yourself and in all creation.

Beware: Salient Safari Approaching

By Charles R. Supin

Rector of St. John's, Far Rockaway, N. Y.

IN THE FICTITIOUS but seemingly ubiquitous life of Father Swellguy, whenever one thing went wrong everything went wrong. The child's cough gave him a sleepless night, the mimograph machine backfired smudging all the leaflets, an acolyte almost set fire to the soloist; and the new and nervous usher tripped over the carpet causing almost silent curse to be heard by Mrs. Intolerance who abruptly stormed out of the church muttering something to the effect that she preferred the language of the 1928 liturgy which she would try to find elsewhere. It was one of those days; and just as well, he thought, that not too many people were there.

But sure enough, during the period set aside for silent prayer — as Father Swellguy was trying to remember the date for the cake sale so as not to lose face with the women's guild — he saw them. Peering stealthily over the tops of leafy bulletins, a little southeast of the west door, were strangers: the committee of three from St. Good-place who had hinted that they were looking for a new rector and that they might see Fr. Swellguy soon. Well, there they were, looking. Behold the salient safari.

The hunt was on. Was that a spear Father Swellguy thought he saw? Of course not, merely the middle man taking notes with a red tipped pen. But what kind of notes? What did they know about him? That he walked, talked, cut his hair short, that he had less than perfect teeth and, thanks, to his child's cough, bloodshot eyes. And that he preached for fifteen minutes, ten and two-tenths seconds? Sometimes? Was this the way

these committees would gather information, complete enough to bring the right one back alive?

Convinced that both Father Swellguy and St. Goodplace deserve something better I asked ten of my colleagues their opinions about the system in general and their experiences in particular.

One of the more common requests for change was the actual time period for negotiations. "Much too much time," said most. "So much time," as one continued, "that everyone gets exhausted, to the point where anyone might be elected, merely to get the whole thing over with."

"Consider the false economy," criticized another. "A vestry might get so used to the savings by having a supply priest come in for a few hours on Sunday, that they fail to see that this kind of temporary arrangement might undermine the whole parish program for months to come. They might save a lot of money, but the parish pays the terrible price."

"And what does it prove," adds another, "for the committee to down-grade the previous rector? Nothing, except to show a lack of lay leadership."

MISSION QUESTIONS: —

(Continued from Page Six)

experimentation with drugs, Western interest in Buddhism and the occult, the Jesus People and the renewal movements in Asian religions.

One section of the salvation today conference will consider the topic, "dialogue with people of living faith," and will include dialogue with Buddhist monks and laymen and visits to a Buddhist monastery. Thailand is 95 per cent Buddhist.

Other topics to be dealt with by section groups include: "Christian identity and racial identity," "cultural change and conversion," "salvation and social justice," "churches in relationship," "growing churches and renewal," and "the local mission of each church."

The program will also include group sessions for Bible study, meditation, exploration of art forms as a way of expressing an understanding of salvation and consideration of salvation in relation to health.

Among the few speeches will

This was a concern of most of those I asked. "The committee seems more interested in having the new man fill in the blanks left by the predecessor, rather than have him develop a new ministry of his own." Put more sharply by another, "As head hunters, these committees are rank amateurs."

To prove that the priest has the sense of the spiritual life is what the process should be all about. This was the feeling of everyone asked. As one put it, "The committees seem to be more interested in whether or not I can fill the alms plates rather than whether or not I am committed to bringing men to Christ." Two other priests said almost the same thing: namely, "they never ask us if we pray?" One suspects that a committee might be too embarrassed to ask such a fundamental question; but, as my colleagues all agree, it's the fundamentals about the individual and the parish that must be the real ingredients of this real life expedition into the seemingly unknown.

(Part One of Two Parts)

be one on the conference theme by M. M. Thomas of India, chairman of the WCC central committee.

Speaking of the WCC as a whole, Potter said it faces a major problem in the coming years because of the tension created by the shift of focus from the agenda of churches in the North Atlantic countries to "the agenda of the churches of the southern world."

"The question is how to cope with this when the power of the purse is still in the North Atlantic churches and radicalization of the agenda brings the North Atlantic churches into judgment on such matters as race," he said.

"We can't avoid this problem," he said. "We have to face it. And our Christian faith enables us to face it."

BOTH MOON WALKERS EPISCOPALIANS

★ Both Navy Capt. John W. Young and Air Force Lt. Col. Charles M. Duke Jr. are Episcopalians.

Before the launch from Florida on April 16, the entire Duke family met for prayer. Dr. William Duke, the astronaut's identical twin and a Presbyterian, said: "I know my brother had a prayer in his heart at lift-off. He put his mission in God's hands. Charlie asked that it go well and that he perform well, and not let his teammates down."

Also present for the launch was Fred Walker, the Duke family's rector from Christ church in Lancaster, S. C. He said, "Charlie and Dottie Duke are great church people and are extremely active in the church." They have two sons.

Capt. Young was confirmed in Orlando and is a member of St. Christopher's church in League City, near Houston. He was divorced last year and has since married a 29-year-old secretary, Suzy Feldman. The new Mrs. Young has studiously avoided the press since the wedding, and was not seen or interviewed during the launch.

Social Principals Document Adopted by Methodist

★ The United Methodist general conference has adopted one of the most sweeping sets of social principles ever considered at one time by a U. S. denomination.

Observers said the document covers virtually every conceivable issue related to modern social and political concern.

Controversy was generated in floor debate over the document's sentences on homosexuality. It marked the first time the church had legislated on this issue.

Delegates held that homosexuals are persons of "sacred worth" but that the Church finds homosexual practice "incompatible with Christian teaching."

On other issues after considerably less debate, delegates approved carefully worded paragraphs on civil disobedience and conscientious objection to particular wars. The 1968 General Conference turned down a resolution on the latter issue.

The key sentence on civil disobedience said: "Citizens have a duty to abide by laws duly adopted by orderly and just process of government. But governments, no less than individuals, are subject to the judgment of God. Therefore, we recognize the right of individuals to dissent when acting under the constraint of conscience and after exhausting all legal recourse to disobey laws deemed to be unjust. Even then

respect for law should be shown by refraining from violence and by accepting the costs of disobedience."

The new United Methodist social principles, which conclude with a social creed, voice "reluctance" to approve abortion because of "belief in the sanctity of unborn life."

However, decision for abortion after "thorough and thoughtful consideration" was left open as a Christian option. And an appeal was made to remove abortion from criminal codes and place it under standard medical procedures.

The distribution of contraceptive information and devices and the viability of voluntary sterilization as a birth control measure were approved in a section on population.

Sex is said to be clearly affirmed within marriage. And divorce is recognized when partners are "estranged beyond reconciliation."

The principles endorse conscientious objection to all war and to particular wars. The 1968 general conference refused to sanction selective objection but found it acceptable this year.

Separate rubrics pledge support for the rights of racial and religious minorities, and for children, youth, the aged and women.

The principles condemn both overt and covert anti-Semitism — one of the first such official

statements by a U. S. Protestant denomination.

On racial minorities, the new document asserts the "obligation of society . . . to implement compensatory programs that redress long-standing systematic social deprivation of ethnic minorities."

A passage on property was called socialistic by a sprinkling of delegates but passed unaltered. Property ownership is termed "a trusteeship under God and is limited by the overriding needs of society."

The rights of all workers, including government employees, to participate in collective bargaining was endorsed with limited opposition.

A strong condemnation of all "organized gambling" is contained in the principles. Included are government-maintained lotteries and all commercial or recreational gambling sponsored by any organization for revenue purposes.

A section on drugs and tobacco did not evoke controversy. The principles say that use of tobacco can be questioned on medical grounds. They oppose drug addiction and point to human and social harms potentially involved in use of alcohol and marijuana.

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marijuana, is held out as one Christian choice. Abstinence from alcohol as an official United Methodist stand was dropped in 1968.

War is branded as incompatible with the teachings of Christ and called a dubious way to settle international problems; the militarization of society was scored.

Anti-pollution and ecological measures are covered in a section on the natural world and other blocks of principles cover home and family, the community at large, economic life, political issues and world issues.

An unprecedented commission on the role and status of women was approved by the conference.

Endorsement of the new unit, authorized for the next four years, contributed a major victory for a women's caucus that had worked for months on the proposal.

The caucus had the basic support of a denominational study panel on women and top leaders in the women's division of the board of missions.

According to figures available at the conference, 54 per cent of the membership of the church are women. The women's caucus complained that women made up only 13 per cent of the delegates to the conference, only 22 per cent of the members of general agencies, and less than 1 per cent of the clergy.

STRIKERS BACKED BY DR. SPOCK

★ About 70 city employees of Franklin, La. are on strike for the right to organize.

The strike is led by blacks who make up the majority of their union, but some white workers also walked out and have remained firm.

"What we are asking for is job security," said Herbert McClarity, president of the local union. "As it is now, we are at the total mercy of city officials; if people vote the wrong way in an election, they get fired."

Mayor E. J. Champagne refuses absolutely to even talk with union representatives.

About 84 per cent of the eligible city employees joined the strike. Departments affected include sewage disposal, garbage collection, water works, recreation, cemetery, etc.; some were totally closed down. The city has begun to hire replacements, but the union claims operations are still severely crippled.

The strike got a boost when Dr. Benjamin Spock, the famed peace leader and baby doctor, came to lead a march and speak. Strikers had contacted the People's Party which is running Spock for president as a "stand-in" candidate and asked that he come.

People were threatened with firing and cut-off of credit if they attended the event. But 200 joined the march as it began and 1000 gathered at the courthouse to hear Spock. He also reached thousands of people in the area in a radio interview.

Franklin is a town of 10,000, about 3,000 black, 150 miles west of New Orleans, in the heart of sugar cane country. There is virtually no union organization in the area. The Franklin workers are a part of Louisiana public employees union council, affiliate of the American federation of state, county and municipal workers.

RED CHINESE MAKE SHRINE OF MANSE

★ A United Church of Canada minister in Gravenhurst, Canada, says, with a smile, that perhaps the People's Republic of China should buy his house and turn it into a shrine.

The manse in which the Rev. John Houston lives has been visited by five Chinese Communist groups in the past two years. Most recently, the championship ping-pong team spent an hour in the building.

Houston is pastor of Trinity United church. His manse is the birthplace of Dr. Norman Bethune, a medical missionary to China whose memory is revered in the People's Republic.



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