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# THE WITNESS

## Hunger:

**How The Church Can Deal With It**  
by Richard W. Gillett

**How The Hungry Can Deal With It**  
by Robert McAfee Brown

## Plus:

**Networks Report On Hunger Response**



# Letters to the Editor

*The Witness reserves the right to condense all letters.*

## "Know Thyself"

Thank you for including in the July 13 issue "Lambeth Walk!," "Chop Sticks and The Maple Leaf," and "Women Priests a No No Says Athenagoras." Perhaps when the persons who hold these points of view read them in printed form, they will realize how prejudiced they are.

Meanwhile, it is half frightening and half hilarious to realize that many of the church leaders, who both take themselves seriously and are regarded with awe by some in their constituencies, have allowed bigotry to twist their reasoning so far askew that they have lost touch with the world in which they live.—*Frances A. Benz, Cleveland Heights, Ohio*

## O For a Daniel

This is in response to "Minneapolis Neither the Time Nor the Place" of your April 27 number.

Congratulations to you for having the courage to show your true colors as a congregationalist, schismatic, anarchic and dogmatic blind guide.—*Rev. Paul E. Cosby, Titusville, Florida*

## Thank You Mrs. Dietz

I am glad to offer my support to THE WITNESS for one more year. However, may I suggest that you attempt to provide more content per issue.—*Helen L. Dietz, Philadelphia, PA*

## Nice to Hear From You

Please excuse my belated report of pleasure in the article of "Post-Theistic Thinking". Let's have more of this type of writing. Also reviews of theological books which we preoccupied parochial clergy cannot get to reading would be helpful.

THE WITNESS could serve the purpose of keeping the average clergyman abreast of modern theological thinking by way of summary articles.—*Rev. Walter Schroeder, Litchfield, Minnesota*

## What About the New Liturgies?

It is true that the new "WITNESS" is different from the old one, but only as a child may differ from his parents. I am happy with it and look forward to a long association.

I hope you will be printing something on the proposed new liturgies. I mean something really telling why particular changes are an improvement. We don't need lectures on what is good for us and being treated as though we were uninformed and dull doesn't help either. I think most Episcopalians would welcome any improvements.—*Dorothy Console, Roslyn, New York*

## A Good Wish From the South

I enclose a request for a subscription for 18 issues of THE WITNESS. I am subscribing because of the quality of the editorial content from my viewpoint, as represented especially in the last issue.

I believe there is an important place in the communications life of the Church for a publication like THE WITNESS, if the role is carried out on a pragmatic and less shrill manner.

I wish you all good fortune and look forward to receiving my subscription.—*Robert E. McNeilly, Jr., Nashville, Tennessee*

## Sorry, We Have a New Computer

Well one more issue of THE WITNESS just went into the trash where it belongs. After receiving the sample copy of your magazine, I wrote on the invoice to cancel me out. But you keep right on sending. Why?—*David Kobs, Adams, Iowa*

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"It would be comforting to believe that eating less here would provide more for the hungry abroad, but instead it will mean lower prices and lower production . . . Doing penance with a brown lawn may for all we know save your soul and eating less is likely to save your heart. But neither has much to do with feeding Bangladesh; for that we need policies attuned not to the next world but to the harsh but inescapable economics of this one."—*Wall Street Journal*

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# THE WITNESS

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## The Growing Bounds Of Bondage

by Robert L. DeWitt

A fisherman in Maine, eking out a hard living from the waters of the North Atlantic, was asked on the evening of Nixon's resignation last summer what he thought the result would be. He thought a moment, then replied with characteristic brevity, "What will be different?"

The Presiding Bishop in his recent pastoral concerning world hunger has put it soberly and put it well: "I believe God's Spirit is calling our Church to respond creatively to one of the most crucial issues ever to confront humanity." Behind this statement is the reality that the world is deeply divided between the haves and the have-nots. Hunger, poverty, discrimination and powerlessness have spread their curse very unevenly over the people and the nations of this world.

But the problem goes deeper. It is not just the have-not nations which are afflicted. In this most favored of nations we are familiar with the entire inventory of oppression. Racial injustice, sexual discrimination, poverty, hunger — all are our familiar enemies here in the United States.

But the climate of oppression is found not only in the urban ghettos, not only in the gutted hills of Appalachia, not only in the desolate settlements of the American Indians, not just among the domains of small farmers and fishermen. The enslavement which manifests itself in poverty and sexism also is reaching into the middle class of American society. The downward mobility of so many in that group, occasioned by inflation and recession is swelling the ranks of the deprived. An increasing number of Americans find themselves in the ambiguous situation of being half slave, half free. The Black at least may not be a woman. The woman at least may not be poor. The poor person at least may not be Black. Of course, there are those, too, who experience the triple jeopardy of being a woman, being Black, and being poor. But virtually all of us bear some mark of enslavement.

Lincoln said this nation cannot continue half slave and half free. A civil war gouged out in capital letters the truth of his judgment. But what if the slavery we face today, a century after Lincoln, is even more pervasive?

There is a difference in our perception of our predicament today. "Slavery" no longer occasions the calling forth of charity on the part of liberal, "free" people of good will toward their less fortunate sisters and brothers. It would be callous to forget that there are many who are less fortunate than others. But the hand stretched out to help is a hand which also bears a manacle of enslavement. That outstretched hand seeks not only to free others, but to free itself as well.

# World Hunger And Future Christian Response: The Issues

by Richard W. Gillett

*The food problem seems to many people to be a consequence of drought and natural disaster. It seems passing: prices rise and fall; people starve and are forgotten; there is scarcity followed by abundance; the food problem itself passes into oblivion, as it has done between the winter of last year and this spring. Yet of the recent economic disorders none is in reality more certain than the disorder in food.*

—Emma Rothschild, in *The New Yorker*, May 26, 1975

A year or so after the American public as a whole began to recognize the existence of a world hunger crisis, one billed as being of unprecedented severity, a peculiar situation obtains.

After a virtual avalanche of articles, fervent editorials, speeches and heartfelt exhortations by secular and religious leaders on the subject, the public's sense of hunger as an acute crisis seems to be waning. The news is that the drought in the Sahel has eased. India may be able (largely with U.S. help) to "squeeze by this year," it is said. Food production in Latin America was up 4 per cent last year from the previous year's record levels. The U.S. has just announced (in midsummer) a bumper wheat crop, expected to be 22 per cent above last year's harvest. (Only Bangladesh, reports sadly add, continues in its pathetic state).

Parishioners begin to wonder aloud why all the emphasis on world hunger "when pressing problems like drugs and alcohol wait right in our community."

But wait. Money is flowing into the treasuries of church hunger relief agencies in unprecedented amounts. Contributions to the Episcopal Church's Presiding Bishop's Fund for World Relief topped \$1 million last year (about double the amount of two years ago). Some \$1.2 million more already has been contributed in the first four months of 1975.

Is there a crisis or isn't there? And isn't it good that church people, at least, seems to be responding generously to their hungry brothers and sisters across the globe?

Sadly, both the public's and church peoples' perceptions of world hunger as a crisis are rooted in misconceptions of the problem, and of the kind of response that faithful church people must prepare themselves for over the long term. This article briefly will examine some of the churches' responses to world hunger thus far, suggest some guiding principles for action, and finally put forth some possible long-range strategies.

## I. The Institutional Churches: Early Responses

There has not been a dearth of words and movement in the Episcopal Church in the past year. The inter-provincial task force on world hunger, headed by Norman Faramelli, has been well conceived and founded upon a realistic appraisal of the dimensions and complexities of the issue. Parishes have formed committees, held innumerable hunger suppers, gone on hunger walks, and established domestic food doles to the newly unemployed, in addition to their greatly increased giving to the Presiding Bishop's Fund.

On the wider church scene, a few of the systemic problems of hunger are beginning to be recognized, principally in the area of government policy. *Bread for the World*, and *Impact* are two ecumenical lobbying organizations which have begun to develop constituencies across the country to put pressure on Congress. The former, whose president is Eugene Carson Blake, claims some 7000 members after a year's existence. *Impact* has a focus which includes but extends beyond hunger to other justice issues. Both have timely newsletters, but *Impact* seems better able to move swiftly and with precision on urgent legislative issues.

Also, a few Episcopal dioceses, such as Los Angeles, Massachusetts, and Rochester, are pushing their parishes to an integrative understanding of the hunger issue in diocesan training events and in special publications.



But have the tough questions been faced: inequitable global distribution of resources, government policy, behavior of large agricultural enterprises, structural domestic unemployment, and the outrageous over-consumption of food and other resources by church people along with other Americans? When and if they are, will the church respond any differently than it did on racial justice, poverty, and the Vietnam war — i.e., by retreating from the struggle?

## II. The Development of a Long-Term Christian Response

One of the first things to be recognized about the issue of world hunger is that it constitutes an imperative to examine the relationship of *world economics* (and hence of our own economic system) to *justice for the world's peoples*. It is an issue whose time has come. Its importance was crystallized last year when the United States General Assembly declared its intention to work for the establishment of a new International Economic Order, and adopted, by a vote of 120 to 6 (the U.S. cast one of six negative votes) a new Charter of Economic Rights and Duties of States. The Charter deals with issues which have a direct bearing on world hunger, such as trade, aid, international markets, resource development, and practices of multinational corporations.

How does a national church denomination, or a diocese, begin to give recognition to such an important new reality — especially one which calls into question so many basic assumptions of a competitive free enterprise system while addressing so many of the basic causes of world hunger? Could our Presiding Bishop (or any diocesan Bishop) have been bold enough to affirm this new Charter (which, as the General Secretary of the World Council of Churches, Dr. Philip Potter, has commented, should have been widely affirmed by the churches)? Of course, had he done so, and spelled out in detail its implications for American economic and political life, contributions to the Presiding Bishop's Fund might not be so high!

And therein lies the difficulty. There never may develop a wide national church constituency that understands the hunger issue, as "one dramatic symptom of a deeper ill: the persistence of national and international orders that foster distorted development" (Denis Goulet, "World Hunger: Putting Development Ethics to the Test", *Christianity and Crisis*, May 26, 1975). For the economic system that so largely sustains America, and its

churches' budgets, is the one which needs reordering if the hungry are to be fed.

### Some of the Pieces

Therefore, strategies must be pursued which encourage national, provincial and diocesan leadership to go as far as possible towards recognizing the "deeper ill," and at the same time develop long term responses both at parish level and in alliances where committed Christians can come together with key secular groups.

But whether nationally or at grass roots level, it is better to understand the requirements of a new and just international economic and moral order by examining, on a case-by-case basis, aspects of the obsolescent order, and then applying the imperatives of biblical justice, than it is to propose doctrinaire political or economic theories as solutions.

Here, then, is an attempt to suggest some of the pieces of a long-term strategy for the churches, both at higher and at lower levels.

● On the issue of domestic hunger, the church can be effective at several levels by examining and prescribing remedial action for the delivery of food stamps and other food programs to eligible recipients (estimated by a U.S. Senate committee this March to be as high as 36.6 million people nationwide!). Training programs to spur such action already have been initiated on an ecumenical scale in the Los Angeles area, as well as in All Saints Episcopal Church, Pasadena. And the national church has supported Food and Research Action Center, a national organization doing Nader-style battle with recalcitrant state governments. But the long range issues behind the food stamp program are those of full employment and the right to a guaranteed annual income. If national or diocesan leadership fails to act, church groups may need to ally themselves with secular national groups or community groups in special lobbying efforts, educational programs, or demonstrations.

● The practices of large agricultural and food processing companies in relation to the world hunger crisis are visible only as the tip of an iceberg. Aptly, one writer has characterized this phenomenon as "the shadow of the vast, unpoliced food market, where a pliant Agriculture Department seldom ventures." Much research, such as that of the Agribusiness Accountability Project in Washington, D.C. needs doing. Pressure by churches has spotlighted the evils of "commerciogenic malnutrition." Such malnutrition has

occured when U.S. food companies in poor, developing nations have pushed infant milk and baby food formula to replace the breast feeding of infants. The result is new financial stress on already poor mothers, and infant malnutrition and disease because mothers frequently dilute the formula and also fail to observe the complex sterilization process bottle feeding demands. A group of five Catholic religious orders has led the way in questioning this practice.

An impediment to going the traditional shareholder resolution route with agricultural corporations is that five of the six major firms which dominate the grain industry are privately owned, thus negating investor action. Other handles will have to be found. In working to reduce the enormous power of such agricultural giants churches may wish to collaborate with the National Farmers Organization. It exists to advance the interests of the small farmer and favors legislation leading to a Family Farm Act. This act would extend anti-trust legislation to prohibit big non-farm businesses from entering farming if assets or sales were above certain levels. Public accountability for agricultural practices would thus be more easily achieved.

● The building of well-disciplined lobbying constituencies throughout congressional and state legislative districts is an essential task. Bread for the World and Impact deserve support here. Yet a method must be found to persuade letter-writers to keep at their task and to expand their constituencies. Perhaps one way of doing this is to make a regular letter-writing commitment part of a broader covenanting agreement signed by church people committed to the hunger issue. Follow-up reports on legislative votes also are essential.

● The almost universal plea that we simplify our lifestyle and decrease our consumption habits, so as to make more food and resources potentially available to needy countries, is bound to fail unless systemized in some way. Perhaps only a covenanting group, strengthened by its religious commitment to strive toward promoting "the right to eat" for every human being, can monitor its consumption levels. A tool needs to be found that will help committed Christians and others step by step, and at a realistic pace, to break away from the habits acquired in an expansionist-oriented world, and begin to live appropriately on spaceship Earth. One such tool, in process of development by the author, may be a household food and resources audit, which families can learn to administer themselves. Taken one step at a time

(such as the monitoring of a family's consumption of meat over a period of, say, a month), a family can learn how it is doing compared to other families, how that average compares with meat consumption in other countries, and what the meat quantity may represent in terms of grain inefficiently used.

● In this process of finding handles on the hunger issue, white Americans must place themselves alongside the minority groups of our country and other oppressed groups in the Third World. For only they can help us deal with our own culturally conditioned attitudes toward work, welfare, family, competition, and other value notions which are stumbling blocks to our understanding of why other people think and act as they do.

Here, the Ninth Province of the Episcopal Church (Caribbean) has great potential for involving the American church and to help it deal with these attitudes. The province embraces Indian, African, Spanish, French and English cultures.

Undergirding all this for Christians: the simple and central themes of BREAD and THE RIGHT TO EAT. These are the unifying religious and human concerns on which we take our stand. It is difficult indeed to withstand the power and appeal of bread, both as universal symbol and physical need for humankind. Its religious power is infinite. Its relationship to justice and to the oneness of the human community is an insistent theme of the scriptures. The Christian Savior referred to himself as "the bread of life." If we can hold to this theme as the constant thread which must run through all the diverse and difficult challenges ahead — of institutional change, political involvement, attitudinal transformation, and the quest for a simple life style — our contribution "so that all may eat" just might make a difference in the outcome.

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**Richard W. Gillett:** director of social concerns and Christian education, All Saints Church, Pasadena, CA; founder, Puerto Rico Industrial Mission, a church-related agency for social and economic change; lived in Puerto Rico for nine years.

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"If the earth must lose that great portion of its pleasantness which it owes to things that the unlimited increase of wealth and population would extirpate from it, for the mere purpose of enabling it to support a larger, but not a happier or a better population, I sincerely hope, for the sake of posterity, that they will be content to be stationary, long before necessity compels them to it."—  
*John Stuart Mill, 1800-1873*

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# Extending the Theology of Liberation

by Robert McAfee Brown

During the third week in August 200 people spent six days in a Catholic seminary in Detroit discussing the future of theology.

As it stands, that is a fairly innocuous statement.

But the statement assumes a different coloration when the composition of the 200 begins to be fleshed out. About 10 percent of the group consisted of Latin American "liberation theologians," mainly (though not exclusively) Roman Catholic priests who have paid heavy prices, ranging from interrogation to imprisonment to torture to exile, because their Biblically-centered faith is also informed by a rigorous Marxist analysis of the ills of their society and ours. Add to that, that the remaining 90 percent of North Americans were there to learn how a liberation theology can be developed for the North American situation, and things get a bit more interesting. And add to *that*, that the North Americans were not chiefly white, middle-class, mainline Protestants (like the present writer), but a great variety of exploited groups — Chicanos, blacks, Asian-Americans, Native Americans, Appalachians and women — and the potential for an exciting, if not explosive, encounter has risen close to a certainty.

There was excitement and there were explosions. On a number of occasions the conference threatened to disintegrate, and various groups caucused to determine next steps. But through that necessary process, something emerged that will endure — not a carefully structured organization with by-laws and budgets, but a group of 200 people more deeply committed than before both to one another and to a common struggle for a more just society, in which oppressed peoples will increasingly find one

another, join together and work out the true meaning of the gospel's promise of "liberty to the oppressed."

Such movements in Latin America have been badly treated. Members of "Christians for Socialism" in Chile, for example, were not only mauled by the junta after the coup, but were repudiated by the church hierarchy as well. As the recession continues in the United States, as the oil crunch mounts, as our foreign policy is increasingly challenged by the Third World, and as charges about our political, economic and military imperialism gain credence, will there be similar responses to attempts to create a "liberation theology" for North America? We can expect opposition from political, economic and military interests that are always immediately suspicious of anything to the left of right of center. Where will the churches line up? Especially the churches drawn mainly from the middle class?

One of my own agenda items after the Detroit conference is to look for ways in which the intensity of the experience of the Latin Americans, and of the oppressed peoples of North America, can be transmitted into action on the part of mainline Christians. No easy agenda. Here are some of the issues we are going to have to face:

- Liberation theology, it is properly asserted, can only be done by those who are themselves engaged in "the struggle for liberation." It must grow out of *praxis*, a combination of reflection and action. But "the struggle for liberation" is going to threaten most of the things mainline Christians enjoy and even take for granted — a certain standard of living, a distancing for unpleasant situations, the luxury of talk without the threat of much change. Do we have the resources to let some of those things be put on the line for the sake of our exploited brothers and sisters?

- As already indicated, the explosive nature of the Biblical promise that God is on the side of the oppressed is closely related to a subordinate but crucial social analysis employing Marxist insights. Can we engage in a "de-mystification" of Marx so that instead of cringing at the mere mention of the name we dare to see how the world looks through Marxist eyes, and let that contribute to our concern for social change? While I am not sanguine about how successfully we can do this because of years of conditioning against Marx, I am convinced that the effort must be made unless we are going to lose all contact with an increasing portion of the human race. We may have to employ other terminology ("liberty and justice for *all*" is not a bad starter), but we cannot indefinitely pretend that this crucial thinker is unworthy of our own attention.

● It is clear that to most of the rest of the world, the United States is part of the problem rather than the solution. Quite apart from Marx, we must begin to see ourselves as we are seen by others. The picture is not pretty: we are seen as exploiters of economies other than our own, intruders (by fair means or foul) into the internal decisions of other governments, ready to use anything from bribes to napalm to make sure our will prevails and we remain Number One. However unpalatable, that picture is widespread and increasingly well documented. We must accept whatever truth it contains and work to change those parts of it that are at variance with a faith which proclaims that *all* persons, not just white Americans, are made in God's image.

● Such a task has immense political implications. But it is basically a question of how seriously we will embrace a Biblical faith that cannot stop short of immense political implications. I know of no place where this can be truly done save from within the Church — that global community in which we are not first of all white, or American, or male/female, but part of the global family with responsibility for the very least of our brothers and sisters.

It is a scary business. We must not defuse the term "liberation" too simplistically by insisting that we need liberation also, as though we were in the same category as the Brazilian peasant whose child is dying because the American corporation for which he works won't pay a living wage. But we do need liberation from the middle-class fears and hangups that make us timid and irrelevant in a time of great social upheaval to which the gospel claims to speak a freeing word. If we, in our situation, are to be faithful to that gospel, some past allegiances will have to be foresworn and some new commitments made.

Otherwise we will end up not as those helping Jahweh free his children from oppression, but as those who stubbornly continue to serve in Pharaoh's court.

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**Robert McAfee Brown:** Professor of Religion, Stanford University; contributing editor, *Christianity and Crisis*.

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# Women Ordained in Washington

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*The following statements by Bishop Barrett and the five women deacons concern the second group ordination of women priests on September 7, 1975. They are reprinted here in full as a matter of interest to our readers, since the press has only carried excerpts.*

## **A Statement of Intention by the Rt. Rev. George W. Barrett**

On Sunday, September 7, 1975, God willing, I intend to ordain to the priesthood several women deacons. All of them give evidence of high qualification to be priests and most of them have been recommended for ordination by the vestries of their parishes and the standing committees of their dioceses.

I am convinced, in conscience, that I cannot refuse to act in this instance. I state this despite my great reluctance to increase the tensions within the Church, to disrupt its peace, or to add to the problems of fellow bishops, particularly those in positions or jurisdictional responsibility. Only exceedingly compelling reasons move me to take this action now.

There is no point in my going over at any length the arguments that have been associated with this issue, especially in the last year. I will simply state the reasons that have led me personally to the position where I now stand.

For at least 10 years I have given much thought to the question of the ordination of women. In 1966 I was chairman of a committee appointed by the Presiding Bishop to study the proper place of women in the ministry of the Church and report its conclusion to the House of Bishops. In 1968 I served on a sub-committee of the Lambeth Conference dealing with the same subject. These studies and all the accelerating events since have convinced me that the case is clear, theologically, ethically, and pastorally. In fact, as the debate has continued the arguments all tend to assume a familiar ring.



To undertake still further studies before acting is like asking for more studies in the biology differences before enacting a voting rights act.

I realize, of course, that there are strongly held convictions as well as deep cultural assumptions and intense emotions associated with the opposing view. There seems to be an anxious awareness felt, if not articulated, that revolutionary theological, liturgical and pastoral implications are involved in the full acceptance of women into the ministry of the Church. Some resist what they regard as the secular influence of the movement for women's liberation, yet one could just as truly say that women's liberation is implicit in the Christian Gospel.

All truth is from God, and it is tragic for the Church to face the ridicule of the secular world for its lack of faithfulness to that gospel, rather than because of it. I feel then, that I must do what I can to eliminate this injustice and scandal, both in justice to the persons who suffer from it and for the integrity and witness of the Church in our society.

I realize that there are many kinds of ministries, clerical and lay, and that no one has a right to be ordained a priest. But everyone has a right not to be denied ordination simply on the ground of the sex to which she belongs. Until that right is firmly established all attempts to deal with theology of ministry, priestly or lay, will be clouded and compromised.

I have given much thought to the questions of validity and regularity. Obviously I would not participate in such an ordination unless I believe it valid and had solid theological support for such a view. While acting in an irregular manner is contrary to my usual inclination and style, I am convinced that the irregularity involved in this situation is far less damaging than continued acquiescence in offense against basic standards of justice and charity. History is replete with examples of irregular actions producing lasting and constructive results. One need go no further than the events being commemorated in this Bicentennial year, or in the consecration of Samuel Seabury, first bishop of the Episcopal Church in the United States.

I know that many are concerned about the facts of current irregular actions on the deliberation and decisions of the General Convention. No one can predict such effects with accuracy; history again shows that action in support of ideas tends to make them irresistible if their time has come. One might indeed question the appropriateness, if not the legitimacy, of a decision of this

sort being made by a General Convention when one of its two houses bans women from membership, and they are excluded from half of the other.

I must then resolve any doubt on the side of fairness to the women involved, the course that seems true to the gospel and the nature of the Church and that will permit the women to carry on their ministries with greater integrity and fulfillment. They, indeed, are the real heroines and witnesses in this situation. At considerable risk, energy and pain they are leading all of us toward overcoming the sexism which, no less than racism, is a work of death in our time.

As I look back on my life and ministry I find much for which to be thankful, much for which to rejoice, much for which to ask forgiveness. I am grateful at this stage of it to be asked to make such a witness for a cause in which I so strongly believe.

I trust that both in our agreements and differences we can take comfort in the faith that we live by God's grace rather than our own wisdom or virtue, that his providence uses our efforts and his mercy covers our failures. Faithfully, yours.

### **A Statement by the Women to be Ordained**

On September 7, 1975 the Rt. Rev. George W. Barrett, a non-diocesan bishop, will ordain us to the priesthood of the Episcopal Church. We believe we are called to the priesthood by God and by our Christian communities. We have each fulfilled all the qualifications and our congregations have recommended us for ordination to the priesthood. Four of the five of us have been recommended and certified for ordination to the priesthood by our diocesan standing committees. Nothing in Episcopal Church canon law prohibits ordination of women to the priesthood. Yet our diocesan bishops refuse to ordain us priests despite months of effort by us and by many in our dioceses to influence them to proceed. Finally, under these conditions we have requested ordination by another bishop.

We respect our Church structures and our bishops and we have appreciated their concern for us. However, with great sadness, we have concluded it is not enough. We believe that to be denied ordination now by our diocesan bishops perpetuates a grave injustice, which is not only harming women deacons but crippling our Church. To await another vote by the General Convention, which has twice defeated the ordination of women to the priesthood *in principle*, is to affirm the concept that discrimination against women may be practiced in the Church until the majority

*continued on back page*

# Networks Report, Respond to Gillett

**Pennsylvania-Virginia Network,** Edward W. Jones, Lancaster, Pa.

The strengths of Gillett's paper are:

- It gives evidences considerable research and expertise.

- Particularly impressive is the section entitled "The Development of a Long Term Christian Response." At the local level what concerned Christians are looking for are handles — creative and imaginative ways of doing something about the problem.

It is difficult to discover any significant weaknesses in the article. Many of us in the Church feel ourselves powerless (like Elijah following the slaughter of the prophets) whenever we are confronted by papers, articles, speeches and challenges which dump the global issues squarely in our laps. Happily Gillett has given us some places where we can grab hold and do something.

Some readers will wonder why there is scant mention of the problem of overpopulation. Others may wish that more emphasis be given to technological development in under-developed nations.

Concerning the question "What is being done in this area?" we have, as do most dioceses, a task force on hunger. What it will or can accomplish has yet to be demonstrated. St. James' parish in Lancaster has sponsored major educational efforts around the general theme "Christians in a Hungry World." By action of the Diocesan Council, funds originally raised for diocesan "mission efforts" have been diverted to the Presiding Bishop's Fund for World Relief. These and other similar ventures all fall under the heading of what some have called the "band-aid" approach. It is my impression that Central Pennsylvanians are not yet very much in tune with the idea of the Church initiating "systemic change."

A number of us are troubled by how quickly the "band wagon" ebbs. In March when the big push was on, contributions to the Presiding Bishop's Fund doubled, tripled and quadrupled all across the diocese. However, it is difficult to sustain a sense of emergency. Even in my own family, our conscientious resolves to curb overconsumption are not well remembered. If we don't eat as well or as

much as we once did, it is largely because even hot dogs are now over \$1 a pound.

How should a Church and Society group in Central Pennsylvania be involved? Gillett suggests a number of ways. The diocesan task force on hunger, which has not met during the summer, needs to study his suggestions. Land use is a big issue in this part of the world, particularly efforts to keep farm lands from being sold out to those who would turn them into suburban housing developments. Overconsumption, particularly luxury consumption, is a continuing problem. What we need to explore more are ways for reminding card carrying Episcopalians that the problem is not going to disappear, that it is our problem as much as anyone's, and that in and through the problem God is summoning us to take a hard look at our values, both personal and corporate, and to try new styles of living.

**Northwest Network,** Kent Hackmann, Moscow, Idaho

Reader beware. Gillett's report is confusing and debatable. He questions individualism but does not commend collectivism. He challenges capitalism but does not prescribe socialism. He calls for an understanding of systems and leaves the reader wondering if he knows anything about them. He urges us to share our productive wealth with the have-not nations while telling us to be sensitive to their values so that we may know that they do not want our ideas or technology.

Gillett stresses that the have nations face a moral obligation to share with the have-not nations. To do this, he calls for a simpler life in capitalistic countries so that more will be available for the rest of the world. Perhaps a simpler life would be better for the mental and physical health of civilization. Undoubtedly the call is valid for any discussion of the consumption of finite resources.

A simple style of life, however, may have undesirable consequences. In the short run, the initial surplus, if any, will be only a band-aid on a major wound and does nothing to encourage greater production. In the long run, a simpler life could be contra-productive. The needy will continue to be dependent, and a lowering of consumption at home slows down production, creates unemployment, and adds to the welfare list. Even the equal sharing of some resources may not be the best policy. Fertilizers, for example, should be used on the very productive wheat lands of northern Idaho and eastern Washington rather than wasted on marginal or inferior lands elsewhere. Rather than a simple life, one might call for a redirection of the industrial world's productive capacity: a shift from



the manufacture of expensive weapons of war to socially useful water pumps for irrigation would be a good place to start.

The world food problem, as Gillett states, is a complicated one. Shortages occur in some areas due to weather rather than economic relationships, as witness the crop failures in Russia this year. Population growth apparently needs to be arrested, but peoples in overpopulated areas seem unwilling to change habits and values (a notable exception is China, where population control, agricultural and industrial production and distribution of necessities improve after a major change in ideology and values). How soon in the future, if at all, the magnitude of the problem will effect a change in attitudes in all nations is impossible to predict.

**New York-Connecticut Network,** Clyde Glandon, Batavia, New York

The Diocese of Western New York has initiated a "Pence Can" program in its parishes to provide money for immediate food relief and to raise consciousness at meals of our solidarity with hungry people. Regional workshops were held in September for parish hunger committees which included workshops on food stamp counseling.

Gillett's presentation of the problem and his outline of a long-term strategy for us are short and sound. The question of whether a "bandwagon" response in the institutional churches will continue in the face of the "hard" issues is indeed to the point. I can't see that we've come to that yet; people have been staying off that bandwagon in droves. Hostility or militant indifference to appeals for response to world hunger has not been limited to articulate reactionaries; it is a mass phenomenon measured by passivity.

This confirms Gillett's attention to some of our attitudes. There is a long Roman Catholic tradition of criticism of the kind of values which now seem to be obscuring reality for American Christians. The failure of a "market" solution is a failure by definition as well as in practice: there are manifest human disasters in our world which can no longer wait for an entrepreneur to figure out a way to make money by solving them. It is poignantly absurd to continue to hear Coca Cola trying to get us to believe that we've got the music the world is singing.

Our theological grounding in a brotherhood of the breaking of bread does transvalue and redefine for us the values American society has been living by. Such values have so determined the function and experience of the institutional churches in American life that this theological

grounding must imply a thorough-going re-education in the doctrine of the Church. We haven't got to the hard issues yet because there is still such widespread conviction that this is not what "church" is. Distressingly trite but still true.

**Pennsylvania-Virginia Network,** Virginia Host, Oil City, Pa.

Gillett has all too clearly defined the problem of world hunger. We could deal with the necessity of having a few meatless days a week and growing our own vegetables, but Gillett makes us face the fact that the issue is greater than a few hundred thousand far off people whom we will never see starving to death. It is whether everybody starves to death.

At what point do we arrogantly turn on our compassion? The photos of big-eyed emaciated children from far off seem not to have greatly bothered us to date. In our secret heart of hearts, do we ever think that a well-managed famine confined efficiently to the Southern and Eastern hemispheres would be the simplest way to resolve many problems? Yes, we do — and because we are Christians we push the thought away in shock and guilt. We would rush to intercede if other citizens of the "First World" decided to put this plan into action. Wouldn't we?

Will we Christians wait until we are overcome with "compassion" by photos of big-eyed children in England? In Canada? In Terre Haute? Given the history of the Episcopal Church, I am tempted to say we might wait until big hungry eyes appear in Sunday School and then debate the validity of that hunger for a few years.

I see in Gillett's proposals a series of sacrifices and joinings:

- The Church if it is to make a prophetic witness must not stand aloof and view the scene while making lofty pronouncements. It must be willing to sacrifice some of its importance by joining with secular groups to educate the American people to the issues.

- The American people, through their government, must join with other governments and be willing to sacrifice their superiority and alter their systems.

- Every nation must make the sacrifice of submitting itself to a world authority of some sort, maybe even a world government.

We must begin to insist *now* that these facts be faced and that Gillett's ideas or similar ones be implemented by the Church and by the government.

The Christian social relations department in the Diocese of Erie has begun educating people on the issues of world



hunger. Eight people from the diocese attended the mini-conference held in the Third Province in June at Frederick, Maryland. Most Network members are involved in this although it is not a Network function.

Each county in the region has an Elderly Nutrition Program, whereby poor elderly people are given several nutritious meals a week (if they can get to the center). Food stamps are in general use in this depressed area.

## Women Ordained,

*Continued from page 9*

changes its mind and its vote.

We are reminded of the biblical admonition, "You have all clothed yourself in Christ and there are no more distinctions between Jew and Gentile, slave and free, male and female, but all of you are one in Christ." We believe it is the responsibility of the Episcopate to preserve discipline and order within the church, but it is also its obligation to guard and interpret the Christian faith. Episcopal authority is given to enable bishops to implement the principle of faith within the church. To refrain from ordaining a qualified candidate because she is female or because a church institutional body votes to continue to discriminate against women is to allow a political process to inhibit faithfulness to the Gospel — a dangerous precedent. The abdication of their authority and their responsibility by our bishops has thrown our church into chaos and places women deacons in an untenable position.

To continue as deacons now would be to accept and affirm conditions which rob us and our congregations of our fullest ministry even as those conditions rob the Episcopal Church of the fullness of a female and male priesthood. We believe we must oppose such conditions as contrary to the Gospel and destructive to our church, to ourselves, and to all women and men. We recognize

that this ordination will bring joy and hope to many, anger and conflict to others. We have weighed the costs to ourselves and our Christian community. We believe we are acting in response to the Holy Spirit. We ask that all Christians, whether in agreement or disagreement with our decisions, join our prayers for our Church in its struggle to embody Christ's teachings.

Signed: Rev. Phyllis Edwards  
Rev. Eleanor Lee McGee  
Rev. Alison Palmer  
Rev. Betty Rosenbery  
Rev. Dian Tickell

*Editor's Note:* After this statement was issued, the Rev. Phyllis Edwards, after two meetings with Bishop James Montgomery, withdrew from the ordination service.

## Hunger Relief Agencies

Bread for the World, 602 East 9th Street,  
New York, NY 10009

The Washington Interreligious Task Force on World  
Hunger, 100 Maryland Avenue, NE,  
Washington, D.C. 20002

Ox-Fam/America, Box 288, Boston, MA 02116  
National Office of the American Friends Service  
Committee, Ms. Roberta Levenbach, 1501 Cherry  
Street, Philadelphia, PA 19102

African Famine Relief Fund, 2204 R Street,  
NW, Washington, D.C. 20008

Church World Service, 475 Riverside Drive,  
New York, NY 10027

UNICEF, United Nations Building, New York, NY 10017

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