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# THE WITNESS

April 1976

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## ■ The Death and Life of Bishop Pike

Excerpts from the book  
by William Stringfellow  
and Anthony Towne

## ■ A Modest Proposal

Phillip C. Cato

## ■ An Alternative Approach to an Alternative Future

Sondra Myers





# Letters to the Editor

*The Witness reserves the right to condense all letters*

I trust some good will come from my plugging "The Witness." I am delighted to be its promoter, because it is a good magazine and fills a useful and important need, especially now. You have made it a very worthy successor to the old Witness.

**William A. Beal** — Chevy Chase, Maryland

Peace and good be to you. Thank you for the complimentary copies of THE WITNESS. I am interested and shall read it with interest.

**Sister Mary Jose** — O.S.F. Venezuela

Let me just reflect a little bit upon The Witness and the movement as I see it. I think The Witness is, and can make, an increasingly effective witness in identifying new directions for social concern after the hyper-activity of the '60s and the danger of conservative backlash in the '70s. I know that economics are very real and this means that you cannot have a very large magazine at this time.

At the same time I believe we clergy in particular are in very serious need of more probing articles. I think I feel some over-concentration on certain issues and wishing for new perspectives on them and also some probes on other issues, e.g. Where is ecumenism? What are the meanings of changes in the youth culture? Why is the Bicentennial a BLAH?

I've tried to say in these few sentences where I am and where I'd like to be and I do want you to know we are with you and are grateful to you for re-invigorating this wing of the Church and giving it some direction.

**Robert McGregor** — Grosse Pointe, Michigan

Holland's "Look At Yourself, America" has inserted an inquiring "dip stick" into historical recesses of our sputtering national motor. Reading the level on his "oil gauge", he shares with us his new insights into our nation's "life and death struggles against classism, imperialism, racism and sexism". This is a self-instructive device with a high potential for producing rededicated citizens — eager for new witness and action.

The same kind of job Mr. Holland is doing for our country needs doing in every little soul and parish. Woe to us parish Pharisees. How great the difference between what we say we believe and what our actions show us to be. Perhaps you could follow the unblurred analysis of our national deeds with a dip stick inquiry into, "Just Look At Yourself, Parish".

**Robert P. Moore** — Sewanee, Tennessee

I am most grateful for the three months' complimentary subscription to The Witness magazine. I welcome learning about the Episcopal church community's presence and response to the church's social mission. Many thanks for your initiative in sharing with us.

**Mary Daniel Turner** — SNDdeN Executive Director, Leadership Conference of Women Religious

## AMERICA

by Anthony Towne

is 200 years old  
and by way of celebration  
I would like to share with you-all  
— assuming I somehow get my head together—  
the fact that once upon a time the lordly Manisseans  
for nobody knows how many hundreds of years  
cultivated corn and harvested fish  
on an island "discovered"  
by G. Verrazzano  
in 1524

(The Manisseans were Indians of the Narragansett family.)

# THE WITNESS

Robert L. DeWitt, Editor; E. Lawrence Carter, Robert Eckersley, Antoinette Swanger, Lisa K. Whelan, Hugh C. White, Jr. Editorial and Business Office: P.O. Box 359, Ambler, Pennsylvania 19002. Telephone (215) 643-7067. Subscription rates: \$9.00 per year; \$1.00 per copy. *The Witness* is published monthly by the Episcopal Church Publishing Company. Board of Directors: Bishops Morris Arnold, Robert DeWitt, Lloyd Gressle, John Hines, John Krumm, Brooke Mosley and Dr. Joseph Fletcher. Copyright 1975 by the Episcopal Church Publishing Company. Printed in U.S.A.

## Editorial A Voice in the Wilderness

Robert L. DeWitt

I knew Jim Pike well. He confused me. He stretched my mind. I am grateful for his life.

When I was a young priest I heard him speak at a diocesan clergy conference on the invitation of Bishop Emrich. Pike was then Dean of the Cathedral of St. John the Devine. He had been asked to speak on preaching, a skill in which his excellence was recognized. I recall vividly the theme of his remarks. "Authentic preaching," he said, "requires two symbols. One is a weather vane. The other is the cross. The first is to keep us in touch with current reality, and the other is to keep us in touch with eternal truth."

Jim Pike was the preacher at the service when I was consecrated a bishop. On the day before the service, he inquired pastorally about the state of my soul, mind and emotions concerning the coming service. He also asked what I would like the message of the sermon to be. On the day of the service a vested array of bishops was lined up for the procession — but no Bishop Pike. Said Presiding Bishop Lichtenberger with a twinkle to one of the bishops, "If Jim does not show up, *you* will be the preacher!" Jim showed up, barely in time, gaily greeting the other officiants.

Once he spoke in the late 1950's to the Economic Club of Detroit, a luncheon gathering which many of Detroit's leading businessmen usually attended. His subject was the House Committee on Un-American Activities, a hot potato at the time. "Contrary to the general impression," he said, "I am not opposed but strongly in favor of the House's having a committee on un-American activities. My only concern is: what kind of activities are really un-American?" He then went on to label as "un-American" racism and other social ills which were corroding the heart of America.

Jim Pike was a man ahead of his time. True, some of the issues which occupied and preoccupied him have had their day. One thinks of the heresy issue. Thanks partly to him, that issue may now safely be lodged in history. He was an active advocate of many concerns — racial justice, theological reconstruction, women in the ministry, to name a few — which are still with us but have nonetheless lost their novelty. We have moved beyond some of them to their deeper implications.

Actually, it was in a profounder yet simpler way that he was ahead of his time. It had to do with his stubborn insistence that Jesus is Lord of the church, and that his teachings are normative for the church. I doubt he would feel any more comfortable in the church now than he did then. But he would not feel so lonely. Today his name is legion — the legion of those who feel alienated from, even exiled by a religious institution whose history and Gospel call forth their respect and loyalty, but whose present life and witness are more marked by the petty prudence of man than by the thundering truth of God.

# From: **The Death and Life of Bishop Pike**

by William Stringfellow and Anthony Towne

## **AN HONEST MAN IS CANDID**

They had come to talk about Bishop Pike. Bishop Robinson had seated them comfortably in his study, an addition to the old farmhouse, a bright, colorful room in the contemporary manner and with large picture windows giving onto an ordinary English countryside. There were birdfeeders scattered among the shrubs and winter-barren trees. No voices from the spirit world would interrupt Bishop Robinson, but during pauses in his recollections his guests would welcome the reassuring chatter of finches and chickadees.

John A. T. Robinson, sometime Bishop of Woolwich, and author, among other books, of *Honest to God*, a best-seller on both sides of the Atlantic in the mid-1960's, had been a friend of Bishop Pike, and the two bishops had met many times throughout that decade in England and in the United States to discuss theology and to have good times together. *What Is This Treasure*, which Bishop Pike published in 1966, included a dedication to the Bishop of Woolwich.

### **JOHN A. T. ROBINSON GOOD FRIEND AND COMPANION-SPIRIT ALONG THE WAY**

Towards the end of September of 1969, Bishop Robinson was to relinquish his duties in Woolwich, and for the occasion he "laid on" some festivities. Jim and Diane Pike had been expected to stop in England on their way back from Israel especially for those festivities, but their desert ordeal and his death had intervened.

During the summer of 1962, which he spent in Wellfleet on Cape Cod, Bishop Pike had begun to write, under the working title "I Believe," a book on doctrine. His intention had been to consider particular traditional Christian beliefs, as set forth in the Creeds, in terms of their application to daily living in the modern world. He wrote an initial chapter on the nature of belief, but after fussing with several further chapters on specific doctrines, he found he could not go on and set the book aside. In the spring of 1963, Bishop

Robinson sent him an advance copy of *Honest to God*. That book had a powerful impact on Bishop Pike.

*I admired his courage; I felt he was getting somehow closer to the point. And it gave me the courage to throw away all the chapters I had written except the one on belief, and to write an entirely different kind of book, which is quite iconoclastic.*

*In other words, by then I really had moved on further, even beyond the place where I was, and I decided not to try to come out smelling like a rose on orthodoxy.*

"I believe" was jettisoned, and Bishop Pike proceeded to write a controversial study of the creeds which was published, in 1964, as *A Time for Christian Candor*.

*Honest to God* and *A Time for Christian Candor* came to be lumped together as precursors within the Anglican communion of a development in theology that some found subversive of fundamental Christian doctrine. Re-read a decade later, however, neither book would seem to have seriously challenged any of the essential teachings of the Church, and neither Bishop Robinson nor Bishop Pike would seem to have advanced a theological position that was new or even novel. Both works had importance because they raised questions about the efficacy of antique and inaccessible magisterial creedal formulations. *Honest to God* was a searching approach to that problem limited by its caution. *A Time for Christian Candor* was bolder in its argument but unfortunately the argument had not been nearly as carefully thought through as it deserved to be.

Bishop Robinson would later feel some regret that his work had been so frequently associated with Bishop Pike's.

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From the book **THE DEATH AND LIFE OF BISHOP PIKE**. Copyright© 1976 by William Stringfellow and Anthony Towne. To be published by Doubleday & Company, Inc.





“Theologically, I’ve always been twinned with him by *Time* magazine and that sort of thing. I’m not quite sure I’m really happy about that. I don’t know whether he was either, for that matter. But this is the way the press deals with people. I find it difficult to assess him theologically. He was essentially a popularizer and a brilliant one. He was essentially still a legal mind rather than a theologian. He was brilliant, of course, in the sort of ‘p.r.’ field. You always felt when he was talking to you that he was giving you a press interview. You felt it was all for the tape. I found this disconcerting. You felt there was this sort of spiel coming out and whoever was there . . . well, it didn’t seem to make much difference. To that extent I did feel a certain unease with the fact that he never seemed *really* to listen.”

“This doesn’t mean, of course, that he wasn’t always himself . . . absolutely disarming and very charming . . . such a warm person that one wanted to expand with him . . . and one felt entirely at ease with him in *that* way. But having watched him at work . . . the way he sort of switched on a press interview at a moment’s notice . . . and the way it didn’t make much difference whether he talked to you or to them . . . it just sort of all spilled out . . . *this* was the thing that was so distinctive about him. It was the fact that he was able to communicate to that kind of audience which was his great gift, I think. He was obviously a person who could . . . with a very competent theological training without being in any sense a scholar . . . a person who would get over the language barrier that so often makes communication between theologians and others impossible.”

“Now I felt that in some ways the title of his book *A Time for Christian Candor* compared with my *Honest to God* perhaps put the finger on

something of the difference between us. I think that basically what made Jim tick in all this *was* the need for candor. In other words, for heaven’s sake say what you really believe, and if you don’t believe it don’t say it. It was with the *saying*, I suspect, that he was *really* concerned. It was this . . . and being truthful in the way you were prepared to put across what you believe . . . *that* was for him the nub of the problem. And so many of the things the Church says in its Creeds and its sort of official doctrines just don’t mean anything . . . so why not say so?”

Now this was, I think, a slightly different exercise than the one I was concerned about . . . which was not *primarily* a matter of communication. That did come into it because the two are so interconnected as to be almost inseparable. But I was *more* concerned not with what you say . . . or the candor with which you express it . . . but with how you can re-express your beliefs so that they actually do correspond with what you think. These are, of course, very closely related exercises. But I do think there *is* a difference between candor and honesty. Honesty in a way cuts a bit deeper. Honesty is prepared always to go to the roots . . . and that for me is what it means to be a radical. I was trying to dig pretty deep down . . . to get at the roots of the problem of beliefs . . . and to re-express what some of the other formulations had been trying to say. I would *now* agree that the Creeds and so on don’t really say it . . . or say it in ways you really can’t make meaningful . . . or truthful . . . to yourself much less to other people.

“There is a difference of emphasis here. I was more concerned with digging down than he was. How you communicated this was obviously one part of the whole thing. Jim’s image of “the package” which occurs in his stuff very often has to do with that. Let’s throw away the packaging, he would say, and get at the treasure under the earthen vessels. That seemed to me to be simplistic. The idea was basically that it was the packaging that was getting in the way. So, if you could give to people what’s inside, short of all these other things, then they would take it . . . or at least it would be more intelligible . . . and they could eat it . . . or something. Whereas I am not sure the exercise doesn’t need to get a bit deeper than that.”



Bishop Robinson's regard for Bishop Pike was rooted deep down in honest affection. It was the treasure within that Bishop Robinson delighted in, and not that dazzling earthen vessel the world knew as Bishop Pike, that glitter of packaging which for so long captivated the press and the *demimonde* of the media. Once, in the spring of 1968, the two bishops had been together at Princeton University for "one of those star-studded conferences that drone on for days and accomplish nothing whatsoever." One afternoon, weary of it all, the two old friends stumbled out of the Princeton Inn into a breathtaking display of flowering cherry and dogwood. An especially lovely pink cherry at the peak of its bloom enchanted Bishop Robinson.

I said to Jim, "Isn't that a gorgeous sight?" And he said, "What's that?" "You know, he really didn't know what I was looking at."

## PASTORAL CRISES

During the interregnum of Pike's self-defined agnosticism, the young man had become virtually obsessed with the matter of ecclesiastical authority. He conceived faith to be contingent upon Church membership and upon affirmation of, of acquiescence to the authority of the Church as arbiter and instructor in the faith. He viewed the authority of the Roman Church as impaired and corrupted by an extraneous claim of papal infallibility and he concluded that Rome's authority had degenerated into authoritarianism. Pike sought, with evident zeal and with some anxiety, a Church which had been spared such excesses and abuses but which could confidently trace its authority in doctrine and polity to the Apostolic era. He had eventually settled upon Anglicanism, with the permission, if not the enthusiasm of his mother, and this renewed allegiance to the Church enabled him quickly to resume the vocation to the priesthood that he had wanted since childhood, though thereby putting aside his solid and brilliant work in law and in legal scholarship.

His preoccupation with the authority issue, as might have been predicted, diminished much, once he became a priest, and practically vanished in the course of his episcopacy. As bishop, Pike no longer felt need for an elaborate justification of

ecclesiastical authority. Once he was in authority, he was free of this compulsion to rationalize it. To be sure, there were moments when he could not refrain from baiting his peers in the Roman Church about the difference between their asserted authority and his understanding of the episcopal office. In his letter to his clergy on "Freedom of prophecy and the limitations thereon," he wrote: "The position individual clergy have taken either by words or participation in group action have not always matched my own views, but this is not requisite (or entirely desirable, since I have not patterned my administration after that of the Cardinal Archbishop of Los Angeles, and it can hardly be said that we have a monolithic Diocese!)" Yet, essentially, as bishop, Pike lost interest in the question of authority. He was a bishop of the Holy Catholic Church; as such, he exemplified Apostolic authority appropriate in the Church; that settled the problem for him. In this, he showed a historic sense, a comprehension, a conscientiousness so remarkable that it proved to be an embarrassment to many of his fellow Episcopal bishops. Remembering the hostilities and hesitations attending ratification of his election, it might have been supposed that other bishops would welcome the eagerness and solemnity with which he applied himself to being a true bishop. Instead, many of them found his demeanor threatening, an exposé of their own banality and compromise, a violation of the fraternal etiquette of the House of Bishops. To add injury to insult, he became insistent that bishops should be theologically informed and competent and articulate. And what was most aggravating of all was the fact that, meanwhile, his diocese had become the most successful of all the bishops according to worldly criteria of material, financial and numerical growth.

Ultimately, James A. Pike became so emancipated from his own anxiety about authority that he utterly relinquished his authority, and reached the point where belief was no longer critically dependent upon ecclesiastical authority. He had moved — through a lifetime — from Church dogmatics to confession of the Gospel, from "smooth orthodoxy" to personal faith, from — in his own phrases — the ontological to the existential.



This shift is connected to the fact of Pike's quick boredom. In New York, at St. John the Divine, Canon West had noticed that after a very short time, Dean Pike had become bored, despite the vigor and excitement his ministry engendered there and despite the widespread acclaim evoked by his witness there. Even more did he grow restless in the administration of his diocese.

One significant factor feeding his boredom while bishop was the recurring necessity to respond theologically in his role as *pastor paritorum*. In this, for the first time, he was on his own, without surrogates or tutors, such as Howard Johnson, canon theologian at the Cathedral of St. John the Divine during Pike's deanship, had been. Thus his inclinations for study and thought, for reflection and expression returned to prominence. He entertained again the dream of his seminary days of studying in England with a great theological faculty. His old friend Robert Hutchins tempted him with an open invitation to join the Center for the Study of Democratic Institutions as a theologian-in-residence. He was tantalized by a summer's stint in New York City devoted to reading and writing and to preaching at Trinity Church. He found both stimulation and nourishment, intellectually, in his ever-increasing travels to colleges and universities across the nation. As early in his episcopate as 1960, he began to delegate assignments to his Suffragan Bishop, George Richard Millard, and to Canons-to-the-Ordinary on the replenished Cathedral staff, and to assorted other aides, including, notably, Esther Pike. His wife acquired such prominence, indeed, in the administration of his office that she came to be called, among seminarians and younger clergy, "Mrs. Bishop."

The upshot of Pike's efforts to find room for his versatile and mobile interests, to secure respite from administrative tasks and to relieve his boredom was no lessening of pressures but their multiplication. And this acceleration mounted geometrically as internal opposition to Pike developed and became outspoken within the Diocese of California and within the House of Bishops. Throughout, personal and private crises accrued until they could no longer be contained or repressed or neglected. Not very long before his death, Pike wrote:

*All my life — or as far back as I can remember (psychoanalysis has helped some here) — my pattern of response to disappointment, deprivation or failure — or to what threatened to be such — had been the extension of areas of activity with attendant multiple and diversified preoccupation. In the case of a person fairly capable at various types of things he gets involved in, this pattern inevitably opens up increasing numbers of opportunities in the respective facets, leading eventually to hyperactivity. When by such means all of one's time, energy and thought-spaces are occupied the result is the increasingly effective suppression of awareness and concern about unfulfilled areas of the personal scene.*

"To illustrate this fully," he added, "would require that I here and now write my autobiography (which I would regard as premature)."

Pike was accurate about his "hyperactivity" serving as both compensation and escape in relation to personal problems. Yet, astonishingly, in the midst of his hectic, sometimes frenetic circumstances, he stopped drinking. He acknowledged his alcoholism, confessed it, sought help, joined Alcoholics Anonymous, went dry. He renounced alcohol on June 30, 1964. Thereafter, save for a single reported lapse of a day or so, he remained totally dry.

## WAS BISHOP PIKE A HERETIC?

The question left unresolved at the Seattle General Convention — the one apt to linger as long as any memory of James Albert Pike — was whether Bishop Pike was verily a heretic. Did he, to use the language of the canons under which he was accused, hold and teach "publicly or privately and advisedly, any doctrine contrary to that held" by the Episcopal Church?

An answer to that requires that Anglican doctrine be ascertainable with a degree of clarity and definiteness sufficient to render a charge of heresy coherent. A standard or measure of orthodoxy is necessary. It is not obvious that there is such. The Anglican Communion has nothing in its inheritance comparable to the *Westminster Confession* in the tradition of the Reformed churches or to the Lutheran *Augsburg Confession*. There are the formularies of the *Articles of Religion*, published in The Book of

Common Prayer, as ratified in the United States in 1801 by the General Convention of the Episcopal Church. They were promulgated in America then because of the exigencies occasioned by the American Revolution and the formation of the new nation and the consequent change in Anglicanism in America from a mission of the Church of England to an autonomous national church. The *Articles* are a virtually verbatim copy of the earlier *Articles* of the mother church adopted in the 16th Century. In the circumstances they represent a heavily acculturated composition and this fact is generally acknowledged in the Episcopal Church. The *Articles* are regarded as quaint — of historical interest, but hardly as definitive of doctrine. Even the most enthusiastic of Bishop Pike's accusers never thought to invoke the *Articles* against him. The *Articles* do uphold the ancient Creeds, in this manner: "The Nicene Creed, and that which is commonly called the Apostles' Creed, ought thoroughly to be received and believed: for they may be proved by most certain warrants of Holy Scripture." It had been urged repeatedly while various charges were pending against Pike that he denied the Creeds, or parts thereof, though he thought of his effort as explicating them and never repudiated their recital or other use within the Church. Thus, how the Creeds are interpreted becomes crucial to an appeal to the Creeds as assessor of heresy. Are the Creeds to be understood as reporting historical fact or as expressing theological truth? Shall they be read with simplistic literalism, as some of Pike's accusers argued, or stylistically and symbolically? Do the Creeds represent reportage or metaphor? Or, must such questions be answered one way or the other? Can there not be within the Church room for a diversity of interpretations of the Creeds in conjunction with their common use?

These questions plagued the Episcopal Church, as well as other churches, long before the Pike heresy controversy. It became one of the sad footnotes to the censure of Pike, under the nominal auspices of Bishop Angus Dun, that Bishop Pike could cite in his own behalf a proposal Dun had offered in 1924, while he was a seminary professor, that the historic Creeds be deemed optional in liturgical practice until they

could be studied by scholars with the purpose of revising creedal language so as to be more comprehensible. Professor Dun had put the problem:

*The practical question is not whether the great classical formulations of faith in Christ . . . within our creeds enshrine permanent truths and values, but whether they serve . . . to . . . share or sift faith in Christ in our day . . . For increasing numbers there are clauses where the mind goes blank as the words are repeated, where many honest but non-reflective minds feel a vague uneasiness, where the more middle-aged and indolent minds surrender the effort to think their situations through, and where the more docile minds recognize sacred mystery and working where they cannot understand.*

*Under these circumstances it cannot be said that it is the creeds which unite us . . . There are at least certain public indications that it is the creeds that divide us . . . the basis of our unity and our continuity lies deeper than creeds.*

It had been, of course, the latitude and generosity of belief and interpretation traditional, if not consistent, within Anglicanism's existential unity and historic continuity that had so perniciously appealed to young Jim Pike in the days when he was so intensely searching for a church connection that he could enter in conscience. Through the years, he had retained that admiration for the breadth of Anglicanism. On the eve of his departure from the Cathedral in New York he declared that he considered the fullest expression of the Biblical message "is found in the Anglican heritage . . . I believe that this is the most Catholic, most Protestant, and most liberal tradition in Christianity."

This same conviction about the Anglican genius was artfully embodied in the book on doctrine, *The Faith of the Church*, which Pike had co-authored with Norman Pittenger. Bishop Pike recalled this often, if sometimes somewhat ruefully, during the heresy tumult because that book had as much stature in defining doctrine as anything currently in official use in the Episcopal Church and he could envision himself in an absurd trial in which that book was cited as doctrinal authority.



Others in the Episcopal Church sensed the same element of the absurd in the heresy effort against Pike and in his censure. *The Witness*, on October 20, 1966, editorialized:

*In the days preceding the meeting at Wheeling the press reported the death of the 'Red Dean' of Canterbury, and we were led to reflect on the maturity of the mother Church of England in dealing with the eccentric and the innovators among her clergy. Bishop Barnes of Birmingham, Bishop Robinson of Woolwich, the 'Red Dean' were never subjected to the humiliation which Bishop Pike was subjected to at Wheeling.*

The open spirit of the mother Church had been affirmed in the words of Archbishop William Temple, in 1938, when a report commissioned by the Archbishops of Canterbury and York, *Doctrine in the Church of England*, was published. It was the product of 15 years of work

by 25 scholars and ecclesiastics on the nature and ground of Christian doctrine as perceived in the Anglican Communion; it has been a book widely studied in Anglican seminaries, and was a principal source for the Pike-Pittenger volume. In introducing *Doctrine*, Temple emphasized that it was not intended as a *summa theologica* — such would be, said Temple, a *monstrum horrendum*. “The Church of England has no official Philosophy and it certainly was not our desire to provide one for it.”

Heresy trials and, indeed, the idea of heresy were anomalies in Anglicanism quite some time before the Bayne report reached that conclusion. It was, perhaps, in the last trial of an Episcopal bishop for heresy — that of Bishop Brown in 1924 — that this was exposed most cogently. There, after refusing to admit evidence on the latitude of doctrine in Anglicanism, the ecclesiastical court stated that the doctrine of the Church was a matter of judicial notice and it took judicial notice that what the Episcopal Church held was



contained in *The Book of Common Prayer*. After the verdict, which condemned him as a heretic, Bishop Brown remarked:

*We have utterly failed to draw from the court a statement of any standard of orthodoxy. But this failure is our greatest triumph, because it was our contention, from the outset, that it could not be done.*

*We are told only that the doctrine is contained, but not formulated, in the Prayer Book, in the Collects, in the Scriptures. So doubtless it is contained in the Dictionary . . .*

*It will have become obvious to everyone whose mind lives in this scientific age, that a charge of heresy can not be sustained. More than that, it will become obvious to everyone that such a charge can not even be stated. And what is obvious to everyone sooner or later must become obvious to theologians.*

It took 43 years for Brown's prediction to be fulfilled by the recognition, in the Bayne report, by theologians and ecclesiastics of what has been obvious to everyone.

Probably Bishop Pike himself was to blame for the notion that he was a heretic. When he first mentioned the term, while expressing his qualms about the narrow creedal views contained in the 1960 Dallas pastoral letter, he gratuitously furnished his enemies with a suggestion of how they might discredit or destroy him. Once the association of Pike with heresy gained notoriety, every word or phrase he uttered became subject to distortion, to excerption out of context, to misrepresentation, a process sometimes abetted by his verbal skill in shorthand, jaunty, flippant talk. Furthermore, the media, through the years in which various heresy accusations were circulating, tended to characterize Pike's views in more emphatic style than the texts of his writings and speakings justified. A *TIME* had styled the Holy Spirit as "the esprit de corps of the Christian fellowship," and had continued by remarking that the Trinity was "a concept which seems to say that we have three gods rather than one," without inciting hostile response.

Placing the issue of "irresponsibility" in abeyance, for the time being, the censure's allegation concerning Pike's "often obscure and contradictory utterances" was particularly curious, too, at least to anyone who had, in fact,

been attentive to his utterances, oral and published, during his public prominence. The inference, at the censure, was very compelling that few of his peers who endorsed this rebuke were relying upon direct knowledge of what he had said rather than an impression they had somehow acquired other than by reading his articles and books or listening to him speak. What emerges from the latter effort was neither obscure nor contradictory, for the most part, but remarkably redundant. What is noticeable is not how novel his views were, but how often they were reiterated in similar language. What is shown was not so much how his mind changed, but that his mind changed little.

## A CONSUMMATE OBSESSION

The death of James A. Pike in Judea estopped his second departure from the Church. The ecclesiastical procedures for certifying his abandonment of the Episcopal Church had not been formalized in time for his death. In a curious way, this situation emphasized the elementary issue of Pike's lifelong agitated relationship with the Church — the conflict, as it emerged, inexorably, reluctantly, between church and faith. On that last occasion when Bishop Pike ventured the wilderness, his attention was fixed upon Jesus; his quest sought the origins of the Gospel, and he comprehended, with utter lucidity, that the Church, for himself anyway, had become an inhibition to such a commitment. With a characteristic candor, therefore, Pike had renounced his church connection. There was no repudiation of the Gospel implied. It was not a matter of loss of faith, as he had supposed when he had left the Church once before as a young man. Quite the contrary, this time his quitting the Church meant his emancipation as a human being. It signified his believing hope. It represented a penultimate act of faith for him.

Years earlier, in comparably solitary circumstances, Dietrich Bonhoeffer bespoke a similar tension inherent in the historic dialectic of church and faith, as John Cogley had remembered when he heard the news of Pike's resignation as Bishop of California. This was the issue of religion vs the Gospel, ecclesiology vs theology, doctrinal recitals vs confession, authority vs conscience,



the Church vs Jesus, idolatry vs faith.

Because he himself was an ecclesiastic, Bishop Pike felt this conflict most acutely in terms of idolatry or "ecclesiolatry," as he sometimes called it. In his writing and speaking, coincidental with the heresy controversy, he kept returning to Saint Paul's admonition concerning the frailty of the Church and the transience and relativity of churchly institutions and traditions as "earthen vessels" to which no ultimate dignity could be imputed and to which no justifying efficacy must ever be attributed. And, consistent with that, his growing awareness of Christian origins rendered the servant image of Jesus compellingly attractive to Pike. As James A. Pike became less and less religious, it can be said that he became more and more Christian.

Poignantly, it was a Jew who, perchance, most clearly recognized the extraordinary metamorphosis Bishop Pike had suffered, and most readily affirmed it. On the day after Pike's body was buried in Jaffa, *The Jerusalem Post* published an article by the renowned New Testament scholar at Hebrew University in Israel, Professor David Flusser — a person so marvelously immersed in the Biblical saga that, in meeting him, one imagines him to be a First Century personality. Dr. Flusser wrote: "Pike's . . . attitude was surely deeply Christian. We will eagerly look forward to . . . his book about Jesus. It will be . . . a stimulating book, in which there will be no difference between the 'historical Jesus' and the 'kerygmatic Christ.'"

The dialectic of church and faith became so intense for Pike, of course, because he had once himself been eagerly idolatrous about the Church. Once upon a time — just after he moved to Santa Barbara — Bishop Pike commented to a newsman that his resignation as bishop did not indicate his disenchantment with the Church "because I was never enchanted." The remark was hindsight. Verily Pike had been enchanted with the Church. During his professed agnosticism, he remained so literally enraptured with the Church that he construed his separation from the Church as depriving him of faith; so completely enamoured was he then that he was desperate and became obsessive about returning to the Church. In the intimacy of his correspondence with Mama he posited a pristine era of "the

undivided Church" and he romanticized Anglicanism as the residue of that era within Christendom. Later on, he sought to transpose his idealization of the Church in the congregation that he, in association with John Coburn, established and guided and nurtured at Wellfleet for the Cape Cod summer colony. That effort, launched while Pike was Dean of New York, was never publicized, but the Chapel of St. James the Fisherman had very high priority for Pike as a detailed model — in design, in liturgy, in teaching, in lay participation, in social concern, in pastoral care — of Pike's idyllic Church. Meanwhile, in similar vein, but with a fanfare befitting the premises, he implemented his grandiose view of the Church at the Cathedral of St. John the Divine. During this period in his life, whether building St. James the Fisherman or upbuilding St. John the Divine, there was still a primacy of the Church over faith in Pike's thought which, if less anxious than earlier in his experience, was no less emphatic. He summed it up in an Easter sermon, in 1953: "The existence of the Christian Church is the best argument for the Resurrection."

Had James Pike been of more pedestrian and less catholic intelligence, the event of his episcopacy might have occasioned the atrophy of his mind and of his witness. He might, as bishop, have become religious and mundane. He might, foolishly, have confused the station of bishop with the verification of faith. He might have succumbed to ecclesiastical success or regarded his office as a vested interest in the preservation of the ecclesiastical *status quo*. Forsooth, his episcopacy did not conform or stultify Pike. Albeit he completed Grace Cathedral, and otherwise much embellished the life of the Church in San Francisco and in the nation, Pike continued to grow, to ask, to search and stretch, to listen and challenge, and that, perhaps, the more so because he was no longer under theological tutelage. When, in 1960, Bishop Pike wrote an article for *The Christian Century* series, "How My Mind Has Changed," though he still styled the issue of faith in churchly categories, he made public mention of the freedom of the Gospel from the Church:

(1) *I am more broad church, that is, I know less than I used to think I knew . . .* (2) *I am more low*

*church, in that I cannot view divided and particular denominations as paramount in terms of the end-view of Christ's church, and I do regard the gospel as the all-important and as the only final thing. And (3) I am more high church, in that I more value the forms of the continuous life of the Holy Catholic Church . . . These forms include liturgical expression and the episcopate.*

The tenor of the *Century* piece sharply different from the Dallas pastoral letter, with its rigid ecclesiology, which the House of Bishops had promulgated shortly before Pike's article was published. And the contrast between the two utterances was dramatically underscored when the Georgia cleric used the latter to charge Bishop Pike with heresy.

In his changing understanding of the relationship of the Church and the Gospel and in the dynamics of church and faith, for Pike, there was more involved than an open and active mind or the spirit of either a pioneer or a pilgrim. There was the matter of authenticity, of the recovery of origins, or, in the parlance of lawyers, the significance of precedent. James Pike was not an iconoclast. It remains a measure of the degeneration of the Church that he was ever so regarded. One of the books which Pike read, in his avid pursuit of Christian sources in his last years, was Marcel Simon's *St. Stephen and the Hellenists*. Pike marked the book with marginal notes and exclamations, many of which indicate his sense of identification with the text. One passage with which he could readily empathize was this:

*Rather than revolutionary preachers of an entirely new message, Stephen himself, and Jesus as Stephen sees him, are, in the most precise meaning of the term, religious reformers. Stephen's position vis-a-vis post-Mosaic Israelite religion and official Judaism seems to me to be very much like that of the sixteenth-century Reformers vis-a-vis medieval Catholicism. None of them intends to make innovations. Their eyes are turned to the past . . . (Stephen) is against . . . his Jerusalemite . . . contemporaries because, and insofar as, they practice a debased and corrupted form of religion . . .*

Bishop Pike's concern for authenticity, for a recall of the past that would renew the present, did not assume that knowledge of the origins of the gospel was fixed and foreclosed. The radical potential of his interest was already evident in 1955, when news of the scrolls which had been found in caves near the Dead Sea raised apprehension that the discoveries would distress Christianity. "Christians have nothing to fear from whatever facts may be discovered," Pike told a Cathedral congregation, "The more we can know about the historical orientation of the life and thought of Jesus the better."

Some weeks before, in March of 1955, in another sermon, he had foreseen how his eagerness to know all that could be learned of Christian origins risked being at odds with the ecclesiastical and religious *status quo*. "Independence of spirit means a cross," he observed, "Simple conformity to the prevailing mood . . . spares one the cross." His foresight was fulfilled in his excoriation at Wheeling, but, there, in the moments he was allowed for response, he made no personal defense but pressed his appeal to precedent. He cited the past views of Angus Dun on the ambiguity of the Creeds to expose the sham of the use of Bishop Dun as sponsor of the censure. Then he invoked St. Augustine on the fitting conduct of theological inquiry and discourse:

*If what I have written is not according to the truth, then let him only hold fast to his opinion and refute mine, if that is possible, and let me know of it, too, and impart his knowledge to everyone else whom he can reach. The method I sum up in this sentence is brotherly discussion.*

More than anything else, certainly more than any issue of doctrine or any item of rhetoric, it was Bishop Pike's obsession for authenticity — as that came to supersede and transcend his regard for authority — that threatened and enervated his peers in the Church. It was this which made his being obnoxious. He had become more concerned with the Jesus of history than with prospering the Church establishment; he actually raised questions which posed the Gospel against the Church. The Church would have to somehow be rid of his presence.

A blunt way to put the issue that arose between



Pike and the Episcopal Church is that Pike was too diligent, too conscientious, too resolute in his vocation as a bishop. If that caused bafflement and provoked hostility among many fellow bishops, it nonetheless was recognized as Pike's virtue elsewhere. John Cogley's memoir, at Pike's death in Judea, recalled his pastoral outreach to colleagues at the Center in Santa Barbara. "James Pike was happiest, and at his very best," Cogley noted, "when he was fulfilling some office proper to a priest or bishop." Malcolm Muggeridge affirmed the same, in the *New Statesman*: "Poor Bishop James Pike lost and found dead in the Desert of the Temptations. More fearful symmetry . . . A true bishop of our time . . ." The orders of the episcopacy in Apostolic succession are said to be indelible. Whatever the theological status of such a view, it is empirically the truth for James A. Pike.

Thus, despite the redundancy in much of his theologizing, an extraordinary shift occurred during Bishop Pike's life in which he was freed from idolatry of the Church by his passion about Jesus. There were detours and vagaries and temptations and distractions, triumphs and calamities and humiliations and obstacles along the way, but, by the time he reached Judea, his hyperactivity had become reconciled with his obsessiveness and he knew but a consummate obsession, concentrated upon Jesus, which engaged and transfigured the profusion of his talents and interests and energies.

There were, and are, those unable to comprehend Pike's situation, toward the end of his life, as other than madness. In the Bayne committee report, rendered at the Seattle General Convention, however, the paper of Arthur A. Vogel, an academic theologian subsequently made the Bishop of West Missouri, contained a clue to a different exegesis. Vogel wrote: "We might add that life in Christ, since it embraces the crucifixion and Christ's death to self, should enable the Christian inquirer to be completely open to the truth. If the Christian has died to himself to the degree necessitated by the cross of Christ, he is by that fact completely open to the truth of God's love . . ." One might imagine that, somehow, Vogel had seen the notes of a sermon Pike had preached on February 10,

1952, which said: "In the Cross of Jesus Christ we see . . . (that) God accepts me though I am unacceptable, thus enabling me to accept myself."

The death to self in Christ was neither doctrinal abstraction nor theological jargon for James Pike. He died in such a way before his death in Judea. He died to authority, celebrity, the opinions of others, publicity, status, dependence upon "Mama", indulgences in alcohol and tobacco, family and children, marriage and marriages, promiscuity, scholarly ambition, the lawyer's profession, political opportunity, Olympian discourses, forensic agility, controversy, denigration, injustice, religion, the need to justify himself.

By the time Bishop Pike reached the wilderness in Judea, he had died in Christ. What, then, happened there was not so much a death as a birth.

## A Modest Proposal

by Phillip C. Cato

Recently in preparation for the election of a Bishop Coadjutor in the diocese of Newark, a survey was conducted among clergy and lay persons to ascertain what they regarded as the marks of a bishop. The divergence of opinion between the clergy and laity was telling in several instances. In one particular instance, that difference of opinion should be an occasion for learning for the entire Church. It had to do with the preferred age for the man to be elected.

The clergy believe the person elected should be over 50 years of age. In contrast, the laity indicated their desire to elect a person somewhat younger than 50.

Perhaps the clergy, who are somewhat more closely related to the bishop as a pastor and administrator of liturgical and other canonical discipline, desire someone with more experience and maturity. It could even be surmised that they are looking for someone who by virtue of age is more of a father-figure. But I suspect that there is an even more persuasive factor at work.

For good or for ill, a bishop places an enormous imprint on a diocese. Like the pastor of a local congregation, he shapes his charge over the years by the way he administers the diocese and gives pastoral leadership. After a period of time, the diocese begins to be an extension of his personality and his way of functioning. Knowing that, the clergy do a lightning calculation and figure how long, if he remains in good health, such a person would be at the helm.

And since long episcopacies have often proved stifling either for the man or the diocese (certainly this is true in local congregations) they almost automatically opt for a man who will have only about 10 years in office before he retires or gives up considerable authority to a new successor or coadjutor.

There are some serious drawbacks to this way of doing things. The rigors and stresses of the episcopal office are becoming increasingly demanding. Being a bishop in our Church is not unlike being a college president or the mayor of a major American city. No one seems able to function effectively without the bishop's presence or approval. The complex presided over becomes increasingly complex and that brings more demands for attention. In short, our bishops are worked to death and become more and more office-and meeting-bound. Their pastoral function suffers.

Furthermore, a man in his fifties and early sixties may not hold up as well under stress as a younger man might. Too often, I have heard too much concern for the health of an older bishop and too much desire to get the pressure off him.

The laity of our diocese want someone younger. Strong leadership was greatly desired by both clergy and laity in our survey and the laity see that leadership coming from a younger man.

Is it not time for this Church to consider canonical changes which allow bishops to be elected for only a 10-year period or to serve as a diocesan for only a 10-year period, after which they will become available as suffragans or assistant bishops in their own or other dioceses?

Newark was greatly blessed in recent years by the presence of the Right Reverend Kenneth Anand, a resigned bishop from India, who served until his recent death, as vicar of a mission and as Assistant Bishop of the Diocese of Newark. Bishop Anand, a scholarly and saintly man, found time to minister to mental patients in a state hospital, to give spiritual direction and counsel to the clergy, to lead retreats and to grow intellectually and spiritually himself, all the while giving invaluable assistance to our diocesan bishop in pastoral visitation, ordinations and the like. Any diocese could benefit from such a presence.

We do not have too many bishops and pastors; we have too few. Younger and more vigorous diocesans could give more vigorous leadership. And the wisdom and experience of resigned diocesans serving as vicars and assistant bishops would greatly strengthen the diocesan bishop and the clergy and people of any diocese.

Public or private responses to the proposal of such canonical changes and reordering of our way of electing and utilizing bishops would be most welcome. This difference of opinion between the clergy and laity in Newark could be the occasion for a dialogue from which we would all benefit.

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## An Alternative Approach to an Alternative Future

By Sondra Myers

Two questions challenge me as I pursue a study of alternative futures: How do we cope with the hidden presumption that if we do not design an alternative future, we will arrive at one that we know to be undesirable? And, conversely, if we do design one, how can we be sure that it will be good, and we will know how to get there? I am reluctant to concretize a fantasy that bears little relevance to what will happen. Obviously, it is not because I see the present course of Western society as satisfactory. Living in the "Badlands," how could I be unaware of the decay of human values and the loss of self-respect and sense of "belonging" that I see around me?

But here is the problem in considering the future: The only thing I am sure of about the future is that I have not been there before and neither has anyone else! And I don't know what will occur along the way. Of course, I may know the general direction, but I know equally well how I can be waylaid, how my journey may be interrupted by a storm or some calamity, how I may reach a fork in the road and not know which turn to take. And if I do design a future and try to get there, how do I know which road to take to that alternative place, and how can I be sure that I will really want to live there? The variables and uncertainties overwhelm me before I get past the first dream.

In a sense it is easy to imagine a Utopia. It is conceived often as a world existing in time and space. It is totally unlike the iron-clad ugly megalopolis which produces ugly iron-clad money-grubbing robots. (It is just the reverse of the here and now, as seen poetically; for Utopians often depict today and tomorrow in vivid imagery.) It is a small country community with sane limitations, a garden of genuinely creative human relationships and goals. It has a particular political and economic system. It is populated by people who have all reformed.

In short, I can only conceive of such a Utopia as an aberration, a little island of people committed to and unified by an ideal. The atmosphere is rarefied; it is a world for angels.



So, as an alternative to an alternative future, let me try to think through those problems that stand in my way when I consider the feasibility of a more humanized society, in which material goals and a passion for rampant growth are supplanted by more human aspirations of brotherhood and creativity. I am too impatient to wait until I get "there" to begin to experience these and other meaningful aspects of life, and so I must try to find them along the road.

When I think of the future I am chiefly concerned about those who will grope along without a central theme to their lives. The angels will take care of themselves, but what about the rest of us who do not have a dream to move into?

Utopias are, for me, naive fictions that do not spark us to action. In fact they do not lend themselves to practical improvement of one's life or surroundings because they are founded on a rejection of the human traits and environment of the present. They have a false solidity that cannot be supported by the rather shaky "oughts and don't's" that make up their foundation. At the very most, they are reminders of a better way, an ideal for the few.

In my view it is more fruitful to turn to the road itself, and our relation to it. It is in the dynamics of the relationship of the individual to his surroundings that one might uncover some hopeful possibilities for humankind's future. Change is inherent in being and I suggest that some of the changes that occur can arouse us from the apathy that results from being mere parts of the machine.

Last year's oil shortage startled the U.S., no matter that conservation experts had long warned us of the probability of disaster resulting from enormous waste. Especially, I suppose, in the U.S., the land where "everything is possible," it was inconceivable to most of us that the pattern of increasing consumption ought to be reconsidered. Until a crisis occurs we do not focus our attention on warnings (e.g. cigarette smoking: There is more than ever despite an elaborate warning system). According to the Western way, use everything. When, however, the Arab embargo on oil made scarcity a reality and suggestions for conservation came forward from the government, we did respond immediately by conserving. Perhaps we were even relieved to have the opportunity to break off the

pattern of reckless use.

One can hardly advocate crisis as a way of life. On the other hand, one can surely assume that it is a part of life, and I suggest that there is still enough human energy left, even in this technocratic society, to respond to crisis. The kind of crisis that occurred was a threat from the outside and it had a unifying effect. I suggest that this kind of common need is more unifying than the Utopian dream — and more humanizing, and decidedly more energizing. When the growth ethic is challenged on moral or psychological grounds, it is natural that those who believe they are benefiting from it will not respond, nor will those respond who feel utterly powerless. Utopia, a place built on "oughts," is meaningful mostly to Utopians; crisis is meaningful to almost everyone.

In politics, the Watergate affair, for all its horrors, forced ordinary people to take a moral stand, and for all those in America who shrugged their shoulders and said, "Everyone does it — he was caught," there were thousands and thousands more who expressed genuine outrage. Watergate forced the legislative branch of government, which in recent years had seemed to be pathetically powerless, to rally the moral energy to see the crisis through, and to prove in the end that our system of government, with its focus on the power of law rather than the arbitrary power of any man, could withstand such an enormous jolt.

In the present economic slump I have seen instances of men choosing to work less hours in order to save the job of a co-worker.

The economic decline of the West is the kind of crisis that will break down some of the arrogance that has built up in our society. The presumption that we can and ought to manipulate the world will have to go if we do not have the power to do it. Out of necessity, there will be a renewed interest in the more creative facets of our being. The concept of infinite growth will have run its course — from being an ideal to an evil to an impossibility. When an idea cannot support itself, its strength must dissipate.

Perhaps I am no less naive than the Utopians in believing that the more human and humane traits have a certain permanence and that they will rise up whenever they have the opportunity; they have been suppressed in this period by the sheer

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momentum of the movement toward "more." Whether technology took over and proceeded on its own momentum or whether man was so fascinated with his manipulative powers (much like a gluttonous child) that he could not stop, I do not know. But the momentum was there — no question of that. Now it has slowed down and we can look toward the emergence of a greater appreciation of human values.

I am aware I have oversimplified in citing examples of noble responses to crisis. These crises are much too complicated to produce only one kind of behavior. I only wish to illustrate my belief that we are still capable of responding, that even the awesome technology has not snuffed out our human capacities; but we need a jolt, which I suggest is more likely to occur in crisis than in contemplation.

These thoughts have come forth in response to the challenge of conceiving a future society that

would be to my liking. My whole way of thinking, my attitude, my hopes and dreams preclude my doing that. I'm afraid I am enslaved to the present; I want very much to perceive it with some accuracy and to act in it with some intelligence, and in some small way, to keep alive in myself and in society, the values that I believe ought to survive.

Starting from that point of view I believe the previews of energy shortage and economic decline we recently experienced already have caused people in all parts of our society to begin to change their ways of thinking. The crises that have now presented themselves have crystallized the problems of the "infinite growth ethic" the way no warnings ever could.

**Sondra Myers** is a free lance writer, active in community affairs, who has studied philosophy and history at Oxford.

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