

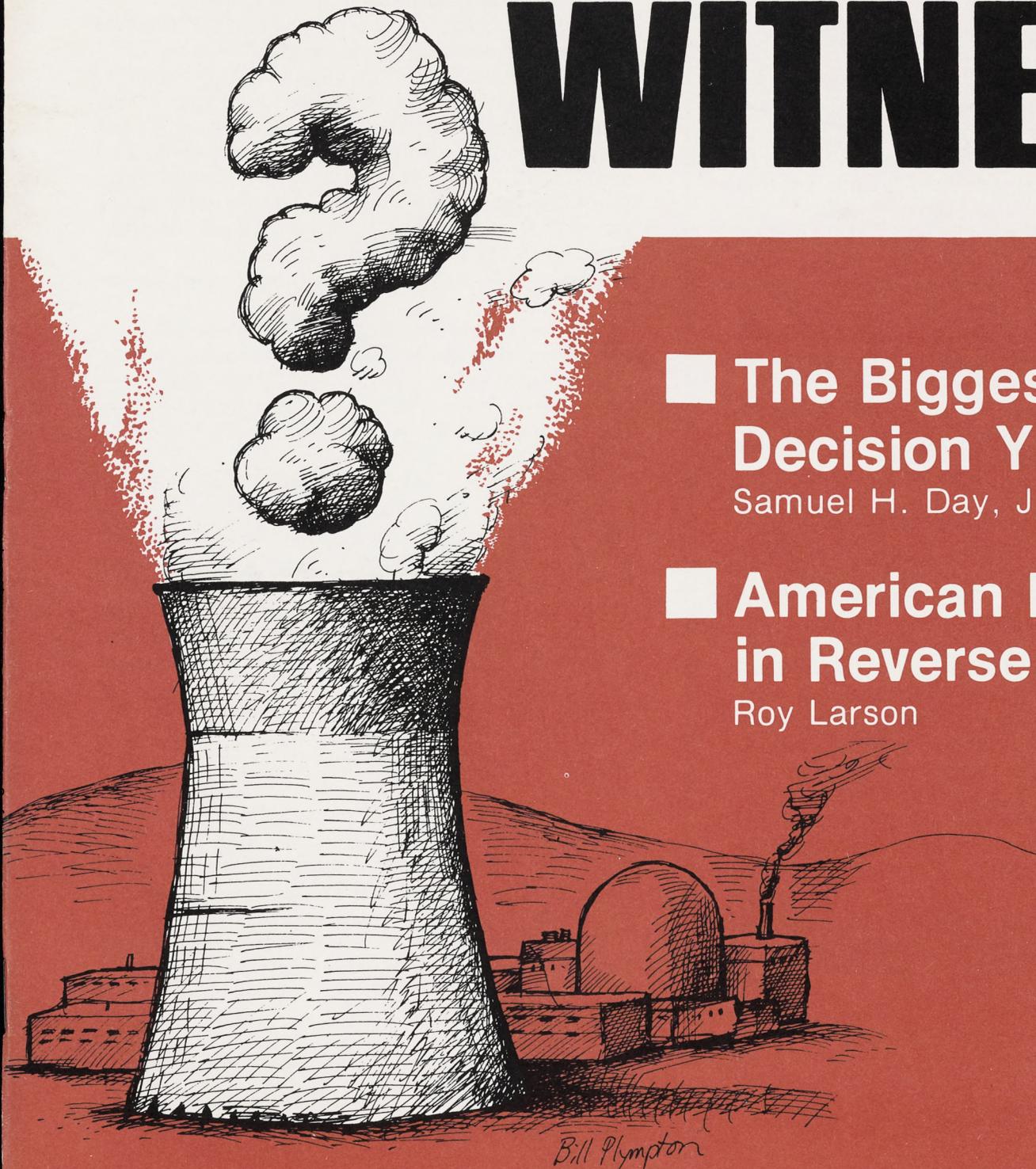
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July, 1976  
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# THE WITNESS

■ The Biggest  
Decision Yet  
Samuel H. Day, Jr.

■ American Religion  
in Reverse Gear  
Roy Larson



Bill Plympton

# Letters to the Editor

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

## We Try to Inform—Not Hurt

You have lost the respect many have had for THE WITNESS by publishing in the February issue, Cromey's "Sex and the Unmarried."

This is an offensive, repulsive, and destructive article—the young and the old are hurt by this type of journalism. You have insulted the intelligence of Church people and have harmed the Church irreparably.

What is good and healthy about sexual intercourse between consenting unmarried people, or between consenting persons of the same sex, or masturbation as a way for persons to give pleasure to themselves?

Situation ethics is an affront to the Church.

With Sadness, **Robert Lambert**, Jacksonville, Florida

## Thanks, We Needed That

May I commend THE WITNESS for its excellent February issue, especially the articles dealing with human sexuality.

Religion is not an option for human beings, nor is our sexuality. Yet the sad and difficult truth is the traditional expressions of Biblical teaching in regard to human sexuality are proving to be inadequate for the human needs of today's world.

What is needed today is a model of responsible and joyful sexuality that celebrates our common humanity and our creation in the image of God.

Throughout the world is a movement of people who are helping make themselves more human, more free and more responsible for their destinies. The world demands religious institutions that help make these things happen and which place human dignity and freedom of lifestyle high in their gospel of good news.

**Robert W. Renouf**, President, Human Relations Institute, Tustin, California

## A Blessing on Both Your Houses

A saintly Bishop constantly confronts Christians with the hypocrisy of living life-as-usual in a world of oppression and suffering. A saintly Rector, a devoted high churchman, concentrates on teaching and transmitting the Faith in all its richness. Thank God for both of them.

The Society for the Preservation of the Book of Common Prayer fights to save that wonderful treasure-house from oblivion and this lay reader, says -- "right on" -- and save the King James translation too! Our liturgical reformers offer the Word in today's tongue -- and this parent and evangelist, well aware that children and non-Christians must comprehend fluently at the threshold, says "right-on". Thank God for both. And Almighty God forbid that the new or old be suppressed by any silly, tidy mind in any diocese or parish!

The Philadelphia prophets, doing what God calls prophets to do, ordained women priests. The conservatives, doing just what God calls them to do, resist. Thank God for both! And grant us a solution in which local option is the watchword.

Threats of schism are made. Some social gossellers say the "Establishment Church" is a mere husk out of which the butterfly of their new, purified sect will emerge. Some conservatives scratch the Church out of their wills if their One True God of 'Free Enterprise' is breathed against. Some Anglo-Catholics so confound "catholicism" with their own views as to contend the Church in Canada is in schism!

Heavens above, didn't Henry VIII or "Barchester Towers" teach us anything? That we are *imperfect* members of Christ's body. That some feel called to run, some to sleep, some to scratch -- and maybe *all* are hearing the Spirit's call as best we can. That we can live with diversity. That "Fathers" and "Misters" didn't have to purge each other. The patron saint of our parish said it best in I. Corinthians 12.

Our Anglican *genius* is broad churchmanship. Surely, it's to be our great gift to a reunited Oecumene. Let us rediscover broad churchmanship in loving and obedient reconciliation now.

**Alec Kyle**, St. Paul's Church, Doylestown, Penna.

# THE WITNESS

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bler, 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

# Do Not Bring Us to the Test

Robert L. DeWitt

What will result from the General Convention? What do we hope it will accomplish? Most people see it as an ordeal for the church, a trial. Trial by ordeal. Perhaps that is right. The sharp focusing of political pressures on issues such as the election of a new president for the House of Deputies, the question of the ordination of women, prayer book revision—these will be ordeals, and they will in fact be a trial of the church. And full credit is due those who by virtue of their office, or of concern, invest a great deal of energy and concern in these political processes, hoping that the issues will be resolved as well as may be. It is necessary work, and it must be done.

But there is another dimension, a dimension both of time, and of truth. Seen in this dimension, the convention will be not so much an occasion where the church will accomplish something, as reveal what it has accomplished. It will be not so much an accomplishment as a revealing. Not so much an achievement as an indicator.

Ordeals do not so much make or break individuals, or organizations, as reveal clearly what they are. They are a moment of truth. The truth is made clear. Stepping on the scales is a useful action, but it does not change one's weight. At convention, the church is revealing its spiritual weight.

This year of Presidential election provides a useful parallel. The deals, compromises and buttonholing, traditional to the nominating process, are the ingredients which result in producing a candidate

from a national convention. It is a necessary process which results in an inevitable result—that the country gets the kind of candidates it deserves. And the same can be said of the one who finally is elected President—he and the country deserve each other.

This line of thought leads to a conclusion which is not new, but important. It is the importance of doing homework, as over against the examination. As Arthur Koestler has one of his characters say: "Every night is the last judgment".

The General Convention will be a testing of the quality of last Sunday's sermon, of last month's vestry meeting, of last year's diocesan convention, of the last interim meeting of the House of Bishops, of the meetings of Executive Council, of the Presiding Bishop's decisions and indecisions. The Convention is not the Last Judgment, but it is a judgment.

And the prospect is not bright. The Church is not expecting a high grade on this test, rather, it is hoping, desperately, forlornly, that it can somehow manage to pass. At least that is what most people hope, and what some expect.

But what does God say to a church which prays it can survive a convention? "I am not interested in issues you have chosen, and called Mine. I have made it clear what My priorities are. If you have not heard and heeded the prophets, you have not heard and heeded Me. If you have not heard and heeded My Son, you have disregarded Me. I have made it clear that I love this world of Mine, and the people in it. That is My enterprise, What is yours?"

# The Biggest Decision Yet

by Samuel H. Day, Jr.

Take an ordinary grocery sack and fill it with plutonium or enriched uranium. Depending on how you use it, this fuel could heat and light a great city for a full year—or destroy it in an instant.

That is the fundamental paradox of nuclear power.

That is the essence of an issue of costs versus benefits which presents humanity with perhaps the most important question it has ever had to face.

And that is the crux of a dilemma which at long last has begun to compel the attention of the public. It is not a moment too soon.

No one ever doubted the destructive capabilities of nuclear energy, which was unleashed by mankind in the atomic bomb which leveled Hiroshima at the end of World War II. Nor does anyone challenge the capability of nuclear fission of delivering vast amounts of useful energy at relatively economic rates. What makes the issue so fundamental today is the dawning public realization—30 years after the threshold was crossed—that there is an inherent and inescapable connection between those two facets of the atom.

The driving forces of the commercial nuclear power program are political and economic, having their roots in the atomic diplomacy of the early cold war period. The technology for the industry evolved out of military research and development. The reactors in current use in the United States are patterned on the power plants built for the Navy's nuclear submarines. The fuel to run them comes from the huge uranium enrichment plants which were built in the 1940s and early 1950s to supply fissile material for the nation's vast stockpile of atomic warheads.

It was largely to justify its immense investment in nuclear weapons development that the Atomic Energy Commission encouraged the initially

*Samuel H. Day, Jr. is editor of the Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists.*

reluctant electrical power industry to invest in nuclear energy. In this it had the enthusiastic support of nuclear scientists and technicians, and the public itself, who welcomed "atoms for peace" as an alternative and antidote to atoms for war. The first commercial nuclear power went on the line at Shippingport, PA, in 1954.

Under the tutelage and patronage of the AEC, which paid for the research and development, took care of the heavy costs of fuel enrichment and fabrication, and arranged for other far-reaching subsidies, including insurance liability, the nation's utilities gradually began taking the plunge. In the process, a constituency for nuclear power was born in such giants of American industry as General Electric and Westinghouse, which manufacture the reactors.

By the mid-1960s the nation's deepening commitment to commercial nuclear power was approaching the point of irrevocability, and other industrialized nations were beginning to follow suit. The steady drift turned into a stampede in 1973 when the OPEC nations quadrupled the price of oil. The number of commercial reactors in the world increased from 24 in 1960 to 98 in 1970 to 219 in 1975. With larger and larger reactors being developed, the total installed capacity of those units increased almost a hundredfold.

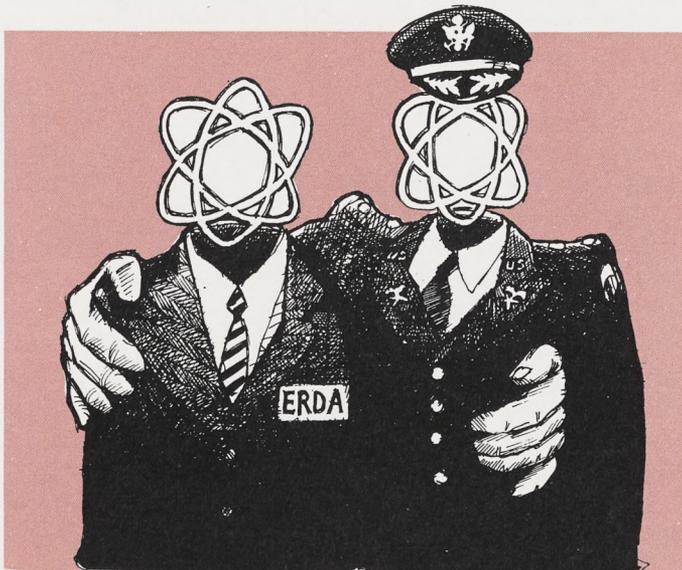
The first signs of trouble for the industry and its allies in government occurred in the 1960s in the form of public concerns over pollution. Here and there, people worried about pollution of lakes, streams and the atmosphere by the vast amounts of waste heat generated by nuclear power plants. The AEC attempted to assuage those fears by making the industry build cooling towers. Others worried about the cancerous and genetic effects of the low-level radioactivity discharged by the plants in the normal course of operations. The AEC took the edge off such complaints by tightening the emission standards. Still others raised questions about disposal of the high-level radioactive wastes, some of which remain toxic for literally hundreds of thousands of years. The AEC promised to search more diligently for a permanent repository for the wastes.

It wasn't until the early 1970s, when nuclear power began its present upsurge in growth, that opposition coalesced around an issue for which the AEC had no ready answer. This was the question of catastrophic accidents in nuclear power plants.

The seeds of doubt had been sown by the AEC's own scientists, whose studies in the 1950s and 1960s had indicated that failure of a reactor's "emergency core cooling system" could lead to a melt-down of the reactor's super-heated fuel supply, a chemical explosion and the release of vast quantities of debris which could bring radioactive death to tens of thousands of people.

The efforts of a small group calling itself the Union of Concerned Scientists, armed with the AEC's own reports and documents, produced at a series of hearings in 1972-73 the reluctant admission by the AEC that it had no real assurance that the emergency core cooling system would work. Field tests which were supposed to demonstrate the workability of the system had been allowed to fall behind schedule even as bigger and more volatile reactors were coming on the line.

Eventually, by the fall of 1974, the AEC did produce an answer to the safety question. It came in the form of a \$3-million study which minimized the consequences of a melt-down accident and said the probability of catastrophe was exceed-



Bill Plympton

ingly remote. But by then the damage had been done. The credibility of the nuclear establishment had become the main issue.

Questions about the vulnerability of nuclear power plants to major accidents led inevitably to questions about their vulnerability to acts of sabotage. Even if the probability of a catastrophic accident was remote (a point still much in dispute), there was no way of computing the odds against deliberate mischief. Or of protecting society against such acts except through police state methods.

Such questions have led to profound misgivings about the adaptability of nuclear fuels—plutonium and enriched uranium—to military and other hostile purposes. India's detonation of a nuclear device in May of 1974, done with plutonium sneaked out of a Canadian-built research reactor, was a reminder of the peaceful-military interchangeability of nuclear fuel. With nuclear technology proliferating around the world at an extraordinary rate, the energy-hungry nations were steadily acquiring the capacity of mutual annihilation.

Despite these misgivings, the nuclearization of the world's electrical energy system has proceeded with a steadily increasing momentum, especially among the industrialized nations, slowed only by the current recession and the industry's spiraling capital costs. About eight per cent of all electrical power in the United States is now produced by nuclear fission. Current projections call for this ratio to increase to about 50 per cent by the end of the century. Other nations—Japan and Western Europe in particular—are planning even more ambitiously.

Efforts to halt this trend are mounting. A major test will come in the California primary on June 8 in the form of a proposed "nuclear safeguards initiative" which would require the industry to prove its safety beyond doubt if it is to continue growing in California. Industry has responded by mounting a multi-million-dollar public relations campaign which points to the diminishing supplies of fossil fuels and equates the continued growth of nuclear power with the struggle for national "energy independence."

As the public concerns mount, the nuclear establishment is quite literally battling for its life. And for a way of life.

# A Reply to Sam Day

by Sheila Collins

Sam Day has written a concise but important piece. In order to understand the present drive for nuclear power in the nature of the conflicts which now surround its development, an historical perspective is crucial. The connections between the impetus for nuclear power and the bomb are not incidental. Hannes Alfvén, formerly of Sweden's Atomic Energy Commission and now a nuclear critic, has referred to them as "Siamese twins" linked together in a symbiosis of frightening proportions. It is important to weigh both the symbolic and the actual power that this connection confers on governments and corporations which own the access to nuclear technology. By its very nature—the vast danger it poses as well as the great concentration and wealth which are preconditions for its development—nuclear power can only be owned and controlled by governments or major corporations. It is, therefore, not amenable to small scale, decentralized, democratically-controlled forms of ownership and production.

If we continue to pursue nuclear energy to the point where 50 percent of our energy needs are met through this source, we will have virtually guaranteed ourselves not only a system of state capitalism but a hierarchical, repressive, authoritarian political order—to protect its functioning.

We can already see evidence of this tread in the secrecy and deception with which the AEC has operated over the last decade and in the cozy relationship between the new Energy Research and Development Administration, the energy industry and the military establishment. An example of the relationship between commercial energy and military needs is seen in the job description of R. Glenn Bradley, recently appointed Deputy Director of Production, Fuel Cycle and Waste Management at ERDA. An ERDA news release states: "Bradley will be

*Sheila Collins is editor of Grapevine, a publication of the Joint Strategy and Action Committee, Inc.*

responsible for production of nuclear weapons material and research, development and demonstration programs for reprocessing and recycling commercial reactor fuels, and treatment, storage and disposal of commercial radioactive wastes." Is a man who is responsible for the production of nuclear weapons the kind we want in charge of handling radioactive wastes?

Under the assumption of a continuing upward spiral in energy needs (itself a concomitant of an economic system based on private ownership of the means of production), government and industry are moving into a fond embrace. Eventually there will be no difference between them. We can see this happening already in the Energy Research and Development Administration. In a speech delivered to the New York Security Analysts in February, Robert W. Fri, Deputy Administrator of ERDA, outlined the relationship which will be needed if government is to guarantee us an energy-rich future.

"So to deal with these uncertainties (financial risks) industry must be prepared to take Government on as a risk partner, just as we must learn to deal with industry as a sharer of risk. We have to make changes. For example, we must be prepared to do without regulations (where we can) that tend to drive returns down in the energy industry. Sharing risks, after all, is not the same thing as buying a product, and it should therefore require less Government involvement and interference in the business of private industry. So, as to our overall estimate of the future of nuclear power," he concludes, "we think the nuclear power industry will survive and prosper and make an invaluable contribution to this nation's future."

Whose future, we must ask, will be benefited through this development: The poor—who have never benefited from capital and energy-intensive technology? Women—whose needs are not for more energy wasteful, labor saving devices but for equal rights, dignity, justice? The unemployed—whose jobs were lost when they were replaced with energy-intensive technology?

The specter of a nuclear future forces us to a critical examination of the entire structure of productive activity and to the values which have shaped life in a capitalist society.

# ENERGY AND NUCLEAR POLICY STATEMENT

A Statement of the Friends Committee on National Legislation  
Approved at the Annual Meeting, Washington, D.C., January 25, 1976

*Friends' historic testimonies on simplicity have stressed that the quality of life does not depend on material possessions or conspicuous consumption. Waste and extravagance have been opposed because they squander natural resources which should be devoted to helping create a fuller life for present and future generations.*

*The world's energy problem is a crucial aspect of the struggle for human survival and welfare on a planet of limited resources. Energy policy formation should be global, not determined primarily by nationalistic, military, or corporate interests. The choices are basically moral: what long-term risks are justified—risks of damage to the environment, or radiation damage to health, and of limitation of the life-chances of future generations? There should be open discussion of all alternatives, both at the United Nations and between citizens and the decision-makers of their respective nations.*

## Conservation

We give high priority to conservation as a significant way to help meet urgent needs of peoples throughout the world. Conserving energy can be accomplished in many ways, including: decentralizing energy systems, thus permitting fuller utilization of energy; using renewable sources including solar; setting more stringent standards for insulation; developing new building techniques to cut energy requirements further; total energy planning for communities, industrial plants, office buildings, and major public facilities; developing mass transportation and carpooling; and developing more efficient types of engines.

## Renewable Energy Resources

The development of the use of fuels other than nuclear, particularly from non-fossil fuel sources, will do the most to conserve our environment. Solar energy can be of use as a primary source for heating, air-conditioning, and generating electricity. Secondary sources of solar energy include wind energy, hydro, ocean temperature difference, organic waste conversion, and other organic energy sources. All of the above plus tidal and geothermal require increased research and funding.

Food production consumes a large share of the energy budgets of many nations. It is important to step up research on programs which aim to increase the amount of food produced from given amounts of energy expended.

## Non-Renewable Energy Resources

Non-renewable energy sources—oil, gas, and coal—while important in the short term, should in the long run be conserved and reserved for essential uses other than the production of energy.

To meet the needs of nations which are not now equipped to develop alternative sources of energy for civilian use, we advocate the establishment of a world energy conservation and development fund, with strong leadership from all areas of the world.

## Fission Power

*(See Note at end)*

We believe that U.S. reliance on fission nuclear power to fill the energy needs of an economy characterized by extravagance and waste needlessly mortgages the peace, welfare, and

freedom of future generations.

The threat to peace results from the possible diversion of fission fuel materials for nuclear or chemical warfare or terrorist activity.

The threat to welfare results from the risk of catastrophic reactor accidents, from health damage due to low-level radioactive emissions associated with reactors, fuel-processing plants, and waste storage, from the radioactive poisoning of the biosphere, and from environmental damage.

The threat to freedom results from the extreme amount of security required to prevent sabotage and diversion, especially at reactor power plants, fuel treatment plants, and in transporting material between them.

## Plutonium

We regard with the greatest apprehension the increased production and use of plutonium, which is the fuel envisioned for nuclear power generating plants in the future when the present limited supply of uranium ore becomes short.

Plutonium is one of the most toxic substances known, has a half life of 24,000 years, and is, of course, the material from which atomic weapons may be made. The utilization of plutonium bombs by increasing numbers of nations or terrorist groups becomes easier.

The task of security policing becomes formidable for untold generations.

We believe that any planning for electrical power generation using plutonium is misguided. The key issues are not technical or economic but social and ethical.

## Nuclear Radioactive Waste

Storage of radioactive wastes for thou-

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sands of years is so far an unsolved problem. At present, about 100 million gallons of high-level radioactive waste, half liquid, half solid, are stored in the United States. At Hanford in the state of Washington some half million gallons have leaked into the soil as the result of corrosion of the containers, resulting in permanent contamination. Plans for the future call for solidification of all commercial wastes and their shipment to a "Federal Interim Storage Facility." Plans for permanent storage do not exist, since no truly safe depositories have been located. A reliance on nuclear fission power is thus, in Alvin Weinberg's words, a "Faustian bargain," in which the safety, health, and freedom of future generations are traded for ample and cheap power for ourselves.

### Moratorium

A moratorium must be secured on all new construction licenses to build new nuclear power plants; and development of fast breeder reactors and plutonium recycling should be suspended pending further study on the political, technical, economic, health, and moral issues.

### Transition

We recognize the possibility that increased conservation might not suffice during the moratorium period preceding the widespread use of renewable energy sources. Therefore, to the extent that fossil fuels, and especially coal, might be used during this transition period, such use should be closely regulated to minimize environmental impact.

Use of presently operating nuclear plants and of those for which construction licenses have been approved should be phased out over a period of

years, with the substitution of other energy sources, keeping in mind the consideration of environmental effects.

### Nuclear Fusion Power

Controlled nuclear fusion research to date suggests that fusion could call on an unlimited store of low-cost fuel and would reduce or eliminate the problems of waste storage, fuel diversion for military use or terrorism, catastrophic accidents, and severe radioactive contamination. Research should examine the potential genetic and environmental hazards. The funding of such research should not be at the expense of harnessing the benign sources of energy.

### International Atomic Energy Agency

During the period of transition to the elimination of nuclear weapons and the generation of nuclear fusion power, the authority of the International Atomic Energy Agency should be expanded to regulate adequately the transfer and use of highly enriched uranium. We strongly urge U.S. leadership in the negotiation of greatly increased authority for the International Atomic Energy Agency with full participation of all regions of the world.

### Decentralization

The widespread use of decentralized energy systems, based on renewable energy sources at a community level, would save energy and capital outlay, reduce pollution, and enhance the

freedom and self-reliance of those using it. Tax incentives should be developed to encourage this.

Decentralization would also counteract the increasing concentration of economic and political power in a few giant energy corporations. Decentralization would encourage essentially grass roots efforts involving individual and community action and small businesses, thus giving many people the opportunity to do something effective to help solve the world energy problem.

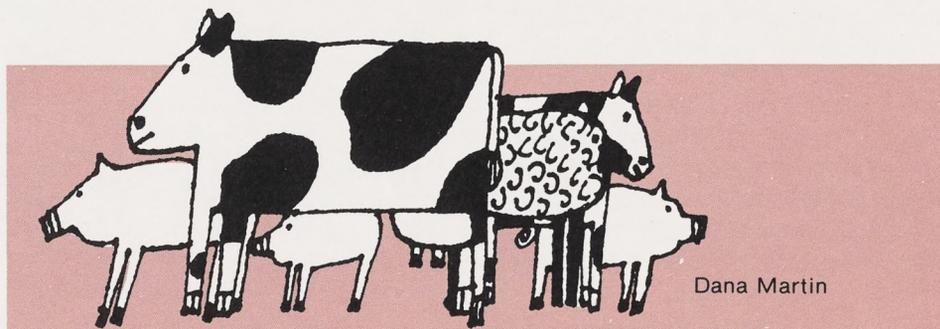
### In conclusion . . .

. . . the United States should seek solutions for the energy problem through conservation, development of renewable energy sources, decentralization of power systems, and consideration of global energy needs. Production of power by nuclear fission involves unacceptable risks. International control of nuclear energy should be strengthened and attention should be focussed on steps toward nuclear and conventional disarmament.

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*NOTE: Fission energy comes from separating a heavy nucleus into two fragments with the release of energy. Fusion energy results when two light nuclei combine to form a single nucleus. Fission is the source of the atomic bombs, and fusion is the principal element in hydrogen bombs.*

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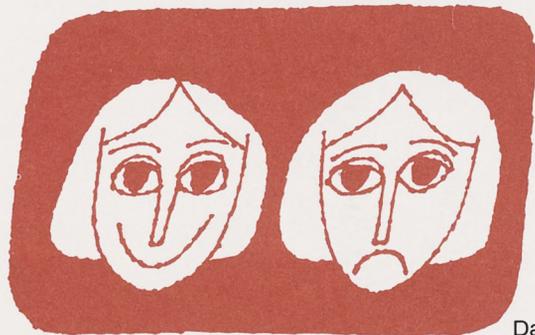
Dana Martin

# Christianity A Subculture?

by Paul Van Buren

As disenchantment with the American myth spreads, the more possible it becomes to think of Christianity not as a cultural support of the Establishment, but as a counter-culture. The increasingly convincing evidence that we the people have been lied to and are still being lied to by our highest officials is not at first sight a matter of theological import. Yet I believe it is or may be a help in loosening the stranglehold which the values, standards and canons of our civilization have had upon Christians, especially in this country. The rise of an increasingly interesting Marxist-Christian dialogue is evidently a piece of this. So too is the challenge of fellow Christians from the Third World, especially from Latin America, pressing to see whether there are any Christians in North America who will side with them against governments supported by the interests that control our government and determine its policy. All of this makes for a situation which invites new thinking, which opens a window on a new view of Christian faith and the Christian's role in a society such as ours. Twenty-five years ago such matters were called "non-theological factors" in the ecumenical movement. That we are no longer so sure that they are non-theological is a sign that theology is beginning to stir and is far from dead.

*Paul M. van Buren has recently resigned the Chairmanship of the Religion Department of Temple University in order to spend a year writing on Jewish-Christian theology.*



Dana Martin

# American Religion in Reverse Gear

by Roy Larson

Since 1970 I have been reporting at regular intervals in this column the growth of neotraditionalism in American religion.

That trend, which followed on the heels of the death-of-God movement, the now-obsolete Now Generation's obsession with novelty and spontaneity, and the frenetic casting about of the hyperactivists, is far from spent.

Nevertheless, while chronicling the resurgence of neotraditionalism, I have kept in the back of my mind the suspicion that much of the present rage for tradition is as faddish as the voguish tendencies it is reacting against. In a society still not that far removed from the frontier, traditionalists often get undeserved credit for depth. In obedience to these undocumented hunches, I have continued to assume that the basic, long-range drift of American culture is in the direction of an expanding secularism.

These thoughts surfaced again the other day during a long lunch with a former Roman Catholic priest, a part of the church's "brain drain" during the 1960s. For personal reasons, he preferred to remain anonymous.

More than 10 years have elapsed since he left the priesthood and the church. Unlike many ex-priests, he has no desire to remain active in the church as a layman.

"Staying within organized Christianity," he said, "is by no means the only thing to do. It is by no means always the courageous thing to do. Staying within might be cowardice, capitulation, entrapment. It might entail the death or stunting of whatever was valid in the Christian ethos."

Although he is by choice an outsider now, he remembers with appreciation the gifts he received from his Christian heritage, especially the art, the music, the architecture. "I have a healthy respect," he told me, "for the ecumenical tradition of the church." In a

*Re-printed by permission of the Chicago Sun-Times, where Roy Larson serves as Religion Editor.*

historical sense, he is a Christian; in an existential sense, he is not.

That means, among other things, he no longer participates in the liturgical life of the church. For him, the liturgies are more like costume dramas than real events. Attempts to inject new life into old liturgies leave him untouched. "Leonard Bernstein's 'Mass'," he said, "is terrific show biz, but it's concert music, not liturgical music."

Behind his feelings about the liturgy are his convictions about theology. Parts of the church's traditional theology, he believes, are "salvageable" for modern adults, but he is convinced many of the questions raised by the death-of-God theologians were brushed aside before being adequately dealt with.

In his judgment, neotraditionalists like those who recently issued the "Hartford Appeal for Theological Affirmation" are engaged in a fruitless effort to keep alive by artificial means a tradition that is played out. "What they're doing," he said, "is pumping air into a tire that has holes in it."

After our conversation, my companion wrote me a letter and sent me some of his essays. In his letter he went a step further in his denunciation of theology: "To try to justify theology at all is a regressive and possibly a pathological trend. Let the dead bury the dead." It is disorienting, he contends, for modern persons to look at reality through a theological filter.

Like many students of contemporary culture, the former priest believes we are living in a transitional time, "a time between the times." Old ways of understanding life no longer make sense; new ways have not yet come into being. "It's like being in adolescence," he said. "We can't go back to where we were, but we're not yet able to go forward."

"How do individuals make it in such a period when so many of the props have been removed?", I asked him.

"It's not easy," he replied. "We have a sense of isolation. We are left without a community. But instead of turning for help to a false community or to dead symbols, we need to look to other people for support, wait for legitimate new symbols to emerge, and struggle to find a language that clarifies rather than distorts the data that come from our senses."

Terms like "theist" and "atheist" have little meaning for him. What is important is the word "religion."

"Religion," he stated, "is the bond between men. Now we need to be putting something together again, a human community, on a new basis. For me the basis for this is not theological fantasies but humane socialism."

Out of this community, he thinks, a new vision of God may emerge:

"This god will not stand in infinite opposition to man. Rather he will be not unlike the earthy gods of earthier peoples than we have been, a deity of joy and laughter, of Dionysian creativity, of wine and song and lovemaking, of friendship and of the holiness of solitude and stillness.

"In short he will be a god who truly symbolizes the vitality of life and experienced love and is germane to the lively ethos of his people. Such a musical deity is beyond what we have known in theism or atheism. The new epiphany may be a surprise. For it will be the manifestation of a long suppressed community elan, surging forth from a consciousness in which we are bound together in mutual care and love."

## You Had Better be Worried

Many groups and individuals concerned with civil liberties are working to defeat a bill in the senate known as "Senate 1". A full copy (750 pages in length) of the bill contains in it a serious threat to our rights under the First Amendment of the Constitution.

The comprehensiveness of the bill and the vagueness of its language in themselves should alert us to potential dangers. For example, the bill would legalize the government's practice of keeping secrets, would re-enact laws which permit wiretapping without a court order, would re-enact the Smith Act in a manner which would allow the government to imprison people for merely talking about revolution, would severely limit the freedom of the press, and would protect federal officials from criminal penalties for any illegal act "required or authorized in performance of their duties..."

If this bothers you, write your senators.

## A New Executive Council Position?

by Mark Harris

A note on representation:

For a short while last fall it appeared that the Executive Council might decide to fund a position on national staff titled "organizational liaison officer." Such an officer, among other things, would represent our interest to, and inform us about, legislative bodies which most directly affect the way in which long-term issues of world and domestic hunger are dealt with or resolved. That position was not funded.

To the credit of the national church and its leadership, and because the church has come to see issues of hunger as long-term in character, the Executive Council has funded a position of hunger coordinator. The person who fills this post can be invaluable to us all in relating to us the full extent of complexities in both facts and values that hunger issues raise up. We can hope that coordination of our efforts to work on issues of hunger will lead to a better formed, more cohesive, plan of action for the whole church.

It seems appropriate, however, to suggest that the possibility of an organizational liaison officer be re-introduced with a broader area of responsibilities. The national church ought to fund such an officer so that our church might better be represented to, and be informed about, the whole range of issues where national and international policy formation and action relate to Christian concerns for justice, peace, and human rights.

Such an officer ought to be representative in a diplomatic sense—carrying concerns and representing interests of our community in alien territory, and representative of a constituency (perhaps in even an elective way) in parallel fashion to the way that legislators have constituency and authority base.

In a time of money troubles it might seem strange to suggest yet another staff position on a national level. Nevertheless, such a suggestion seems necessary. Public policy affects the ways

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in which our faith has relevance in the world. Unless we seek ways of consistently and concretely communicating our concerns as a faithful community in the arena of decision-making bodies, our concerns will go unheard.

## Black on Black

by Robert L. Dewitt

It occurred last December at the Fifth General Assembly of the World Council of Churches in Nairobi...

I was early at the luncheon line, to avoid the later rush. I had an early afternoon meeting. I took my tray to one of the many tented picnic tables. No one was seated yet at the table. I mused at my lack of social assurance, a lack which deflected me from the few tables where some were already seated. There I would have found conversation to go with the lunch, conversation I would have relished. Just then a young Black woman came to the table and asked if she might join me. She was a Black from Ghana, and exhibited a social poise which I, as a white, had failed to learn in the United States. She was serving, I learned, as a French-English interpreter for the Assembly.

As we passed a few minutes in casual conversation, a Kenyan steward serving our section of tables came up to me and asked if I would care for some fruit cup for dessert. I said yes, and he turned to go. The Ghanaian woman stopped him with an abrupt inquiry: "Why did you not ask me?" He was confused by her question. She repeated it: "Why did you ask him if he wanted some fruit cup, and did not ask if I did?" He was no longer confused by the question. Now, he was embarrassed. He stammered an apology, and said he would also bring her some. Still poised, she said: "You are excused."

The moral needed pointing, for me. "Why", I inquired, "Did he not ask you? Because you are a woman?" Patiently she explained, "No. Because I am Black." "In Ghana, she continued, "we have been trying hard to overcome the effects of colonialism. We are very conscious of the tendency of Blacks to defer to whites. It is a conditioning from our past. Consequently we try to be sensitive to it, and to identify it wherever it occurs."

The Episcopal Church Publishing Company  
P.O. Box 359  
Ambler, Pennsylvania 19002  
Address Correction Requested

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