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# THE WITNESS

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## On Living Biblically Now

William Stringfellow



## Beebe Case: Clue to the Future?

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## Toward Building the Cities

Paul Moore



# Letters to the Editor

*The Witness reserves the right to condense all letters*

## All Not Called

The ad sample on page 13 of THE WITNESS (June 1976, "There are women priests in the Episcopal Church now") says "Right now over 250 women are enrolled in seminaries of our Church. When they graduate they will be ordered deacons in accordance with the ruling of the Houston General Convention. Nothing should stand in the way of their being priested canonically..."

It would be more accurate to say "many will be ordered deacons..." or "most will..." if you know it to be true. Some women seminarians do not have vocations to the ordained ministry. Please change this in future copies.

**Rev. Kathy Piccard** — Cambridge, Massachusetts

## Who's Missing a Witness?

Providentially, the June WITNESS fell into the wrong postbox and into my hands, shortly before a Sunday when I was inhibited from getting to church. There being no sermon on the radio or TV, I decided to make THE WITNESS my preacher and ended up with a sermon of my own:

The issue of editorial censorship of proffered advertisements ("Church Press—Free or Captive?") will plague editors for many years. When Good Housekeeping announced it vouched for every article advertised, and for a time at least offered to refund shoddy purchases, every magazine became judged by its ads.

So, though it is accepted that newspapers will print all the political campaign ads proffered, church and other "high class" magazines are expected either publicly to announce an equal time policy or to stand back of their advertisers. Most church papers have been specific about printing letters without necessarily agreeing with their content, but make no reference to paid advertising.

I have seen some horrible little ads in church papers (God knows they needed the money) and THE WITNESS doesn't print ads. But for the sake of The Episcopalian, which is vitally needed by the church, it should print either a Good Housekeeping or caveat emptor statement. The Episcopalian editor should have printed the ad as a letter. That would have gotten him off the hook and he wouldn't be damned for censorship.

**Rev. Edric Weld** — Santa Barbara, California

## We See Only God's Back

I read Paul Van Buren's proposal (June 1976) with complete dismay. While I applaud any effort to help Christians overcome their persecution of Jews and of Jews to better understand how and what Christians think, for Prof. Van Buren to start out on such a diversionary effort which may well take two generations and longer before it reaches local congregations is a waste of time.

The real problem is not peace among Jews and Christians but who is God in our day? How do we talk God language now? Because the death of God people could not come up with a new God does not mean there is no need.

We are not out on the Negev. We are in a lot worse place: The world of the 21st century. If there must be a biblical story it surely is that of Moses in the cleft of the rock when God went by. He saw only God's back.

The problem for us—theologians included—is to discern God's presence, make it visible and viable in the signs and symbols of our time and follow where it leads.

**John Clark** — Poughkeepsie, New York

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**Credits:** Cartoon on page 7 from poster by Pèg Michel, available from Unitarian Universalist Women's Federation, 25 Beacon St., Boston, Mass. 02108, \$1.50. Cartoon on page 5 courtesy Centro Nacional de Comunion Social (CENCOS), Mexico City.



# THE WITNESS

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## Endangered Species

Robert L. DeWitt

A few years ago a prominent Black leader, in a conversation, made some comments about ecology. It was a term just then coming into popular usage. Said he, "Ecology? Oh, yes, I know all about that. You know, they tell me that the trout in the streams this spring are a quarter of an inch shorter than they were last year. Isn't that a tragedy!" His cynicism was evident. To him, ecology was the latest in a long series of devices whereby white liberals were enabled to busy themselves about something other than the fundamental questions and crises of our social order.

Ecology has since come of age. The issues it raises are not superficial. Pollution of our rivers, contamination of the ozone layer, and threats to the earth's temperature are aspects of life which we will neglect at our certain peril. Rachel Carson's "The Silent Spring" could indeed be the silent prelude to the death of life on this earth.

But there is often a curious myopia in this focus on threats to the other creatures who share this earth with us—the whales and porpoises, for example. People, too, live under the shadow of grave threats to their existence. The chemical and thermal pollution of our waters which poisons the fish are the work of an industrialized system within which millions of men and women are now unemployed. The mindless mechanization of modern production which scars the earth in its press for unlimited growth is marring the lives of people, leaving them hungry, resentful and powerless.

Back to that Black leader. Was he not correct in sensing that there is a real touch of the effete in a great deal of ecological concern? Are not the basic environmental threats in danger of being ignored by an "ecological chic" which can too easily become both trivial and sacrilegious? The Bible is clear that humankind is the crown of God's creation. From the Christian standpoint, ecology should focus on the crown as much as on its setting. It is not people, made in the image of God, who are a threat to the rest of God's creation. They, too, are threatened. Rather, it is the economic and political structures which have come into being that are endangering not only the lesser creatures of this earth, but also threatening people themselves.

A sound ecology should concern itself over mankind's own social and economic and political environment. The rest of creation would be a direct beneficiary of that concern. It is a sign of the poverty of our understanding of the social and economic order that people of good will, in their concern for creation, can ignore the misery of human beings and deny their grandeur.



# On Living Biblically Now

by William Stringfellow

I spend most of my life now with the Bible, reading or, more precisely, listening. My mundane involvements, ostensibly distinguished from this vocation—like practicing some law, being attentive to the news of the moment, lecturing about the country, free lance pastoral counseling, writing, activity in church politics, maintaining my medical regimen or doing chores around the premises on Block Island—more and more readily become incorporated into this main preoccupation so that I cannot really separate the one from the other any longer.

This merging of more or less everything into a biblical scheme of living spares one an artificial compartmentalization of one's person and a false pietism in living.

The biblical adventure continues, I expect, forever and ever: always familiar and always new, at once complete yet inexhaustible, both provocative and surprising, gratuitous and liberating. Insofar as I am a beneficiary of the biblical witness, the significant change that I am able to identify, so far as my own thinking is concerned, has to do with the abolition of false dichotomies between the personal and the political or between the private and the public.

What verified this to me, in an outstanding sense, was the illness which placed my life in crisis in the period from 1967 through 1969 and which I chronicle in *A Second Birthday*. In the radical endangerment of the illness, protracted as it was, I could recognize that the death which so persistently threatened me, the death so aggressive in my body, the death signified in unremitting pain, the death which took the appearance of sickness—that death was familiar to me. I had elsewhere encountered that same death. (Actually, I had *everywhere* encountered that same death).

The previous decisive exposure, of which I had total recall during the illness, had been a decade or so before while I was working as a lawyer in East Harlem. There I contended in daily practice with death institutionalized in

**William Stringfellow** is a theologian, social critic, author and attorney. This article is the substance of his remarks at a Church and Society Network meeting. They will be incorporated in a book to be published later.

authorities and agencies and bureaucracies and multifarious principalities and powers. I had, slowly, learned from that involvement something which folk indigenous to the ghetto commonly discern; namely, that the power and purpose of death is incarnated in institutions and structures, procedures and regimes—like Consolidated Edison or the Department of Welfare, the Mafia or the police, the Housing Authority or the social work bureaucracy, the hospital system or the banks, liberal philanthropy or the corporate real estate speculators. In the wisdom of the people of the East Harlem neighborhood, such principalities are readily, spontaneously, and truly identified as demonic powers as a result of the relentless, ruthless dehumanization which they work.

## Institutional Death in Harlem

In the years in East Harlem, I become enough enlightened about death institutionally so that death no longer was abstraction and no more was narrowed to its merely funereal connotations. I had begun, then and there, to comprehend death theologically as a militant moral reality. Hence, the grandiose terms in which the Bible denominates the power of death had begun to have a concrete significance for me.

When, subsequently, death visited me in (apparently) a most private and personalized manner, in the debilitations of prolonged illness and the aggressions of pain, I was able to recognize that this represented the same power—the same death—that I had before beheld, in quite another guise, vested in the principalities active on the East Harlem scene. Divergent, or even unconnected, as the two





situations seemed otherwise to be—the one so public and political, the other so private and personal—there was an extraordinary and awful coherence in each situation in the vitality and intent of death. And, thus, the asserted or assumed dichotomy between the public and the personal appearances of death is very superficial. Or it is a deception abetting the thrall of death over human beings.

In later reflection, I would press the point further. I confess that the experience of exposure to death and of coping with death in the ghetto of East Harlem became critical to such capacity as I received to endure and survive—more exactly, to transcend—profound illness.

This virtual abolition in my mind of the distinction between the private and the political realms reveals a secret of the gospel which, I notice, bothers and bemuses very many people of the church, though they seldom may be articulate about it. Most churchfolk in American Christendom, especially those of a white bourgeois rearing, have, for generations, in both Sunday School and sanctuary, been furnished an impression of Jesus as a person who went briefly about teaching love and doing good: gentle Jesus, pure Jesus, meek Jesus, pastoral Jesus, honest Jesus, fragrant Jesus, passive Jesus, peaceful Jesus, healing Jesus, celibate Jesus, clean Jesus, virtuous Jesus, innocuous Jesus.

## Meek Jesus or Political Criminal

Oddly enough, this image of Jesus stands in blatant discrepancy with biblical accounts of the ministry of Jesus where Jesus is known to have been controversial in relation to His family and in synagogue appearances, to have suffered poignantly, to have known complete rejection of intimates no less than enemies, and to have been greeted more often with apprehension than acclaim. More particularly, this notion of an innocuous Jesus contradicts the notorious and turbulent events now marked as Holy Week in which the historical Jesus was pursued as a political criminal by the authorities, put to trial and condemned, mocked and publicly humiliated, executed in the manner customarily reserved for insurrectionists, and, all the while, beheld by his followers with hysteria and consternation.

While the traditional churches have invested so much in the innocuous image of Jesus, they have not been able to suppress and remove from common knowledge the public clamor of Holy Week. This has placed churchpeople in the predicament of having simultaneously two views of Jesus

with little help available as to whether the two are reconcilable.

I recall how uneasy, as a younger person, I used to feel in church when Lent, especially Holy Week, would happen and when, suddenly, it seemed, all that we had been told during the other church seasons about Jesus would be refuted in the recital of gospel accounts. There were these obvious questions which would never be mentioned, much less answered.

Why, if Jesus was so private, so kind, so good, was He treated like a public criminal? Why would the State take any notice of Him, much less crucify Him?

I became aware that others felt this discrepancy, too, and that some met it by steadfastly concentrating on the idea of an innocuous Jesus since that inconvenienced their way of life and made the effort to overlook the contrary evidence of Holy Week and the disquiet it occasioned. Some others, I noticed, opted the other way: they ideologized Jesus, rendering him a mere political agitator. I found both of these attempts deeply unsatisfactory, both being narrow and acculturated versions of Jesus, the one pietistic, the other political.

If the church failed to deal with this remarkable discrepancy, one still might have recourse to the New Testament to ascertain whether the contrasting images of Jesus had basis and, then, to comprehend the issues posed in Holy Week. The secret involved has to do, I learned in the Bible, with the political significance of the works, discreet





though they be, attributed in the gospels to Jesus, and similarly, the implication, politically, of his sayings. Both are cryptic: characteristically Jesus tells a parable, ending the recital with the remark "those who have ears, let them hear." Or, characteristically, He heals someone in some way afflicted in mind or body and then cautions the one healed and those who may have witnessed the happening not to publicize it. It is only when His parables or His works become notorious (the particular precipitant episode being the raising of Lazarus) that the authorities move against Jesus.

Why do the rulers of the world regard Jesus so apprehensively? Why is He an offense—and a threat—to their regime?

## Power Over Death

The emerging answer in the biblical accounts is that in teaching and in healing Jesus bespeaks and demonstrates an authority and capability over the power of death, and it is that very same power of death in the world which supplies the only moral sanction for the State, or its adjacent ruling principalities. This Jesus preached and verified a freedom from captivation in death which threatens in the most rudimentary way the politics of this age. The rulers perceive this, once they have learned of Jesus and of what He has said and done, accurately to be their undoing. Thus, the very events which have been most private or most discreet in Jesus' ministry take on the most momentous political meaning, and if, in the days of Holy Week the truth of the confrontation becomes public, it has been premonitory throughout the life of Jesus—from, so to speak, Herod's attempt to murder the child through the temptations to submit to the power of death—portrayed in explicit political terms—in the wilderness.

It is, in other words, the coherence of the power of death multifariously at work in the world which explains why the public authorities cannot overlook the ministry of Jesus when it becomes apparent to them that He possesses authority and exercises capability over the power of death, as exemplified in His preaching and healing.

In the midst of the consummate public confrontation between the political principalities and Jesus during Holy Week, on Maundy Thursday, Jesus promises that His disciples will receive and share through His triumph over the power of death in that same authority and capability over death in this world. And so it is that His promise is fulfilled at Pentecost, and thereafter, whenever that

Continued on page 14

## On Meatless Meals: Orgy and Out

by Helen Seager

*Ho, shepherds of Israel who have been feeding yourselves!... You eat the fat,... but you do not feed the sheep.*  
Ezekiel 34

So that local parishes could follow Lenten meatless meals this year without resorting too often to macaroni and cheese, I decided to assemble for them a booklet of meatless recipes for large quantity meals. Moreover, hoping to persuade my parish to remember the world's hungry in a tangible way during this Lent (and after, I hoped), I asked the Episcopal Church Women president, a retired dining room manager, to collaborate in the selection of recipes.

For even greater credibility, the two of us offered to help the sexton/cook prepare the meals for our parish. It worked. We put together a booklet of 10 menus for meatless meals for 25, 50 and 100 people, loosely based on the principles of combining vegetable proteins. We enlisted the endorsement of Bishop Robert Appleyard (we named the booklet *Bishop's Bread*), printed it at our own expense, mailed a copy to each parish in the diocese (to the ECW president—who else?), gave a copy to Presiding Bishop John Allin, shopped for ingredients for *Quiche Lorraine* for 100 people that first Thursday, and put on our aprons.

Our first obstacle was the parish secretary, who upset the sexton/cook and called the Bishop names for interfering with her eating habits. The cook got over it the first week as the three of us quietly made quiches. Dinner was delicious, some signed a food pledge (about legislation, not eating), the cooks were applauded ("if this be meatless eating, count me in"), and no one said anything upsetting—anything at all—about hungry people. Through tuna loaf, spinach-stuffed shells, and egg foo yong, the response was a smiling corporate YUM; yes, we thought, they were learning; one can eat festively and with a conscience at the same time. But no one collected money for hungry people.

We learned that Bishop Allin gave his copy to his wife

Helen Seager is Church and Society convener for Pittsburgh and "a very part-time accountant."



(who else?) who raved to Mrs. Appleyard (who else?) who ordered 10 extra copies. The writers (cooks) were smiled at and applauded.

We planned a glorious soup, properly festive, of all the leftovers we'd saved from previous weeks so that the parish would not have to pay extra for roast lamb for Maundy Thursday (a remnant of Seders we had a few years back). Several of those of little faith in what was being fed to them distributed a petition, "We the undersigned do not want to eat soup next week." The first signature on the petition was that of the parish secretary. Still, the cooks were applauded.

The Junior Warden and I met in the kitchen. "I suppose we should try to be good Episcopalians," he began, "but I don't think it is right for the Bishop to tell us not to eat meat during Lent."

The poor man thought we were engaged in a medieval fasting discipline dictated to the faithful as a prescription for goodness by the Great Father. It's not his fault; eating with a conscience had not been explained to him in his



## Do You Care?

*More than 20% of the world's people are believed to be starving at this moment; 60% are estimated to be malnourished and physically underdeveloped.*

JSAC Grapevine

*Because of the cross of Jesus and our worship of the triune God, the Church must address itself to the appalling suffering of humankind caused by hunger. It belongs to the Church's nature by virtue of its indissoluble union with its Head to cry out by word and action against those human systems and ideologies which dehumanize over half the human race by denying it a fundamental right—that is, food adequate to maintain physical and mental health.*

From Statement of Theology  
National Committee on Hunger, Episcopal Church

*Cattle fed on grain consumes 10 pounds of grain for every pound of meat produced. Hogs and chickens are more effective converters of grain than cattle, four pounds of grain producing one pound of pork and two pounds of grain producing one pound of chicken.*

*If the average citizen of the U.S. would reduce his consumption of beef, pork and poultry by 10% in the next year, 12 million tons or more of grain would become available for the purposes other than livestock*

Lester R. Brown, "Our Daily Bread"  
Foreign Policy Association

*We can appreciate how wasteful this system is when we realize that the amount of grain and soy lost through feeding livestock in one year in the United States would provide every single person on earth a bowl of cooked grain every day of the year.*

Frances Lappe (Eating for a Small Planet)  
Interview with Richard Taylor, *Youth*, 8/75.

parish. I briefly set him straight about the world food and hunger situation, explaining that it really does make a difference to the rest of the world what Americans put on dinner plates, and vented my anger toward the soup petition. His face hardened; my voice rose.

I went on about my 12 years of dealing with intransigence in the parish, about the fearful attitude of the parish about change, toward women on the vestry (5 out of 15 was considered "too many"), about the stinginess of the ECW



guarding an \$11,000 bank account; it was very satisfying. But more was happening than a malcontent spouting off to an authority figure. I was leaving.

The petition restored perspective about the nature of things in the parish, in PECUSA, a perspective which applause might have altered. Instead of soup, they ate whole wheat crepes, and a vestry member donated the lamb for Maundy Thursday. My apron went on one more time to cook, one by one 200 crepes (more applause). With each one I blessed the Lord for wheat and eggs and took another step out of the door I knew the Lord would close behind me.

This Lenten orgy of woman's-place idealism was a finale. The crepes finished and delivered, I hung up the apron, went to a meeting of Church and Society Network Convenors, glimpsed a new community at the Shadybrook Conference, and came home to help with the arrangements for a new meal—a Eucharist celebrated in Pittsburgh by the Rev. Carter Heyward. Thanks be to God.

## The Poorest Half

What is it like to live in the poorest half of the population, in the poorest half of the world?

Start with a typical American family. Take away the car, the house and all the electrical appliances, no TV, radio, iron, washing machine or refrigerator. No electricity. No running water or sinks or showers or toilets.

Substitute a one-room hut made out of mud or straw or a few boards, with a dirt floor. Add children, sick and hungry. One out of four won't live to the age of five. On an average day, most of them will have diarrhea. No schools. No one in the family can read.

Take away breakfast, lunch and dinner. Substitute two bowls of rice—or corn meal, or sweet potato. Add a little gruel made of chickpea, or else some fish sauce, once a day. One chicken splits six ways on Sunday. Maybe.

Mix this well-fed family group with a sun-baked field. Work them like oxen from dawn to dusk, to see if the next crop comes up before they die. At harvest time, see the landlord and the money-lender show up from town to get their share.

Watch the powderkeg sitting in the sun.

Roy L. Prosterman — JSAC Grapevine 5/74

# Beebe Case: Clue to the Future?

by John Rea

The Peter Beebe case is closed. But the words "*charges dismissed*" may reverberate all the way to General Convention and beyond.

The Court of Review decision in Ohio June 11 will make it extremely difficult for any prosecutor to convict a priest who invites women priests into his diocese to perform priestly acts.

And it would certainly appear that if General Convention does not act in favor of women priests, it is just a matter of time before some Ecclesiastical Court, using the Beebe decision as authority, will hold that the canons as they now stand permit the ordination of women. To put it bluntly, if General Convention does not do it, an Ecclesiastical Court is going to do it.

A review of the facts in the Beebe case reveals why:

On July 29, 1974, in Philadelphia, eleven women were ordained to the priesthood in the Episcopal Church. A storm of controversy arose at once as to the validity of these ordinations. In August, 1974, at a special meeting in Chicago, the House of Bishops declared that the ordinations were not valid.

Subsequently, the Rev. L. Peter Beebe, with the majority support of his vestry, invited two of the women to Christ Church, Oberlin, Ohio, to celebrate holy communion on December 8, 1974. These two women were not licensed to perform priestly acts in the Diocese of Ohio. Both had been inhibited by the Bishop of Ohio from coming into the Diocese and performing priestly acts. Furthermore, Father Beebe had been admonished by the Bishop of Ohio not to have the women come in. In spite of this, Father Beebe allowed the service.

Shortly after, the Standing Committee of the Diocese of Ohio ordered Father Beebe to trial. On May 13, 14, and 15, 1975, at St. Paul's Church, Akron, Father Beebe was tried before a diocesan court of five priests and unanimously found guilty of the two charges lodged against him:

John Rea, member of the law firm of Meyers, Stevens and Rea, Cleveland, is attorney for Peter Beebe.



- Disobeying the “godly admonition” of his bishop
- Violating Title III, Canon 24 of the General Convention which provides: “No Minister in charge of any Congregation of this Church, or, in case of vacancy or absence, no Churchwardens, Vestrymen, or Trustees of the Congregation, shall permit any person to officiate therein, without sufficient evidence of his being duly licensed or ordained to minister in this Church.”

The trial court conviction was appealed to the Court of Review of Province V. Although the Court was created in 1904, this was the first case it had ever heard. The Court is made up of one bishop, three presbyters and three lay communicants, two of whom are lawyers.

The Court of Review unanimously reversed the conviction on April 3, 1976, and sent the case back to the trial court with specific directions as to how a new trial was to be conducted.

Re-trial was set for June 30 at Trinity Cathedral, Cleveland. Several weeks before the scheduled re-trial date, the Standing Committee of the Diocese of Ohio, by a divided vote, dismissed the charges against Father Beebe.

## Reversal Came as Surprise

So all inhibitions against Father Beebe have been lifted and he is a priest in good standing once again in the Diocese of Ohio. The reversal of the conviction came as a complete surprise to almost everyone. The question presents itself: What effect, if any, will the Court of Review decision have on General Convention?

The polity of the Episcopal Church is similar to that of the U.S. government in that each has an executive, legislative and judicial branch. A balance of power is supposed to exist among the three. In the Church, the overpowering balance of power has been with the legislative branch—General Convention. Power exercised by the executive branch has varied depending upon the Presiding Bishop. The judicial branch has almost completely atrophied through disuse.

In the Beebe case, however, the judicial machinery was dramatically brought to life. The General Convention canons, because they have been used so seldom, have many gaps with regard to the judicial process. The only meaningful language in the General Convention canons with regard to the mechanics of how a trial should be conducted are in Title IV, Canon 3(f), Section 21. No mention is made in the canons at all as to whether cases shall be tried as criminal or civil matters; as to what degree of proof is required of the prosecutor; as to whether members of the trial court sit as judges or as jurors.

This is of great importance because *voir dire* examination of the individual members of the court may be conducted by trial counsel in the event the members of the court are characterized as jurors. In the Beebe case, by pre-trial motion, counsel for defendant asked the court to try the case as a criminal case and, therefore, asked that the prosecutor be required to prove his case beyond a reasonable doubt. This motion was overruled.

By pre-trial motion, counsel for the defense also asked that the members of the trial court be treated as jurors and that the defense be permitted to examine individually, in open court, each prospective member of the court as to his



possible bias or prejudice. It was the ruling of the trial court that the prospective members thereof could not be so questioned.

On appeal, the Court of Review agreed that the case indeed should have been tried as a criminal case, reversed, and sent the case back for a new trial.

On appeal, the Court of Review held that the members of the trial court sat both as judges and as jurors and that the individual members of the prospective court were, therefore, subject to *voir dire* examination by counsel as to their possible bias and prejudice. The court, therefore, reversed on this ground also and sent the case back for a new trial.



## Rulings Set Precedent

These first two rulings of the Court of Review clearly establish a precedent which will probably be followed in the future. This means that the prosecutor will have a much more difficult time in proving his case because he will now be required to prove his case beyond a reasonable doubt.

At the time of trial of the Beebe case, with respect to the alleged violations of Title II, Canon 24, counsel for defense pointed out that the critical language of the charge was as follows: "No Minister in charge of any Congregation of this Church shall permit any person to officiate therein, without sufficient evidence of his being duly licensed *or* ordained to minister in this Church."

## Little Words Mean Lot

The key word in that charge is the word "*or*". The overall import of the trial court decision was that the word "*or*" really should be treated as the word "*and*". It then went on to hold the obvious—since the women admittedly were not licensed, Father Beebe was guilty of violating this canon.

The Court of Review reversed and held that the word "*or*" meant exactly that. Thus, the issue was squarely raised as to whether the women had been ordained. The Court of Review ordered that this question be resolved by the trial court at the time of re-trial. Therefore, the prosecutor was faced with the task of proving beyond a reasonable doubt that there was not sufficient evidence that the women were ordained.

It is obvious from the action taken by the prosecutor in recommending dismissal of the charges shortly before the second trial that he did not feel that he could prove his case.

With regard to the godly admonition charge, it is worth noting that the Court of Review decision made several important points. First, the fact that a bishop tells one of his priests to do or not to do something does not, per se, establish such statement as a godly admonition. The decision establishes several criteria against which an alleged godly admonition must be measured. It is interesting to note also that the consent of a bishop issuing an alleged godly admonition to one of his priests must be had before a priest must stand trial for disobeying the alleged godly admonition.

## Those Women Priests

In the hullabaloo surrounding the trials of Peter Beebe and William Wendt for allowing women priests to celebrate the Eucharist in churches where they were rectors, it is easy to get the impression that except for those two occasions the women priests have been quiescent over the past two years.

Recently a congregation that had contracted with two of the women for regular celebrations was told by a diocesan official that theirs was the only parish in the country still inviting women priests and that only two Episcopal priests were still accepting such invitations.

This of course is not true.

The women priests are alive and well and most continue to act as priests. One has joined the Methodist Church and another is in the process of being deposed as a presbyter who has "abandoned the communion of this Church." Most of the rest of us continue to celebrate the Eucharist with small groups of Christians or Episcopal churches in exile or in parish churches. While these celebrations have become too numerous to keep track of, it is certain that since November, 1974, Episcopal women priests have celebrated the Eucharist in no less than 30 Episcopal congregations (parish churches, missions and college chaplaincies.) These celebrations have occurred in 12 different dioceses. In two dioceses, women priests celebrate unhindered by Bishop's sanctions and in several parishes they have become regular visiting clergy.

In addition, Episcopalians and other Christians have attended celebrations of the Eucharist by women priests in ecumenical or non-official gatherings in at least 20 other dioceses. Women priests have also presided at Baptisms, marriages, and funerals. A number have been invited by parishes in several dioceses to celebrate after the General Convention regardless of its decision.

And so, backed and supported by a growing number of Episcopalians—clergy and lay—the women priests continue their ministry in hope and thanksgiving.

Rev. Suzanne Hiatt — Episcopal Divinity School



# Jesus Our Mother?

Medieval men spoke of themselves easily in feminine modes. There seemed to be much less nervousness than is felt today about responding to God and the created world in the manner of the opposite sex. Before God, every Christian soul was the bride of Christ and the mother of the Child of Bethlehem; before God every Christian soul was a son and heir of Christ, a soldier called to fight against the world, the flesh, and the devil. The medieval church in its life with God experienced Christ as mother, and men and women could experience themselves as women and men.

Let us look first at the divine androgyny. One of the earliest witnesses in the Middle Ages to the tradition which knew the Second Person of the Trinity in a feminine mode was St. Anselm of Canterbury. This eleventh-century English bishop, theologian, and monk refers to Jesus as "our Mother" in his prayers, in three different modes of divine action. Through his passion and death, Jesus gives birth to the souls of faithful Christians.

*"And if you had not died, you would not have brought forth. For longing to bear sons into life, you tasted death. And by dying, you begot them."*

Anselm's motif of Jesus our Mother is found repeatedly throughout the literature of mystical piety.

A second theme found in St. Anselm depicts Christ as our caring mother who comforts, gentles, revives, consoles.

*"Christ my mother, you gather your chickens under your wings; this dead chicken of yours puts himself under those wings. For by your gentleness the badly frightened are comforted, by your sweet smell the despairing are revived, your warmth gives life to the dead, your touch justifies sinners..."*

Anselm takes the biblical image of Christ the Mother Hen (Matt. 23:37) to draw a parallel between the care and nurture of earthly mothers and the work of Christ in the soul, as our Mother of Mercy. This Mother of Mercy is not as in Marian piety, the Lord's mother Mary, but is the Lord Christ. The experience of unquestioning, accepting love is here found in God rather than in the auxiliary, subordinate figure of the Virgin.

Repeatedly in the popular vernacular literature of prayer, Christ's sacrifice is experienced in a maternal way. (But) Christ is not only our Mother. Medieval Christians experienced God in a wonderful variety of emotional

relationships. They passed easily in prayer from Jesus the Lover of the Bride-Soul, to Mother of the Creature-Child, to Brother and Sister who stands with us in our creaturehood, to the Child who is born within in the castle of the soul, and to Father, Lord, and King.

The God of medieval piety was a Mother/Father, Sister/Brother, Lover/Child, a God of demanding and accepting Love, a God who is born within each of us and who bears us into life as a travailing mother.

Excerpted from "Male and Female in Christian Tradition," by Eleanor L. McLaughlin, in *Male and Female: Christian Approaches to Sexuality*, edited by Ruth Tiffany Barnhouse and Urban T. Holmes III. Copyright 1976 by The Seabury Press. Used with permission of the publisher.

## That Undemocratic 'Divided Vote'

by Jeannette Piccard

The "divided vote" as cast in the Episcopal Church House of Deputies is unjust because it aids and abets minority rule.

But it has been used so long that people believe it is part of the Constitution and the Constitution must be changed in order to eliminate it.

Not so. Article I, Section 4, paragraph 4 of the Constitution, regarding voting procedures, does not mention the "divided vote." It exists in the rules of procedure of the House of Deputies, not the Constitution.

What is the "divided vote?" How did it develop?

Each diocese is represented by two delegations, lay and clerical, each consisting of four deputies. In most cases, each deputy has one vote, but when a "vote by orders" is called for, each delegation has only one vote among the four deputies.

The Constitution requires the four deputies to reach an agreement *before* casting a vote. If all agree, or if they decide three to one, the vote is either "yes" or "no." But

**The Rev. Jeannette Piccard**, Ph.D., an Episcopalian priest, lives in Minneapolis.



what if the four deputies in either order remain split, two for and two against a given question?

Sometime in the 19th century, the old Robert's Rules of Order which applied to the whole house were extended to apply also to the individual order in each diocese.

The Rules determined that an unresolvable tie would be counted as a "no" vote because it was not a "yes" vote. The so-called "divided vote" was invented because of the belief that each order in each diocese *must* vote, although the Constitution does not require each delegation to vote. It does limit the four deputies to one vote between them. One vote cannot be on both sides of a question. The decision is determined by the "votes cast," not the number of dioceses present.

So what can be done? The response seems simple: Change the rules of procedures. But that is easier said than done.

In this regard, it is important to raise the consciousness of the deputies to realize just how large a majority is needed in order to pass a motion if it is voted upon by the present unconstitutional rules of procedure. Simple statistics show that the "divided vote" *can* require a better than 87% majority in order to decide a question in the affirmative. The result all depends on the *distribution* of the "divided vote" just as the distribution of two negative votes can decide concurrence or nonconcurrence in a single diocese.

For example, the vote of the Diocese of Minnesota at Louisville concerning one question was six "yes" votes and two "no" votes. Had the two "no" votes been distributed evenly between the clerical and lay orders, the delegation would have voted "yes." Both votes, however, were in one order so that the vote of that order was declared "divided" and counted "no." Hence, no concurrence. Since the same thing occurred in other dioceses, a minority defeated the will of the House, while making it look like a majority decision.

If the Constitution is obeyed and each diocese really has only *one* vote (remember one vote cannot be on both sides of the question) in the lay and *one* vote in the clerical order, all questions will be decided by the total yes and no "votes cast." (The Constitution reads, "votes cast" not dioceses present). A question may not then be defeated by a 25% or 12.5% minority.

The democratic principle of majority rule is well-established in our culture and clearly required by the Constitution of the Church. Resolving the issue of the "divided vote" will end the frustration and divisiveness caused by the injustice of minority rule.

## Toward Building the Cities

by Paul Moore



In a sermon on Easter Day I asked the people of our city to look with clear eyes at what is going on in New York. That same process is going on today in all the cities of this diocese; Yonkers, White Plains, New Rochelle, Beacon, Newburgh, Poughkeepsie. It is a sickness unto death.

I stated that each one of us is responsible for this dying, and that each is part of some tragic cycle of it. One of these is the cycle of businesses leaving the city and thereby making conditions worse and causing more businesses to leave. I urged those businesses which could do so to exercise their moral responsibility to stay here, in order that they might help to turn around the dying of our city into rebirth.

I realize the grave difficulties facing businesses here—the high taxes, the problems of retaining personnel, the crime in the streets, the inadequate schools, the untrained workers. But even greater difficulties will face our national economy, and therefore our businesses, if the metropolitan areas of our nation disintegrate into wastelands of non-productive poverty and despair.

I commend the businesses that have announced their intention to stay in New York, and I hope that their spirit may inform others who may now be wavering. Granted, the primary purpose of a business enterprise of any kind is to make a profit for the stockholders. Management has a moral obligation to its stockholders to fulfill this mission. Similarly, the primary purpose of a university is to teach its

**The Rt. Rev. Paul Moore** is Episcopal Bishop of New York. The above is excerpted from his diocesan convention address, May, 1976.



students and to conduct research. The primary purpose of a hospital is to heal the sick.

But American law declares that corporations of all sorts have the privileges of a person before the law. Thus, every institution, whatever its purpose, has an ethical responsibility towards its community. If our institutions, whatever their particular vocation, do not assume this social responsibility, our whole system of free enterprise and democracy will collapse and the state will have to take over that burden.

Remember, the community, through its government, does take responsibility towards its business enterprises, often lending great sums of money to save them. In turn, business and other institutions have an obligation toward the community.

However, the blame for the root causes of the disintegration of New York and our other cities cannot be placed at the feet of businesses alone. Many others are to blame. Generations of government on many levels have committed New York and other cities to a devastating debt load, under which we now stagger. For a momentary political advantage, they closed their eyes to the disaster they were laying on future generations. But we must remember that these are the officials whom we elected and whom we allowed to jeopardize the future.

And the press failed to alert the public sufficiently to the danger of this debt when it was first clear many years ago. Some labor unions have made demands not commensurate with the economy's ability to support them. Our churches, unused to dealing with problems of government finance, have kept silent too long. Academic institutions have not used their intellectual credibility sufficiently in matters of social concern. Groups of all kinds have put their own special interests ahead of the community. There's enough blame to go around for all.

But blame does not build community. Blaming is just a way of excusing oneself. And so, let us turn now to constructive measures which I believe we can take together:

1 We should do everything in our power to convince our federal government to increase its subsidy of welfare and education in our cities. Waves of immigrants for over a hundred years have come to New York, and have been trained here and educated here, to take their place in the mainstream of American life. New York has paid the educational bill for much of the nation. Waves of immigrants from Europe, from the Caribbean, from South America, from the rural parts of our own land, unable to survive there, have come to New York and

other cities helpless and weak. These cities have paid for their welfare, their health care, their social needs. New York has been the school and the hospital of America. Therefore, the federal government should subsidize education and welfare more fully. And this would give the sorely pressed economic community a breathing spell in anticipation of tax reform, especially the reform of those city taxes which effect business negatively.

- 2 The political boundaries of the metropolitan areas do not coincide with the economic structure under which they function. We must move towards greater and greater regional planning, so that each part of the metropolitan area picks up its fair share, so that not only is there equality of opportunity, but equality of sacrifice.
- 3 We must do all we can to urge our government to improve the business climate of our cities, but we should also ourselves seek to improve this climate. I spent several years in the midwest. There, the chambers of commerce and the city government always were involved in bringing new business to their city. Boosterism has never been New York's forte; we're a little too sophisticated for that. But it's high time that we improve the business climate here.
- 4 The city speaks a great deal of volunteerism, but measures must be taken to help volunteer groups do what they can. An example is the Urban Homesteading program sponsored by our Cathedral, known as U-HAB. Using this as an example, amidst the wide spread housing crisis, tenants and citizens have banded together in many of our worst neighborhoods, like Harlem, the South Bronx, the Lower East Side, to fight back. And they are now actively taking over abandoned buildings and rehabilitating them in new, cooperatively owned housing. They earn their equity by the work they contribute. Groups as diverse as young gangs, squatters, car strippers and prisoners work together to rebuild our city. However, this program has practically no official public support and is on the edge of floundering. Likewise, in many other fields, citizens could be helped to solve their own problems. Whether it be parents making full school days possible, volunteers cutting back the expenses of hospitals, so that they need not be closed, these are the kinds of volunteer efforts which our city should creatively encourage and support, but to which, so far, not much more than lip service has been given.
- 5 We should encourage our people to give themselves for some time each week to volunteer jobs. In one of our own churches, the Church of the Heavenly Rest, for instance, there are already over 160 parishioners who have signed



up for voluntary jobs, which the city has had to eliminate because of budget cuts.

These are some of the things which we can begin to do together. I feel an enormous opportunity has been thrust upon us, and although I have had some criticism, the overwhelming response to that Easter sermon has been one of gratitude and support.

I believe this is the way towards hope and life. The other way is the way of starvation of body and soul, and the oppression of the poor, and the death of the compassionate soul of America. Already symptoms of this kind of oppression are coming over the horizon. I was really partly amused, but really deeply outraged to find my name alongside the names of some Congressmen and former Mayor Lindsay in The New York Times, said to be on a secret list kept by the state police and compiled from the files of a very partisan publication. I'm also very deeply concerned over some of the measures of Senate Bill #1, which takes several steps backward in the area of civil liberties and civil rights.

Let us reject these ways of oppression and let us lift up the ways of hope and of freedom, the way of new life. Let us give witness once more to the ancient vocation which God gave the people of Israel and the people of his church—the vocation of ministry and prophecy, the vocation of liberation and salvation.

This is no passing interest on my part, but will undoubtedly change the direction and priorities of my own episcopate, because I am sure there is a better way to be your pastor and to be, together with you, a more active force for good in the communities of our diocese. And so I plan to delegate, or try even to eliminate, some of the administrative duties that have kept me immobilized here so much of the time, because I do feel the need to spend more time with you in your communities. And also, I enjoy it.

#### GOING TO GENERAL CONVENTION?

Come Visit Us!

Booth No. 122

Church & Society/The Witness

#### Prayer While Eating Macaroni and 2/3 Drunk

Dear God, be as palpable as macaroni and me  
at the dinner table.  
Not transubstantial  
as bread and wine,  
and you spooking somewhere  
in the crumbs and juices,  
but as Thou wouldst be  
if Thou were not Thyself but like me,  
part Thyself and part Jack Daniels.  
First tell some jokes, dear God,  
then manifest Thy Divine Essence  
in ways that will be clear  
in shopping centers,  
in bars,  
in courts of law,  
on street corners where Thou hast not hung out  
since Jerusalem.  
Dear God, let there be  
a macaroni epiphany  
that I and all  
the undivining world  
might know Thee  
touch Thee  
eat Thee.

— Charles August

Continued from page 6

authority is shown, wherever that capacity is verified, insofar as the Christians live faithfully in the power of the Resurrection, freed from captivation or intimidation by the power of death, they have known, and they know an hostility and harassment on the part of the ruling principalities similar to that which Jesus knew.

The negation of the supposed distinction between the private and the political because of the coherence of death in diverse forms or appearances points to the truth that the Resurrection—far from being a vague or ethereal immortality—is eventful and accessible for human beings in every situation in which death is pervasive; which is to say, in every personal or public circumstance in common history whatsoever.



# Unemployment Protest

*(At mid-year, the unemployment rate in Michigan stood at 10.2%—highest in the country. Ten states were registering rates of more than 9.4%. Religious leaders in the Detroit area, representing many faiths, issued the following statement underlining the urgency of the situation.)*

We, the elected and appointed heads of religious bodies of Metropolitan Detroit and Michigan, join with those of the National Council of Churches, the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops, and the National Jewish Community Religious agencies in addressing a widespread evil in our midst, the evil of unemployment...

We find it difficult to believe that the industrial, labor, academic and political leadership of Michigan cannot or will not find ways to solve this problem. We are familiar with arguments for inaction. There are those who argue that we inevitably will have either inflation or unemployment, and because inflation affects more people, therefore unemployment is preferable. The thesis appears false because currently we have *both* unemployment *and* inflation. If we can have both, we can also have neither.

Others argue that it is in the self-interest of business to have large numbers of unemployed to keep labor costs down and to keep working class people under control. If that is true, we condemn such self-interest. If it is not true, then now is the time to give the lie to this argument. Otherwise, Americans must face strong evidence that our economic system is socially and morally a failure...

We address a call to the people of Detroit and Michigan and to ourselves. We speak particularly to the thousands of us in churches and synagogues. It is a call to consciousness of our condition.

It is a call to care, to look up from our secure jobs, from our preoccupations with private life and private consumption, to feel what's happening, to learn the facts, to share and to act.

We call for action to inform ourselves...We call for pastors and rabbis and congressional leaders to engage their people in analyzing our situation. We call for pressure on our unions, businesses and the levels of government to take the needed actions to put Michigan to work and heal the poverty and hopelessness that stands in such contrast to the luxurious new shopping structures that dot our region.

Signers of this statement include H. Coleman McGehee, Episcopal Bishop of Michigan; John Cardinal Dearden of the Archdiocese of Detroit; Bishop Dwight E. Loder, Michigan Area, United Methodist Church; Rev. Dr. Howard Christensen, Michigan Synod, Lutheran Church in America; and Lewis S. Grossman, Jewish Community Council of Metropolitan Detroit.

Letters continued from page 2

## Paul or Jesus?

I am so tired of what "St. Paul said" being used as proof text for what the Church should be. The Church, which claims to be the Bride of Christ, is more enamored with Paul than it is faithful to its one and only—and that spells adultery in my book.

No man on earth is going to let his wife run his household according to what some other man says—but that is what the Bride of Christ does every time it goes with what Paul says.

Paul may have spoken to his generation—but Jesus speaks to all generations. I do so hope at that Second Coming, surrounded with heavenly hosts, that Paul is one of them. I can't wait to see 20th century woman tie into him. And 20th century man, too, in a few instances.

Let's get with Jesus and leave Paul back in the First Century to rest in peace, where he should be left.

Abbie Jane Wells — Juneau, Alaska

## A Matter of Discipline

The Preface to the Book of Common Prayer states that "in every church, what cannot be clearly determined to belong to doctrine must be referred to discipline; and therefore, by common consent and authority, may be altered, abridged, enlarged, amended, or otherwise disposed of..."

In my opinion the proposal to admit women to the priesthood is not clearly a matter of doctrine, and is therefore to be treated as a matter of discipline; then it is unquestionably within the competence of the General Convention to decide upon this issue.

But there is a disturbing factor. Under the current regulations, overseas deputations have full voting rights. This raises two problems. First, it is questionable whether these dioceses should have been given equal voting rights in the first place.

Second, the social and cultural situation in many of these countries is vastly different from that in the United States. The absurdity of this situation is demonstrated in their voting on the Draft Book of Common Prayer which does not apply to them unless they so choose. Their fears as to the possible effect on them of a decision in favor of women's ordination would be allayed if we adopted the "Canadian plan." It is to be hoped that these considerations will be weighed by the deputations concerned and they will see that the appropriate course of action for them would be to abstain from voting on these two issues.

Reginald H. Fuller — Virginia Theological Seminary



## Noted Speakers to Appear on C & S /Witness Panels

Church and Society, in cooperation with THE WITNESS magazine, will sponsor three panel discussions on "Sexism," "Racism," and the "Theology of Hunger" on Sept. 13, 14, and 15, respectively, during the General Convention in Minneapolis. Sessions will be held at noon at Gethsemane Church, 905 Fourth Avenue South, two blocks from the convention site.

Among those who have accepted invitations to participate are Gustavo Gutierrez of Peru, noted liberation theologian; Pam Chinnis, presiding officer, Women's Triennial; Rosemary Ruether, author and theologian; and Bishops Coleman McGehee of Michigan, Paul Moore of New York, and John Walker, newly elected coadjutor of Washington, D.C.; Marion Kellerman, Chairperson, Anglican Consultative Council, and William Coats, Episcopal Chaplain, University of Wisconsin.

Other outstanding panelists both from the Convention and from outside the church will speak at the sessions.

Tickets at \$2 (which includes a light lunch) will be available at THE WITNESS/CHURCH AND SOCIETY exhibit booth (No. 122) while they last. For further information and a complete roster of speakers, check booth No. 122.

Also on display at the booth will be a new Study/Action Guide published by Church and Society in cooperation with THE WITNESS. The guide is designed to assist local groups in probing the social mission of the church and to provide clues on how to bring about social change.

## Four Provinces Approve Women Priests

The House of Bishops of the Anglican Church of Canada in a recent special meeting reaffirmed its earlier decision to proceed with the ordination of women to the priesthood. The statement released following the meeting read:

*"Having consulted throughout the Anglican communion and elsewhere about our intention to proceed with the ordination of women to the presbyterate and having carefully discussed several representations requesting the House to change its position, this House reaffirms its collegial commitment to the principle and implementation of the ordination of women to the presbyterate as indicated in the motions passed in November, 1975..."*

This action occurred about the same time that similar decisions were made elsewhere in the Anglican Communion. At its General Synod in Nelson, the Anglican Church in New Zealand overwhelmingly voted to allow women to be ordained. The General Synod of the Church of Ireland took like action recently in Dublin. Of special interest is the fact that at the latter Synod the vast majority of the delegates were men, and less than one-half dozen voted against the motion.

This brings to a total of four the number of Anglican Provinces which have removed all obstacles to the ordination of women priests, the Province of Hong Kong having been the first.

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