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# THE WITNESS

October, 1976

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## My Encounter With China

Carman St. J. Hunter

## The Community, Southern Style

Harcourt Waller, Jr.

## 'Total Amnesty, Not Shamnesty'

Patricia Reif



# Letters to the Editor

(Roy Larson's article, "American Religion in Reverse Gear," (July, 1976) drew two strikingly different responses — one short and one long. They appear below.)

## 'At A Loss As to Use'

I am at a loss as to the use of such articles as "American Religion in Reverse Gear", by Roy Larson. When the secular press thrives on articles which confute, confuse and disparage the power of the Faith what is the use of including such verbiage in the religious press as well?

Obviously Mr. Larson's priest friend became hopelessly estranged from any experience he may have had of the Resurrected Lord in his life and certainly in sharing that experience with those he was charged with conveying that saving message to.

Rev. David Lounsbury  
Eugene, Oregon

## 'Something Really Jarred'

Something strange happens each time your publication, THE WITNESS, finds me in far away West Coast land. And, each time it comes, I think of how I might have written my thoughts in response to the question, "What is it that gives you meaning in your life?"

Finally something really jarred. Roy Larson's article, "American Religion in Reverse Gear", has put my feelings in as clear and succinct terms as anything I have read or discussed in the last seven years. I felt as though he had been interviewing me instead of the Roman Catholic priest. Indeed, the "brain drain" of the 1960s for all church denominations is something to behold, especially out here in "Honestville" where it has been more apparent and predominant. (People are not shocked at the thought of a defrocked or deordained priest living a new and different life-style. We are very common here).

Larson's interviewee is smack-dab-center Jim Guinan! "Unlike many ex-priests, he has not desired to remain active in the church as a layman . . . staying within might be cowardice, capitulation, entrapment." I have found, in my pilgrimage to honesty with myself, that to do so would be an awful lie.

This sounds harsh and maybe even judgmental. It is not

meant to be. Rather, it is the way I am beginning to see my life now and wish I had been able to see it 20-25 years ago. Somehow I feel as though I have been swindled.

It is a lie for me, and I speak for no other, simply because my belonging to the church fostered my dependency upon some "other" to take care of me. Even now, when I let myself be influenced by my fantasies, I find a tendency to drift back into that old dependency and dream of standing in the pulpit, making a late call on a distressed family, or holding on to a "theological position" which I think makes it all sensible and (ugh) "relevant." Those fantasies don't last long. I have the good fortune to be married to a feminist who cannot tolerate that sort of dishonesty in me.

My witness is simply put: "Quit being dependent. Take care of yourself, James." For seven years I have been trying, with some success, to make sense out of that admonition, and believe it or not, it works. I now have a new life, new life-style, new ways of keeping honest, new friends and associates who are bound together by nothing outside of themselves, and a job that deals with life and death for a great many people. That gives me my meaning today. I also have a much healthier attitude toward the things I can and cannot do, and no longer find myself overwhelmed with grandiosity or defeat in the face of both. I enjoy being me.

I like people more because I have learned to like me. Why I couldn't as a "Christian", I cannot answer. I have a strong suspicion that it is related to my old dependencies: "Somehow mother church will take care of me, no matter what I do."

So, whenever I read THE WITNESS, I am moved to be gratefully appreciative, like the Pharisee, that I am not like some others who may not have been forced to such honesty. Paul Van Buren, one of my old idols who now has clay feet, disappointed me with his new enthusiasm for Marxist-Christian dialogue and Jewish-Christian theology. Without

Letter continued on page 14

## CREDITS

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# THE WITNESS

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## Editorial Creating History

Robert L. DeWitt

During Epiphany in a middle Atlantic city two years ago a group of suburban parishes combined to hold a series of study sessions on the ministry of the laity.

They focused on one particular aspect of this ministry; namely, that of lay persons at their place of work. At the outset, most of the people in the group had conceived of their ministry as serving on vestries, teaching church school, visiting the elderly, working for organizations concerned about social betterment — such were their images.

But the emphasis here was to be the workplace — where lay persons spend most of their time, where they have real competence, and therefore, where it is peculiarly appropriate for them to bear witness.

The participants were intrigued with the prospect. It promised to be refreshingly different from so many church situations where the laity are asked to explore theological concepts with which they are not familiar.

The first meeting concluded with an assignment: They were to talk with two or three others at their place of work, and prepare a list of things which were not as they should be, and which should be changed. There was a sense of real excitement as they left.

They returned a week later having done their homework well. Lengthy laundry lists of concerns appeared on pieces of paper unfolded by members at the study session. A high level of interest marked the encounter; they understood each other, and a common concern marked the discussions. The assignment for the next meeting was to talk to two or three — preferably the same — persons as before, and return with specific suggestions as to what could be done about the concerns they had previously identified.

There was a markedly different mood at the third

meeting. As they shared their “homework,” there was a noticeable lack of animation. Finally one young man in a middle-management job rose and said, “I think the answer is fairly obvious as to why we had difficulty with this assignment. Most of our concerns about our job situations have to do with corporate policy — and what can we do about changing corporate policy?”

Throughout human history many people have expressed their predicament in those words, “What can we do?”, articulating a sense of powerlessness. And time after time that cry has changed into a cry of desperation, “What can we *do*?” Because power corrupts. If power does not reside democratically with the people, then it is focused in individuals and small groups who use it tyrannically. This is one of the major lessons of history.

But history is always in the making. A study/action guide entitled, *Struggling With the System, Probing Alternatives*, has been produced by the Church and Society Network in cooperation with THE WITNESS magazine. It is aimed at concerned groups that wish to engage in a serious process of appraisal and diagnosis of the social institutions — not God-given but of human contrivance — which control so much of our life. It is a forthright effort to give expression to the social mission of the church in our time.

Discussion focuses on seeking answers to such questions as: *Why is our society dysfunctional for so many people? How might it be different? What are some forms of group action on the local level which can test our tentative theories, and at the same time make a positive contribution?* Copies at \$5.75 can be secured through Church and Society, Box 359, Ambler, PA. 19002.



# My Encounter With China

by Carman St. J. Hunter

*(Carman Hunter was in China in happier days — long before the earthquakes which rocked the country this year. But she joins us in asking your prayerful concern for the victims of the recent quakes, which have claimed lives in the Philippines as well.)*

When my husband and I entered the People's Republic of China in June of 1975 with a group of 22 other North Americans, we each brought with us a particular past which shaped our perceptions. Mine included the experience of living, for periods of four to ten years, in three countries other than my own — China, Canada and Brazil.

It embraced a vocation and ministry, exercised over 26 years in settings ranging from St. Hilda's school in Wuchang, China to positions as chief executive for Christian education and, later, world and national mission of the Executive Council of the Episcopal Church. It also included Anglican and ecumenical conferences and consultant work in many countries as well as significant involvement in U.S. dioceses and local congregations. Finally, it encompassed the specific and unique factors which being a woman contributed to my experience of ministry.

Other visitors have detailed the impact of the Chinese people — their vitality, health and spontaneity. Literature describing the substantial changes over the last 27 years is readily available. It is my intention in this brief article to focus on only a few of those changes and their implications for our own country and for Christians.

## Values in Conflict

China is not a neutral subject. The glowing reports of those who have been there recently are often met with doubt and suspicion. Win-lose discussions lead nowhere but the reason for the effect on visitors is probably not hard to find.

Sudden exposure to an almost ascetic pattern of communal life where justice, equality and service are preached with evangelical fervor, provides an unsettling contrast to the familiar social disorders, economic



contradictions and passive patterns of consumption of goods and values in capitalist societies. The traveler is more impressed by immediate experiences than by social complexity.

Not only are values — such as friendship; cooperation; self sacrifice; rigid honesty; full participation of women; moral persuasion as the means of social control; the breaking down of differences in the treatment and status of citizens; productive labor; trust in the intuition of the masses to embrace the good when the issues are understood — all proclaimed verbally, but they are also internalized as part of a total system of education. Every member of society, no matter what his/her function, participates for part of every year in productive labor and in ongoing lively discussion in a work or neighborhood centered criticism/self-criticism group.

Building a society of 800 million changed persons is a long process. There are those in China who believe that another set of values is more appropriate — competition, centralization, hierarchical structures; trained elites who will lead and teach the masses; efficiency; rationality; profit and special privileges; social control by force. The proponents of these values believe that once technological development has taken place, there may be a return to the original ideals of the revolution. Mao Tse-tung and those who are labeled “radicals” in the U.S. press insist that

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Carman St. J. Hunter is an educational consultant presently working with World Education Inc., New York City.



once a new elite has been formed, it will be just as hard to displace it as the old elites of landowners and capitalists.

China is clearly not a monolithic development model. With varying degrees of intensity, persons and groups come down on one side or the other of the values tension. The extremes on each side become the rallying points for factions.

The Cultural Revolution in the late '60s and the more recent eruptions following the death of Chou En-lai were part of an ongoing process in which excesses are corrected periodically. What is astounding is the attempt to build a social order on the basis of moral principles which are publicly debated by peasants and workers, students and soldiers, as well as by the top leadership.

The same value struggle goes on in our own society but under very different conditions. The dominant values in our public life are part of the set which emphasizes competition, rationality and economic considerations. These are seen as strong, masculine values which govern the "real world" and are rewarded in politics and in the market-place. In contrast, cooperation, intuition and the values from the other set are perceived as weaker, feminine values. They are appropriate for small work teams, voluntary organizations, families and churches.

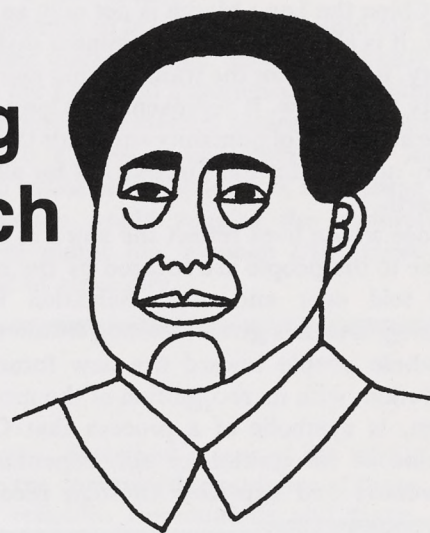
The schizophrenia frequently felt by women and clergy results from this dichotomy. In our society these two groups are the most frequent teachers of the private values. Yet even in their own domain, family and church, they are often forced to live by the public values. When they speak out on the basis of private values, they are denounced as irrelevant idealists, incompetent to judge public issues. China poses the question: How long can we avoid adjustment in the tension and greater openness to interaction between value sets?

## Myth as Message

If values are criteria for interpersonal and communal life, beneath them lie the social and religious myths which provide their substance. Every society develops a way, or ways, of understanding and responding to deep existential forces — the mystery and deepest meaning at the center of being; the inevitable nature of human limitation; the inescapability of death; the experience of anguish and ecstasy; the tragic dimension in life. Myths develop from the history and experience of a people. They are an expression of how participant peoples see truth, but they are not truth itself.

In the United States we are seeking this year to rediscover the myths and symbol systems of our origin and

## The Long March



After the Communist-Kuomintang split in 1927 (over Chiang Kai-shek's betrayal in Shanghai) Mao Tse-tung and other Communist leaders hid in the countryside where they were constantly persecuted.

In the Fall of 1934, some 100,000 men and 35 women started from different points, joined forces and struggled against Chiang's troops, as well as against the forces of weather and mountainous terrain. There were dramatic river crossings, a struggle across the terrible grasslands. Finally, only 20,000 reached Northern Shensi Province, some 6,000 miles from where most had started.

This has become religious legend, as well as history. Young people are taught that only after this kind of trial were Mao, Chou En-lai, Lin Biao and the others able to gather, and, through the simple life together — combining study and action — plan "to turn a world of beggars into a world of men (*sic*)"

To have been on the Long March is to be a real hero.



early history. It is clear that no single religious or political myth controls our understanding of ourselves. Rather, the myths and symbols which dominate private beliefs and spiritual experiences are multiform.

In China the Long March is not only an actual historical event, it is also basic to the dominant myth of the present society. It stands for the transforming journey from the old society to the new. It represents the long struggle against all the afflictions of humanity and holds the promise of final victory not only for the Chinese but for all the hopeless of the earth.

Those whose lives reflect the spirit of self-sacrifice and service to the people are revered by the masses and their story told over and over. Salvation is won through suffering. Death is given meaning within the movement of the whole people toward the new future. The Cultural Revolution, with its recognition of the growing dangers of elitism, is symbolic of a process that Christians might describe as recognition of sin, repentance, confession, forgiveness and expiation through reconversion to the



### Of Trees Remembered...

In a tractor factory I discovered someone from Wuhan. As we strolled through the park-like grounds, I asked, "Are there trees like this in Wuhan now?"

I remembered the dismal, denuded streets and countryside, left bare of all forestation by the Japanese military whose long occupation had used up everything that could possibly be burned for warmth and for cooking. "Oh, yes," he said, "there are tall trees everywhere in Wuhan."

"Then the trees I planted with the St. Hilda's students on Serpent Hill must also be tall and beautiful," I mused.

He stopped in amazement. "I worked with you, talked with you, on those days in May 1949 when Boone and St. Hilda's, brother and sister schools, planted those trees together," he said. He went on to tell me how intrigued he and other Boone students had been to see one of the foreign teachers planting trees. Soldiers from the People's Liberation Army were organizing and guiding our efforts.

He had apparently asked about me and been told that I was participating in study groups and in work in order to understand and help build the new China. And so, 26 years later, our conversation became deeper and more trust-filled as we talked of old friends in common.

ideals of the revolution.

The myth is more evocative than the actual changes in Chinese society. While it is based on Marxist analysis, it has been considerably enriched and changed not only by the remarkable genius of Mao, but by his ability to build on ancient Chinese wisdom and mystical quality which has always been an element in Chinese humanism. A new note of messianism has emerged since the USSR has been perceived as sacrificing human goals to technology, rapid development and bourgeois consumer values.

Reactions to China are many. There is an alarming tendency to want what is happening there to be either all right or all wrong. Cynics cast doubt on every accomplishment while supporters block out errors and excesses. To take China seriously would mean recognizing her myths and symbol systems as legitimate contributions to the human search for meaning and for a way to live together on the planet.

We might acknowledge the potential for life-giving power as well as demonic destructiveness within all myths, including ours and the Chinese. We would have to give up our exclusive view of history and realize that our future may be more powerfully influenced by the development of thought and culture in both ancient and modern China than by the Fertile Crescent, Greece and Rome.

No people is exclusively formed by its own historic roots. The requirement that we plan together for the wisest use of the common resources of the earth links the destiny of all the world's peoples. It becomes essential to health and survival, that we be able to learn from each other and to know which myths are dangerous delusions, spelling disaster for all, and which are simply necessary human illusions, required by fallible human condition.

## Freedom of the Remnant

Americans consistently ask about the Church in China in terms of its institutional freedom. The clearest evidence one can find is that there is no Church organized as Western Christianity would understand it. Our group participated in a service in Chinese for the foreign community in Peking. The life of Chinese Christians is quite separate.

A remnant of theologically trained persons apparently visit small communities of believers throughout the country who study the Scriptures and worship together. Freedom of religion, guaranteed under the Constitution, allows both belief and non-belief. No one may force others to accept his/her creed. Religious affiliation is openly acknowledged and Christians are generally admired locally for their seriousness and the exemplary quality of their lives.



The question of survival in complete isolation is a serious one. Any messages we receive from the Chinese Christians suggest, however, that the experience is important for them. They need time to find the essential elements of the Gospel and to build bridges of meaning to Chinese realities. The ambiguous history of the Church in China, related as it was to political and economic domination by external powers, imposes reticence on all Western desire for new relationships. We can only wait in faith that God is present not merely in the midst of those who acknowledge that presence but also in all the stirrings of spirit in the larger society.

The perception which American Christians have of our calling within our own society may have greater

significance for the future of the Church in China than renewed relations at present. In a time when we have lost a sense of direction as a people, when our myths compete with each other and our sense of the sacred is blurred, it is time to discover a new vision.

Rather than seeking to breathe new life into old myths, perhaps a remnant might emerge, sensitive not only to our own past but to the universal experience of the numinous. There seems already to be marked movement from narrow religiosity toward a greater appropriation of the rich resources of the whole human family. A new sense of our calling as a people would require the restoration of wholeness to our public life, through affirmation of the religious ground of all reality.



## Visiting With a Chinese Woman

On a Sunday afternoon during my trip to China I took a taxi to visit a woman whom I had come to know very well during a visit she had made to Wuhan

in 1950. She was a graduate of a Christian college and had studied abroad, returning after Liberation. She was herself a Christian and an outstanding example of the best of those whose life and spirit of service was formed through the Church and its educational system in the '30s and '40s in China.

The taxi passed through the labyrinth of tiny lanes that make up the many densely populated neighborhoods off the main streets. Finally we found her small house, and I began a three hour visit which proved to be, for me, the most evocative, instructive and deeply personal of all my hours in China. Our talk was free of any need to prove ourselves to each other.

I put many hard questions to her, concentrating on how life had been for her and for those she knew well. When I expressed wonder at the claim we had heard everywhere that there was no sexual activity before marriage and almost no marriage before 25 years of age, she asked, "Carman, don't you remember how it was for Chinese women before the revolution? Of course these young women don't want to give up their present freedom. They don't want to be tied down by families when they can travel about the country, deeply involved in the heady experience of working for the future of the country and for their own future. They are involved with other young people in arts, music and in productive labor. They see and feel the pulse of the country. They know that what they do matters."

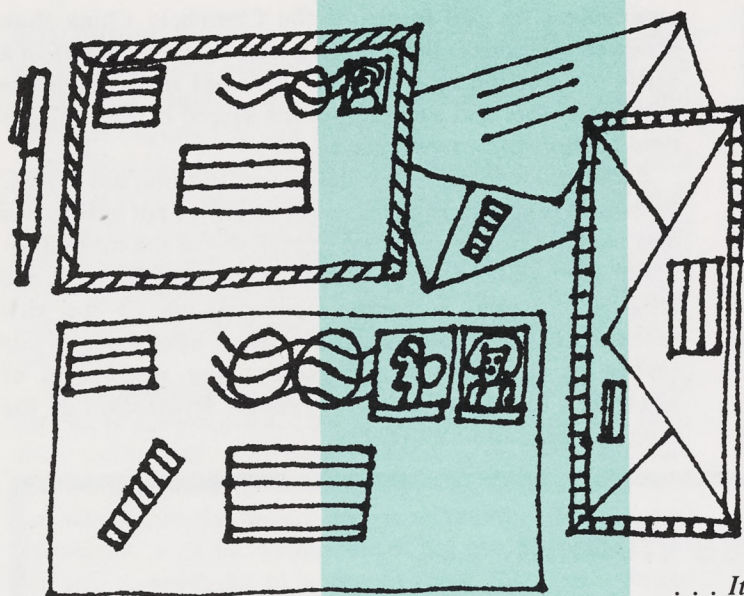
She cited examples, described a way of life which sounded much like the committed experience of those young persons in religious communities and movements familiar to me.

She told me how easy her access is to decision-making processes which directly affect her daily life. "I can go any time to the members of the neighborhood revolutionary committee. I know them all. They know me. On any matters related to education, health services, sanitation, relationships between persons and groups which affect our life together, I go in, talk with people, and we plan ways to solve whatever the problem is. Then something happens through all of us working together. It is not like the old days when those who ran our cities were far away and didn't listen, when we couldn't change anything through our own efforts."

I could not avoid thinking of my own dying city and my powerlessness.

I asked about the contrast between what her life as an educated person might have been and what had actually happened to her as a civil servant, responsible for establishing standards of factory safety, the profession for which she had actually been prepared in pre-revolutionary days and followed for the first 20 years of the People's Republic. She indicated her home and said, "I might have had greater luxury. I would have been part of a small, professionally trained group, serving a small portion of my people. I would have been working against the tide. Now the whole society is based on the principle of serving all the Chinese people. Whatever personal sacrifice I have made, it has been worth it."





## Two Faces of Sun Moon

*... It may prove to be one of the most All-American events of this bicentennial year.*

*On the traditional side there was a hell-fire and brimstone preacher — a recent immigrant — speaking to a very representative and unmelted pot of New Yorkers about God's plan for his chosen country, America.*

*On the modern side there was that citadel of American baseball, Yankee Stadium — recently refurbished at record cost overruns attributed to Mafia-related contractors; there were rhetoric, violence, laughter, brass bands, balloons, flag-waving, fire crackers and petitions to legalize pot; there were street people, religion addicts, anti-communists, clowns, Lutherans, defenders of the American Empire, hundreds of private police and, in the middle of it all standing tall on a platform by second base, a millionaire industrialist/religionist flailing his arms and screaming in Korean from behind bullet proof glass . . .*

Rev. Moon and His Bicentennial Blitz  
*Christianity and Crisis, 7/9/76*

Sun Myung Moon and his Unification Church have proved attractive enough to entice into its ranks thousands of Christians — especially youth — from Protestant mainline and Catholic churches over the past few years.

One of these, a young Black Episcopalian (let's call him Matthew) is in frequent communication with our office, and wrote the letter below reflecting on Rev. Moon's appearance this summer in Yankee Stadium.

But the Rev. Moon is a controversial figure on the religion scene. A young Methodist missionary journalist of our acquaintance, Jim Stentzel, attended the Sun Moon festival while on furlough in the United States. The excerpt from an article he wrote (above) indicates he had a different point of view. He set it down for us in counterpoint to Matthew's (below).

If you find the correspondence provocative, we would welcome *your* view.



## DEAR BISHOP DeWITT:

As I was selling candy in a parking lot one day, I contemplated upon the value of the God Bless America Festival.

I discovered a new depth of love that Rev. Moon had for mankind, of which I had been incognizant before.

In the Yoido Rally in Korea, of which I was a delegate representing Liberia, some newspapers reported as much as 1.2 million people attending. The rally was anti-communistic. So much of the bulk of work done in the Unification Church is.

Until recently in Korea, and still in America, Rev. Moon has been disparaged because of this position. This defilement, to be sure, is embarrassing. Yet, he has remained inexorably unmoved.

Then, the other day, I understood why. Communism must be converted into Christianity because, by its denial of salvation through the crucifixion of Jesus, it prevents or will prevent billions of people from having eternal life. Thus, it nullifies the crucifixion. How tragic that so many former Christian American youth trade their eternal life for clichés and slogans.

How pitiful that the world and American intelligentsia endearingly embrace it. How sad God must be, and how in vain Jesus must feel his excruciatingly painful death was. How ironic that the very World Council of Churches and Vatican resemble Henry Kissinger in showing compassion for the very foe of the God they serve. What a clouded vision God's elect children have.

As you would expect, I have renewed concern in the success of Rev. Moon's festival and hope American leaders can begin to have a continual partnership with him as he tries to liquidate the ideology of communism and to establish a refreshing brotherhood amongst nations before communism liquidates Christian nations and Christianity.

Should the worldwide and American growth rate of communism continue unchecked in 10 years, Marxism will be taught in American schools and advocated from the White House. Then, the children, grandchildren and descendants of this generation will never know Jesus or salvation. Then all God's work since the creation will be jeopardized.

I truly hope you can investigate a book which can be obtained from the Unification Church called *Communism: Proposal and Counter Proposal*. I also hope that you and those whom you know can find some alliance or coalition with the Unification Church in this work.

May Jesus attend your dreams,  
Matthew

## DEAR BISHOP DeWITT:

Sitting in Yankee Stadium June 1, I contemplated the value of the God Bless America Festival, and I discovered a churning rage and lingering nausea which I had not known before.

The crux of the matter is that any "defilement" of Moon has been by his own hands — by his condoning murder and torture in his fatherland. In his One World Crusade to crush communism, he supports the machinery of repression that keeps Park Chung Hee in power in South Korea today — and keeps many of Jesus' truly committed disciples in prison.

Those self-righteous, self-elected "children of God" who argue simply that "there is no freedom in North Korea" miss the whole point of the Bible: that God harshly judges any government and any system which would unjustly enslave the body and grind down the soul of any person.

Moon is as American as anti-communism and apple pie. We should hope that he is a throw-back to by-gone days rather than a pioneer of the new age, for his movement shows the latent McCarthyism and the potential fascism in the American mood and mind-set.

Moonism also reminds me of the failures of U.S. churches, specifically the blindness of Christendom's uncritical marriage with capitalism. If Jesus appeared tomorrow in any U.S. suburb and in any North Korean farm village, I honestly believe that more North Koreans would recognize and follow him — probably because there have been no churches as we know them in North Korea for 30 years. My message to Matthew is this: let's begin by converting capitalism to Christianity. Let's get off using words like *liquidate* and instead speak of love more often in the context of loving your enemy. Let's recognize that Moon himself "nullifies the crucifixion" by stating outright that Jesus failed. This logically means that his death was wasted. Let's open our eyes to the fact that Moon posturing as the successful Jesus has about as much integrity as (but is much more vicious than) your representing Liberia in South Korea.

American Christianity has laid and is continuing to lay some meaningless trips on its young people. I'm not at all surprised that many of these young people are seeking integrity outside the old structures. Yet it is tragic that so many people who cannot see the light of the Son can neither see the dark side of the Moon.

The tragedy began with the failure of people like you and me — priests, bishops, missionaries and church communicators — and perhaps it can be overcome some way.

May Jesus attend your waking hours,  
Jim Stentzel



# The Community, Southern Style

by Harcourt E. Waller, Jr.



*By faith Abraham, when he was called to go out into a place which he should after receive for an inheritance, obeyed; and he went out, not knowing whither he went.*

—Hebrews: 11:8

By 8:15 p.m. Sunday, approximately 35 men and women had taken seats in a circle around the large living room. Some were in chairs; some were on the floor. The next-to-last couple to arrive put a bottle of wine and a loaf of homemade bread on the coffee table.

Bob and Betty Joe began leading the singing of rounds. Then I began a prayer — a reminder that though we were always in the presence of God, in a special way we had come together to renew ourselves as a particular group in the midst of that presence. The statement blended into words petitioning the power of the Holy Spirit to cleanse by removing barriers to closer relationships, while giving a clearer sense of the group's mission to the world. Next Mac read from the Old Testament and began a brief discussion. Ginny did the same with the New Testament reading.

Then I announced that Bob had something important to share. Bob said during the previous week he learned that his tumor which had been removed was malignant. He told us of his tortured dreams, depression, terror and loneliness as he began to face the imminent possibility of his own death. In a few days he would fly to a special hospital in Houston for victims of cancer and would probably begin chemotherapy.

Harcourt E. Waller, Jr., is a national board member of the Church and Society Network and C&S convener for the Central-South region.

After a few minutes of shocked response, I spoke briefly about the healing possibilities within the community and, with Bob's consent, asked all to pray for a cure. One after the other each embraced, laid hands upon him, and uttered prayers of healing.

In a few minutes I talked more about the call to be healers in society as well. At that point Pete reported for the Housing Task Force. He and Gene had now secured a house and a mortgage ready to be used by a low-income family not previously able to own a home of their own. The task force needed \$3,000 to buy the equity. Ten people volunteered to provide such funds.

Gene reported that a local home counseling service was looking for a low-income family ready to take possession of the house. He also alerted the group to the necessity for organizing a minor repair and clean up operation.

It was then time for prayers, all kinds of prayers. Most offered freely their petitions, intercessions, and thanksgivings. This was followed by *The Peace* which broke forth in joyous pandemonium for about 10 minutes. The bread and wine were prepared. The Community blessed, broke the bread and served each other, then sat down to business. They were especially attentive to the update Kathryn gave them on the Hunger Task Force's continued progress in Food Stamp outreach. Some personal concerns were aired, then the gathering officially adjourned, a few stayed to socialize. The Community of the Fellowship of Jesus had participated in its own weekly act of renewal.

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The Community of the Fellowship of Jesus began in the Spring of 1972. About 40 people entered into discussion,



investigation and planning aimed at discovering how to be a community of Christians who could express themselves freely, creatively and lovingly. They were determined to avoid legalism, dehumanizing customs, and all past institutional arrangements that would inhibit their search for a free and open expression of the Christian faith. A staff writer for the *Charlotte Observer* put her version of the beginning in a recent newspaper article:

*THE COMMUNITY* was begun as a somewhat embittered church-in-exile by Harcourt Waller, some members of Christ Episcopal Church and other friends who rallied around him after his controversial firing as rector there in 1972.

For more than two years before his ouster, the Princeton-educated priest had launched torpedoes of shame on every American tragedy from the Vietnam war to racism, hunger and poverty, from his pulpit at the 2,500-member church at 1412 Providence Road.

Church leaders charged they had 'irreconcilable differences' with Waller, 53, an independent, wilful man with a passion for Christian activism . . .

The first participants in The Community were middle to upper-middle income people. Most came from an Episcopalian background. They were professionals, business men and women, educators and housewives — "straight" people. They were also unconventional in their common concern for new ways to be Christians. Most of them had been sympathetic, if not active, in the Civil Rights struggle. Some had actively opposed the Vietnam War.

As churchpeople they had been frustrated by their inability to deal creatively with social issues through ordinary parish life. They read books and articles related to their search. The one they liked best was "Call To Commitment," the story of the Church of The Savior in Washington, D.C. They borrowed ideas wherever they could find them. They sent me to visit and talk with innovative persons identified with new patterns of Christian life and action. When they had done a sufficient amount of preliminary study and discussion, they spent a long weekend together at a conference center. Immediately afterward, they took legal steps to organize officially as, The Community of the Fellowship of Jesus. The longer name is seldom used. They call themselves, THE COMMUNITY. As a result of their initial work, they hammered out a statement of purpose with a commentary. Written on the first page was:

*In the spring of 1972 a group of Charlotteans began to talk about becoming a flexible community of Christians uninhibited by expensive church properties, outmoded organization, and other financial*

*and psychological roadblocks which make it hard for Christians to be very Christian.*

*The result was a statement of three purposes:*

*1) To affirm that God is at work in the city calling Christians to the task of making and keeping life truly human.*

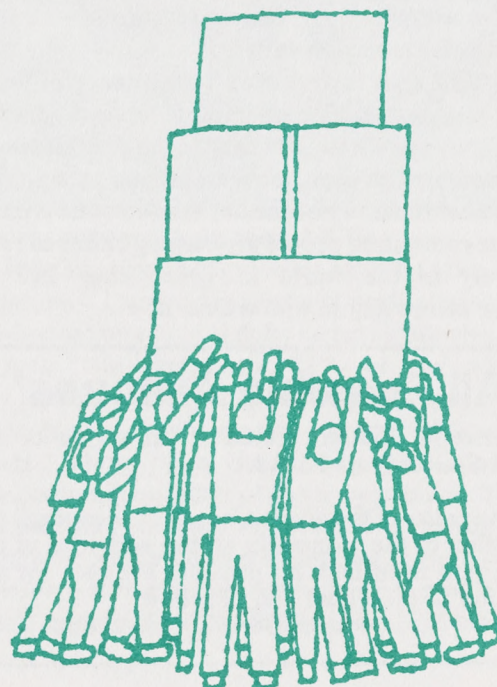
*2) To work toward becoming a knowledgeable and productive Christian community.*

*3) To originate and test new patterns of Christian growth and action.*

*It was decided to build no churches. At the time of writing The Community has no one place to call home. Places are not important to its existence.*

The members next dealt with ways to organize their programs and relate action to liturgical life. They adopted a "task force" method of meeting needs. A task force exists as long as it takes to accomplish a particular goal, then it self-destructs. They agreed not to have long-term standing committees.

As a result of Bob's experience with cancer, the community started a task force called "Dayspring." The goal was to identify, organize and train "recovered" cancer victims for the purpose of cancer counseling. The initial Dayspring group were drawn from The Community. They organized meetings, sent letters to all area clergy and physicians, publicized a phone number, and initiated an around-the-clock counseling service. There is now an extensive network with seminars, meetings, training programs reaching far beyond the city and county. Many of





the Dayspring methods have been borrowed from the techniques of Alcoholics Anonymous. Dayspring has now been "cut loose" to live and grow on its own.

Kathryn and the Hunger Task Force of 14 members of The Community are already a success story nationally publicized. Their work model has been adopted by the National Council of Churches' Task Force on Domestic Hunger for use across the country. The Community's Hunger Task Force did its initial work in local Food Stamp outreach and was instrumental in adding approximately 20,000 eligible persons to the Food Stamp rolls in Charlotte-Mecklenburg. Kathryn and several of the original members moved on to help establish a statewide network called The North Carolina Hunger Coalition, to raise participation in the Food Stamp program across North Carolina and to monitor the way the State of North Carolina administers the program.

Lest anyone think The Community is simply a social action agency, the pattern of its life together is rooted in prayer and hard work at deepening faith while raising internal "trust levels." There is a weekly "freewheeling" liturgy and two weekend retreats a year. Consultants have been under contract to introduce and train The Community in problem solving, creative resolution of conflict, methods of meditation for greater internal mind-body control and usefulness.

I had always studied and thought and taught about the quality of life in a genuine eucharistic community. It is invigorating to be a part of one where what is done is the action of the whole body of people rather than something done by the clergy for the laity.

I do not think ours is an isolated experience of longing. On the basis of our search and implementation of what we have been finding, we have in fact become a third force in the contemporary Christian movement, and I suspect there are and will continue to be other examples of new patterns in which the committed people are coming closer to relating redemptively to the world in which they live while ministering effectively to and within it.

### 'All Possible Avenues'

The Episcopal Church stated in an action of the General Convention of 1913:

...it is the policy of the whole Church to encourage the cooperation of the women in all the activities of the Church, and to furnish all possible avenues for the expression of their zeal and devotion.

—Journal, General Convention, p. 345

# 'Total Amnesty, Not Shamnesty'

by Patricia Reif

September is a significant month in the struggle for amnesty for Vietnam war resisters. A month of ups and downs.

**ITEM:** Sept. 29, 1973 was the opening date of the last General Convention of the Protestant Episcopal Church of the United States. The House of Bishops passed a resolution part of which stated:

*Resolved, the House of Deputies concurring, that general amnesty be granted to all who have refused to participate in the conflict in Indochina; and be it further*

*Resolved, the House of Deputies concurring, that this Convention calls upon dioceses and parishes of this Church to include in their Christian education and social concerns programs a serious consideration of the question of amnesty and the needs of returning veterans.*

This resolution failed to pass in the House of Deputies. At the time of this writing, the fate of the resolution at the 1976 General Convention is unknown.

**ITEM:** On Sept. 17, 1974 President Ford proclaimed his Clemency or "Earned Re-entry" program covering about 10% of war resisters. It lasted six months, and evoked a less than 10% response from those eligible. They called it a "Shamnesty" program and effectively boycotted it.

**ITEM:** On Sept. 5, 1975 the "Vietnam Era Reconciliation Act" (H.R. 9596) was reported out of a House subcommittee to the full Judiciary Committee. Authored by Representative Robert Kastenmeier (D-Wis.), this bill would grant immunity from prosecution to some war resisters, provided they sign a sworn statement that the action for which they seek relief was the result of "disapproval of U.S. military involvement in Indochina." Though often referred to as an "amnesty" bill, it is really a weak and ineffective compromise. To date it is stalled in the Judiciary Committee. On the Senate side several amnesty-

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related bills have been introduced, but no hearings have been set. As Senator Philip Hart remarked, "Congress has the power to grant amnesty, but it doesn't have the guts."

National Amnesty Week in February was a dramatic demonstration of the depth of organized concern around amnesty and the progress that has been made among those who hold public office. Over 300 actions were carried out in all 50 states. Governors of 12 states and dozens of mayors and city councils endorsed amnesty resolutions, and hundreds of sermons for amnesty were preached in local churches and synagogues.

Prospects for Republican Party support are dim, but hopefully some positive measures will be taken. In the Democratic Party encouraging signs abound. The Platform took an important step in calling for the complete "pardon" (not amnesty) of all persons who are in legal or financial jeopardy because of their opposition to the war in Indochina. Speaking on "Meet the Press" several months ago Jimmy Carter singled out amnesty as the "most difficult issue" he would have to deal with if elected. Carter has promised that, if elected, he will "pardon" the 4,000 indicted draft resisters and consider case-by-case "pardon" of the deserters still at large.

## What Amnesty Means

Amnesty is different from clemency, pardon, or forgiveness. It is a deliberate "forgetting" of past violation of civil, criminal, or military law. It involves no punitive conditions, such as alternative service, and is usually a *class* action, without case-by-case review of individual circumstances.

Amnesty is a legal act provided for in the Constitution. It may be proclaimed by the President or legislated by Congress. It is the law's way of undoing what the law may have done unjustly. In the language of our Judaeo-Christian tradition, the granter of amnesty refuses to play God — by forgiving condoning, or condemning. S/he simply "forgets" the alleged offense, for the sake of reconciliation and a new beginning.

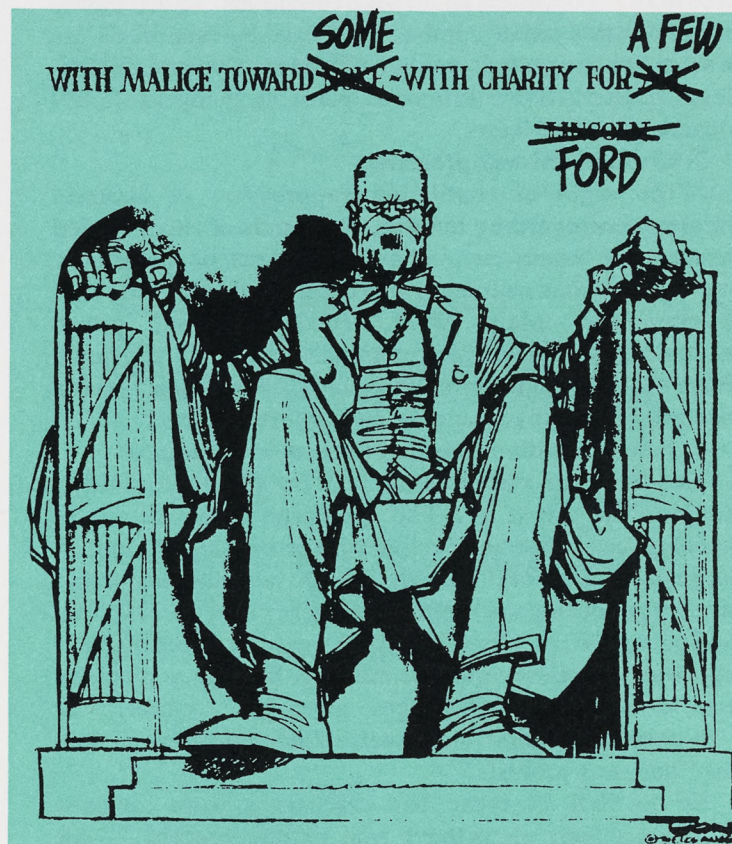
Because of media concentration on the 4,000 indicted draft resisters who went into exile or underground, most Americans are aware of this group. What many do not know is that there are at least *one million Americans* who still suffer because of their various forms of opposition to the war. Let us look at four categories or classes of resisters, and some specific reasons why they deserve amnesty.

### 1. Draft resisters, including non-registrants

Draft resisters were primarily middle class, white, and well-educated. Many applied for C.O. status, but were

denied it. For example, in 1970 alone, 100,000 applied, but only 18,000 received it. The inequities of local draft boards in granting deferments and their outright discrimination against poor and minority people are well known, especially to those who did draft counselling.

In addition to the above, according to Selective Service estimates, about 200,000 men per year resisted by simply not registering for the draft. The threat of discovery and conviction is always present. Amnesty would remove that constant threat.



### 2. Deserters and long term AWOLs

As Fritz Efav pointed out in his speech at the Democratic convention, "The great majority of draft-eligible men were never drafted by virtue of deferments, loopholes, privilege, and luck." In fact, only 11% of the 15.6 million draft-eligible men actually entered military service. The majority of the 1.7 million who were drafted came from poor families. They often had little education, and a disproportionate number of them were black. They lacked the resources necessary to obtain C.O. status or college deferments. So the burden of serving in the armed forces fell disproportionately on the less privileged.

There were over 423,000 Vietnam desertions — more



than in any war in U.S. history. Some deserters had fought and even been decorated in Vietnam, but came home, dropped their guns, and said, "No more!" Many tried to get out by applying for C.O. status; when this was denied, as it usually was, they decided to go AWOL. The rates of desertions match U.S. escalation and de-escalation in an almost perfect bell curve.

Some people object to amnesty for deserters on the grounds that they left their units on the battlefield, thus endangering the lives of their comrades. The truth is that less than 1% occurred under such conditions. To attempt to weed out this small number on a case-by-case basis (as Carter has suggested) would be an expensive and endless legal process. Some estimates place as many as 25,000 deserters still at large.

### 3. Civilian anti-war protestors

In the light of continuing suppression of accurate information regarding the war, thousands of citizens tried to alert the American public to what was happening by peaceful demonstrations, marches, and acts of civil disobedience. Many were arrested, served prison sentences, and now carry criminal records as convicted felons. A total amnesty must include them. Their records need to be expunged and all civil rights restored.

### 4. Veterans with other than honorable discharges

The discharge system is the military's method of firing people. The threat of a bad discharge is the means of keeping men in line and dealing with protest and dissent. A large percentage of the nearly 700,000 less than honorable discharges during the Vietnam era were given for desertion and going AWOL. Often, too, they were the direct result of anti-war activities within the military. But the real reason was camouflaged; discharges given for "apathy" or "character disorders" look much better on the records than for "anti-war protests."

Up to 90% of these bad discharges were imposed administratively — without trial or due process — for offenses which would never be considered crimes in civilian life. The 10% given as a result of court martial have already subjected individuals to sentencing and punishment.

In her talk to the National Democratic Platform Committee Louise Ransom, co-founder of Gold Star Parents for Amnesty, summarized the argument for this category:

*For the Democratic Party not to include consideration of veterans with bad discharges in a broad general amnesty would give rise to the justified criticism that we are a party that favors the privileged, which is certainly not in our tradition.*

Could we not substitute "the Episcopal Church" for "the Democratic Party"?

*Letter continued from page 2*

appearing to be smug or putting him down, I really want to ask him "who really cares about that?"

For me that thrust is about as relevant as the ones we did in Detroit as we tried to find handles in the urban scene to hook the church into so the church could become more "relevant" to the demands of the 20th century. Our friends in the city administration used to shake their heads and ask, "why should we be concerned with your problem?" They were right. But we persisted as if they didn't really understand, and we did.

Somehow, we thought, we have a secret that they need to ask for and then we'll give it to them and that would justify our being there to make sense out of their lousy lives.

All this is hogwash for me now. I couldn't see it then. This was the biggest dependency: To be the evangelist who tells "them" about their salvation. As they said, "Who needs the church? Who asked you to come into our world? Why do you think your insights are of any value for us?" I think that's really prophetic.

I still have my deep passions, my concerns, my burning desires to see justice done. I am just as feisty as I ever was; I am wrong just as much of the time as I used to be, but now I don't feel the need to apologize for it, only acknowledge it.

I think Women's Ordination is a conundrum. Why encourage women to enter into a profession that is already overloaded with excess clergy by about 5-6,000, especially since it is happening at a time when the excesses are bound to increase as the available positions continue to decrease? So women become priests and even Bishops! Will that necessarily bring about the changes to the church that are necessary? And what does it do for those young women who might be more serviceable in the political arena, in the work world, in the decision-making areas of their worlds — where the church definitely isn't?

Thank you for letting me put down where I find my meaning today. It's not in the pew every Sunday. It's not in my re-reading of Scripture periodically. It's not from my association with "Church people". It's not from being a professional in an institution that tries to make itself wanted by a world that seems not to care whether it exists or not. I find my meaning, my faith, my motivation for living, my excitement in simply understanding me; being responsible for me; taking care of me; and finding my validation of myself in me. No longer do I need to cry "Help" in the sense of making my life worthwhile.

It has been a difficult lesson but it has been and continues to be the best lesson I have ever learned: self-awareness, self-responsibility; self-assertion; and self-validation.

James Guinan  
Sacramento, California

*Continued on back cover*



# PLAIN TALK

Dear Friends,

With this issue of THE WITNESS we celebrate our second anniversary.

Permit us a bit of reminiscing...

When we began publishing two years ago, it was an unlikely time to re-enter the field. Inflation was causing steep rises in postage as well as in all other costs. The sidelines of the periodical path were increasingly dotted with publications — both secular and religious — which had to drop out.

In spite of this, THE WITNESS re-entered the race. Its situation was different from most, in terms of circumstance and objective.

**As to circumstance:** In October, 1974, speaking of the Rev. William Spofford, former editor, we said:

*By dint of paying himself a subsistence salary, stinting on costs, receiving many contributions in addition to subscription prices, a small capital fund grew and with wise investment appreciated in value over the decades. At the time of his death over two years ago there were sufficient financial resources to resume publication...*

That subsidy can make THE WITNESS viable for some time, without the burden of running advertising. For this we are grateful.

**As to objective:** We feel THE WITNESS has been making its mark as an independent monthly — sometimes controversial, always provocative — on the issues behind the issues in church, nation and world. THE WITNESS seeks to provide the kind of analytical reporting which the church sorely needs to be faithful to our time.

But the Board of Directors of the Episcopal Church Publishing Company has a fiduciary responsibility to serve the Gospel as best it can with the resources at hand. The question arises: How wide a circulation should THE WITNESS have to justify the expense of publication?

Two years after the re-appearance of THE WITNESS we are approaching the 3,000 mark in paid subscriptions.

Not so bad, considering the brief time we have been back in business, starting virtually from scratch. So our friends tell us. But we have a continuing question about the adequacy of a publication if it continues to reach only one out of every 800 Episcopalians.

If the number of subscribers were doubled, say, one out of every 400, we should feel more confident that THE WITNESS is an effective instrument to carry on the social mission of the church.

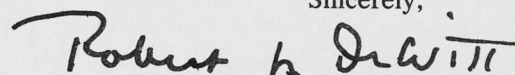
This then, is our immediate objective — to double our subscriptions.

The more simple route is for each subscriber to secure one more. But since life is not as simple as mathematics, — would you be responsible for securing *two* subscriptions?

That is, obtain subscriptions from two people in your parish, or of your acquaintance, who would profit from the type of journalism that THE WITNESS provides. Or treat them to a gift subscription — our renewal rate on these is high. Use the form enclosed in this issue.

And we thank you, because we know you care about this mission as much as we do.

Sincerely,



Robert L. DeWitt  
Editor

## A Lazarus-Like Episcopal Church

The Episcopal Church today is Lazarus-like: we are moribund; unmoving...But God is near! In our midst! Some of us share God's grief for this old friend. Some of us share the faith of Mary and Martha in the Call back to Life. The power of the living Christ quickens us against our will-toward-death: from inertia to liveliness.

Alleluia! There is no turning back. So I share this with you:

## Lovesong in the House of Quarrelsome Overseers\*

Meditation on John 11:17-44

Jesus wept.

The human side we've failed  
to worship,  
the side of sweat and  
tears and jokes and  
righteous rage  
and deep, so deep fatigue.

Like a mother longing  
over the bricks and stones  
of Israel's heart.

Like a mother yearning  
over the stifling child  
choked on its own  
dry tongue and spittle.  
Jesus wept.

And two sisters rush to the tasks of faith:  
remorse, rebuke, rebirth.

*We dead entreat you.  
Loose us. Let us go.*

Stinking, old, despaired of,  
Lazarus, come forth.

\*"The Episcopal Church" in Mandarin idiom.

alla bozarth-campbell



Continued from page 14

The National Council for Universal and Unconditional Amnesty (NCUUA), a coalition of over 50 religious, civic, and peace groups (including the Episcopal Peace Fellowship) founded in 1973, supports total amnesty for all the above categories of resisters.

It sets the general case for amnesty within the wider context of the war: how and why we got involved, and the crimes against humanity committed there. More specific arguments based on such concepts as reconciliation, healing of wounds, respect for individual conscience and forgetting the past appear in the dozens of religious statements for amnesty issued since the first UCC Synod statement of 1968. (See *Religious Statements on Amnesty*, published by the National Interreligious Service Board on Conscientious Objection, 1974.)

While the actual fighting ended in April, 1975, amnesty is part of the unfinished business of the war, and should be linked with other related issues: providing reconstruction aid to Vietnam, normalizing diplomatic, trade, and cultural relations with the nations of Indochina, admitting Vietnam to the United Nations, and assuring adequate rehabilitation and compensation to all physically or psychologically wounded veterans.

On the second anniversary of the Clemency Program — September 17 — NCUUA will launch a nationwide postcard campaign to Presidential Candidate Jimmy Carter in Plains, Georgia asking him to grant amnesty, *not* pardon, to *all* war resisters. Attractive "picture" postcards may be obtained from the NCUUA office either in New York (235 E. 49 St., New York, NY 10017) or Los Angeles (5899 West Pico Blvd., Los Angeles, CA 90019).

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