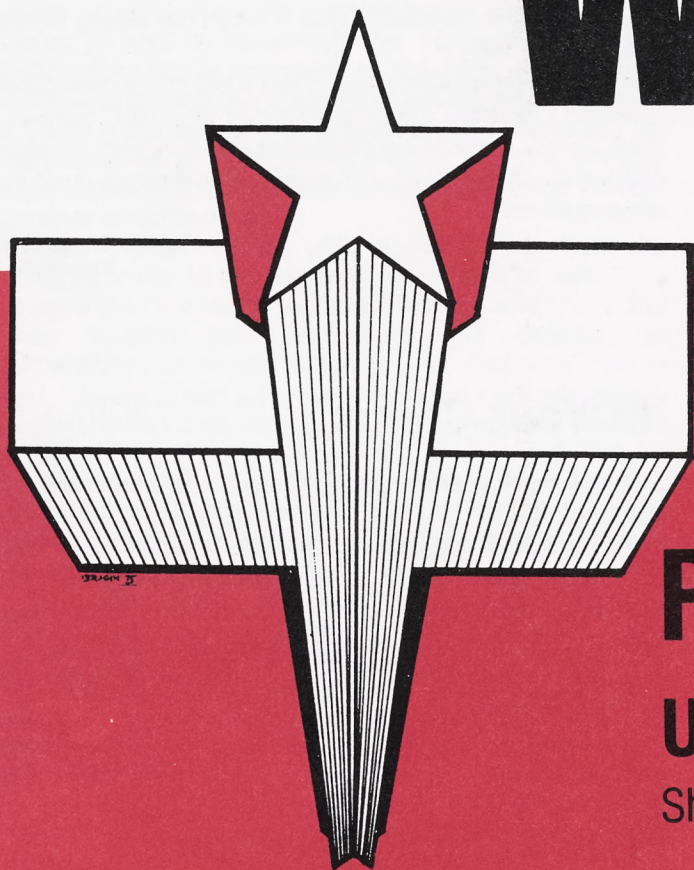


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THE WITNESS

December, 1976

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PRAYER:

Under Duress

Sheila Cassidy

After Success

Nicholas Jones

Magnificat and Call

Alla Bozarth-Campbell

Letters to the Editor

The Witness reserves the right to condense all letters

Namesake Defends Paul

Ms. Wells' preference for Jesus over Paul (WITNESS, September) was one clearly shared by the apostle (*1 Cor. 1:10-17; 2 Cor. 4:5*). Why, then, does she wish to knock the one to whom she owes that powerful figure of the Bride of Christ and from whom we have that other assertion — revolutionary in its time and still not digested! — that in Christ Jesus there is neither male nor female?

The church came clearly to the view that the apostles' witness was faithful and reliable, perhaps the best way to "get with Jesus." And the church from the first agreed with Peter and the others that Paul was an apostle, and indeed *the* apostle to us Gentiles. Is she really suggesting that Paul preached another gospel than that of the apostolic communities which produced the four Gospels? That would be to say that those communities didn't know their own minds.

For 19 centuries Christians have found that Paul has helped them (of course not the only help) to "get with Jesus." If anyone thinks that the church (Paul's beloved term, possibly never used historically by Jesus) is the Bride of Christ, then she or he shows the marks of having learned something from Paul. Or as Paul would have preferred to say it, she or he has learned from Him (Christ) by way of His slave (Paul). May we all continue to do so!

— Prof. Paul M. van Buren
Cambridge, Mass.

CREDITS

Cover, David Bragin;
graphic, p. 8, Dana Martin.

Needs 'Bread' for Sparta

I am hoping that Helen Seager can forward a copy of *Bishop's Bread* to me as soon as possible ("Orgy and Out," September issue).

For some time I have been seeking suitable recipes for large groups of people who choose to eat with conscience while attending conferences, retreats, and other such gatherings at the YMCA camp where I am employed. Our cook is overworked, underpaid, and understandably rebellious at being asked to research new recipes "for a bunch of women-libbers." That is why I am asking for the booklet in a hurry!

Our local Ecumenical Council has a sub committee called "hunger Coalition." With permission from Ms. Seager, I think Sparta Ecumenical Council might very well consider duplicating the contents for distribution through our local congregations.

— Virginia Whitehouse
Sparta, N.J.

'In Your Corner'

I need more activities just as I need a few more holes in the head.

Nevertheless the things I have read about THE WITNESS, particularly Bishop DeWitt's editorial "On Liberating Prophetic Voices," indicate that Church and Society is addressing subjects which need attention.

So I'm in your corner. I'm a parishioner at Emmanuel Church, Boston.

— Jane L. Keddy
Wakefield, Mass.

Food Political Weapon

The quotations in the box, "Do You Care?" in the September issue are misleading. Our enemy in the fight against hunger is not meat — it is nothing more or less than the tastes which the American public have developed. Americans have developed an affinity for grain fed beef — marbled with fat, therefore tender. It is true that beef cattle consume an inordinately high proportion of grain to produce that flesh that American cattle growers brag is so tender. The ratio of grain to flesh is high — the facts in the quotations are true enough.

Letters continued on page 15

THE WITNESS

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'A Woman's Reach'

Robert L. DeWitt

The recent convention in Minneapolis took historic action in approving the ordination of women to the ministry, and in accepting the 15 women already ordained to the priesthood. In the light of that, it is surprising to note the absence of jubilation on the part of those most devoted to and involved in working for that objective. Why is this so, since it would seem that what they sought has been obtained? Three factors deserve consideration.

First, there may be with some a fear that the struggle of the 15 women may have been in vain. The concern that the many women deacons, and the many more women just beginning the process of preparation for ordination, will feel that now "all is well," when in fact all is not well. That they will gladly accept the fact they now can be ordained, will see this as the new mode of the church's life, and not be sensitive to nor concerned about the continuing and much more significant patterns of sexism in the church against which the ordinations of the 15 were actually a symbolic protest.

Only the matter of *access* to the priesthood by women has been established. The matter of their *participation* in the life of the church runs solidly into the myriad manifestations of sexism. Bishops, vestries, conventions and congregations have not even begun to face the questions of placement, preferment, acknowledgement and acceptance. The lesson — that "in Christ there is neither male nor female" — could be completely lost on the system as it takes a gulp (as it did in Minneapolis) and then plunges on its accustomed course. The prophetic act will have been coopted, "regularized," and then life can go on much as before, with no clear and significant gain.

A second reason for the sober reaction to the convention action (by those who approved of it) may be not only a growing realization of how "token" the victory was, but also a glimpse of new areas of concern. When, in any society, a group gains new access into the community life, this often serves as a breakthrough into wider demands. The civil rights legislation of 1964 heralded by liberals as a great step

forward, significantly ushered in the era of racial revolt, the burning of cities, "black power," black separatism, and the call for reparations.

It is too easy and often erroneous to draw parallels between the resistance to sexism and the resistance to racism. But it is true that an acceleration of expectations often follows a dramatic advance. Continuing resistance to the church's authority when and where it shows itself incapable of dealing with legitimate concerns could be a result. Legitimate aspirations are not easily contained by structures, once what seems right also seems possible.

A third factor could be the frustrations and confusion which come to an effort which has focused on a particular goal, once that goal has been achieved. In a sense, this suggests the ultimate dissolution of any issue-centered movement. Clergy and Laity Concerned About Vietnam was a stunning effort mounted against the Vietnamese war. But once armed hostilities ceased, the many good reasons for the continuation of the organization had a hard time withstanding the drag of the popular feeling that "it is over." So with the issue of women's ordination, post-Minneapolis.

The advent of the Christ child was not an "issue-oriented" event. It was not in order to focus on the overcoming of the Roman Empire, nor even to open up the insights of Jewish monotheism to the Gentile world. Rather, it was to cast fire upon this earth, to enable the eternal presence of God and of his spirit of truth and love and justice in the ongoing affairs of this world. Mary's song resonates with that purpose when she says, "*My soul magnifies the Lord...who puts down the mighty from their seat, and exalts the humble and meek.*"

It is to be hoped that those who worked and gave so much for the ordination of women will recognize the eternal dignity and worth of what they were about — will recognize that what they were involved in finds its proper focus in a larger setting; namely, that of the unending social mission of the church. Perhaps their lack of jubilation indicates the beginning of a deeper wisdom.

Prayer Under Duress

by Sheila Cassidy

Until I went to Chile in 1971, I was a rather ordinary sort of doctor, very involved in the rat-race, wanting to be successful — not so much to be rich — but to be good at my work and have a nice house and car and do all the things I like doing. I chose Chile because I had Chilean friends who told me it was a beautiful country.

It sounded very attractive: I visualized myself working shorter hours, living the grand life and marrying some tall, handsome man as I set off to seek my fortune.

Although I knew that Chile had the first democratically elected Marxist government, I did not go out of political motivation. Neither did I go for humanitarian reasons. I had never been interested in missionary work nor concerned myself with the problems of the underprivileged. I went out as a private person, perhaps escaping from the hardness of medical life in England. I arrived in Chile speaking no Spanish and found I could not practice without obtaining the Chilean medical title. I spent the next two years learning the language and doing the exams. During this time I worked and lived among the Chilean people and grew to love them and their country. And for a while it looked as though my dream would come true.

But then came the coup and a dramatic turn of events which led to my arrest.

I was in Santiago on Sept. 11, 1973, when the armed forces overthrew Salvador Allende's government. From my window I saw the house of government bombed by the Hawker Hunter jets and I saw the lorries full of armed soldiers, and the tanks, pass by my door. Immediately after the coup, general conditions were appalling. It was then I came to see another side of Chile.

Sheila Cassidy is a 38-year-old British surgeon who lived in Chile for four years. Her imprisonment and torture after the fall of President Salvador Allende brought her a deep renewal of Faith. She is presently considering entry into a religious order.



In 1975, two years after the coup, I was working for the National Health Service in a large emergency hospital in Santiago. With the worsening of the country's economic situation, hospitals had begun to change, and the poor and unemployed no longer had the right to free medical treatment. Therefore, I started working for a church clinic side by side with priests and nuns in the shanty towns, and for the first time came face to face with the reality of poverty and suffering and hunger.

Tried to Remove Bullet

It was during this time that I was asked by a Chilean Catholic priest to treat a wounded revolutionary who had been given refuge in the house of the American Sisters of Notre Dame. I operated on his leg in an unsuccessful attempt to remove a bullet. His condition deteriorated, and believing that he would die of blood poisoning unless the bullet was removed, I advised that he be given asylum. He was subsequently given refuge in the house of the apostolic delegate in Santiago. These measures were necessary because it was known that should he be handed over to the military authorities, his life would be in jeopardy.

On the night of October 31, I was arrested after a raid on the central house of the Columban Fathers, where I was treating a sick American nun. The only people in the house were the superior, the nun, the maid of the house and myself. The maid was killed in the first shots, and firing continued for 15 minutes despite the fact that there was no retaliation. I was then arrested and taken blindfolded to one of the DINA interrogation centers.

For the first 24 hours I was subjected to a lot of physical pain, and I thought that I was going to die. From having said in a blase sort of way before, "*Of course I don't mind dying, it'll all be okay,*" I suddenly thought, "*Is it — is it all true? Does God exist? Am I making a frightful mistake? Is it all a fairy story?*" I hung on to everything that I remembered and came to the conclusion that it was true,

but certainly I didn't feel warm and comforted by it.

Prayer has always been important to me and during the years before I was imprisoned I had disciplined myself to pray regularly every day and in many situations. During the actual time of torture, I prayed in a very desperate way — just a "Help me God," sort of prayer. It seemed the only thing to do — praying for strength to hold on, because they were trying to make me reveal the names of people whom I thought they were going to kill. I just said: "Oh God, help me, help me." It wasn't a particularly comforting prayer; it was more like an anguished cry in the dark.

What was comforting was that I suddenly felt enormously loved by God because I realised that I had in a way participated in Christ's suffering. It was an experience of Calvary.

Subjected to Shocks

I was strapped unclothed to a metal bunk and for three separate periods of about an hour was subjected to electrical shocks to make me divulge the names of the priests and nuns involved in giving shelter to the revolutionary.

To be stripped of my clothes and stretched out in such a defenseless way made me dare to think that I was experiencing in some slight way what Christ had suffered. All during that hard, dark time I felt that he was there and I asked him to help me to hang on. It was then that I understood St. Paul when he said: "Nothing can separate us from the love of Christ — not nakedness, nor peril, nor sword."

What I found curious, even at that time, was that I felt no hatred for my torturers. I just felt sorry for them. I could see how Christ forgave the people who tortured him, because it was so obvious they were such sad, sick people. After four days of physical pain, I was transferred to the solitary confinement block of Tres Alamos prison — a new world and a new set of problems.

I was left completely alone in a small room with just a bed, half of the bible in Spanish, an old *Reader's Digest* and a tiny glimpse of the mountains over a high brick wall. I was filled with an enormous fear that I had to keep tightly battened down, because it was quite possible that any moment they could have taken me back and tortured me again, or killed me. On a more practical level there was the problem of actually spending 24 hours a day alone. I think it's the same for people who live alone, who are ill and perhaps afraid of dying. I tried to determine what God

wanted of me at this time. And I remembered vividly the prayer of Dietrich Bonhoeffer while he was awaiting execution in a Nazi prisoner of war camp.

*O God, early in the morning do
I cry unto Thee.
Help me to pray, and to think only
of Thee.
I cannot pray alone.
In me there is darkness,
But with thee there is light.
I am lonely but Thou leavest me not.
I am restless, but with Thee there
is peace.
Thy ways are past understanding
but Thou knowest the way for
me.
Lord, whatsoever this day may
bring,
Thy name be praised.*

I tried very hard not to fight against what God wanted for me, and this is why I didn't pray desperately to be released. I prayed endlessly that if I was to die, then so be it — but that I should have the strength to die decently and with dignity. One of the most difficult times was after my visit to the judge, where I had to face for the first time that I might be spending five or ten years in jail. This was a terrible night. I felt very near to breaking — and I prayed as did the soldier in the trench under fire:

*Stay with me God, the night is dark —
the night is cold, my little spark
of courage dies. The night is long;
Be with me, God, and make me strong.
Life with its change of mood and shade
I want to live. I'm not afraid,
But me and mine are hard to part,
Oh, unknown God, lift up my heart.*

I lay awake all night fighting with my natural urge to pray to be saved and released. Trying to abandon myself to the



will of God was much harder than the experience of torture. Torture was imposed upon me — I had no option — whereas abandonment is a voluntary act. Hopkins' words came to mind:

*That night, that year
of now done darkness I wretch lay
wrestling
with (my God!) my God.*

I prayed for strength, I prayed to know what was right. I tried to love God, praise God. I thanked God that I had a bed, that I had enough to eat, that I was alive, that I was well, that I had a book. I thanked God for the birds that came and ate the crumbs on the windowsill and for the grass and for the little bit of the mountains that I could see.

Then I prayed for all the others who had been tortured and who were being tortured, that they should have strength. After three weeks alone, I was forced into another totally different situation. I was moved to a detention camp where there were 120 other women. We slept eight to a room measuring 2.5 by 2.8 meters, in tiered bunks, two people sleeping on the floor. Suddenly instead of thinking about myself all day I had to think about other people and how I should behave to help them.

Loved by Marxists

I was quite overwhelmed by their love and generosity. I would estimate that 90% of them had been tortured, as I. They worried if they thought I was unwell or depressed. I came to realize that they loved me specially, because I, who was not a Marxist, had helped one of them. They showered gifts upon me. Like a cross — of matchsticks and wool — the first ever made in this detention camp. And beads made of bread by a girl who spent many weeks in solitary confinement. Miniature chalices, fashioned from coins, were a special gift sent from the men's section. A bible given to me by the Red Cross in Chile was signed by many of my friends in prison the day I left.

When I lived for five weeks in close contact with the young Chilean revolutionaries I learned many things. I found that although they had definitely opted for violence they were motivated by love for the underprivileged people of Chile and of the world. Their primary option was one of service and this involved discipline, self-denial and risk of death. Their way of life in prison I can only describe as an example of life lived in the early Christian communities: All goods were held in common and those who had two shirts gave to those who did not have one.

In Memoriam



While THE WITNESS was processing Sheila Cassidy's article, Orlando Letelier, Chilean Ambassador to the U.S. under Allende, and Ronni Karpen Moffitt, a colleague, were killed in Washington, D.C. when a bomb exploded in Letelier's car.

The Latin American Strategy Committee, which includes representatives of major Protestant, Catholic and Jewish bodies, said in a statement condemning the "brutal murder": "We view this tragic incident as part of a spreading pattern of violence, torture and assassination in Chile, extending throughout Latin America and Europe and now into the U.S."

Among leads being investigated is a tip from a Chilean that he recognized a high-ranking officer of DINA, the Chilean secret police, on a flight that arrived in New York from Santiago. The tip was first passed to the Rev. William L. Wipfler, Episcopal director of the Latin America Department of the National Council of Churches, who handed the information to Rep. Donald Fraser, whose office informed the Justice Department.

THE WITNESS grieves with Isabel Letelier and her four sons and Michael Moffitt, husband of Ronni Karpen, and joins LASC in endorsing a resolution introduced in Congress by Rep. Toby Moffett calling for a complete investigation of the bombing.

More impressive than the sharing, however, was the spirit of love that reigned. In five weeks, cooped up together with 120 women, I heard no spiteful words but witnessed countless small acts of kindness. Their love was not restricted to their friends, but immediately extended to all new arrivals. The pregnant women and the sick were lovingly attended and small irritating faults of personality were good humoredly tolerated.

I found the majority of these women were Catholics who had lapsed at school or university. They had been disillusioned by a Church which seemed to side with the rich rather than with the poor. They had adopted Marxism as an ideology because it offered a more concrete solution to the problems of their country. Had my vision of the Catholic Church been the same as theirs I also would have been greatly disillusioned. The Church I knew, however, was not one which tried to impose religion as the opium of a desperate people.

Since I was known to be a Catholic, when the first Sunday came, people said to me: *"Are you going to hold a service?"* I was ashamed at how much it cost me to make this public witness, but to my great surprise, 25 people came. We sat down on the grass with a cross in the middle, and I tried to pick bits out of the bible which could comfort people and help them. We prayed spontaneously. We prayed for husbands, families, lovers, people who were lost, and the children. I tried to share the thoughts that I had at the time. One of the things that came to me strongly was the meaning of liberty, as expressed in the poem by Richard Lovelace:

*Stone walls do not a prison make,
Nor iron bars a cage;
Minds innocent and quiet take
That for an hermitage;
If I have freedom in my love
and in my soul am free,
Angels alone, that soar above,
Enjoy such liberty.*

We came to the conclusion that freedom of the spirit was a very real thing, and although we were surrounded by ten foot walls, barbed wire and chaps with machine guns, really we were quite free. It was the people who held us prisoner who were enslaved. The torturers were prisoners of some unspeakable evil; the rich who were unable to share their goods with people who didn't have enough to eat were also enslaved in their own property. And we prayed for progressive freedom for ourselves, from our own selfishness.

After five weeks in Tres Alamos I was expelled from Chile. I received no official communication as to the reason for my expulsion and I had been found not guilty by a military court.

In sum, over the past four years I have lived and worked as a doctor in a developing country. I have been greatly moved by the first hand experience of abject poverty and

hunger, and like Thomas I was forced to put my hand into the wounds and thus to believe. I have also experienced first hand the loss of my freedom and have been subjected to interrogation and torture for an action which I believed to have been right.

I have spent two months in prison, three weeks completely alone and five weeks in the company of prisoners of conscience, many of whom were revolutionaries. I have had an unusual and privileged opportunity of getting to know a group of people whom I would not otherwise have met.

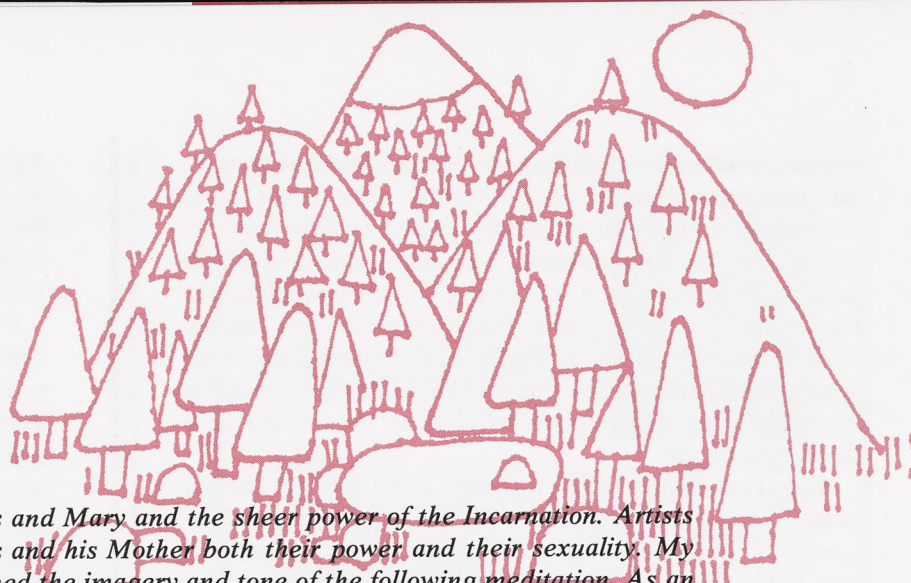
In Chile and in many parts of Latin America, Christians find themselves working side by side with unbelievers and those who profess ideologies which are at variance with the Christian vision. I believe that in this way a truly productive dialog between Christians and unbelievers must occur. As a committed Roman Catholic, and a believer in a peaceful road to justice and freedom I do not believe in Marxism or communism. I would, however, be committing a grave injustice if I did not say that I have found in many who profess to be Marxists a love for human beings that is far greater than mine or of many of the Christians I know.

Lastly, I believe that the call to share in the poverty, suffering and persecution of Christ in his oppressed people of the Third World as well as the call to dialog with unbelievers of good will can only be answered by men and women of prayer. If we are to be instruments of peace, sowing love where there is hatred and joy where there is sorrow, then we must let go of our own will and allow Christ to act through us. If and when we can achieve this total giving of ourselves to Christ then we will be able to meet the challenge of seeing him in our brothers and sisters.



'We Make God Out of Me'

by Alla Bozarth-Campbell



Christmas is the time we think of Jesus and Mary and the sheer power of the Incarnation. Artists through the years have denied to Jesus and his Mother both their power and their sexuality. My concern for this was in part what informed the imagery and tone of the following meditation. As an artist of words and sound I feel that it's my responsibility to correct this mistake in historical perception.

On October 1 around 3:30 a.m. in Vermillion, S.D., where I was visiting speech expert at the University of South Dakota, this SONG OF MARY came to me.

The last section with the MAGNIFICAT and poem, CALL, has been used liturgically in two ways: By reading the parts antiphonally as written, and by reading them (MAGNIFICAT AND CALL) simultaneously. The latter is quite powerful to hear. I owe the Mother Thunder image to Mother Thunder Mission in New York City.

Song of Mary

In the Age of the Molten Moon, Mary the Beloved gives birth.

My body chosen for Mystery, born to encompass the Holy One. How can this be? I, mere woman, made to form the Very One from the clay of my flesh, bone of my bone, nerve of my marrow, the heartbeat of God in my belly.

O Smallest One, egg of my being, my own bold Maker! Who knows you or who can name you?

When I lived a fish in my mother's womb I was joy to my parents, the pride of their years, faith in a dying age. Early, perhaps too early, they returned me to you: back to the Temple. How could I know you? Yet I was yours, yours only.

A growing girl, a healthy child, I joyed in the sun with the muscle of work and the pride of my limbs. I ran with the wind, walked naked in rain, exulting with wings in my skin. When others laughed I laughed right back: yours only. *I was thine, I was born for thee; what was thy will with me?*

A young woman's voice came out of my body, quick in my days. My hair was black, silvered young by the sun, it streaked round my face, a gathering of lights. I am Virgin: woman-whole-unto-myself, no one's possession. The spirit in my, in my arms and hands, in the feet of my going, will praise thee.

O Hokmah! O Shekina! I am the temple of God, the Seat of the Covenant, the Ark of the Promise, the Lap of Creation. I am the Throne of the Universe, mother of millions. God's covenant with me in all creatures is honored. The uncreated One has shown in my bones. Hear them crack in this birthing! This human form of dust and sun: we make God out of me. Like roots out of trees above ground I myself grow out of me: the honey flows out of me, a festival of bees. O Ruach! O Hokmah!

Wisdom be attentive: I claim thee.

My grandmothers feared to stray from their homes when young girls, lest a spirit creep from the cracks of the earth, under rocks, around weeds, to nest in their wombs. Was it when I bathed in the running river or lay honey-eyed in moonlight on hot summer nights? Did you come down some silver beam or out of the tree trunk beneath me in a flurry of bees? In a shower of gold or when I made love with words in my heart's poem? That time in prayer I saw the angel made of light in a fiery bower? O Being-made-of-motion faster than the earth, a streak, a lightning bolt, pure power in a

moving shell: your gaze in laser, your color beyond the spectrum of our sight.

*Behold! I bear Power,
All Power in my rounded shell,
breath of my breath,
being of my bones.
Make room!*

*Make fire! Strike flame!
Light the earth.
I bear Power.*

What made you think me safe-and-humble when I am humble-full-of-Grace-and-Power? Do you not know that my body could go up in smoke and take you, this planet, take all heaven in its thunder? Call me Mother Thunder. I carry lightning in my tender boom.

Magnificat and Call

MY SOUL PROCLAIMS YOUR GREATNESS, O GOD

There is a new sound

AND MY SPIRIT EXULTS IN GOD MY SAVIOR;

Of roaring voices in the deep

BECAUSE YOU HAVE LOOKED UPON YOUR LOWLY HANDMAID

And light-shattered rushes in the heavens;

YES, FROM THIS DAY FORWARD ALL GENERATIONS SHALL CALL ME BLESSED,

The mountains are coming alive,

FOR THE ALMIGHTY HAS DONE GREAT THINGS FOR ME.

The fire-kindled mountains moving again/To reshape the earth.

HOLY IS YOUR NAME, AND YOUR MERCY IS ON THOSE FROM AGE TO AGE WHO FEAR YOU.

It is we sleeping women/Waking up in a darkened world,

YOU HAVE SHOWN THE POWER OF YOUR ARM,

Cutting the chains from off our bodies/With our teeth,

YOU HAVE ROUTED THE PROUD OF HEART.

Stretching our lives over the slow earth,

YOU HAVE PULLED DOWN PRINCES FROM THEIR THRONES AND EXALTED THE LOWLY,

Seeing, moving, breathing in the vigor/That commands us to make all things new

THE HUNGRY YOU HAVE FILLED WITH GOOD THINGS, THE RICH SENT EMPTY AWAY.

It has been said that while the women sleep/The earth shall sleep.

YOU HAVE COME TO THE HELP OF ISRAEL, YOUR SERVANT,

But listen! We are waking up and rising,

MINDFUL OF YOUR MERCY

And soon our sister will know her strength.

ACCORDING TO THE PROMISE YOU MADE TO OUR ANCESTORS

The earth-moving day is here.

OF YOUR MERCY TO ABRAHAM AND SARAH AND TO THEIR DESCENDANTS FOREVER.

We women wake to move in fire/The earth shall be remade.

Prayer After Success:

Jonah's Dilemma

by Nicholas R. Jones

(Nicholas Jones is part of a community which separated itself from Christ Church, Oberlin, over the controversy of the ordination of women. — Ed.)

It is Thursday, September 16, 1976.

I have just heard that the General Convention of the Episcopal Church voted to permit the ordination of women to the priesthood. My friends are jubilant about this victory; for them, it is a triumph of our political action, of our witness, and of our faith. And I agree.

If the women priests had not sought ordination and acted on their callings, if the parishes had not invited them to celebrate the Eucharist, if Peter Beebe had not stood trial, if we in Oberlin had not been the particular thorn in the Church's flesh that we were, if we had not separated from our parish and our Church, would this vote have passed?

Surely the turmoil that we and others raised has pushed the Church to make a decision at last. Should I not thank God with celebration that the procrastination is over, the vote taken and won, the decision now presented unequivocally to every diocese and parish, to every priest, bishop, and candidate, and to every Episcopalian?

Instead I sit paralyzed with depression and anger. I am Jonah now — "*Lord, I might as well be dead as alive.*" You told me to further this turmoil, you forced me to leave my familiar, comfortable church and to cry out against the wickedness of Nineveh. You know how hard I fought you, ran away, tried to find easier ways, compromises with your will. And why did I run away? Because I knew even then that you would leave me in the lurch, holding the bag, a sorry fool — as you have done now. Even so, you caught me up and told me to go the hard way — no compromise for you, you said.

So I went: I cut myself off from my old life, leaping into all that pain and grief. And in the months of separation, of wilderness, I began to grow used to the new position: not exactly life, not death, but a place of some limited stability, a place I could get to know. Then, just as I said you would, you repented and brought *them* back into the fold; you made *them* your favorites again. You and your blessed mercy! Where does it leave me? Can I go back? Can I stay like this?...

It is three days later.

I have taken another look at the end of the book of Jonah. I am like him, the reluctant prophet, the unlikely prophet of God's judgment now robbed of his mission by God's mercy. It took him — and me — so much pain to accept God's call at first, to become the prophet, outcast, exile, fanatic. How much more painful is it to lose the identity of that role, to give up the assurance of a continuing opposition to a sluggish Church.

Jonah feared his mission because of the risk: He knew that God would give him a life only to take it away again. And he was right. Look at the vine over Jonah's head: It grew up, spread out, gave Jonah a comfortable place in the shade; then God destroyed it in a moment. Jonah was angry, of course — the hot sun is no place to sit without shade. But he missed the point of the vine, just as he missed the point of Nineveh, and just as I missed the point of the vote: It is by such that I am set free.

When I was simply an opponent of the Church, I was bound to one role, one very specific calling, one place in the sun. All my other callings were for the moment submerged, neglected; I was imprisoned in my one mission. Natural enough — even comfortable. But what more there is to life! When the vine withers and the mission suddenly dissolves, I am set free to consider that greater life.

What have I all along been hoping and learning? I have been dreaming of a new life — a community dedicated to spiritual and personal growth, to exploring ways of living in the world, to respecting each other in love and honesty, to allowing ourselves space to touch and space to be alone. That which was only a dream has now surfaced as my hope and my goal.

I read today of another angry person, the elder son in the parable of the Prodigal. He has worked zealously for his father; now the dissipated younger brother comes home repentant, and the father orders a feast — for *him*, the prodigal! The injustice of it overwhelms the hard-working elder son — he has always suspected that his zeal was not appreciated as it should be — and he cries out against it. He is furiously angry: if this drunkard of a brother so easily wins mercy and love, what point can there be to a life of mission and of zeal? His life has been lost.

The answer, though, goes beyond his perspective; it quietly asserts the freedom that he has always had and never known before. "*Son, you know that all I have is yours.*" Such a blessing — a gift of new life — is not often heard or believed; but I think that I have heard it, and I hope that I believe it.

Women's Ordination: A View Beyond the Vatican

by Patricia Hughes

The setting: A press conference with the Archbishop of Canterbury — F. Donald Coggan — who had come to Minneapolis for the 65th General Convention of the Episcopal Church. A reporter rose to this feet. *"Archbishop, would you comment, please, on the implications for Anglican-Roman Catholic relations of the Convention's decision to admit women to the priesthood and the episcopate?"*

As a Roman Catholic woman who is completing studies for the priesthood, I anticipated the response with a special urgency. In the week of discussion and debate just past, bishops and deputies, visitors and exhibitors had expressed clear projections of "the Roman reaction." There seemed to be little hesitancy about the predictions, but, curiously, they were mutually exclusive.

"If you want improved ecumenical relations, vote NO!"
"If unity of the Churches is important to you, vote YES!"
"Ecumenism will be set back centuries, vote NO!"
"Hasten the day of our oneness, vote YES!"

It would seem unlikely that such disparate conclusions could be grounded in common data. Could it be that the pleadings of partisans and non-partisans alike were tangential to a larger truth? In the post-conciliar '70s, there would be not only a "Roman" reaction but also reactions of "romans." The latter would not, of necessity, echo the former.

The Archbishop began his response by referring to a widely quoted communion from Pope Paul VI in which the possible affirmative action of the Convention had been anticipated. *"Note,"* said the Archbishop, *"that Pope Paul himself was confident that it would not lead to the disruption of relations, though it might prove to be an immediate set-back."*

His Grace continued, *"But anyone who would seek a balanced view of the ecumenical implications would do well*

Ms. Hughes is completing a Master of Divinity degree at the Jesuit School of Theology in Chicago. She was one of the planners of the Roman Catholic Ordination Conference in Detroit and a member of the press corps at General Convention.

to look beyond the Vatican to the remarkable groundswell of support for the ordination of women growing, particularly in the United States, among the clergy and large numbers of their (religious) orders."

The "groundswell" detected as far away as Canterbury had been duly measured on the ecclesiastical Richter scale, its epicenter recorded as Detroit, Mich. or Mt. Rainier, Md., depending on the perspective of the observer.

On Dec. 14, 1974, a group of 31 women and men representing national organizations, religious communities, and seminaries had begun planning for "Women in Future Priesthood Now: A Call for Action." Their Ordination Conference, as the 1975 Detroit gathering came to be called, attracted over 1,200 people and dramatized the interrelationship between developments in ministry, the expanded consciousness of women, ecumenical solidarity, and an ecclesiology which enabled church members to "BE church" without waiting for an invitation.

Detroit was unashamedly an advocacy gathering. Participants focused on the moral imperatives for the ordination of women as speakers delineated a constructive theology. Effective strategies for action towards a change in church legislation and practice flowed from the ministerial experiences of those gathered.

For many, the most poignant moment of the conference came during a Liturgy of Blessing when 300 women stood to acknowledge their sense of call to ordained ministry and to ask for the supportive prayers of their sisters and brothers. Before that service, the Roman Catholic community had little knowledge of how many, if any, women felt called to priesthood. The lack of data was symptomatic of the marginal regard accorded the issue. But now no longer. THE ISSUE had names and faces, the word was made flesh.

The "event" of Detroit mandated the Women's Ordination Conference, a national organization whose goal is the ordination of women to the priesthood within the context of the renewal of church ministry. The core commission of the conference, 19 lay and religious women, will continue the dialogue initiated with the American hierarchy and will support and coordinate regional activities. Among many cities, New York, Peoria, Boston, Milwaukee, Cleveland, and St. Louis witnessed 1976 spin-off conferences that brought the education/action message of Detroit to additional thousands.

If theological development has its source in the experience of the church, then clearly, the traditional

teaching excluding women from orders was being significantly and widely challenged.

While the Ordination Conference was a-borning, Priests for Equality was gathering its current 1,150 members from 45 states and nine countries. Announced in July, 1975, the group sent its invitations from Mt. Rainier, Md. Its charter contains 17 affirmations of the equality of women and men in civil society and church life, and acknowledges that social justice requires an end to priestly silence which perpetuates sexual discrimination.

The PFE stance on ordination of women reads, "Whatever has been our tradition and the cultural conditioning of previous eras in Church life, our present faith and theology and our instincts for justice tell us that exclusion from the priesthood on the basis of sex is no longer a viable position."

And so the myth of universal clerical opposition to the ordination of women is shattered.

The 1973 Ministry Statement of the Anglican-Roman Catholic International Commission recorded the convergence of both communions in a shared understanding of the nature of ordained ministry. The 1975 Anglican-Roman Catholic statement on the Ordination of Women assured members of both denominations that the expressed goal of full organic unity would not be abandoned in the event that either Church came to a fuller self-understanding enabling the participation of women in its ordained ministry:

"Particular controverted issues of Church life may represent different ways of manifesting God's grace, as the Spirit has guided us. Even the things we do not agree with in each other's traditions may have something to teach us about God's will for his people." The ARC statement continues, "We proceed in the faith and hope that the Spirit is leading us into unity."

It is apparent that the Roman Catholic contributors to that dialog were somewhat skeptical about the probability of the ordination of women in the Roman Church. And yet, anyone who follows the growth of the Women's Ordination Conference and Priests for Equality has the opportunity to share what Archbishop Coggan called "the balanced view," and to experience a creating Spirit hovering beyond, as well as within, the Vatican. It is this Spirit, I believe, who has already made us one and who calls us — men and women, lay and clerical, Anglican and Roman, — to gather about a common altar.

Minneapolis was but mid-way on our pilgrimage. May we strengthen and sustain each other in the struggle to move on.

Deadline Daze

Deadlines frequently catch us in an awkward time frame, since THE WITNESS copy must be in six weeks prior to publication. Two cases in point are Carman Hunter's article, "My Encounter With China" in the October issue and Robert Maurer's "Courts vs. Chavis: Subtle Violence" in November.

THE WITNESS was on the press when news of Mao Tse-tung's death was announced. Similarly, Rev. Ben Chavis ended his fast shortly after the November issue went to bed. To update the story, the Civil Rights leader was returned to McCain prison for tubercular and mentally unstable prisoners (although he is neither) after he ended his 131-day "spiritual fast and political hunger strike." (He can receive Christmas cards by addressing Ben Chavis, Jr. McCain Prison, P.O. Box 58, McCain, N.C. 28361.)

By doing our own layout in January, we hope to cut down the lead time for more current reporting.



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THE WITNESS wishes you a peace-filled Christmas and a joyful New Year.

REVOLUTION IN GETHSEMANE

by Clement Welsh

Church and Society held its three forums in Gethsemane Church, just to one side of the Convention Hall — a church named for the place to which our Lord went with his disciples to pray, before he was crucified. The analogy could be pushed too far, but it could be reasonably said that the three occasions when our attention was powerfully focused on sexism, racism, and hunger, were in their way moments of intense cognitive meditation on issues that demand the world's devout reflection.

Such issues may lurk beneath the surface even of debates on the canons, yet they resonate oddly with the process of debate, and especially with the element of compromise that those processes require when decisions must be made. That oddness manifests itself as pain in a concerned person. The need is so urgent and the process is so slow. The need is so deep and the process is so tangled in trivialities. For the three forums were not talking about disembodied ideas, but about people and their suffering, and every exchange of resolutions from House to House in the Convention prolonged someone's suffering somewhere.

We have at least two distinguishable needs in a convention of a church: to get some business done, as a rather large house that must be kept in order, and to provide an opportunity for a community of sensitive people to touch base with their ideals and hopes. When we bring these disparate purposes together we put our practical wisdom to a severe test, for it is a mark of our frail humanity that we put our house into an order that only palely reflects our ideals. We have all experienced the cynicism that such a mismatch can so easily produce.

But a church — or a world — should remember that cynicism is an easy euthanasia for sensitive persons who are experiencing the pain of unfulfilled hopes. To take that route is to leave the world to the barbarians, and to the self destruction to which the shortsightedness of barbarians condemns them. We may seem to move from our Gethsemane of reflection and hope to an institutional crucifixion in Convention Hall, but it is worth remembering that crucifixion is not an end, but a beginning. It was, in fact, the beginning of a revolution.

We usually think of revolutions as the tearing down of old establishments and the structuring of new ones. "Struggling with the systems," as the study/action guide of the Church and Society Network says, and "probing alternative" structures. For structures have power, and there is nothing an idealist hungers for more than power. It is the power of institutions, after all, that holds us in its grip: the power of traditional language, referring to God as "He;" the power of tradition and of its provincial expression in western civilization, that makes white humanity the "norm;" the power, above all, of industrial and technical efficiency, that clusters wealth and food in a few hands and mouths. *But the real revolution always begins in the mind.* It is the revolution of ideas that counts

SOLD OUT!

"Sexism"... "Racism"... "The Theology of Hunger" — the three panel forums put on during General Convention by THE WITNESS/Church and Society — were filled to capacity each day as our booth quickly sold out its tickets.

Because hundreds were turned away and because we were besieged with requests like, "Can we get a copy of the talks" and "Do you have plans to transcribe the tapes," THE WITNESS will print in future issues excerpts from the panel presentations as well as notable responses. Look for Rosemary Ruether, Pam Chinnis, Bill Coats on "Sexism;" Barbara Harris, Chris Cavender, Henry Atkins on "Racism;" and Gustavo Gutierrez and Bill Wipfler on "Theology of Hunger" in THE WITNESS next year.

Meanwhile, Clement Welsh, warden of the College of Preachers, Washington, D.C., offers these thoughts on the Church and Society/WITNESS panel forums.

in the long run, and for such a revolution, a long run is usually necessary. Our ideas are not easily revolved, and especially not in that 180 degree semicircle that would effect the reversal of course that the ship of state seems to need. For we constructed our ideas — our world view — with difficulty, and over many years, and a major change in them may look at first glance like madness. Insanity, after all, is a disease of the mind, recognized by contradicting all that we hold to be true. So the revolutionary appears at first as a mad person who denies what seems to us to be obvious. The general public can be forgiven for not following quickly in his train.

We do not know what it will take, or how long it will take, for a revolution to occur in the areas of sexism, racism and hunger (to select only the three areas that Church and Society brought before us). We do know, however, that the revolution has begun, and may indeed have been underway for many years. It is a revolution in our understanding of what it means to be human (male/female, color/culture) and of what it takes to survive (food/water). Just about all the essentials for the life of our species on this planet are grounded in those issues, and it is no wonder that whatever truth, (or more accurately “truths,” for they are our best constructs of what is “real”) that we have held to be *the Truth* in our part of the world about such fundamental matters are clutched by us in our anxiety with a death grip.

So the new direction of our understanding will work its way only by way of the death of many cherished beliefs. We may realize that time is running out; before some cherished opinions die, many who hold them may die in some disastrous malfunctioning of the establishment. But what we pray for and meditate on in Gethsemane, whether it be crucified or not (at Convention, or elsewhere) will rise, as Truth always must rise, and become the truth we live by, for in this relentless universe nothing less than the Truth stands a chance.

The revolution of ideas, painful though it may be to all concerned, is on its way. Let's hope we see it prosper, whether we deserve to or not.



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Minatory ululations convey LOVE out of the human holocaust
as redwing blackbirds chattering plangent charivaris
mock the gunfire from autumn's drunken hunters
reminding me how my father flung himself
on the back lawn the afternoon war
went hoist by its own petard
and rat-a-tat-tat with
an imaginary gun
aroused my
LOVE

Anthony Towne

However, the implications are all wrong. The first problem is that even if the American public did give up 10% of their meat, the grain saved would not reach the mouths of hungry — there would simply be a cutback on the production of meats by growers which would increase the over the counter price. The second major problem is that the grain used to feed cattle, pigs, and poultry is not fit for human consumption. It is a high yield low grade corn product that carries little nutritional quality in and of itself. It provides fibre, not food. *But* — if we, the consuming public, demanded grass fed beef, a certain percentage of the acreage used to grow that grain would be freed for the production of a more nutritionally valuable food substance.

Unfortunately, even that is not enough. The United States realized a long time ago that food is the most powerful political weapon in the world. Five major agro-economic firms in the United States control 86% of the world's grain flow — ten times the product power of the OPEC nations oil power. Government policy has used that power to its political advantage. Hungry nations are allotted food and development assistance on the basis of political leaning, not on the basis of need. We have the food and fibre at our disposal *right now* to feed the hungry of the world, and we have the technology to train hungry people how to grow their own food. We do not, however, have the political inclination to accomplish those tasks.

Since the beginning of the Nixon administration, the Food for Peace Program, initiated in the Kennedy years, has taken a desperate plunge. The Pentagon now has influence in the USAID programs, so that much of the assistance funding allocated by Congress goes to underdeveloped nations in the form of rifles and bombers. On the average, the United States has been involved in a covert extra-continental military operation every two years since the close of the second world war, and many of those operations have been directed against nations (such as Cuba, Guatemala, and Chile) that had pledged themselves to long term land reform at the expense of American agribusiness. Right now, the United States ranks 14th among 16 development assistance nations when assistance is determined as a percentage of gross national product. Clearly, some hard Christian stewardship is needed in monitoring government.

— Rev. Douglas G. Scott
Tenafly, N.J.

Confronting Structures

Your September editorial says, "it is the economic and political structures...that are endangering people." William Stringfellow sees death there also. Your phrase, "which have come into being" suggests that these structures are new — and they are not. They have always existed where people have organized.

Stringfellow says — we all say — resurrection is accessible for human beings, even those caught in the structures. But how? Structures have always threatened people, both within and outside them. We speak to those outside but what about those within? What have we to say to those civil servants caught, trapped or willingly serving in the structures? What about bishops, archdeacons, rectors, and laity, too, who serve the structure and minister death? How do we help persons to stand against structures, to reform, cleanse or destroy them? Why must the pressure for change always come from outside?

I enjoyed Helen Seager's article. I understand what she went through, but what did she step out of? What did she leave — as she feels, with the Lord's blessing — and where did she go? Is there no answer to the threat of structures, no response except anxiety, judgement, or departure? I think there is and I think we need to discover it and to call people to it and to do it ourselves in the places where we find ourselves.

— Dustin P. Ordway
Fairport, N.Y.

(See back cover. — Ed.)

Praise From Philippines

In the struggle for justice and true development, it is supportive to know that there are, in the Episcopal Church, people and organized work who make the church other than what it appears to be.

The social analysis as expressed in THE WITNESS while it is geared to the American nation, is meaningful to us considering the imperialist hold of U.S. big business on our country and the cultural attachment, often enslavement, especially of Filipino Episcopalians to U.S. Americans. The views on church issues give a deeper and more balanced understanding to what we are ordinarily exposed. The few copies of THE WITNESS that come in are good initiators of discussion.

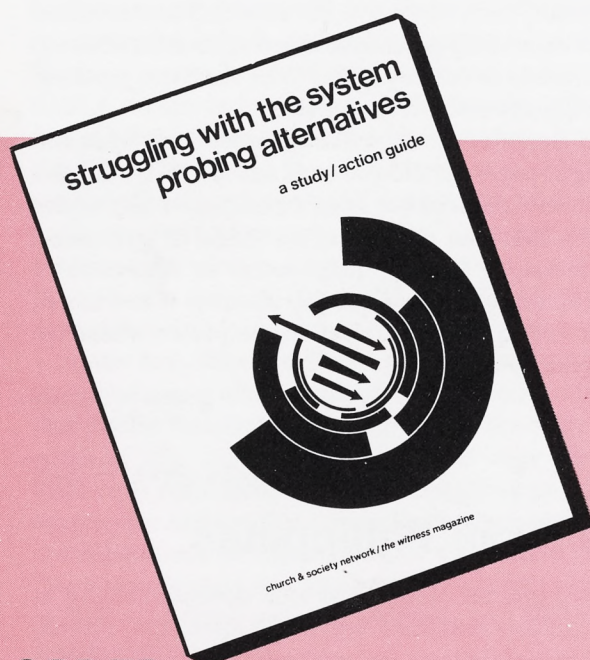
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