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# THE WITNESS

AUGUST, 1977  
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**Cuban Perspectives**  
Charles Lawrence

**Prison Interview:**  
**Cueto & Nemikin**

**. . . WITNESS Goes to Jail**



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# Letters to the Editor

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## Not Easy for This Bishop

Although it is not my custom to write letters to editors, I am obliged to tell you how helpful and insightful THE WITNESS is month by month. Your magazine does address the issues and you constantly make me deal with them - damn it! The sensitive issue of homosexuality is at our doorstep both nationally and in this Diocese. I find myself talking with and reading about the plight of the homophile. Your June issue contained a toughy for me: "If you were the Bishop —" about whether or not to license a homosexual priest.

Unlike my brothers Kilmer Myers and Paul Moore, I am a novice in bishoping. I have always thought of myself as open, sensitive, and responsive to issues both pastorally and prophetically. The issue of homosexuality is contradicting that self image muchly and mightily. I say to myself that I could make the decision facing brother Myers easily and quickly. No way! For to my knowledge I have not ordained homosexual men and women.

In fact, I wanted a local newspaper to carry a headline following a recent Diocesan ordination to read "Bishop ordains six heterosexuals" just to balance things out; but it was just a momentary relapse to frustration and I knew the newspaper wouldn't say it that way anyway. "What's news about that?" I said to myself. Then it hit me - good grief, we no longer live in a time when the "normal" and "straights" being called by God need be noticed? I hope not.

Meanwhile, I must say that if homosexuality is no longer considered an illness, much less a sin, then what is it? Surely the homosexual orientation must be a deficient, abnormal, and failing way of life. But then so is my life in other ways.

In my pastoral ministry, I have noticed time and time again how much the homosexual suffers from prejudices of his surroundings. Nowhere, it seems to me, is the homelessness of man so deeply understood as in the Gospel. The homelessness of the homosexual is real pain and agony. If we can show the homosexual how deeply Christ understands his homeless life and help him to become more sensitive to the essential condition of our existence, which is that of a pilgrim, a searcher and seeker, a real change might emerge. In my struggle to define what and where I stand on

this matter, I see the life of the homosexual as one great cry and plea for love. In a deficient and failing way he reveals this desire. There are perhaps few people who have to experience their incapacity for real love in such a bitter and painful way as the homosexual. When we can make visible behind his so often destructive acts the desperate desire for love, we can also make free his way to Christ. I believe ordaining and "blessing" of such orientation does not heal the process or effect change. To say the homosexual cannot change his orientation is as intractable as saying I cannot change. Somehow I see injustice being present in saying that the homosexual cannot help it, it was the way he was born. To imply that Christ's love blesses and ordains such a life-style goes against the biblical and theological norm of creation. If homosexuals are the modern day "lepers," then I reflect upon the fact that Christ did not bless leprosy, He healed it and made it every whit whole.

It is an awesome place to be "If you were the Bishop . . ." and I guess I would be among the most critical of Bishops (at least I used to be!) until I became one, and the hopeful and helpful part is that I am still becoming one. I hope the homosexual priest or layperson will let me be so, and I shall be comforted if the homosexual will struggle also to become whole and find his homelessness overcome by the freeing power of Christ in whatever way He would bless and ordain.

**The Rt. Rev. Robert P. Atkinson**  
Diocese of West Virginia

## Name of the Game?

Re: Shaull, Mosley, and Hayward (June WITNESS):

Shaull says reshuffle the deck. Mosley wants a new dealer. Heyward asks (almost) for a new stack of cards.

If those in high places are (at last) wearying of an old language and an older set of ideas, what can they imagine about the rest of us?

In a few words: We stopped listening a long time ago. We are working our way through our lives using whatever is at hand — TM, Ta, fakirs, medicine men, drugs, charismatics, fasting, old literature, new literature, every damn thing that comes to hand.

We know for sure that orthodoxy has nothing to say. It has not said anything since Copernicus. I will make exceptions of Bonhoeffer and Teilhard. Not Bonhoeffer the theologian but Bonhoeffer the prisoner. Not Teilhard the Jesuit but Teilhard the outcast, prisoner of his order.

Except for the most blindly romantic, everyone knows that a horse and buggy on the Interstate is a dangerous way to travel. God (travel) may be the same always but people are not. Anyone who thinks he/she understands God the

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# THE WITNESS

Telephone (215) 643-7067. Subscription rates; \$9.00 per year; \$1.00 per copy. *The Witness* is published monthly by the Episcopal Church Publishing Company. Board of Directors: Bishops Morris Arnold, Robert DeWitt, Lloyd Gressle, John Hines, John Krumm, Brooke Mosley and Dr. Joseph Fletcher. Copyright 1977 by the Episcopal Church Publishing Company. Printed in U.S.A.

Robert L. DeWitt, Editor; Mary Lou Suhor, Managing Editor; Robert Eckersley, Peggy Case, Susan Small, Lisa K. Whelan, Hugh C. White Jr. Editorial and Business Office: P.O. Box 359, Ambler, Pennsylvania 19002.

## On Ending the Cuban Embargo

Robert L. DeWitt

Some international issues are obscure, and require complicated analysis and deep reflection. Others are more obvious, and can be clearly stated. So it was with the call to end the Vietnam War. And so it is with the 15-year-old embargo of Cuba by the United States, a cruel device being used against a small, developing country.

The Episcopal Bishop of Cuba, Jose A. Gonzalez, stated in a recent letter to the Cuba Resource Center, an Ecumenical group which sponsors visits by U.S. church delegations: "Many of us here feel encouraged by the possibility that the day is near when our governments will re-establish relations, with the mutual respect that is indispensable. Once again we will be able to express the fraternal bonds that have united the churches of the United States and Cuba."

In March, Dr. Charles Lawrence, president of the House of Deputies of the Episcopal Church, was one of eight Protestants and Catholics who visited the Island-nation. (See his impressions in this issue). At the conclusion of the visit, the group issued the following statement:

*"... We particularly wish to express our sincere gratitude to the many Cubans who made possible the multiple opportunities for dialogue that were offered us... The variety of experiences, the readiness of our hosts to fulfill our scheduling requests and the availability of groups and individuals who were responsive to our questions and concerns made it possible for us to gain a deep understanding of the*

*profound change and social development taking place in Cuba. We are impressed and appreciative of what we have seen, experienced, and learned.*

*"As we return to the United States, we are unanimous in our conviction that the U.S. must take initiatives to normalize relations between our nation and Cuba and to change the situation that has isolated North Americans from Cubans and Cubans from North Americans. As a first step, we would hope that our government would put an immediate end to the embargo that has caused great sacrifices and frequent suffering for Cuba's people. As individuals, and as members of our respective denominations and organizations, we commit ourselves to work toward these ends."*

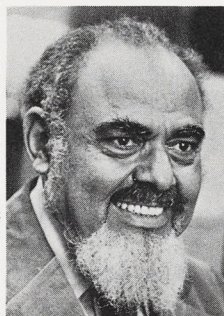
The Cuban Bishops as early as 1969 decried the "unnecessary suffering" inflicted by the economic blockade which has burdened "our workers in the cities and in the fields, our housewives, our growing youth and children, and the sick . . ."

Since then at least eight major U.S. Protestant denominations, as well as the U.S. Catholic Conference, the National Council of Churches and the World Council of Churches, have issued statements denouncing the embargo. THE WITNESS joins with these churchpersons as well as with the people of Cuba in calling for an immediate end to this embargo, which translates in the eyes of many throughout the world into the image of a besieged David and a menacing Goliath. ■



# Cuba

... as Seen by Charles Lawrence



Dr. Lawrence

*Human rights, racial equality, and the role of the Church in a Marxist society were among concerns investigated by Charles R. Lawrence on his recent trip to Cuba. A widely known educator and sociologist, Dr. Lawrence is president of the House of Deputies of the Episcopal Church, the third lay person to hold that office. His trip was sponsored by the Cuba Resource Center, an ecumenical group based in New York, in cooperation with the National Council of Churches. He was interviewed for THE WITNESS by Barbara Durr, co-coordinator of the CRC.*



*Q. Dr. Lawrence, what were your outstanding impressions of Cuba?*

A. What impressed me most was the extent to which the Cubans have begun to manufacture their own goods and restore such things as transportation. There was little or no evidence of unemployment. This, despite the fact that the Cubans are in economic trouble, as they themselves affirm, even if one counts the massive help of the Soviet Union. I was also impressed by the exceedingly good health of the children and the enormous effort at education. There had been widespread illiteracy before the Revolution and a big effort had to be made to overcome that. I should mention one other thing — the Havana Mental Hospital. I see the approach of a society to people who are mentally deranged as an important index of the humanity of that society. We spent almost a whole day there and I thought the approach was highly humanistic and much to be commended.

*Q. Did people on your trip ask questions about human rights in Cuba?*

A. Some members of our delegation had private conversations with Cuban officials, and the question came up again in a group conversation with two executive staff people of the Central Committee of the Cuban Communist Party.

They said that Cuba is frequently asked to allow the Organization of American States or some other organization to come in and inspect things. Regarding the OAS, one said that it was officially on record as being antagonistic to

Cuba, having endorsed a blockade of the Island from 1964 to 1975 and would therefore not be a suitable group to pursue an objective investigation. On the matter of Amnesty International, someone in our group said, "I understand that one of your colleagues was heard to say that Amnesty International must have had inside information because their figures on political prisoners are very accurate." And they gave non-committal assent to that statement.

They went on to say that political prisoners are people actually in prisons who had committed overt acts against the government. Others, who chose to be rehabilitated, were in rehabilitation centers. Now, of course, we did not see prisons of any sort, for political prisoners nor common criminals.

*Q. The Cubans often talk about the conception and definition of human rights being broader than individual political dissent. What are your feelings about this?*

A. Abraham Maslow, who was a colleague of mine years ago, talked about a "hierarchy of needs." There are certain needs, he said, that are so fundamental that you can't even recognize other needs if they are not satisfied. For example, the hungry person can't be concerned about other kinds of things. In other words, as you satisfy the more fundamental needs, than you have more needs.

From what I have read and from what I've seen, I agree with people who say that the vast majority of Cubans are much better off today than they were prior to the Revolution. And I suspect that the vast majority of Cubans



are not concerned about whether or not they can disagree fundamentally with their government.

Actually, in any society, there are levels of disagreement that are quite tolerable. For instance, when I was in the Soviet Union there was as much complaint about bureaucrats as there is here. When you complain about the bureaucrat you're not really challenging the system at all, but how it functions. Let's face it, many of our own rights, many of the rights that we exercise when we dissent are at that level; they're not fundamental challenges.

*Q. As a black man and as a sociologist, how did you see and what did you learn about the progress that black Cubans have made and the position of blacks in Cuba today?*

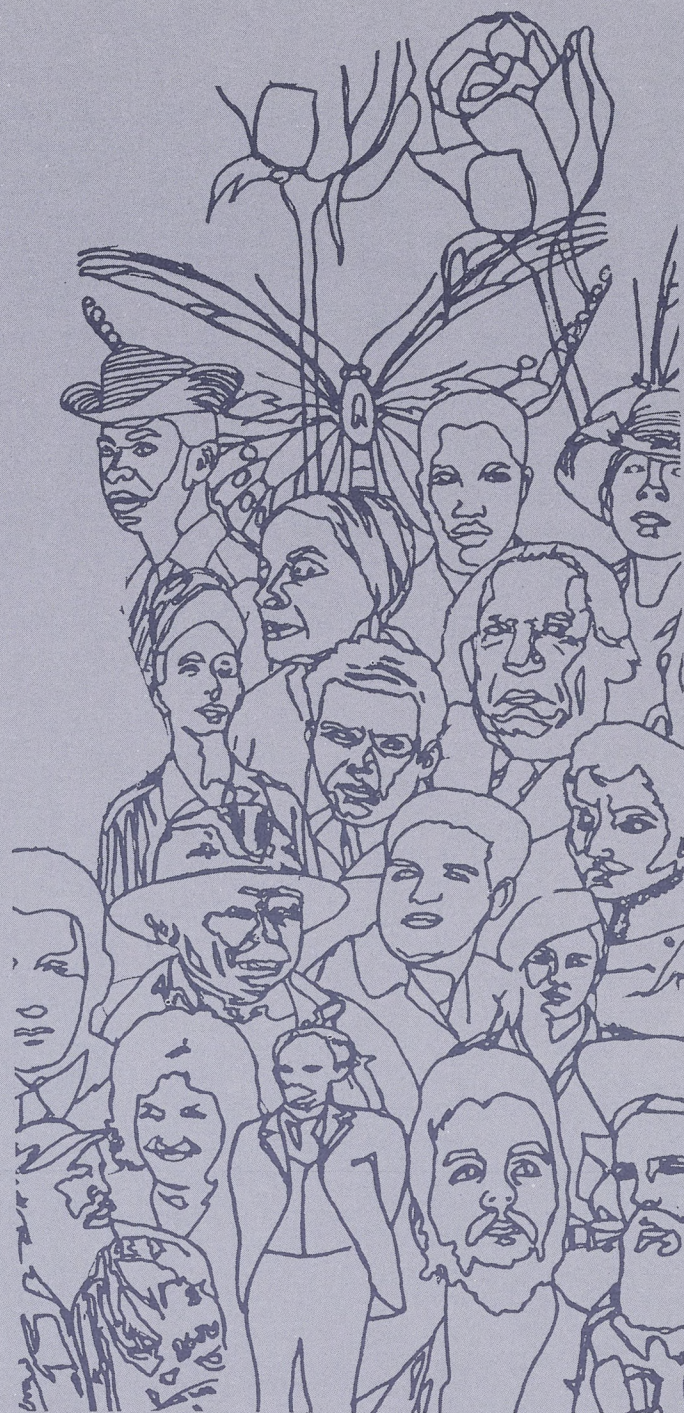
A. I don't have a good base line, but I was in the east, in Santiago and Guantanamo, where the complexion of the population is very dark. And I'm sure it's been that way for a long, long time. The people didn't just suddenly turn dark. The head of the Communist Party in Guantanamo was black, in the sense that we use the term here. That is, he was exceedingly dark brown. Several other Party functionaries that I saw were what we would call black in the United States. They were obviously of some sub-Saharan descent. Moreover, two of our guides were young women who were black. So if there had been, as I understand there had been, differential treatment of blacks prior to the Revolution, I certainly saw no evidence that this is so today. And I saw considerable evidence of persons of Afro-Cuban heritage in what we would call "high positions."

From what I know about Cuba, I'm aware that whiteness in Cuba is a matter of degree anyway. People who may think of themselves as Castilian would have had a hard time in Mississippi a few years ago.

*Q. You stated in a Diocesan press release that the Cuban church was in a transistional stage. As a Christian and as someone who holds high office in the church here, could you amplify on that?*

A. Various people in the Cuban churches are trying to examine their mission in light of a different kind of society and in terms of what the churches presumably are, or are supposed to be: the servant of society, and of God by way of the society. The churches are having to accept a position that's certainly less than triumphal. Some of the churches and, although it wasn't unanimous, some of the people in the churches, see the role of the churches as the facilitation of a revolutionary society. They are reminded of the revolutionary role of the primitive churches.

In their view this role is an identification with the society in which they live. They seem to be trying to understand the



Gospel imperative as related to the kinds of things that they consider revolutionary. Raul Fernandez Ceballos, President of the Cuban Ecumenical Council, put it in terms of the basic tasks of the Revolution which, for the church, means such things as the feeding of the hungry and the bringing about of justice.

In the discussion we had with the Student Christian Movement, two questions were raised: "What do you see as the mission of young Christians to those Christians who do



not perceive themselves as revolutionaries? And, "What do you see as the mission of Christians to Marxist revolutionaries?" There was a general tendency to blur any distinctions between revolutionary Christians and Marxists, to blur what seem to me to be still fundamental philosophical and ideological assumptions that are different in Christianity and Marxism. As a matter of fact, one seminary professor was a little miffed that the question had even been raised. He said they obviously are not worrying about it. But a young Baptist said to me, "They don't want to face the obvious philosophical problems that they have here." And I think there is some tendency in that direction.

On the other hand, I think there are others who see their identification with the Revolution quite clearly as part of their Christian imperative. There are those who consider themselves Marxist Christians.

*Q. Specifically, how do you view the Episcopal Church in Cuba, and how was your visit with Cuba's Episcopal bishop, Jose Augustin Gonzalez?*

A. The Cuban Episcopal Church is, as it has always been, a very small church. There are approximately 50 congregations and about 15 clergy, including the bishop. After the triumph of the Revolution in 1959, they did not lose as many clergy as some of the other mainline Protestant denominations. I don't think they lost proportionately as many as the Roman Catholics did. A remarkably large number remained; although many of their parishioners left, because like other mainline parishioners, they tended to be more middle class and more prosperous.

Almost everybody there has relatives in Miami, East New York, Jersey City, or some other U.S. enclave of Cubans. A number of their members left, and as clergy died, they have not been able to train others to take their places. So there has been a decline. At the moment, there is only one Episcopal student at the Union Theological Seminary in Matanzas, and he was on leave while I was there.

There are tensions within the church; I suspect that it is not unique in that respect! There are tensions between those who wish to join, participate, and celebrate the Revolution and those who, while not necessarily against the Revolution, are at least more pietistic, and see their church largely in liturgical and devotional terms. From discussions with both the bishop and those in less than full agreement with the bishop, I got the impression that the tension was beginning to be resolved, and there is more understanding on his part of them and on their part of him.

*Q. Does the jurisdictional change experienced by the Episcopal Church since the Revolution reflect a changing view of itself?*

A. The jurisdictional change simply meant that it became

an autonomous diocese whereas before it was considered a missionary diocese, part of the Episcopal Church of the United States. When the Episcopal Church of Cuba became autonomous, it did so under what is known as a metropolitan committee, consisting of the Archbishop of Canada, the Archbishop of the West Indies and the President of the Ninth Province, which is the Hispanic or Latin American Province, including mainly Central and South American churches. The Ninth Province is part of our church, belongs to and votes in our convention and it is represented on all of our various committees and commissions. The metropolitan committee has authority only on matters of faith and order. Presumably Bishop Gonzalez looks to them for advice, but they don't have any power over him in any sense. It is the group which keeps Cuba connected to the rest of the Anglican community.

The church in Cuba, like most missionary dioceses of the late 50s and early 60s, was a largely dependent church in terms of finances and resources. Many of the salaries were paid by our overseas department. Until just before Bishop Gonzalez, the Cuban bishops had been elected, with one exception, I think, by the U.S. House of Bishops. The church in Cuba found it a great shock to find itself on its own.

For several years the U.S. Church continued to support the Cuban Church indirectly through the World Council of Churches until it was considered no longer necessary. I believe Bishop Gonzalez thinks that this decision was premature.

On the side of how the church conceives of itself, there's a great deal of thinking going on about the relationship of the church to the new society. This thinking is also reflected in the extent to which some of the younger clergy and lay people question the formal hierarchical structure.

*Q. Did you plan any future exchanges or relations with Cuban Episcopalians?*

A. Bishop Gonzalez was in Indianapolis in April for a meeting of the Anglican Churches of North America, Canada and the Caribbean. I have no idea what influence my trip to Cuba had, if any, but one of the first things I did upon return was to get in touch with the people in our church to ask if they could facilitate his U.S. visa. And they did.

I would anticipate as travel becomes easier both ways, there will be a new kind of relationship, a more active relationship between the Anglican Churches in the United States and Cuba.

As I stated in the delegation's press release, I think that the U.S. embargo of Cuba should be lifted so that this process can move forward. ■



## Cuba at a Glance



• **Location:** Cuba — the largest island in the West Indies — lies on the northern boundary of the Caribbean Sea, about 90 miles south of Key West, Fla. The island-nation extends approximately 745 miles from west to east; its width ranges from 22 miles to 125 miles. The land area is about the size of Pennsylvania.

• **Population:** Approximately 9 million, with an annual growth rate of 2.1%. Some 60% are in urban, 40% in rural areas. The ethnic breakdown is 73% Caucasian, 12% Black, 15% "Mixed," plus some 30,000 Chinese. And 40% of Cuba's population is under 15 years of age, and 6%, 65 and over.

• **Topography:** Some three fifths of the island is gently rolling land, with many wide and fertile plains. Three mountain ranges run across the island, in the western, central, and eastern sections, the latter being the most famous — the Sierra Maestra — where peaks rise to 6,000 feet and where Fidel Castro and Che Guevara launched the Revolution.

• **Weather:** Although Cuba is in the Tropic Zone, it also lies in the Trade Wind belt, making for sub-tropical weather. There are two seasons: The dry, from November to April, and the wet, from May through October.

• **Ports:** Cuba's harbors are among the best in the world — Havana, Guantanamo, Santiago, Bahia Honda, etc.

• **Economy:** Heavily dependent on sugar, which provides 75% of export earnings, Cuba is still considered an underdeveloped country. Cuba's nickel reserves, among the world's largest, account for another 15%, and other export earnings come from tobacco, rum, citrus fruits, fish, cement, and fertilizer.

• **Gross National Product:** Annual growth rate of the gross social product from 1961 to 1965 was 1.9%; from 1966 to 1970, 3.9%; from 1971 to 1975, 10%. A rate of 6% is projected for the next five years.

• **Communist Party.** The Political Bureau is comprised of 13 members, of which Fidel Castro Ruz is first secretary. Other members include Raul Castro Ruz, second secretary, and Osvaldo Dorticos, Cuba's president. Delegates to the first congress of the Communist Party in December, 1975, elected 112 members to the Central Committee plus 12 alternates. The party numbers some 200,000 members and was officially constituted on Oct. 1, 1965.

| Category         | 1958 Pre-Revolution | 1975  |
|------------------|---------------------|---|
| Population       | 6,700,000           | 9,000,000   |
| Life expectancy  | 55 years            | 70 years  |
| Employment       |                     |   |
| -Unemployment    | 700,000             | Almost nil  |
| -Working women   | 194,000             | 647,000   |
| -Social security | \$114.3 million     | \$593.3 million (almost as much as Pre-Revolution budget) |
| Illiteracy       | 23.6%               | 3.9% (lowest in Latin America)                            |

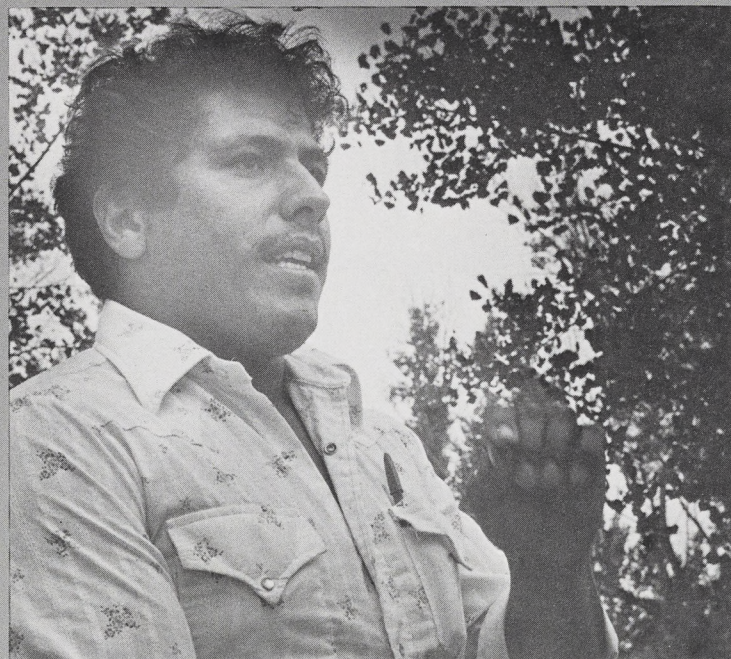
### Administrative Divisions

Six provinces: Havana, Pinar del Rio, Matanzas, Las Villas, Camaguey, Oriente, and the municipality of the Isle of Pines.

Fourteen provinces: Pinar del Rio, Havana, Havana City, Matanzas, Villa Clara, Cienfuegos, Sancti Spiritus, Ciego de Avila, Camaguey, Las Tunas, Holguin, Granma, Santiago de Cuba, Guantanamo, and the municipality of the Isle of Pines.







Pedro Archuleta, 06775-158

*"I will not be used to help the FBI or the federal government smash the Chicano struggle in the southwest or the Puerto Rican movement for independence, or any other movement for liberation. I will not become a stoopigeon for this system. I will stand united with my two comrades in jail, Maria and Raisa, because we will prove to all oppressed people that the government will not scare us by putting us in jail. Maria and Raisa being in jail has made me stronger. We will support each other and set an example for the rest of the brothers and sisters the FBI and the federal government intends to drag in front of the Chicago or the New York Grand Jury.*

*"In me you see the spirit of Emiliano Zapata, Francisco Villa and Pedro Albizu Campos. What I have done here today refusing to talk to the grand jury, I have done with pride. You can put me in jail for a year, or 10 years and I will never talk to you, because I am proud of being a Chicano, and fighting for justice."*

## And Now There Are Three . . .

Pedro Antonio Archuleta — a Chicano activist from Tierra Amarilla, New Mexico — has become the third member of the National Commission on Hispanic Affairs of the Episcopal Church to choose jail rather than testify before a Grand Jury.

Archuleta was held in contempt June 30 and sentenced to the Metropolitan Correction Center in New York, where his former colleagues, Maria Cueto and Raisa Nemikin, are also being held.

Archuleta's trial ended dramatically when Judge Richard Owen ordered the courtroom cleared after spectators hissed his decision and applauded Pedro's closing statement.

Pedro's description of his own harassment and the struggles of his community, where unemployment is 56% year round, moved those who were watching the proceedings to their feet, applauding.

Then in quick succession:

- Judge Owen ordered the courtroom cleared.
- Lawrence Stern, Archuleta's lawyer, pleaded with the bench to reverse the decision, offering that the outburst was "spontaneous, and not malicious in intent." The judge refused.

- Spectators stood in shocked disbelief, and refused to move upon shouted orders of the marshalls.

- Judge Owen called for more marshalls.

- A hasty "peace conference" was held between Pedro and his lawyer and those in the courtroom. Pedro said he did not want them to get into trouble because of him; his supporters did not want Pedro to think they were deserting him.

The matter was resolved when ten or more marshalls arrived, strong-arming the 25 people in court to the lobby, one-on-one.

Archuleta, Cueto, and Nemikin now face possible jail terms through May 8, 1978, the life of the current Grand Jury. The trio contend that the Grand Jury and the FBI are involved in a "fishing expedition" against Hispanic minorities. The FBI says it is investigating "terrorist" bombings claimed by a group called the FALN, an alleged militant Puerto Rican group.

Neither Pedro nor Maria or Raisa are Puerto Rican. Pedro, who was incorporated in the NCHA in 1972-73 to represent Chicano concerns, said he knew little about the

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# WITNESS Visits Grand Jury Prisoners

by Mary Lou Suhor

"No use pushin' no button," said the black woman leaning against the wall of the elevator. "In jail everything moves when the guards say so. This your first visit?"

The Rev. Jorge Rivera of Puerto Rico and I admitted that it was. We were trying to see Maria Cueto and Raisa Nemikin and had just been admitted through a series of doors which unlocked and locked behind us and had waited; filled out forms, waited; had a camera and brief case confiscated and waited; had our hands stamped and waited; and now we were trying to get the elevator to take us to the fifth floor of the Metropolitan Correction Center.

The woman with whom we shared the elevator stepped up to a built-in receiver near the buttons and shouted, "All right, you got passengers here. We're ready anytime you are. Let's go." And we all waited.

Then the elevator lurched, moved mysteriously by an unseen hand, and we emerged, gratefully, summoned by a guard. "Over here. *Vengan aqui.*"

I was surprised to be addressed in two languages. But when we entered the Community Visiting Room I was soon aware that my white face was in the

minority. The room was alive and jumping this June 30. From every corner and from circles in between came snatches of animated conversation as relatives and friends clustered around "their" prisoner, for the moment surrounded by love instead of a prison cell. Words were undecipherable in the cacaphony of noise, but one thing for sure. *Aqui se habla espanol.* Spanish is spoken here. The setting reminded me of a Peg Averill cartoon, "*Jail is for poor people.*"

Jorge and I chatted while waiting. I had met the former director of the National Commission on Hispanic Affairs for the first time a few hours previously at Pedro Archuleta's trial. He had flown to New York for a meeting and had dropped by just in time to hear his former colleague held in contempt and committed to prison.

As both of us had stood, sadly, on the courthouse steps after being ordered from the courtroom (see story above), he had asked me directions to the prison, and I offered to guide him. He had intended to ask for an appointment to see Maria and Raisa the next day but providentially, the guard on duty kept processing both of us through for an evening visit. When he eyed Jorge's clerical collar and asked, "She with you?", Jorge simply answered, "Yes."

Now Jorge spoke up over the noise of the visiting room. "Did you know that Raisa had met Lolita Lebron, one of the Puerto Rican nationalist prisoners? Raisa was being admitted and Lolita had been given permission to leave Alderson to go to her daughter's funeral in Puerto Rico. Raisa had a chance to speak to her. Lolita might not be well known here but a thousand people turned out to cheer her at the airport in Puerto Rico," he said.

"Here they come," I interrupted, spotting Maria and Raisa emerging through a door. How they managed to look smashing in blue prison jump suits, I'll never comprehend.

There were *abrazos* — embraces — all around.

Since we had just come from Pedro's trial, Maria and Raisa were eager to hear about what went on in court, and we ran down what had just happened.

Making conversation in prison is not easy. Emotions run rampant and one

frequently turns to stock questions, cliches and trivia to keep from bursting into tears.

"Well, now. How are you two."

"Fine."

"How's the food?"

"We've gotten used to it. Jail is jail."

"How are your accommodations?"

"O.K. The prison is air conditioned, so we're worse than the Hilton but better than the Tudor," Maria laughed — an in-house Episcopal joke, the latter "modest" hotel well known to frequent visitors at the Episcopal Church Center.

"What about the other prisoners?"

"We see them come and go. Right now we are the longest held here — having arrived in March. Since this is a detention center there is a quick turnover, as women are held for short terms or are transferred to other prisons," Raisa said.

"Are you receiving letters of support?"

"Yes, especially from Church and Society. We were surprised to hear from people from Detroit, Boston, Washington, Los Angeles, Ohio, Idaho — all over the country."

"Do you need books?"

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Raisa Nemikin, 00446-183



Maria Cueto, 00406-183



Calvary, Pittsburgh:

# That First Church Broadcast

by Franklin Winters

It happened in early 1921 — the first radio broadcast from Calvary Church in Pittsburgh. And since 56 years represents quite a big chunk out of anyone's life, it can almost safely be assumed that the majority of the performers in that headlined event have by this time passed from the scene.

Yet, if the ghosts of mortals love to return to the scene of their biggest triumph, it also seems possible that those important figures must still hold a rendezvous at Calvary Church in Pittsburgh.

Let's go back to the beginning. In 1920, H. P. Davis of the Westinghouse Electric and Manufacturing Company was enjoying headlined fame. His experimental station KDKA at Pittsburgh had been sending out programs, and to the scattered listeners with one-tube sets and the earphones of those days, those broadcasts furnished exciting entertainment. Commercial sponsors were then unknown, and the programs were almost entirely devoted to vocal and instrumental music.

Nevertheless, Davis and his associates were in a quandary with regard to Sunday programming. They felt that programs for that day should be specifically religious in tone.

It was Fletcher Hallock, another Westinghouse staff member of the Calvary Church choir, who helped to solve the problem. He suggested that his church might be willing to have one of its services put on the air.

The Rev. Edwin Jan van Etten, rector of Calvary, was approached, and also the vestry, and their consent readily obtained.

It is told that the sexton of the church had considerable misgivings and wondered what the rector was up to when he read the notice for that first service to be broadcast on Jan. 2, 1921: *"An interesting arrangement has been made for tonight's service. The International Radio Company [Westinghouse] has installed wireless telephone receiving apparatus in the chancel, and tonight's music, sermon and service will be flashed for a radius of more than a thousand miles through space . . ."*

Franklin Winters is a free lance writer living in Poughkeepsie, N.Y.

Fortunately, when van Etten came to face the little square microphone, he did not betray any qualms. He had been assured by the Westinghouse experts that the curious voice receptacle would not hum or sputter or blow up in his face.

But neither he nor any others of the preaching staff were prepared for what followed. The service was no more than over when things began to happen. As the rector left the chancel for his adjacent study, he was called to the telephone. A listener, calling from miles outside of Pittsburgh, wanted to let Calvary's parson know how much he had enjoyed that church broadcast.

All that evening the telephone kept ringing. Some persons even came to the rectory with their congratulations. The next morning an avalanche of letters rolled in — not first-of-the-month bills as van Etten first assumed — but more expressions of approval. Then and there the Pittsburgh rector realized that he had received the first radio fan letters ever sent to any minister!

## Mother Felt Deceived

Curious memories still cling to those Pittsburgh broadcasts. At that time van Etten's mother was living in Rhinebeck, a Hudson Valley village, more than 400 miles away. In the same community the local hardware merchant was inordinately proud of his home-made receiving set. Learning that van Etten's service was going out over the air waves, he invited the rector's mother to his second floor studio.

Van Etten always told of what happened with a chuckle.

"She recognized my voice," said he, "but she couldn't believe that I was really in Pittsburgh, and not next door, playing a trick on her."

Seventeen years afterward, almost on the anniversary of that first broadcast, van Etten — who had become Dr. van Etten through an honorary college degree, was interviewed by Llewellyn White, the Westinghouse publicity representative. It was also the occasion when KDKA's 712-foot antenna was dedicated.

"Didn't you have the slightest trepidation?" asked White.

"Incredible!" exclaimed the rector. "That innocent-



looking little black box was not in the way of even my most vehement gestures. To be perfectly frank, I felt that we had everything to gain and nothing to lose from the experiment.

"But after the first two broadcasts," he laughed, "they respectfully asked me to refrain from joining in the hymns. My poor voice had a way of straying from the air to bass and back to the air again, and as I stood nearest the microphone, I had an advantage over the choir, which unfortunately could not drown me out."

## Cough Communicated

Dr. van Etten also liked to tell about the small boy in the choir who arranged to send his family a special message. "Be sure to listen," he told his folks, "just before Dr. van Etten gives out the hymn before the sermon. If you will listen carefully, you will hear a little cough. It'll be me, Mom."

Is this clever youngster still around today in the Pittsburgh environs? If he is, he must also have plenty of memories.

Of course, Dr. van Etten himself has been gone for quite a long time. After 22 years in the parish where he made radio history, he left Pittsburgh in the fall of 1940 to become the dean of St. Paul's Cathedral in Boston. In announcing his appointment, Bishop Henry Knox Sherrill had described him as "a man of great power, as a preacher of unusual attractiveness, and sympathetic understanding as a man."

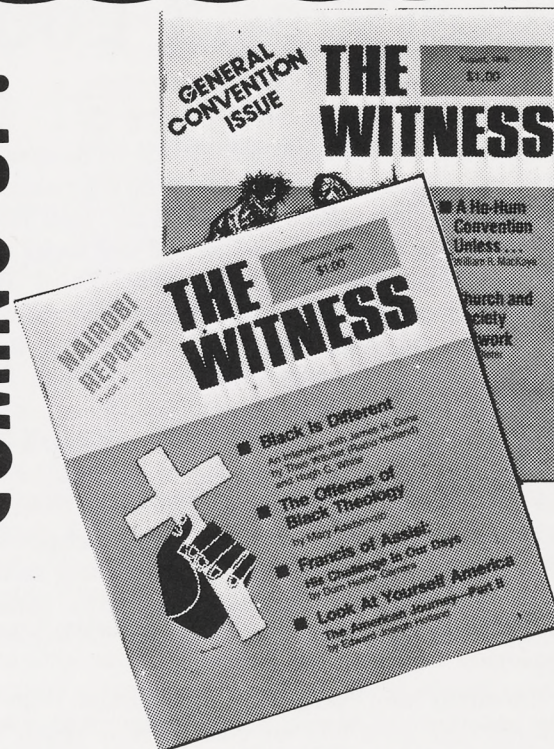
He retired from this office in 1953, and died Oct. 7, 1957. The Episcopal Church has a strict mandatory rule in regard to age retirement, and it was told that Dr. van Etten did not have too much interest in living when he could no longer preach.

Does his genial, august spirit join a host of others at the scene of their highest triumph while he lived? If it does, he and all the rest must be well pleased with the words on the commemorative tablet on Calvary Church that still may be seen today:

**JANUARY 2, 1921  
FROM CALVARY CHURCH  
FOR THE FIRST TIME IN HISTORY  
A CHURCH SERVICE WAS BROADCAST  
BY THE RADIO WIRELESS . . .**

The tablet was made possible by contributions, most of them no more than dimes, from those who had listened to the pioneer broadcasts. When this appeal was first made, within a few days after the announcement, 4000 letters came, every one bringing those small coins. ■

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# Third World Looks to Churches

by Jovelino Ramos

I will be using the phrase *Third World* to designate the world of the oppressed and exploited in their search for liberation, no matter where they are. The Third World is not a geographical entity, but a political and social reality.

*The oppressors are not part of the Third World.* Oppression is usually carried on under the rhetoric of sexual, ethnic, national and cultural solidarity. But the truth is that the oppressors are oppressors even if they belong to the same sex, ethnic group, country or culture as those they oppress. They are not part of the Third World, but are rather agents of the system of domination which exploits the oppressed. Thus defined, the Third World must be understood as a world in revolt; as the struggle of the wretched of the earth for the power to control their own lives; as the challenge of the majority against a parasitical minority; as the power of weakness against the weakness of power.

If Christians are going to be consistent with their preaching, they must address themselves in depth to the predicament of Third World peoples and search for historical rather than momentary and superficial treatment of the cause of their oppression.

The most crucial issues related to Third World peoples can be grouped into four broad categories, which are: I. Survival, II. Labor Exploitation, III. Cultural Alienation, and IV. Repression.

For the sake of concreteness these issues are suggested as a call to action addressed to the churches in the United States in relation to Third World peoples in this country, and to the cause of human rights in the world.

## I. Survival

**A. Immigration.** It is important to understand and to conceptualize the phenomenon of immigration as a search for survival. The oppressed is more attached to his country than is the oppressor. He does not emigrate lightly, but because his survival is threatened. (Slavery, euphemistically called "forced immigration," is a phenomenon which belongs under the category of labor exploitation.)

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**Jovelino Ramos** is the young Brazilian director of the Fifth Commission on Justice, Liberation and Human Fulfillment, a monitor for Third World concerns, at the National Council of Churches in New York.

**Problem:** The immigrant in the U.S. is the victim of a continual process of intimidation and police harassment. He lives in a foreign land, and knows neither his rights nor who can help him.

**Question:** *How can the churches deal with this problem in its political and economic aspects? [Attention is especially called to the Rodino Law, the case of the illegal aliens, and the harassment of the Haitians in Florida.]*

**B. The Political Exile.** The institution of political exile is a special case of forced immigration. In the past, Church agencies have been active in this area with positive results, as in the case of their support for the Cuban exiles during the 1960's.

**Problem:** It is consistent with the ideology and way of life of the majority of the churches' constituencies to help conservative exiles running away from socialist societies. So far, few steps have been taken towards equal concern for those harassed by right-wing regimes.

**Question:** *Can the churches become an advocacy body for equal attention to victims of right-wing harassment? If so, how? [Attention is called to the fact that the number of people running away from repressive right-wing governments will tend to grow in the near future.]*

**C. Unemployment.** It is well known that the rate of unemployment in the United States is higher among the Third World ethnic constituency. One of the most amazing contradictions of the oppressive establishment is the fact that it praises the virtue of work, and condemns the oppressed constituency as lazy and as not trying hard enough, yet it does not provide enough jobs for those who want and need to work.

**Problem:** It is apparent that an establishment heavily dependent for stability and progress on the working of the giant, capital-intensive multinational corporations and on advanced technology and specialization cannot successfully deal with the phenomenon of unemployment. The church constituencies and resources are part of, rather than a challenge to that establishment. Jesus said that wherever you



treasure is, there is also your heart. In other words, it is hard to challenge oppression when you are part of it.

**Question:** *Can the churches, without creating insurmountable antagonisms, successfully pursue an effort aimed at abolishing social panaceas like the welfare and unemployment compensation systems, replacing them by a realistic system of minimal income? [Minimal income should mean enough income to meet survival needs of food, housing, clothing and health expenses.]*

## II. Labor Exploitation

**A. Semi-Slavery.** Well-documented evidence is now available that the American Indian, the Black, the Filipino, the Jamaican and the Latin-American migrant workers in this country are being forced to work under the most repressive conditions. Many have been confined to situations which resemble concentration camps and have been forced to work for wages which cannot meet their survival needs.

**Problem:** Much of this situation is unjust, but legal; that is, it is protected by unjust laws. A further problem is that there are cases of groups who voluntarily submit to such hardship, since their only alternative is no job at all and therefore, hunger.

**Question:** *What can the churches do to confront this situation, and with what resources? Is information and organized action part of a possible pattern of action to respond to such a challenge?*

**B. Illegal Aliens.** It is a fact that, in the urban areas, Third World Peoples are the most underpaid workers and the ones who have to cope with the worst possible working conditions. A case which deserves special attention is the exploitation of the illegal alien. The network of those who force the illegal alien to work hard for low wages prospers on the basis of an efficient blackmailing system. Illegal aliens live under the shadow of continual intimidation. They see the FBI and Immigration officials as watchdogs ready to deport them to the even more miserable conditions from whence they came. In such a situation, they are grateful to have jobs, however demeaning, and "the bosses" know that and use that fear and gratitude against them.

**Problem:** Illegal aliens are the first to oppose exposure of the system which oppresses them because they would be summarily deported. They fear secrecy and anonymity less than the precipitous unprofessional help of well-intentioned, but naive volunteers.

**Question:** *Since the illegal alien will not take the initiative of asking for help, should not the churches take the initiative to do something to change this situation? Is not an immigration amnesty the most plausible and human solution to this problem?*

## III. Cultural Alienation

**A. Dividing in order to control.** One of the best-known principles followed by the ruling elites is to keep the majority divided in order to control it. The best way to neutralize the drive for liberation of a particular ethnic group is to create a sub-elite inside their group which will be accountable to the national ruling elite. Unquestioned community control and uncritical ethnic control may pave the way not for power to the people, but for power to the ethnic elite. It makes very little difference to the oppressed if the policeman who clubs him in the name of the law of the ruling elite is yellow, brown, black, or white.

**Problem:** Any empowerment of representatives of ethnic groups may be co-opted by the system which oppresses and represses Third World Peoples.

**Question:** *Could not the churches re-activate their practice of self-criticism to make sure that those who hold power positions will be the servants of oppressed peoples rather than masters of oppressive bureaucracies?*

**B. Sexual Discrimination.** In any Third World community all are equally oppressed, but the women are more "equally oppressed" than the men. In addition to ethnic oppression, the Third World woman suffers sexual discrimination in her job and wage and in the social and political arenas.

**Problem:** Many Third World constituencies (mostly the men but many women as well) argue that the preaching of women's liberation is another product of white-middle-class-American women now being sold to the women of the ethnic elites.

**Question:** *If the liberation of Third World women is part of the process of liberation as a whole, how can it be pursued without splitting the Third*



*World constituencies on the basis of sexual antagonisms?*

#### IV. Repression

**Police Harassment.** Third World people are the favorite victims of police harassment. The massacres of Attica, of Black liberation leaders, the ordeal of the Native Americans who occupied Wounded Knee in the U.S.; the institution of political prisons, the arrest of people because of political dissent, the torture and political assassination (in flagrant violation of the most elementary human rights) by right-wing dictatorships in Asia, Africa and Latin America at the service of expansionist interests, are mainly addressed against Third World Peoples.

**Problem:** The question of repression transcends the lines of national boundaries and is part of the international concern of Third World people. Church constituencies in the U.S.A. are becoming less and less concerned with international issues and more and more interested in regionalization and community control issues, which may lead to the provincialization and isolation of such constituencies.

**Question:** *Can the churches overlook the question of the violation of human rights, with all its international implications, and still believe it is being faithful to the Gospel? Should not the churches use their moral power to put pressure on the U.S. Government to suspend both military and economic aid to any country which systematically and flagrantly violates the universal declaration of human rights?*

#### Conclusion:

If the churches in the U.S. really want to live up to their proclaimed intent to be stewards of the Kingdom of God, they must realize that

- Third World Peoples are struggling to achieve precisely what is promised in the proclamation of the Kingdom's arrival: justice and liberation;

- Third World Peoples constitute the heavy majority of this planet's population over against a tiny minority of oppressors;

- Even though history is on their side, Third World peoples are presently oppressed, and Christians have to be attentive and responsive to their needs as a way of witnessing to the promises of the Kingdom. ■

*Continued from page 9*

"We have a sufficient supply on hand. I find I read less in jail because my life is so compartmentalized," Raisa said.

"And I find just the opposite. I read more in jail," Maria said.

"We bumped into your lawyer downstairs and she said Maria's parents had just been here."

"Yes, my mother and father came in from Phoenix."

"How did it go?"

"Well, the visit was good, but it was hard on them, you know. They had to give my father oxygen on the plane going home, so it must have affected him."

I imagined my parents going through the process Jorge and I had just experienced. We turned to other subjects.

"Do you work in prison?"

"Since we have not been convicted of a crime, we don't have to work, but they urged us to do so, psychologically. Given our skills, though, they would have put us in the office and we didn't want to be part of processing prisoners and helping the prison system. So we told them we would

clean. We do a lot of scrubbing," Maria said.

The two women told Jorge they were especially pleased with a recent visit from Bishop Reus Froylan of Puerto Rico.

"And he says you helped him a lot," Jorge said. "Did you receive the resolution on your behalf passed by the Puerto Rican clergy?"

They had not. "I'll send it again," he said.

"What is your biggest problem right now?"

"We fear being cut off from the rest of the people being investigated by the FBI and Grand Jury. We hope everyone will see that Pedro and any others the Grand Jury may call, and ourselves, are victims of the same abusive legal system."

The two women hope that Concerned Churchpersons who took up their cause as bureaucratically-related Hispanics from the Episcopal Church Center will give equal support to those being harassed in grass-roots Hispanic communities. "We are all united in the same struggle," Maria said, "and Raisa and I see our stand as a

principled one to protect the rights of the minorities we worked with on the Hispanic Commission."

End of visiting hours was signalled, and we all joined hands.

Jorge prayed in Spanish, choosing a liberation theme from Exodus, asking that the women be fortified in the mission that God had called them to fulfill behind prison walls.

*Abrazos* all around, and then it was over.

We joined other visitors on the elevator down. This time it was filled to capacity and a feeling of claustrophobia came over us as we waited for a *deus ex machina* to take us to the lobby. Two children began to cry. Someone pushed the alarm button. Another opened the door again for air. Everybody was speaking at once. Suddenly we began to move.

As Jorge and I parted outside I wished him a safe trip home and a good weekend. Ironically, as Pedro lost his freedom and Maria and Raisa coped with prison, I realized I was headed into the July 4th Independence Day Weekend. ■



*Continued from page 8*

Puerto Rican Independence movement before he was subpoenaed. (No offense, he had intimated to his colleagues; it was just that surviving as a Chicano in the Southwest had its priorities . . .)

Since 1970, Pedro has been active in the Chicano movement which is challenging the political leaders and those who control jobs, to the detriment of the poor, the Chicanos contend, in Rio Arriba County. His incarceration climaxed a three month court battle during which he had been served with four Grand Jury subpoenas — two to Chicago, one to New York and one to New Mexico.

In earlier proceedings, Robert Rothstein, attorney for intervenors in Archuleta's behalf, noted that the community in Tierra Amarilla had a long history of harassment by legal authorities.

Twenty four members of the community who had worked with La Raza or La Cooperacion del Pueblo had been jailed, he said. "One group was taken into custody, beaten, then released; another group was held in jail, never charged, and released; and others were taken into custody, indicted, but acquitted."

As THE WITNESS went to press, Linda Backiel, legal assistant for Archuleta, reported that Pedro's chief problem in jail is loneliness, with 2,000 miles separating him from his family and friends. Messages of support can be sent to Pedro Archuleta, 06775-158, Metropolitan Correction Center, 150 Park Row, New York, N.Y. 10007.

At the end of Archuleta's trial, Elizabeth Fink, attorney for Maria and Raisa shook her head and commented: "Three down. How many more to go?" —M.L.S.

*Continued from page 2*

way a bunch of Semitic sheep herders did is romantic indeed. Those who think beautiful old language or poetry speaks to them are hearing "voices." If they spoke of anything more dangerous than religion they would get locked up.

Who has examined the premises on which we try to base our religious lives? How do we know those postulates are not about equal to pre-Planckian "ether" over or through which light used to travel to get from the sun to the earth? No wonder Shaull and Mosley are tired of the game and Heyward expands deity to encompass what she experiences. Prophets are not found in seminaries. Seers and visionaries are not in rectories. Rather with Amos — on the assembly line or with Jesus out of the office.

Dare the shufflers and dealers put aside their cards and come out to the world? Or are they afraid they *will* discover a new game is going on.

John Clark  
Poughkeepsie, N.Y.

## Has Problems with Hiatt

I am a woman priest. I was ordained to the priesthood last April 2. I feel tremendously honored and awed by it. However, I have some problems with Suzanne Hiatt's article in your June issue. Either I am incredibly lucky or too much has been made of "jobs for women priests." The angry shouting still goes on. Change is rarely rapid. I am a priest by the grace of God.

I owe much to the women who forced the world to deal

with the ordination of women. The anger and the intense feelings of those illegally but rightfully ordained made it possible for me to be a priest. Convention of '76 made it all a fact. Now no one can pretend that women priests do not exist and their ordination cannot be taken from them. We are indeed "priests forever!" So now, let us as women do our job — ministry — regardless of where we must do it. The battle has been won! No one can turn it to defeat!

We, as women, can be rectors, vicars, assistants, lovers of Christ. There is no doubt about it. But, as new persons in Christ we must show the world that we are priests. Bemoaning our lot will only irritate our brethren. My style is to perform my ministry wherever I am. It is my life! No one can take my ordination away. It has been bestowed on me by God! I wear my collar wherever I go so that people will know I'm a priest. I celebrate the Eucharist anywhere I can. I reach out to the poor, the persecuted, the sick. I need to let people know I am a priest who happens to be a woman. That is my job for the furtherance of women in the priesthood. I do not write articles bemoaning my lack of recognition, I am there and I am seen. Perhaps in the fullness of time the people of God will recognize that women make good priests because I am a good priest.

The Rev. Wendy Raynor  
Edenton, N.C.

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### CREDITS

Cover, David Bragin; pp. 4, 7, Anniversary Tours, New York; p. 5, Center for Cuban Studies, New York; p. 8, Archuleta photo courtesy David Roybal.

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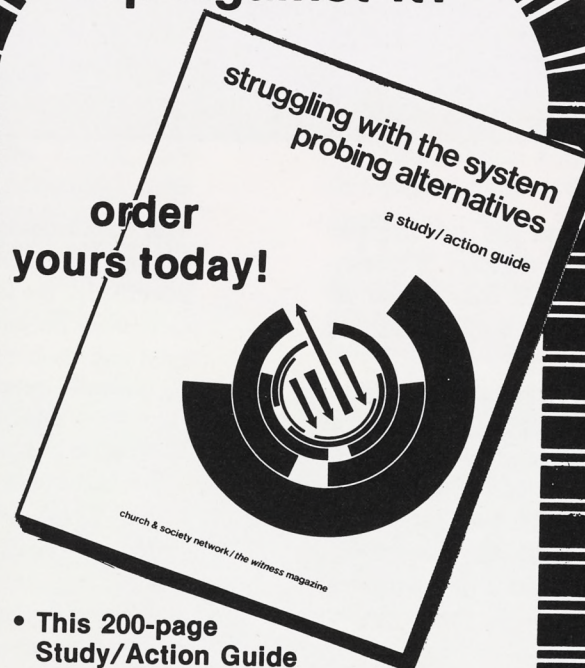
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