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Women's Meet/Houston
Ellen Barrett

Abortion
George Barrett
Helen Seager

**The Embarrassment
Of Being Episcopalian**
William Stringfellow



Objects to ERA Article

I have three strong objections to Dr. Fuller's article in the November number of *THE WITNESS*, the first applying to this article alone, the others to the matter of women's rights in general:

1. Dr. Fuller uses the rather nasty tactic of guilt by association when she lumps together responsible opponents of the ERA and such groups as the Ku Klux Klan and the John Birch Society. Would Dr. Fuller appreciate opponents of the ERA lumping her together with Stalinist supporters of the amendment? This tactic relieves her of the task of examining responsible opposition to the ERA she must suppose; but in fact it makes her entire article suspect from the start.

2. It is doubtful that defeat of the ERA would spell a substantial setback in the struggle to obtain an equal place for women in American society. The Equal Protection clause of the 14th Amendment, the 1964 Civil Rights Act, and other national and local legislation provide essential equality in theory. It is unclear to me how another measure can do more. With or without the ERA unequal treatment will have to be challenged in the courts, and with or without the ERA gross discrimination will violate the law of the land. No one knows in fact what the ERA *would* do. Given the wonders worked upon and by means of the Interstate Commerce clause, reasonable people can suspect that the horrors predicted by hysterical opponents of the ERA are not entirely far-fetched.

3. Finally, it seems to me that the egalitarianism supported by Dr. Fuller (and *THE WITNESS*) flows more from the early modern natural right philosophers than from Scripture, and that in fact it is a sort of neo-Erastianism. The message of Scrip-

ture is that all people are equally bound to hear and obey God. There are no rights beyond the right to become a child of God by grace and free obedience. This right has concrete implications, which very well might be codified by good regimes. I do not see that the ERA provides an example. I do not have room here to explain this view, but I refer your readers to Scripture (e.g. Genesis 1-3 and Ephesians 5) and to Karl Barth's profound and generous treatment of the subject in "Man and Woman," Chapter XII, section 54 of *Church Dogmatics*.

Mark Haverland
Kenyon College
Gambier, Ohio

Dr. Fuller Replies

Mr. Haverland raises three points: Whether there is need for the ERA, guilt by association, and Scriptural witness.

First, the Supreme Court has consistently refused to apply the 14th Amendment to prohibit discrimination on the basis of gender as it has on the basis of race, religion and national origin. If we relied on individual laws to provide equality, the legal status of women would vary from issue to issue and locale to locale. After enactment, such laws, unlike a Constitutional amendment, could evaporate when the blush of democracy fades. (In 1776 New Jersey gave women the right to vote — and took it away in 1807!)

Re guilt by association. The Communist Party of the USA *opposes* the ERA. On the far right, Phyllis Schlafly, head of Stop ERA, was a featured speaker at a 1973 John Birch Society national rally and was listed as a member in their 1960 Bulletin. (She now denies membership.) At Schlafly's anti-feminist rally, Texas State Representative Clay Smothers demanded "the right to segregate myself and my family from these misfits and perverts" attending the International Women's Year Conference in Houston. Smothers' audience of 15,000 middle-class Christians cheered wildly. They continued to cheer as "pervert" rhetorically included anyone wanting federally funded day care, the ERA, reproductive choice, or civil rights for homosexuals.

I interviewed rally participants, whom I do separate from their right-wing leadership. They came to witness for God, family and country. They acknowledge social problems but sincerely see the causes as legislation and bureaucracy and the solutions as personal morality and private spirituality. This raises the third and most crucial point. Can effective personal

witness against today's problems be separated from community witness that entails legislation and administration?

When God's children were inhibited from lives of grace and obedience, Scriptural witnesses reacted publicly, going directly to the cause. When the barrier was idolatry, Moses confronted the established religions. When the barrier was legalism, Jesus broke the established laws. Today many of God's children cannot experience full grace and obedience because of structures, politically maintained, that trap them in poverty and unequal opportunity. In dialogue with the thousands of Christians who witness at anti-ERA rallies we must ask, "Can your personal morality and private spirituality directly challenge the *structural* causes of contemporary discrimination?" I believe they cannot.

Georgia Fuller, NOW Coordinator
Committee on Women and Religion

Pained by Cuba Report

It gives me great pain to read articles supporting the Cuban government, especially when the author (Charles Lawrence) is a fellow Christian, because it demonstrates to what extent the wolf is ravaging the sheep (*THE WITNESS*, August 1976).

It is not my intention to argue here about the diplomatic relations between U.S. and Cuba nor to refute the monstrous assertion that the Cuban people have progressed under Communism. The first can be a good subject for debate. The second is an untenable proposition in the light of the exodus of about 800,000 or 8% of the Cuban population and the fact that Cubans have long been barred from seeking refuge outside the island.

My interest lies in the advancement of Christianity and the intrinsic internal freedom that this represents. My own escape from Cuba was my family's decision after the advent of Communism eliminated any trace of justice. The International Commission of Jurists published a report in 1962 testifying to this: "Rule of law had disappeared from the island." Christians can continue to assemble inside designated churches but cannot educate their children in their faith. Witnessing and evangelizing outside the church has cost many years of imprisonment. Committed Christians are considered automatically to be "Counter-revolutionary."

Evidently the silence of the opposition gave Mr. Lawrence the impression that

Continued on page 18

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To Weep Over Jerusalem

Robert L. DeWitt

The bishops of the Episcopal Church have been subjected to heavy criticism of late, and the church they serve has been continually in the news. The news has been not so much sordid as turgid — signs of schism, diatribes about trivia, a preoccupation with internal matters seemingly of only morbid interest and probably of no importance to the world.

For example, much time and attention at their last meeting was devoted to the question of how the bishops should deal with one of their number who had confirmation services in other bishops' jurisdictions without permission — scarcely a matter of great gravity in the eternal scheme of things. And when the issues have been of intrinsic importance to the church and to the world — as the rights of women and of gays — the news has been rather of how the bishops have equivocated or temporized. In short, the present image of the church portrays it as not being devoted with any great seriousness either to its own Gospel, or to the world.

Providing sharp contrast to that image is the recently emerged Urban Bishops' Coalition, a voluntary association of some 50 bishops from across the country who have been brought together by their common concern about, and need for help in facing the crisis of their cities.

The first joint enterprise they have undertaken (they have committed themselves to act, not just to deliberate) is a series of public hearings in five regionally representative cities of the land, focusing on how the church can better minister to the city. As of this writing three hearings have already been held. The bishops have heard testimony on the endless inventory of social ills that afflict both our cities and the people who dwell in them. From all of this data,

the bishops intend to devise new and effective strategies for the church in its urban mission.

But it is not easy. After listening all morning, afternoon and evening to the testimony in Birmingham, Bishop Furman Stough of Alabama said that his first reaction was "to weep over Jerusalem." Such a day as he had been through makes for hard, hard listening.

It is hard on the emotions, hard on the mind. One would need to be coldly indifferent not to anguish over the privations of marginalized people, the distortion of young lives, the loneliness of the elderly, the resentment of blacks and women about their unequal treatment. And one would need a wisdom not in evidence either in legislative chambers or in the suites of business management to resolve the dilemmas of inadequate and insufficient housing, of rising inflation and rising unemployment. Like a Lenten litany, one wants to cry out: "*Lord have mercy, Lord have mercy . . .*"

But, as Bishop Stough pointed out at the conclusion of the testimony, we in this church which is predominantly white and middle class, have the deeper identity of being followers of Christ, and we must find ways to live that out. A strategy for living out that discipleship corporately is what these bishops are about. It will require the best thinking that they, and others with them, can do. As Gulliver learned from the Lilliputians, even a giant can be rendered helpless when tied down by a multiplicity of little restrictions. So it is with the innumerable demands of the office of bishop.

To avoid being immobilized by endless administrative details, the bishops will need a lot of

Continued on page 19

Abortion

Challenge for New Doctrine of Woman

by Helen Seager

The turmoil about women's rights and responsibility in the church and in society indicates how thoroughly the ancient misogynistic attitude toward women persists, but it is rare that this underlying doctrine of woman is held up for examination in any of the issues.

I believe that misogyny is about to be confronted and overcome, if not destroyed. The resulting challenge to both church and society is to create a new doctrine of woman, which would remove a fundamental source of oppression — the sexual domination of man over woman.

Typically, in the abortion debate, it is not the doctrine of woman that is discussed, but rather the legal rights of fetuses, adoption policies, use of tax money, freedom of conscience, population projections, etc. These issues, important though they are, plus abortion itself, are only the warp and woof of the last but heavy veil over a misogyny which has always been part of our collective unconscious. It is the last veil because at issue is the real difference between men and women, with the focus on an experience that only a woman can have.

That we are close to the truth is indicated by the ferocity of the debate (one Baptist clergy member has characterized a public presentation on abortion as "two self-righteous people who go for the jugular").

A chronology of positions and opinions about women's issues in the church and society shows inconsistency regarding the morality and legality of abortion. In the 10th century Holy Roman Empire, a woman who miscarried even accidentally could be condemned to the stake. In the 11th century, Pope Innocent held that abortion before "animation" (40 days for a male and 80 days for a female) was not "irregular." In the 14th century, it was established in English common law that abortion could be induced at any time

during pregnancy. In 1588, Pope Sixtus forbade all abortion, a principle rescinded by Pope Gregory only three years later.

It was not until the 19th century that the British Parliament passed a restrictive abortion statute, followed across the ocean by New York State, on the grounds that abortion, in those days without antiseptics, threatened the life of the woman. By 1900, even with antiseptics, most American doctors had become anti-abortion — some suggest in an effort to lend dignity to their practice.

The only Old Testament reference which might indicate values assigned to the loss of a fetus occurs in *Exodus 21:22*. In this passage it is recommended that, if a pregnant woman miscarries as a result of trying to break up a fight between two men, but is not injured otherwise, the judge shall award as much money to her husband as he demands. The loss of the fetus is repaid with money. If the woman suffers additional injury, her injury is to be repaid (to the husband, of course) "life for life, eye for eye, tooth for tooth" Although the Old Testament doctrine of woman treats a woman as part of a man's goods and chattel rather than as a person in her own right (see the Tenth Commandment, for example) and despite her principal value as a producer of many children, her loss of life was to be repaid with another life, not with money. One must infer that today's hardline anti-abortion people who grudgingly grant abortion only if the woman is in danger of death would gather small support in Old Testament times. As little as a woman was

worth in those days, her life was worth more than a fetus.

The first century Palestinian doctrine of woman, as manifested in the scriptural and religious laws of the day, treated woman as the source of male contamination, to be confined to and through her reproductive role (a doctrine on which Christian saints and patriarchs of a later era did not improve). Strict and particular rules assured the separation of the sexes in order to protect a man's ritual cleanliness and to protect him from "sinning." A man was not to speak to a woman in public, not even his wife or daughter; a man was not to walk behind a woman, lest he become aroused by her shape (Jesus was not the first to recognize adultery in the heart); women were not to be educated lest they associate with men and know what they know; women were considered incapable of ritual cleanliness and transmitted this state to men. Thus, for the sake of righteousness, men learned to hate/fear/shun women.

These practices reflect a Hebrew anxiety about avoiding the debauched behavior of the neighboring Canaanites, but degenerated to serve as fences around the great Commandments, protecting the males of the day from a confrontation with a fundamental divine mandate. At the same time, uniquely female experiences — pregnancy, childbirth, menstruation, abortion, menopause, lactation — were imbued with a meaning suiting the fears of men rather than the needs of women.

The early Christian church and the church of the Middle Ages, even with the example of a Savior who can truly be called a feminist (in that he actively flouted social mores in order to treat women as fully adult human beings), perpetuated the misogynist doctrine of woman which played no small part in the development of vows of chastity and celibacy, and

Continued on page 6

Abortion

Free Choice Involves Theology, Ethics

by George W. Barrett

Just a little more than five years ago, on Jan. 22, 1973 — a day that will live in the annals of the quest for freedom — the U.S. Supreme Court handed down its decision granting to any woman the right to terminate her pregnancy, at least until its later stages.

Many people disapproved of the decision. However, few could have foreseen the bitter battles, the attempts to take away this right by amending the Constitution, the drastic restrictions on the funding of abortions for poor women, the angry, vicious picketing of abortion clinics with harassing of their patients as well as vandalism and arson. And who could have envisaged that the trust and confidence built up in the ecumenical movement would be threatened by the rigid intransigence of the Roman Catholic hierarchy on this issue?

Like all significant human decisions abortion has profound theological implications, raising basic questions about the meaning of life, about the way we make moral choices and about how Christians exert their influence in a pluralistic society. Many excellent things have been written and said on the subject by distinguished people as well as by a number of religious denominations and bodies, including Catholics for Free Choice. I write not only as a bishop and a former professor of pastoral theology but also after five years as a Planned Parenthood executive and from first hand contact with people making personal decisions about abortions, and with their counselors as well. Such a perspective may be more

realistic than those of celibate clergy, male politicians and even well-intentioned moralists making judgments about the lives of other people.

Several Christian doctrines bear directly on the abortion issue, although these teachings have much in common with Judaism and even certain types of humanism.

1. **Creation:** All life is a continuing creative process, from the origin of the universe through the evolution of human beings, and whatever similar forms of life may exist elsewhere in space. In the whole process, God is involved as the central creative, integrating force, of whom the word "personal" is a clue to God's nature, and "love" the best definition of God's character. However, within this creative process there exists what might be called chance, autonomy, and freedom. God does not manipulate the way in which people make decisions, the pattern of the weather or the way cells of the body divide. God does not "send" a particular child to a particular home by causing a contraceptive device to fail or visit cancer on a man or woman or decree death by drowning. God does not act as a problem solver, rather expects us to function as co-workers; for example, by matching the birth rate to carrying capacity of the earth.

Human life is a continuum as genes pass from one generation to another in a constant chain. At particular points in the process, called conception, sperm and ova unite to begin development programmed to produce unique persons. Contraception prevents the process from beginning; abortion destroys it after it is under way by killing the fetus.

However, a fetus is not a human *person* anymore than an architect's working drawings of a house are the house itself. Of course no one knows when a fetus becomes a person. The Supreme Court wisely decreed birth to be the time when a

fetus becomes a baby, with personal identity and personal rights, that moment when the child breathes on its own and enters an environment larger than its mother's body.

Once, as a part of my responsibility to investigate hospitals to which patients were referred, I witnessed an early abortion. I had many mixed emotions, but never for a moment did I imagine that a human being was being destroyed, simply blood and tissue that might have developed into one. A later abortion is much more traumatic to see or to perform or endure, yet the existence of a human being is not established by the presence of the physical members of a human body.

Still, an abortion is not a procedure to be undertaken lightly. Reverence for life calls for respect for all living things as well as for the environment in which we live and by which we are sustained. It precludes unnecessary killing, and especially the insensitive killing of a creature on the way to becoming a human soul. It is obviously far better to prevent conception than to destroy its result. And an early abortion is infinitely preferable to a late one, both for the health of the patient, the sensitivities of doctors and nurses and respect for the mystery of life itself.

2. **Imperfection:** For our purpose it is unnecessary to go into the theology of sin and evil. Suffice it to say that we obviously live in an imperfect world, and are seldom confronted with clear, unambiguous choices between right and wrong and usually must make the best possible

Continued on page 7

Continued from page 4

culminated in history's most brutal and obscene document *Malleus Maleficarum* (freely translated: *A Hammer to Smash Witches With*).

The Gospels contain nothing specific about abortion. They do contain evidence that Jesus was less severe with women than with men in matters of sexual conduct (a reversal of the prevailing double standard — history's first experience with Affirmative Action?), pointing his astonished critics to the commandment or principle instead. While Scribes and Pharisees obscured the principles with nit-picking fence laws (and believed themselves righteous in doing so), Jesus re-taught the ancient righteousness which "exceeds that of the Pharisees." He pushed the people of his time to a confrontation with the reality which had been hidden — with the reality of the Sabbath, with the meaning of images, with human relationships beyond human roles, with women as interested, interesting, fully human people. Jesus showed abhorrence of laws which placed a fence between a person and the fundamental reality s/he would confront but for religious laws.

I infer from Jesus' abhorrence of fence laws that he believes that righteousness is not hating and fearing and shunning people to avoid evil influence, but loving people, even those who may be evil, and making tough choices on a fundamental level. One is not really righteous, I believe he would tell us, if one acts in a particular way only because all other ways carry serious threats of, for example, criminal sanctions (fines or imprisonment), loss of livelihood, or ostracism. In addition, I believe he would tell us that one is not really acting righteously if someone else makes the choice for her. Jesus' absolute condemnation of judgment of humans was, I believe, his way of telling us that tough decisions are part of righteous living, of self-determination, of having life "more abundantly."

Abortion is really about that kind of decision, a fundamental decision by a woman which bears on the existence of another. The issue is distilled to disagreement about what laws on the subject are best to have on the books. The abortion debate is *not* about the 'pros' and 'cons' of abortion — there is no one (as there is with

childbirth) to argue that abortion is an absolute good which every woman needs for fulfillment, no one is 'pro' abortion. Abortion legislative proposals fall into different categories:

- Punitive legislation, which denies benefits or services (e.g., Medicaid funds) to women who seek or have abortions and to folks who assist them.
- "Reform" legislation, which grants abortion services to women who have been declared worthy under criteria established by outsiders (e.g., if she is lucky enough to be crazy or to have been raped).
- "Letter-from-home" legislation, which grants abortion to a woman if someone else chooses it for her (e.g., a husband or parent).

All three types of legislation enjoy wide support, and the doctrine of woman which each reflects is alive, well, and persistent.

"Today's restrictive abortion laws are a new attempt of a misogynist world to control imagined feminine evil. The challenge to church and society as we influence lawmaking about abortion is to reflect a doctrine of woman consistent with the best understanding of what our Lord would have us proclaim."

The first reflects the assumption that all women seeking abortion are evil, degraded, and must be denied access to the path they have chosen or at least punished for taking it. The second type is paternalistic and assumes that a woman cannot make a tough decision or carry it out without "help;" that is, she is, in one view, child-like, or, in another, stupid. The third reflects the doctrine that a woman belongs to someone else, and her owner controls what happens to her. All three types of legislation — not surprising in a misogynist society, were discussed recently in Congress. Moreover, all three types are society's fence laws for women, to protect women from the "sin" of avoiding women's principal path to righteousness, namely childbirth.

A fourth type of legislation is "repeal" legislation, in which no interference

regarding the woman's abortion decision is proposed or tolerated, but rather questions regarding medical conditions, qualifications of practitioners, etc. are addressed. The doctrine of woman reflected in this type of legislation assumes that women can and do make tough decisions, and that a female person is worth medical safeguards, and her safety is in the interest of the state. She is not dispensable as a human being. The Supreme Court decision of January, 1973 comes closest to this type, granting veto power only to the woman's physician, an obvious limitation, but not an insurmountable one.

Abortion is as old as history. People who will never be pregnant, such as men, and people who have never had an unwanted pregnancy, can understand only second hand the compelling depth of the motive of a pregnant woman to end a pregnancy. The message of millions of women through the ages and today who have mutilated or killed themselves rather than continue a distressing pregnancy tells us that, against tremendous pressure, women have never entirely accepted the observances, myths, and practices by which male-dominated society has tried to contain the evil attributed to women.

Today's restrictive abortion laws are a new attempt of a misogynist world to control imagined feminine evil. The challenge to church and society as we influence law-making about abortion is to reflect a doctrine of woman which is consistent with the best understanding we have of what our Lord would have us proclaim. We certainly want to avoid building fences between a woman and truly righteous action; we certainly wish to proclaim to everyone and to history our confidence in woman's capacity of human righteousness. We certainly want to see the validity of a woman's experience for herself. That is the hope that church can offer society.

I wonder: If misogyny had never entered in, if a woman's experience had always been considered valid, might the human model for God's love for us have become that of a mother for her wanted child rather than that of a man for his bride? ■

Helen Seager is a board member of the Episcopal Church Publishing Company, and Church and Society Convener for Pittsburgh.

Continued from page 5

choice among imperfect alternatives. For example, killing other people is considered wrong in most situations. Yet most Christians are not pacifists and will fight in — or support, at least — the wars they believe just. Many Christians support capital punishment. Robert Louis Stevenson, writing of his visit to certain Pacific islands a century ago, reported that the people there showed a very tender and loving care for children but at the same time practiced infanticide. They were not inconsistent; rather they accepted the only conditions they thought possible for the care and rearing of at least *some* children.

Any number of situations exist in which abortion may be the lesser evil and the greater good.

There are the cases where continued pregnancy would pose a clear threat to the life of the woman or significant danger to her physical and mental health. There are the cases where there are reliable indications of retardation or defectiveness in the children, a condition that cannot be diagnosed until several months of pregnancy.

There are pregnancies caused by incest or rape.

There is the family living at the poverty level — or slightly above it — for whom another child would mean a plunge into privation and want. There is the couple who look forward to having children sometime in the future but for whom a child at present would halt an education and blight a career of great promise.

There is the teen-ager, tempted to keep and try to raise the child with little more capacity for doing so than caring for a doll. The result is all too likely to be a badly brought up, sometimes battered, often neglected child, or grandparents coming to the rescue and beginning another round of child rearing in middle life. Then there are the adolescent marriages following conception, ending in a disproportionate number of unhealthy relationships, broken homes and divorces.

Finally there are the men and women who choose a child-free life style for reasons they consider valid and compelling, both for their own personal fulfillment and their contribution to society. Certainly this is a legitimate alternative in a world that has no need of any more children, other than the ones

who are wanted and will be loved and properly reared. There is not even a shortage of children to be adopted, only of children who are white and very young. In many parts of the world the problem of overpopulation is desperate, with abortion — often self-induced and dangerous — the principal method of birth control.

3. Providence and Redemption: We believe that life can be redeemed by the grace of God, who is capable of using all kinds of misfortune and tragedy for good purposes. A poor family will welcome a child with joy and many a retarded child has brought blessings to his parents, just as children conceived out of wedlock in careless lust have become outstanding citizens. However, to use such facts against abortion is to fall into the fallacy against which Paul warned in his Epistle to the Romans, "Shall we continue to sin that grace may abound? By no means." Being

"The Supreme Court wisely decreed birth to be the time when a fetus becomes a baby, with personal identity and personal rights, that moment when the child breathes on its own and enters an environment larger than its mother's body."

able to redeem disaster is no ground for seeking it. In a somewhat similar category are remarks such as, "Suppose Beethoven's mother had had an abortion?" Indeed, but what if his parents had not slept together on a particular night? Such comments are never heard about Adolf Hitler or Charles Manson.

4. Freedom: All that has been written about abortion and its complexity reinforces the wisdom of the 1973 decision, underlines the importance of every woman's right to choose her course freely and points to the blasphemy of compulsory pregnancy and mandatory motherhood. Few causes are more compelling to Christian consciences than efforts to lift the current outrageous restricting on government funding of abortion on Medicaid. Also urgent is the provision of more facilities for the perform-

ing of abortions and appropriate counseling, now disproportionately concentrated in large urban centers and a few states.

Closely related to the issue of abortion are broader issues of sexuality. Many years ago Margaret Sanger stated that no woman unable to control her fertility could call herself free.

To realize such freedom and reduce the incidence of abortion will require the development of contraceptives that are safer, surer, and longer lasting than those now in use as well as having fewer of the side effects, dangerous and upsetting to many women. Ideally these contraceptives would create conditions where it would take a conscious, deliberate effort to have a child rather than to prevent a conception. The development of such contraception will demand research and expenditures of funds — public and private — comparable to money now being spent on other health needs and diseases associated with the end of life, such as heart and kidney failure and strokes.

Even more important is the kind of sex education and ethical teaching that will help people make sound choices. At present we subject teen-agers to all the blandishments of a sex-drenched culture in media, advertising, and dress. By adult example, we give them mixed signals by our silence or negative admonitions, often denying them access to proper contraceptive care, and then complain when they become pregnant and seek abortion.

Most churches have only begun to meet the issue with honesty and realism. There are few parishes that provide opportunities for people to face together the personal and ethical implications of non-reproductive sexual relationships, to acknowledge positively the joy of sex and the fulfillment to be found in orgasm, along with the obligations they create. Need we leave such teaching to secular scientists and health agencies or even to meretricious publishers and pornographers? Or has the church a god-given vocation to provide wise and imaginative leadership for people to achieve a larger measure of the responsible freedom for which Christ has set us free?

The Rt. Rev. George W. Barrett, former Bishop of Rochester, is currently serving as interim pastor of Church of the Redeemer, Cincinnati.

Newark: The Pits? Or Hope-Filled?

by F. Sanford Cutler

"Newark? It's the pits . . . People don't give a damn . . . It's full of hungry politicians . . . We have bullshitting people in office." These rather sharp comments by members of the Trinity Youth Group of the Episcopal Cathedral expressed the feelings of many who testified at the Newark hearings sponsored by the Urban Bishops Coalition in December.

There were, however, some voices of optimism. The Rev. Arthur Thomas, for example, called Newark, "an exciting community full of hope." But he added, "We, the residents, have been ripped off by those who control the profits."

Skepticism about the Church's ability realistically to become involved in the issues facing the city was expressed by Maso P. Ryan, who told of the Tri-Citizens Union for Progress which was formed in the 60's in response to a call from the Episcopal Church. Based in Patterson, Jersey City and Newark, its goal was to translate Black power rhetoric into action. It received an initial grant of \$10,000 from the church, but according to Ryan, "when it came time to act, the clergy disappeared." Referring to a recent sermon by Bishop John Spong, calling for an end to the fortress mentality of the church and for greater involvement, Ryan questioned whether this was not simply more of the same old rhetoric.

At the other extreme, a representative from one of the inner-city congregations, the House of Prayer, also challenged Bishop Spong's sermon, urging that the church not by-pass existing parishes, but help them break through their budget crunches and provide funds for program. Questioned by the panel, he admitted that the present membership of House of Prayer was only 38 communicants.

Banking and Insurance executives expressed their confidence in the future, and described job training and housing programs their companies were sponsoring. But when challenged to explain the recent public statement by the President of Prudential that, "the time had come to phase out Newark as a residential area," they could only claim that this was taken out of context.

The restrictive nature of some unions also came under fire. The security officer of the building where the hearings

The Rev. F. Sanford Cutler is rector of the Church of the Redeemer in Morristown, N.J.

"The church wouldn't cheat nobody."

"What makes you so sure?"

**"Well, you know, the church
is representing God.**

And I believe in God.

And I believe God wouldn't cheat me.

So I'm saying I have faith in you.

So don't do me wrong."

were held testified that, because of union rulings, he was unable to get a job for which he was qualified despite his completion of the Newark training program.

Time after time, testimony evidenced the effectiveness of a number of community-based organizations in providing alternative forms of education, organizing co-ops, providing houses, pressuring Government for services and in raising consciousness and expectations of people. Particularly outstanding were the efforts of *Casa de Don Pedro*, and *Aspira*, two organizations working among the rapidly increasing Hispanic community. The work of the Roseville Coalition, the Ironbound Community School, and the Vailsburg Service Organization, were also proof that with sufficient organization, community-based projects can become a reality.



Derek Gaters, Philip Williams, and Donnie Days (left to right), members of the youth group at Trinity Cathedral, responding to a question at the Newark Hearing sponsored by the Urban Bishops' Coalition.

What can the church contribute in this area?

While there still are situations where seed money to begin community organization projects is needed, as was done in many General Convention Special Program projects, it was evident that something more was wanted besides money. Several speakers urged the church to take the lead in forming larger coalitions of community organizations in order that they might exert stronger clout on issues. Training of personnel, particularly of community organizers also seemed a feasible operation. Several speakers pointedly challenged the church to change its missionary priorities.

But in spite of the picture of things happening in Newark, and of real opportunities for the church to move into new forms of mission, two comments made at the hearings should be noted here: The first from an experienced social

worker who, when asked what in her opinion represented the major obstacles to be overcome by anyone working in the inner city, replied quickly, "the Hierarchy". Secondly, the unanswered question posed early in the hearings by Archdeacon Martha Blacklock: "How far are the bishops really willing to go in terms of new forms of ministry?"

As Bishop John Hines recently pointed out, the Diocese of Newark has been singularly fortunate in its Episcopal leadership for several decades, and the future is promising. But no one diocese nor individual bishop can turn the church around. The Newark hearings alerted the church to some major areas of concern, produced evidence of the effectiveness of community-based organizations and challenged PECUSA to rethink its goals. ■

Panel, Newark Hearing: John Burt, Bishop of Ohio, chairperson; Francisco Reus-Froylan, Bishop of Puerto Rico; Paul Moore, Jr., Bishop of New York; Magdalia de Jesus Garcia, law student and community college teacher, New York; Kathryn Yatrakis, Ph.D. candidate in political science at Columbia University; Rebecca Andrade, Executive Director of Tri-Citizens Union for Progress, Newark; Dillard Robinson III, Dean of Trinity Cathedral; Malcolm Talbott, President, the Rutgers University Foundation; and Marjorie Christie, President, Episcopal Churchwomen, Diocese of Newark.

In Search of a Square Peg Caucus

Anyone who has enjoyed the last couple of General Conventions of the Episcopal Church would have enjoyed the National Women's Conference in Houston. It was no surprise to me that my subconscious did its usual pre-Convention job and provided me with an honorable excuse not to go (in the form of a sprained foot). What my subconscious underestimated was the extent of my morbid fascination with politics (which I loathe, together with its attendant crowds, noise, acrimony, bad food and worse hotels). I went, persuaded in a weak moment to be a Delegate-at-large.

It turned out to be neither as hopeful nor as depressing an experience as I had hoped/feared, but one that bears little relation to articles I have since read. Did anyone else go to the same Conference I did? Surely among almost 2,000 delegates there must have been material for a Square Peg Caucus.

One of my first impressions was the size of the meeting. Even before we got to the hall, standing in interminable registration lines made graphic the numbers of delegates. Diversity of race, accent, and class all rather overwhelmed me. Southwest and Plains tribeswomen, bottled blondes from Mississippi, and what must have been the reincarnation of one of Hawaii's ancient queens, a larger than life-size Polynesian demigoddess, and many more.

Apart from the anti-Equal Rights Amendment types, the delegates of the lesbian caucus were perhaps among the most disproportionately white and middle-class. In all the opening speeches extolling diversity, however, gay was never mentioned, not even in the rundown of Commissioners, one of whom is co-Executive Director of the National Gay Task Force. I began to develop certain suspicions about process policy when Bella Abzug and others at the opening session kept mentioning the numbers of children and grandchildren the Commissioners had produced.

Former and current First Ladies were gracious; Barbara Jordan was more to the point, but hardly radical. Assorted remarks from dignitaries took up a large part of the afternoon as well, including an address from Judy Carter, "a housewife who writes for *Redbook* when my two-year-old will let me." Suspicions took a clearer shape. This was not

to be a controversial conference, at least no more so than some of the resolutions in the "Plan of Action" necessitated. The wooly, smothering sensation one got at the last General Convention of the Episcopal Church in Minneapolis came back, without, unfortunately, the grace of a John Coburn to direct the proceedings.

Business finally began. Each session was to have a new chair — a good idea in some respects, confusing in others because of lack of continuity of rulings and differing expertise in parliamentary procedure. Not, withal, a job one would have wanted, and complicated by the procedural confusions of some of the delegates, principally those in opposition.

The opposition! After the terrific build-up the Schlaflyites had gotten, I would never have expected my major disappointment with the conference to have been the quality of the opposition. Apart, that is, from their incoherent maunderings against the ERA and all its works.

Why did our caucus bother to study in detail the parliamentary moves to counter sophisticated blocking tactics? There were none. I thought at first that the bumbling was put on, that experts would arise at the first issue of major controversial proportions, that they were trying to lull us into over-confidence. We obviously overestimated our opposition. The best they could muster was an annoyance more than anything else, an attempt to score points under the guise of procedural questions, most of which were clearly out of order and ruled so to the disgust of their initiators.

Very little in the way of negative debate was offered, though the chair went out of its way to seek it out.



The Rev. Ellen Barrett is a second year doctoral student at Graduate Theological Union (GTU) in Berkeley, Cal., and a priest of the diocese of New York.

by Ellen Barrett

Substitute motions with anti-Plan intent were rarely presented, and badly handled when they were . . . copies not in the hands of the chair, introduced out of order, or, in one case, so badly written that it was rejected by chair and parliamentarians because it was incomplete and incomprehensible.

Seven issues were passed on Saturday afternoon, including a substitute motion on Disabled Women introduced by their own caucus. The evening session covered four more, including the star turn, the ERA. A good bit of the bogging down in this session was as much the fault of the chair (New York's Lt. Governor Mary Anne Krupsak) as of the opposition. After the pro-ERA resolution passed it took well over an hour to establish the count of votes in favor of adjournment. Somehow this final snafu was symbolic of the whole grim evening.

I began during this session to be more afraid of the politically slick Pro-Plan Caucus than of the opposition. Not because I disagreed fundamentally with the Plan of Action or with their desire to coordinate the various special interest groups to keep business moving, but because I have a congenital distrust of anybody's obligatory party-line and any agreement to vote as directed by a party whip. Communications on the floor about voting were excellent, and efforts at microphones to limit stalling were not bad, but generally they were handled in a dictatorial fashion that rather precluded real communication.

If politics is the art of the possible, with so many people, so heavy an agenda, and so little time, much discussion was admittedly impossible. I doubtless drive political savants mad by wanting to know why, and how did we get here from there, but am I altogether wrong in thinking it important to pay attention to the humanity of the process?

Feeling dubious about the morrow, we dispersed to return Sunday for an eight-hour session that would try to cover 15 issues of which at least four, including those on minority women, reproductive freedom, sexual preference, and welfare were acutely controversial. All passed, with substitute motions on minorities, older women, and welfare. The only defeated resolution called for a cabinet-level Women's Department, which few had taken seriously anyway.

Time pressure was beaten, the victory won. Why, then, did I walk away in the middle of the session and fly home instead of staying around for the self-congratulatory finale

the next day? I missed some historic events, like Betty Freidan admitting for the first time in history that lesbian rights have something to do with women. Why leave before the voting on the very issue I had come to support? Why did it all feel finished then?

Not, obviously, because of the old-hat but still nasty and annoying (and illiterate) slogans like "Womans Libbers ERA lesbians REPENT Read the BIBLE while your able," or "Who needs Jews, Dikes, Abortian (*sic*), Communists," or from fear — though one young lesbian got her nose broken and another was deliberately sideswiped by a car. Not even wounded vanity at being a very small part of the process, because our caucus was leader-heavy in the extreme, though part of me was wandering about forlornly like non-delegate Kate Millett, wondering where I fit on this joyful juggernaut. Part of it was a sort of heartsick feeling that this was as much or more of a paper victory as most conventions — what impact will all our fine words have when they reach the President? Will they be like so many high school student government proposals and be defused or rejected by the principal when they come up for action?

Perhaps the worst was a conviction that women have changed nothing of the dirtiness of politics, that the methodology of horse-trades, discrete blackmail, and group pressure has simply changed gender. In some ways the opposition was right — Houston was a show-trial. But not necessarily the way they claimed. It need not have been so complete a liberal walkover. Indeed, whether it was or not probably makes little difference in the long run. What does make a big difference is to know that American women have finally had a chance to test our political skills on a large scale and most of us have passed with flying colors.

Whether this is a victory, in the light of the hopes radical feminists once had for the redemption of the political process, is questionable. Perhaps our militantly anti-feminist sisters have come off best after all. At least their tantrums and their blunderings are true to the self-images in their dream of a nation of happy male-dominant, female-submissive families. Their prophecy, at least, has been to an extent self-fulfilling.

And our dreams of change? There was certainly no revolution in Houston. No revolution, but a nagging echo of Yeats that I hope will prove false:

*"We had fed the heart on fantasies,
The heart's grown brutal on the fare."* ■

The Embarrassment ...

I notice that other Episcopalians, like myself, are now finding it difficult to rationalize being an Episcopalian and to remain within the fold.

I recall when I could muster enthusiasm about the affiliation — in the times, for instance, when bishops were of the caliber, as human beings, of Arthur Lichtenberger; or exemplified authenticity, as well as authority in Apostolic vocation, as did William Appleton Lawrence. Similarly, I can remember when the conscience of the Episcopal Church seemed to be quick and agitated, as in the heyday of Jim Pike, or when this church evinced ecumenical imagination, as in the era of Henry Knox Sherrill.

I have not forgotten events in which the Episcopal Church became a presence in American society — at once practical and sacramental — free of conformity or worldly compromise, as in the prayer pilgrimages in the Southern hinterland or when Kim Myers and Paul Moore and others first walked the ghetto streets in Jersey City or New York. I recollect genuine ventures in mission prompted by the Church Society for College Work, as well as the impulses of renewal in biblical witness signaled in Parishfield and elsewhere unaffected by public relations calculations or fabrications.

All this, and much more, comes to mind now as a matter of nostalgia. It is, I think, that, along with related factors of inheritance, family sentiments and ethnic roots, which occasions my own lingering within the premises of the Episcopal Church despite the heavy embarrassment, nowadays, of being Episcopalian.

I hope it is clear that this is no mere complaint against the superciliousness of the Presiding Bishop and many of his peers in the House of Bishops and the cabal of the church bureaucracy. The indifference to human issues, the usurpation of the canon and common law of the church, the vanity of preoccupation with image, the dissipation of “playing church” instead of being the Church, the inordinate regard for lucre, the familiar and typical incoherence, the capacity for mischief of such bishops represent symptoms of crisis in the Episcopal Church.

But the crisis originates in the Episcopal Church — as in other, similar “established” churches in America — in a

process of profound secularization. There has been a radical surrender to the culture in which the preservation of the ecclesiastical institution *for its own sake* has acquired a priority which trivializes the gospel of Jesus Christ and demeans the Apostolic precedent of the Church. That, of course, does not diminish the burden which the incumbent putative leadership of the Episcopal Church is, but it does render urgent the need to exorcise the Episcopal Church from humiliating emulation of the world.

The so-called Venture in Mission campaign exposes this issue — in grandiose scale. VIM interprets mission, for the laity and common clergy, exclusively in terms of money contributions. By that token, VIM has virtually nothing to do with mission. More than that, VIM's declared objective is to amass a capital fund to endow the *status quo* of the Episcopal Church. If this succeeds, the existing ecclesial fabric would be able to be indefinitely maintained, as it is, with all its perquisites, whether or not the people of the church in the future can be persuaded to support the institution by their offerings. In fact, VIM could enable the entrenchment of the *status quo* regardless of whether there continued to be, any longer, *any* people in the church. VIM portends the ultimate secularization of the church — the church emptied of human beings.

This is not the only portent. Part of the process of secularization which has been happening, by which institutional survival becomes an end in itself, involves the abolition of accountability of the institution and its officials to human life. Such accountability is the elementary subject matter of law. In the church the integrity of both canon law and the common law ecclesiastical (in which, anciently, the conception of equity originated) is as an expression of that accountability in at least minimal terms applicable to all within the body of the church. In the world or in the church, where accountability is forfeited for the sake of the security of the institution, lawlessness becomes endemic.

That was what was going on in American society throughout the Johnson and Nixon administrations, not only in war and Watergate but, more basically, in the politicalization of technology. If somewhat less conspicuous at this moment, the overthrow of accountability to human life continues to be the reality of the secular order in America with respect to any of the great principalities of

William Stringfellow is a theologian, social critic, author and attorney.

politics, commerce, science, education or the military. Now this is imitated in the Episcopal Church.

To be specific, in the *William Wendt* trial, in the Ecclesiastical Court of the Diocese of Washington, where the accused was charged with canonical disobedience, the notorious instance of lawlessness — proved beyond any doubt — was not that of the defendant but that of Presiding Bishop John Allin. He denounced accountability. He held himself beyond the law of the church. He defied specific canonical duty. He refuted his vows of office. He literally fled from the jurisdiction in refusing to appear when duly summoned by the ecclesiastical court as a witness and was thus adjudged in contempt of court.

The example, perchance, induces a spreading of lawlessness through the Episcopal hierarchy and the ecclesial bureaucracy. Church officials collaborate with agents of the State in unconstitutional searches and the abuse of grand juries; a bishop ruthlessly and unlawfully ousts a Cathedral dean, evidently seeking to manipulate assets to which his office is unentitled; other bishops refuse

Yet he waited until a full year after General Convention had canonically authorized the ordination of women before speaking candidly about his opinion, when he mentioned to the House of Bishops at its latest session, that he thought a woman could no more be a priest than a husband or father. This is a startling notion, and one which is radically worldly, because it goes far beyond the stereotype macho attitude. It is more than a *sexist* antidoctrine of the priesthood, it is a *sexual* view of the priesthood which attributes priestly qualification to sexual function and capability. It is primitive, strange and pre-Christian, though it may be shared by many others, and, all the more so when articulated by the Presiding Bishop while the House of Bishops was closeted to ponder hypocritically the ordination of homosexuals.

Meanwhile the contempt for the law and discipline of the church and the record of equivocation and duplicity on issues confronting the church of the incumbent church management converge to encourage schismatic ferment. That may materialize in formal schism, but it should not be overlooked that those disaffected and tempted to schism

... of Being Episcopalian

by William Stringfellow

to ordain qualified postulants; a doctrine of nullification is promulgated, ironically in the name of conscience, exempting certain bishops from their elemental responsibility to uphold the lawful discipline of the Episcopal Church.

There are other evidences of the secularization of the Episcopal Church in the realm of doctrine (or, more precisely put, antidoctrine), particularly with reference to the priesthood.

Once again, the Presiding Bishop furnishes the notorious example, though hardly the exclusive one. Anyone who has remained alert during the controversy of recent years over the ordination of women to the priesthood has known that — despite a succession of ambiguous and erratic public utterances and confusing or contradictory impressions — the Presiding Bishop has been deeply bewildered by the very idea of women priests and personally apprehensive at the event of women being ordained to the priesthood. At the so-called emergency meeting of the House of Bishops, at O'Hare Airport, following the Philadelphia ordinations, he seemed hysterical. In any case, his vehement rejection of women priests has never been effectively concealed.

have, for the most part, a political objective within the Episcopal Church. Theirs is an audacious gamble to aggrandize their power far beyond their numbers, relying upon the weakness and appeasing disposition of the present administration of the church to vest them with a virtual veto power over the actions of the General Convention — thus to accomplish by threat and intimidation what they have not been able to gain by persuasion and due process. That in the circumstances many people of the church are misinformed or manipulated or pastorally abused is a concern which is simply ignored as befits the way of the world.

Well, one could multiply the instances which show concretely how the Episcopal Church has been, lately, secularized. It is not, of course, that in other earlier times the Episcopal Church has been unambiguous or undefiled, but that recent events have new or different or particular dimensions that cannot be gainsaid. Whether this crisis in the Episcopal Church will be transcended, whether an integrity as church will be recovered remains, for now, uncertain. But there is no uncertainty about the embarrassment of being Episcopalian. ■

Parish Begs to Differ

Pastoral letters issued by the House of Bishops of the Episcopal Church are required by canon to be communicated to each congregation. That this requirement is often observed in the breach by the clergy is indicative of the present state of authority in the church. However, the following communication from a church in Denver reflects a dialogue with authority which is both novel and creative.

CHURCH OF THE HOLY REDEEMER

December 9, 1977

The clergy and people of the Holy Redeemer Church, Denver, return the greetings and peace of our brothers in Christ, the bishops of the church. Your letter has been received by us, pondered carefully, prayed over and discussed publicly. We make this open reply to you, hoping to strengthen the bond of trust within the church and, thereby, to increase our mutual understanding of Christ's loving mission to the world which we, through grace, share.

We accept with gratitude and hope your challenge to undertake a Venture in Mission, ministering to the hurts and hungers of the world. We note with great sadness, however, that the graces you evidence in mission matters seem to disappear in the considerations of conscience and sexuality.

You decided to speak to us on sexual matters before the study approved by the General Convention has been undertaken. Your letter to us reflects more haste than wisdom.

We wonder whether you honestly believe that someone who advocates homosexuality must be a homosexual. And, what is the meaning of *advocate* in this regard? Do you approve, and may we expect, an attack on our clergy because they, after patient, open searching, arrive at a conclusion which differs from yours?

We are deeply troubled that you permit the Presiding Bishop his conscience with respect to a duly adopted canon of the church, but deny conscience to us in a matter which has yet to be decided. Your manner of handling these two questions invites anarchy in the church.

Our members wonder whether you have asked yourselves how an individual's sexual orientation relates to his/her ministry. And we disagree with the reasonable inference from your letter that this church will not ordain an open homosexual, but neither will it drive from the ordained ministry those many homosexual persons currently enriching our corporate life and ministry to the world.

We respectfully conclude that our bishops have abandoned the pastoral ministry in the following respects:

1. The deeply-caring love which is the basis of pastoral action is not evidenced in this letter. You seem blind to the complexity of these issues and insensitive to matters of justice. Your action, despite the words, shows a willingness to join the world in making homosexual persons scapegoats, (as the church has done with witches, scientists, Protestants, Catholics, Blacks, Jews and others) who are forced to bear the weight of inarticulate outrage at the pressures of modern life.

2. You have failed to convince us that your study of the Bible and Christian theology has been of such depth that your conclusions must be shared by reasonable people. To address us before such study is unworthy of you, and renders your advice to us and to the world meaningless.

3. We cannot escape the conclusion that this is essentially a political, not a pastoral letter. Persons who do not choose to obey the canon on ordination can cause a good deal of fuss, but homosexual persons are sufficiently vulnerable that they can be made to bear our burdens. Your letter does not reflect any intelligent dialogue with homosexual persons, so that you can discover where and how God's grace is active in and through them. To act without

such dialogue is to act as men without hope of finding God's grace everywhere.

Our brothers in Christ, we ask that you return to your high calling. We need your ministry to us and as leaders to the world. But we would have you know of our confidence that when you abandon your vocation, God is not left without power for truth. His Spirit is ceaselessly working, calling forth new ministries, higher prophecies, deeper acts of devotion and love. From you, we expect holy order, but we are receiving confusion. The unity you felt in your midst at your meeting may have been purchased at the peril of your people.

We pray that by the grace of our Lord Jesus you will be led away from the path of hasty judgment, to walk again the path of patient love, bearing the burdens of the weak . . . to be for us living examples of God's love for all, especially those whom the world hates.

Your brothers and sisters in Christ,
Richard Kerr
The Clergy and People of
Holy Redeemer Church
Denver, Col.

(Your pastoral letter was read to us by the rector without comment. He announced at the end of the reading that on the following Sunday, the congregation would discuss the letter. At that time a careful record was made of our people's responses, again with very little comment from the rector, although it was solicited. From these notes the rector wrote this letter. It was printed and read at each service the next Sunday. Two weeks were given for written responses. The people unanimously agreed that the letter expressed their response to your pastoral). ■

Bishops Confuse Gay Issue

by John M. Gessell

The recent pastoral letter from the House of Bishops — particularly the section on homosexuality — has caused much perplexity for Episcopalians and other thoughtful Christians.

The opinions of the bishops on matters touching the status of homosexuals in the Church appear to be simple reiterations of theological and social scientific judgments which are now being called into question. These statements bear no trace of acquaintance with work being done currently in the field of human sexuality by theologians and social scientists as reported, for example, in the recent book issued by the Catholic Theological Society of America, *Human Sexuality*.

Curiously imprecise language, lacking in rigor, appears in these paragraphs. Is it possible that the bishops really have agreed to deny ordination to those who refuse to condemn homosexual persons? If so, this would create intolerable pastoral dilemmas. In view of the life and work of our Saviour, Jesus Christ, how is it possible that the bishops agree that they "must not condone what we believe God wills to redeem?" On the face of it, this implies a condemnation of all men and women everywhere.

Is it possible that the bishops are saying that "practicing homosexual" persons are lacking in, or suffering from, a defect of matter appropriate to receive the grace of ordination; or that they are morally incapable of the office and work of priests? If they mean the former, we will have a first-class theological snarl on our hands. If they mean the latter, then what are we to say about, for example, "practicing alcoholic" priests or "practicing adulterous" priests?

Further perplexity prevails in this discussion. On the one hand, we are told that homosexuals are children of God (presumably by water and the Holy Spirit, surely not by nature), having a "full and equal claim with all other persons upon the love, acceptance, concern, and pastoral care of the church." On the other hand, we are told that, whereas the state must insure homosexuals equal protection under the law, the church will not afford that spiritual equality assured above since that acceptance, concern, and care are to be qualified by the *a priori* denial of ordination without cause. What is by the one hand offered, is by the other removed. The denial of justice is mitigated by the offer of balm.

The Rev. John M. Gessell is professor of Christian ethics at the School of Theology, University of the South, Sewanee, Tenn.

There appear to me to be matters of fundamental theological incoherence here. That which can be redeemed can nonetheless be qualified by the church (or at least its bishops), either for theological or moral reasons. By what warrant do the bishops make this judgment? How are we to discuss this issue in the church with the seriousness which it deserves?

Gregory Baum wrote in *Commonweal* (Feb. 14, 1974) that "... human nature as it is at present is not normative for theologians . . . What is normative for normal life is the human nature to which we are divinely summoned, which is defined in terms of mutuality. This, at least, is the promise of biblical religion . . . Homosexual love, then, is not contrary to human nature, defined in terms of mutuality toward which mankind is summoned."

Baum's statement is an attempt to move beyond the theological pitfalls characteristic of much contemporary discussion on the issue of homosexuality — the appeal to authority and the appeal to nature.

Recent discussions of homosexuality and the church disclose in many quarters an *a priori* condemnation of homosexual behavior. The argument then moves to the appeal to Scripture, yielding Bible fundamentalism and all of its inconsistencies. Failing that, it moves to the appeal to nature and to natural law, ending in the naturalistic fallacy or in a closed system of prior discovery. Clearly neither of these approaches is helpful to a serious discussion of this matter.

There is the further problem of theodicy. If a theological judgment has as its consequence the de-personalisation of a class of people, or renders them less than fully human, or takes from their hands their rightful share in decisions affecting their destiny, that judgment must of course be called into question. Alfred Hennelly, S.J., reminds theologians that the intellectual and cultural milieu of theological discussion can no longer be ignored, and that "the question of praxis is . . . a key issue in theological methodology . . . or even *the* central issue." ("Theological Method: The Southern Exposure," *Theological Studies*, December 1977).

What is required for constructive theological debate on this (and any other) issue before the church is a careful and rigorous examination of additional data from all centers of inquiry, and exacting and systematic theological reflection on that data. What the bishops had hoped to settle is merely the beginning of a lengthy dialogue. ■

Meanwhile, in the Rosados' Homes

by Mary Lou Suhor

Lois Rosado went into the hospital on New Year's Day to abort her baby. But she didn't want to.

Margarita and Diana Rosado are on welfare this year. But they don't want to be.

These are only two of a long series of indignities suffered by members of the Rosado family since the FBI began surveillance of them last year. Three brothers — Andres, Luis, and Julio — have been in jail since August in contempt of the Grand Jury investigation of bombings by the FALN, allegedly a militant Puerto Rican group. Luis once served on the staff of the Episcopal Church National Commission for Hispanic Affairs, and Julio was a member of the Commission.

Lois Rosado had just completed her master's degree in bilingual education — with honors — from City College New York at the beginning of summer, and all seemed to be going well. Julio had helped to see her through school, taking over family duties with the two daughters, Leila, 7, and Akilah, 5. They were looking forward to paying off family debts and having another child, as both parents were working again. Then Julio went to jail.

"I was teaching at a day care center when I had a bad fall and my pregnancy was threatened," Lois said. "The doctor told me I should stay off my feet and rest. But with Julio in jail I was the sole support of the family and each day I took off from work I lost \$10. I couldn't afford to take as much time off as I was advised, and lost the baby. Can you imagine what it's like to carry a dead fetus around for two months under those circumstances?"

Diana and Margarita Rosado make regular trips to the Welfare Office now, although they have never been on welfare before. "That's a harassment in itself," Diana said. "And Margarita can't speak English very well, so someone must go with her to see she's getting the right thing."

The Rosados are angry, and sometimes bitter, about the harassment the family has been undergoing, solely, they feel, because they are strong supporters of



Left to right: Diana, Lois, and Margarita Rosado (with son Hiram) ponder an unfavorable newspaper article about their husbands, Luis, Julio, and Andres, respectively, with their mother-in-law, Mrs. Maria Rosado. The three Rosado brothers are in jail since Aug. 22 in contempt of a New York Grand Jury investigating the FALN.

Puerto Rican independence. Since the FBI first arrived on the scene, the Rosados say they have been constantly maligned and the victims of "dirty tricks" which they catalogue one after another. For example:

— An FBI agent showed a male acquaintance of Diana a picture of him and Diana talking together and asked him if he was "having an affair" with her.

— FBI agents questioned the friends of a nephew of the Rosados, asking "how many teenagers had been pressed into carrying bombs for the Rosados."

— A cousin of the Rosados in Puerto Rico was shown photos of the apartment of the Rosados' mother, photographed from all angles. The women have frequently seen men on rooftops or in

adjoining apartment buildings shooting pictures.

— Photo taking by agents was constant. The Rosado women were clicked at crossing the street, at bus stops, going to work. The mother and grandmother — who is 99 — were photographed going to church. "The FBI even visited my grocery store, and asked if I had ever discussed my political beliefs there," said Mrs. Maria Rosado, mother of the three brothers.

— A cousin was interrogated on the job so many times that his employer threatened to fire him if the FBI kept coming around.

— Agents visited the school attended by Julio's children and asked the principal to identify the children, claiming there was a

robbery in the neighborhood and they wanted to see what the children were wearing.

"But the school knew Julio and me very well. I had done my practice teaching there and Julio had attended parents' visiting days while I was studying. The principal told the FBI they would need a court order if they wanted to talk to the children, and that they shouldn't come back," Lois said.

— Neighbors have been interrogated, the Rosados said, "always with the insinuation that we were terrorists. Now as we go through the building we hear people say, "That the family of the terrorists."

Again, Lois had better luck. "The neighbors in my apartment building knew Julio because he had helped organize a rent strike. So the FBI had to tell them they were trying to clear Julio's name. Our neighbors have been very good to us. One even paid the back rent I owed, saying that the children and I shouldn't have *that* problem, at least."

The three Rosado women can't understand how judges and Grand Juries can break up families for so long a period. It also mystifies them why all nine people in contempt of the Chicago and New York Grand Juries were not granted furloughs from jail to visit home for Christmas.

"Julio was granted two leaves from jail, when I aborted and earlier on, when I was first having problems with the pregnancy. Now if there was real evidence that he was involved in these bombings and they were close to an indictment, would they have let him out twice?" Lois asked.

"Haldeman, Mitchell, and organized crime figures got furloughs for the holidays," Lois said. "Andres, Luis and Julio are *family* men and our children are suffering without them. Luis and Julio were with the children for long periods of time when Diana and I were studying. They helped the children with homework, made visits to school, played with them. Does that sound like crazies who go around bombing?" she asked.

What gives the women courage to get through these days? "Strong family support, for one thing," Diana said. "And I try not to dwell on my problems. I have to maintain my balance, otherwise I'll fall apart and my kids will fall apart. This experience has also opened me up to the abuses other people are suffering in this society. I had read about them, but somehow didn't believe it. Now it's

happening to *us*. I also know that Luis is in jail for his beliefs, and I back him 100%. I feel a lot of anger inside, but basically you have to go on living."

Margarita said she is suffering because her 7-year-old son, Andres, is the most emotionally affected of all the Rosado children. "He feels his father has abandoned him, and cries a lot," she said. "But I have had to adjust to the situation, and the children should know the sacrifice their father is making, too. We try to talk about that."

"Coming as I do from a family of very strong Black women, I lean heavily on the example of my mother," Lois said. I never saw her defeated in problems of daily life, and this molded my character. Also, as a Black American who has studied the history of my own people, I believe strongly that no country has the right to dominate another country and, like Julio, I believe Puerto Rico has a right to be free. I'm trying to make life as normal as possible, under the circumstances for my two girls. Also, our strength helps to keep the men in jail strong. They have to see that we can bear up to this responsibility."

The mother of the Rosados said that she was proud of her three sons for going to jail for their ideals. "Sometimes I am very nervous and feel like crying, but I feel the rights of people should be respected, and all peoples want to be free. Our family has a long history of supporting independence."

In Puerto Rico, we took Julio when he was a little boy to hear Pedro Albizu Campos speak. My sister ran for mayor of the town of Isabela in Puerto Rico on the Independence — PIP — ticket some 20 years ago. And a cousin, Pedro, ran for mayor recently on the PIP ticket in Vega Baja, Puerto Rico."

"You might sum it up by saying that we can't accept this repression that's going on," Lois said. It is not a *crime* to believe in the independence of Puerto Rico. And we feel that a repressive organ like the Grand Jury can be used not only to destroy rights of Puerto Ricans but also the rights of people in this country. You lose some humanity when there is oppression in any society, and when you lose humanity, you lose the soul of living. Somebody has to stand up and say 'No.' Those people in jail are saying 'No!'"

GRAND JURY UPDATE...

FLASH !!! FLASH !!! FLASH !!!

● Maria Cueto and Raisa Nemikin were released from jail by Judge Robert Carter as *THE WITNESS* went to press Jan. 23 Details next month!

● A story by the Rev. Benjamin Campbell in the *Virginia Churchman* (12/77) hinted that Presiding Bishop John Allin was loathe to throw the full weight of his office behind an effort to release Cueto and Nemikin. Campbell said that privately, Bishop Allin and his assistant, Milton Wood, "seem to have been dropping hints that they think the women may be implicated in the whole *FALN* business and the bombings."

● Grand Jury reform legislation currently before Congress would reduce the term of those held in contempt to six months. Cueto and Nemikin have currently served more than 10, and Pedro Archuleta more than seven.

● Some \$2,000 in donations and pledges was raised for the families of those in jail at a cocktail party in New York recently. The event was sponsored by Churchpersons Against Grand Jury Abuse (now the Grand Jury Abuse Working Group of the National Council of Churches).

Continued from page 2

"the vast majority of Cubans are not concerned about whether or not they can disagree fundamentally with their government." Thus he demonstrates his low opinion of Cubans. Is this not a perpetuation of the American superiority complex that has caused so much resentment in all of Latin America?

Hopefully in his next visit he will not be so naive as to use the Central Committee as an information source and visit for himself the political prison camps which he "of course" did not visit. It seems that not many can. The International Red Cross, Amnesty International, the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights and the International Rescue Committee have continually reported on the plight of political prisoners in Cuba. Their number, according to the *Journal de Geneve* is estimated at 50,000. The French Communist Pierre Golendorf puts it at 120,000 as of last year. They include a cross section of the population, including priests and Christians who insisted upon proclaiming the name of Jesus. It is true, as Mr. Lawrence points out, those who choose to be "rehabilitated" are sent to "rehabilitation center." But would he be willing to "rehabilitate" from Christianity or commitment to human rights?

What most distressed me is the association of the primitive church with a revolution that expressly denies God. Christians too have revolutionary dreams. We work with faith that JESUS alone can sustain us. Secular materialism and Marxism will pass away.

Jorge S. Rivero
Boynton Beach, Fla.

CRC Responds

The Cuba Resource Center, which conducted the interview with Charles Lawrence, forwarded the following response since Dr. Lawrence was not immediately available for comment:

I have been to Cuba twice since the Fall of 1976, once as part of a delegation of U.S. church representatives, and once to do research. I attended Sunday morning services in Havana's Presbyterian church, worshipping with an enthusiastic congregation including persons of all ages. Sunday school for children and adults preceded the service. Several months later, I was a guest at the Annual Assembly of the Cuban Ecumenical Council (CEC), an organization which includes most Protestant denominations as well as other religious organizations such as the Student Christian Movement. The program

included a dialogue on Protestant-Catholic relations, and discussions with ecumenical visitors from Jamaica, Mozambique and the U.S.

In all these places I was able to question church people, both clergy and laity, about their own experiences as Christians in Cuba. Many active church members, young and old, asserted that they are indeed revolutionaries. They firmly believe that the Cuban Revolution—which has ended unemployment, malnutrition, illiteracy and organized prostitution—is indeed a blessing to all of Cuba's people and something which their Gospel commitment calls them to support wholeheartedly.

This is not to say that the Christian or Jewish communities which I found in Cuba are large or powerful institutions. Prior to the Revolution, the church was not known as a champion of social justice against the corrupt Batista regime. In the early 1960's, some counterrevolutionary activities, including acts of sabotage, were carried out by "Christians" in the name of Jesus Christ. Relations between the church and the socialist government haven't always been friendly. But to say that religious believers are actively persecuted for their belief is, from my experience with Cuban Christians and Jews, simply untrue.

Mr. Jorge Rivero, in his letter to you, notes the fact that several international organizations, including Amnesty International, have been denied permission to investigate the situation of political prisoners in Cuba. Let me point out, however, as he does not, that Amnesty's estimate of the number of political prisoners there is 5,000—considerably lower than that of either of the sources Mr. Rivero quotes.

The Rev. Elice Higginbotham
Cuba Resource Center
New York, N.Y.

Jail Visit Provocative

In this country, more aware now of human rights because of President Carter's emphasis on their importance, it comes as something of a shock to find Maria Cueto and Raisa Nemikin in prison. As readers of THE WITNESS know, Maria and Raisa are two former staff members of the National Commission on Hispanic Affairs of the Episcopal Church, who refused to testify before a Grand Jury and will presumably be detained at the Metropolitan Correction Center until May '78.

Meanwhile they feel that given their options, they made the right choice: To honor the confidence of their Spanish-speaking clients even at the expense of spending 14 months in jail. In so doing

their lives became a witness: "Even as ye do it unto the least of these, ye do it unto me." They are the allies of the victims, the friends of the oppressed. They are a sign to us out here, a light in the darkness of this society.

I am a member of Amnesty International, and visited Maria and Raisa recently. The visit raised many questions for me:

What is our response to their incarceration? How do we stop Grand Jury harassment of minorities and intimidation of witnesses? How do we reform the Grand Jury system which at present knows no limits, which disregards the Fifth Amendment once it offers immunity to those appearing before it? Is pressure by a Grand Jury to involve others a violation of our religious freedom? If we are one in the Spirit (as we are), does not kinship as children of God supercede the demands of the State?

Mary Bye
Doylestown, Pa.

Complicity With Militarism

THE WITNESS deals with a wide range of problems facing the Episcopal Church and its members. I am therefore surprised that a problem as great as war and militarism is barely touched.

The Episcopal Church has a real complicity with war and militarism. We send our young into the military and off to war, while we pay the taxes to fund wars. We accept as legitimate the over 8,000 strategic nuclear weapons that threaten the cities of the world. In church we use the national flag and generally accept the supremacy of the state. Yet only the Episcopal Peace Fellowship among the organizations of the church protests this behavior.

The scandal of our military chaplains being paid by the State, accepting military authority, having military rank and even wearing military uniforms should create a real protest by the rest of the church. Yet the House of Bishops has aggravated the situation by its recent election, for the second time in our history, of a Suffragan Bishop for the Armed Forces.

The Episcopal Church is not likely to deal effectively with the problems of poverty and injustice so long as it puts Caesar ahead of God.

Dana S. Grubb
Gaithersburg, Md.

CREDITS

Cover, Ben Grim; photo p. 9, Martha Blacklock; graphic p. 10, Peg Averill, LNS.

Continued from back cover

preaching. I disliked it so much, I didn't read it." On the same question, one pragmatist replied: "Can't say. When article looks like a bummer, I don't read it." We asked for an example of a recent graphic particularly liked. One answer: "I don't like graphics."

Asked whether THE WITNESS has/has not provided a real service to the church, one respondent checked that it had, adding "Please remove my name from the mailing list." One return was checked as a husband-wife response, but bore the note: "But this is not a joint return. I'm doing it for us, but mostly me." Another had the comment: "My wife says she agrees."

There was a consistent quality of forthrightness in the responses, a few abrasively so. "Would be greatly pleased if you ceased publication" . . . "Why take the trouble to send out this questionnaire? The magazine is a creation of its editor, and he seems to enjoy having it available to express opinions he endorses. Why change? I'm sure the editor isn't going to" . . . "The size of the magazine is *nuts* (the format). Why in the name of heaven don't you just admit it and change it? You're a stubborn lot!"

And there were several who made comments such as "Because I have been so negative, it is only honest to sign my name" — and did. Another reader commented: "I am not happy with what I read, but like to hear what you have to say." And another: "Be as extreme as you wish. I'll do the thinking for myself."

Very human touches, too, emerged many times in the responses. One respondent checked that he thought THE WITNESS was providing a real service to the church, adding "if anyone is really listening." Another volunteered: "I have given up changing the world. Just once in a while a tiny piece of it satisfies me." And a number surprised and touched us by saying: "Thanks for asking" . . . "Thank you for caring enough to ask."

Perhaps most arresting, for those responsible for a journal of opinion on the social mission of the church, were the number and intensity of expressions of concern about our church, about our society: "What can we *do*?" . . . "I am becoming aware of the fraudulence of our culture" . . . "Isn't it about time to have clergy and laity band together?" . . . "Am beginning to question attempts to sensitize the church" . . . "Any way THE WITNESS is prepared to organize to do something on these issues? Speakers, workshops, conferences, teach-ins, etc.?" . . . "How does THE WITNESS translate *its* beliefs into action?" . . . "My frustration is how to get a handle on problems that tear

people to shreds" . . . "I wish there were a bit more humor and a bit less stridence, but realize that those who feel intensely find it hard to achieve those goals."

Commenting on a question as to whether THE WITNESS has been too preoccupied with the Grand Jury case involving Maria Cueto and Raisa Nemikin, a woman who indicated she would like to know *more*, not less about the case, commented: "Why doesn't the Presiding Bishop get them out as he would if they were White — male — clergy — or a bishop?" Or, again, the wife of a clergyman writes in a concluding comment: "As a woman who has been a life-long devoted worker (not paid) in the church and who is so painfully alienated by this institution's careless disregard of women and their worth, I am only still in the church because of lone voices such as yours. How much longer I can hang on is a real question in my troubled soul . . ." Another respondent writes: "I'm a priest-worker . . . I must admit my attitude (toward the church) is becoming more ho-hum daily — but thanks to THE WITNESS I do still care a little."

Four years ago when the Episcopal Church Publishing Company was considering republishing THE WITNESS, it consulted with scores of clergy, laity, writers, publishers, college students. It was a sobering exercise, replete with well-founded warnings. We were told it was a hard time for periodicals, that people were not interested in the social mission of the church. The decision was made to go ahead, regardless.

Three years later, with the evidence coming in from this questionnaire, we are more determined than ever to do the job, and to do it better, helped by the hundreds of reactions and suggestions we have received. Given readers who are so precise, forthright, human, and so concerned — what else could we do? ■

Continued from page 3

diocesan moral support if they are not to despair of their task. Similarly, a great deal of national support from concerned clergy and laity will be required if the bishops' efforts are not to be dissipated and if they are not to be diverted from this central task of their mission.

Response to the Gospel has always been marked by challenge and risk, undergirded by hope. In the midst of the desolation of the economy and the politics and the human condition of our cities, and in the midst of the trivia and superficiality of so much of our church life, a valid and authentic hope has arisen in the efforts of this coalition of bishops.

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As Our Readers See Us

by Robert L. DeWitt

As was reported in the January issue, THE WITNESS was advised at a recent editorial consultation to "expose" itself more to its readers, to "share" in a human way.

Another suggestion was to query the readership and ask how *they* see THE WITNESS, thereby being vulnerable and open to suggestions for change.

So THE WITNESS prepared 30 questions — about style and content of the magazine, and also about our readers — and sent them to all subscribers.

Some 25% returned the questionnaire. (We are told that this is ☐ Poor ☐ Fair ☒ Excellent). To squeeze out every possible insight that we can from the responses, we have sent them off to academia and a computer for collation and assessment, and will give a complete report later.

Meanwhile, we want to thank the many who replied. We got more compliments than we deserved (although not more than we need!) Further, we would like to share a brief, preliminary sampling and a few initial reactions we have had to the responses.

Our readers are precise. Some, for example, found the questionnaire inadequate and went a second mile by writing lengthy letters of comment which were, of course, enormously helpful. Others endlessly edited the questions and wrote innumerable comments, in addition to checking the proper boxes. In front of adjectives suggested by the questionnaire the words "sometimes," "occasionally," "slightly," "generally," were inserted too many times to count.

Asked if WITNESS articles are too intellectual, one respondent crossed out "intellectual," and inserted "arrogant, prejudiced, one-sided." Another crossed out

"intellectual" and replaced it with the word "academic," adding "God knows they're not intellectual." The three choices in one question were "(THE WITNESS) Does a good job," "Is too opinionated," or "Rates only a passing grade." One respondent crossed out the last choice and wrote, "Is failing."

To ascertain the age of our readers, the questionnaire suggested successive chronological decades, the last category being "Verging on or arrived at senior citizenship." One respondent crossed out those words, stating "stupid category — also insulting and trite." (He listed his own age in the 30-49 bracket.) One clergyman checked that same category, triumphantly adding "Have arrived; retired at 76." A woman checked the category "50-59," adding in parenthesis "(56)."

In developing a composite picture of our readers we were also interested in their education background. They seem a pretty well-educated lot. Where we indicated "college," we listed the digits 1 through 8, asking them to circle the last year completed. One circled "8," then added "+." Another, not to be outdone, circled "8," then added "++++." Still another circled "8," then added diffidently, "I suppose — Ph.D."

Some comments defy categorization, but cry out to be heard. On the question of what the reader would like to see added to the contents of THE WITNESS on a regular basis, said one: "Nothing. Prefer subtractions. A good model would be Harvard Business School's *Management Thinking* (now dead)." Asked to mention any recent article particularly disliked, a respondent said: "Article on

Continued inside back cover