

THE WITNESS

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Christmas 1978
John E. Hines

**Dollar Power
In Church & State**

Isabel Letelier
Michael Moffitt
Joseph Pelham
Charles Ritchie, Jr.
William Yon



ERA Brief Inadequate?

You can't vet every article but if any can be found wanting, that probably adversely impacts all others. I found the article on ERA, by your Board member Joan Howarth, wanting in that it failed even to mention what I believe probably to be the most crucial question, namely whether states which have already approved the amendment may withdraw the approval during the extended period. (September WITNESS).

Despite all the furor I doubt that there was ever much doubt that Congress would extend the period, as it did the other day. The real question and one that no lawyer or law student should fail to face is whether those states which have already approved could withdraw their approval during the extended period.

As you probably know, what Congress did — or perhaps it was only the Senate — was to extend the period with a specific proviso that no state could change its mind during the extended period. Four states have already acted to reverse their approvals.

If I had been advising the ERA people I would have urged them that the door should be kept open both ways, in their own long term interests. I don't want to debate the substantive point but I must say it seems to me grossly unfair, although very effective in view of the nature of our lobbying processes, to lock them up one by one and then move the

artillery to the next one. I suspect a reaction against this may do ERA more harm than good and in any event the question is bound to reach the Supreme Court.

The purpose of this letter is simply to chide your young law student gently on what seems to me to be a rather bland and inadequate brief.

**Carroll R. Wetzel, Esq.
Philadelphia, Pa.**

P.S. If they can't make it under the Marquis of Queensbury Rules, they very likely may not make it at all, by a constitutional approach.

Ms. Howarth Replies

Rescission (a state's attempt to withdraw its ratification of an amendment) and extension (Congress' extension of the period in which states may ratify an amendment) are two separate issues. Contrary to Mr. Wetzel's understanding, the ERA Extension Resolution passed by Congress is completely silent on the question of rescission (as was I). Amendments specifically to allow rescission were defeated; no anti-rescission amendment was ever considered by ERA backers.

I feared that my goal of de-mystifying the ERA extension would be jeopardized if I added a discussion of this even thornier question, but as Mr. Wetzel suggests, rescission is another important issue involving the ERA.

Extension is a new issue; rescission is not. The Supreme Court has held that rescission is a matter for Congress to decide. Congress has consistently taken the position (with the 14th, 15th, and 19th Amendments) that the constitution does not permit a state to rescind. This issue will be faced again by Congress when it must decide whether the 38 states have ratified. Meanwhile, anti-ERA forces have gone to the courts in an effort, so far unsuccessful, to have the rescission attempts of four states recognized. (They targeted 10 for rescission campaigns). The rescission attempt was vetoed in one of the four by the Lieutenant Governor, (a woman)

during the Governor's absence. It does get thorny.

To say that the ERA extension vote was never in doubt is to make invisible (once again) the incredible achievements of women. Congress was turned around by the thousands of visitors, letters, phone calls, and telegrams that poured in. The ERA extension vote was a stunning upset victory, all the more impressive because the "artillery" was fired by groups like the National Organization for Women, the League of Women Voters, the YWCA, and the 90,000 who marched in July, none of whom are the traditional big guns in Washington. The ERA pressure has now returned to the unratified states. Until 38 are won, we live in an un-ratified country.

**Joan Howarth
Los Angeles, Cal.**

Re Male Resistance

Enclosed is a check for a subscription and also \$6 more so you can send me individual issues from May through October. There seem to be articles in every one of those that I "ought" to read, so that really says something for your efforts at making the magazine relevant. I think you are really doing a good job and find most everything very provocative as I move deeper into thinking and doing in theological education.

This letter was prompted in part by my reading the Bob Martin - Beverly Harrison article, "Is Theological Education Good for any Woman's Health?" (September) and wondering what my own theological journey is and what "body of knowledge and experience" I bring through my teaching. Needless to say, teaching at Colgate Rochester Divinity School/Bexley Hall/Crozer Theological Seminary and learning in theological schools (I'm also a doctoral candidate at Union Seminary) keeps one thinking, of necessity, about male resistance to women and theological education!

**Sarah Bentley
New York, N.Y.**

THE WITNESS

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Hope in a Handful of Dust

by John E. Hines

John E. Hines, our guest editorial writer for the December WITNESS, was presiding Bishop of the Episcopal Church from 1965 until 1974.

If you have stood in "the field of the shepherds" and looked across at the expanse that separates it from the community of Bethlehem, you may have felt that, despite the recurring theme of "change" for the world of "now," very little of it has affected the area across which the shepherds gazed on the first Christmas morn.

St. Matthew's Gospel introduces the Christmas story in a simple, straightforward statement: "*Now when Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea in the days of Herod the King, behold there came wise men from the east . . .*" And with those words the image that comes to mind is that of a baby, in a crude shelter, in a time when kings were more a part of the political scenery, and the "wise men" moved across the landscape on camels or horses, which was top speed for travel in that era.

But Herod lived a long time ago. And even a word like "behold" sounds antiquated and unreal in our ears today. A world in which camels and horses were the speediest and most durable forms of transportation simply cannot keep pace with our world which measures distances in hours or moments, not miles any more. So that hearing described again the circumstances attending Jesus' birth seems to widen

the time gap between Bethlehem, Judea, and Bethlehem, Pennsylvania, until we are brought up sharply by the imperviousness to change that seems to mark, at least, the physical characteristics of "the field of the shepherds," and the walls of Bethlehem.

What is being said in the vibrant Christmas story is that, in many respects, our world and the world of Herod and the innkeeper and the shepherds and the tax collectors are vastly different; not just two millenia and a dozen social revolutions apart. But what is also being said is the oft obscured fact that our world is painfully similar to that which saw the Living God incarnate in human flesh!

Specifically. Jesus was born into a land of conflict in which an uneasy peace was maintained more by the force of arms than by the reassuring relationships of mutual trust and good will. Is this a totally unfamiliar description of circumstances?

He was born into a world where success was measured by the affluence with which it was equated, an affluence which claimed the comfortable rooms in the inn while relegating the impoverished and the powerless to a cave which doubled as a stable. Can we

Continued on page 13

Who Knows What Good May Lurk in Bishops?

by Joseph A. Pelham

"After you deliberate and identify priorities, we'll be here and expecting to hear from you."

From testimony, Urban Bishops Public Hearing
Birmingham, December 1977

"Be our advocate" was a constant and continuing theme in testimony by victims of cities across the nation at public hearings sponsored this year by the Urban Bishops' Coalition.

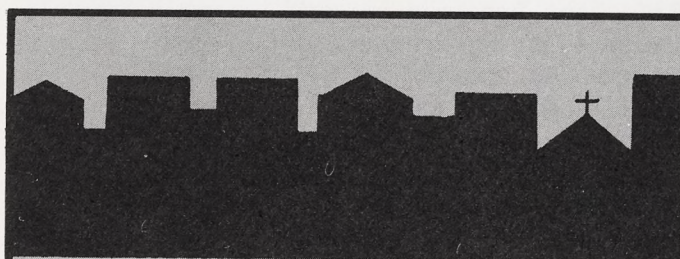
Who knows what might happen if bishops of the church really become involved in advocacy?

As small a step as it might be, becoming an advocate for the cities could add a dimension to their way of "bishopsing" which has been conspicuously absent to date. Urban bishops can be led into deep water by the very process of listening and making decisions about which of a multiplicity of issues and persons ought to become the focus of their advocacy.

It can also liberate them from their fear of involvement. It can introduce them to problems of which they have been unaware. It can bring them face to face with "the wretched of the cities" and with urban activists with whom they have had no previous experience. It can change the way they use their time. It can sharpen their skills of analysis, or drive them to develop further skills. It can confront them with the fact that by background, training and the demands placed upon them, they have not been prepared to be "advocates" of much beyond the institutional survival of the church.

It can even convince them that advocacy on behalf of the victims of the cities is not something which can simply be added onto everything else the church may be doing, but demands, in fact, a re-examination, critique and reassessment of everything else — a new set of priorities and a new ordering of the church's life.

Apparently the Urban Bishops' Coalition has launched out into such deep water, and that the Coalition is becoming



What Is the Urban Bishops' Coalition?

The Urban Bishops' Coalition, under the leadership of Bishop John T. Walker of Washington, D.C., includes more than 50 Episcopal bishops in whose dioceses are located most of the large and medium sized cities of the United States, as well as of Puerto Rico and Panama.

The Coalition surfaced at the 1976 General Convention in Minneapolis. At that time the UBC announced its intention to propose that half of the money to be raised in the church's \$100 million Venture in Mission campaign be directed toward urban ministries.

Since its formation the Coalition has undertaken two major projects:

- A series of three Public Policy Institutes at the College of Preachers, Washington, D.C. Designed in cooperation with the Institute for Policy Studies, a Washington-based "think tank," the Institutes have introduced bishops, staff persons, clergy and laity to the way national public policies affect the welfare of the cities. The last of the three was oversubscribed.
- A series of seven public hearings at which

a force to be reckoned with has surely occurred to the administration of the National Church.

It was reported that in the House of Bishops meeting recently, votes divided on most issues with some consistency, 60/40, with the latter figure representing the membership of the Coalition as a sizeable bloc. If this response runs true to form, Presiding Bishop John Allin and his staff and agents will move to reach out and claim for themselves the concerns of the Coalition, as has been done in the past in regard to women's issues and the social mission of the church. In the process, those concerns will be domesticated to proportions which the deeply conservative leadership of the National Church deems manageable. Without a staff of its own, and the permanency and continuity this could provide, the Coalition seems vulnerable to such manipulation.

The UBC members are, by and large, the most progressive men who sit in the House of Bishops. They are above all else, however, *bishops* — eager to play according to House rules, reluctant to exercise their muscle as a power bloc, hesitant, at least publicly, to tell it as it is, or perhaps even admit to themselves the way it is. Until the UBC decides that the reason it exists is *because* the kind of response which the crisis of the cities demands is not forthcoming through the National Church in the foreseeable future, its effectiveness will be severely impaired. Besides, rumors were rife at the

House of Bishops meeting that the VIM program will produce only 25% of its original campaign goal.

New life surged through the UBC at its recent meeting when the newly created Policy and Action Committee nudged it into action. A paper prepared by Marcus Raskin, one of its members, reflected the PAC's discussion and suggested future courses of action. It declared:

"The judgment of the Committee is that the problems which beset society are integrally involved with religious institutions and the stance they take. Because of the power and comparative wealth of the Episcopal Church, it is integrally linked to these problems. They will continue to plague humankind, at least through the remainder of the 20th century.

"Therefore, a series of activities should now be undertaken by the church that are not *ad hoc* and open to fashion. They must be broad and long-term in concept. And they must be as much a part of the church's activities as prayer itself. This will require a newly defined relationship to civil and political authority which clarifies the church's special obligations for aiding and abetting humaneness, social justice and equity. Where necessary it will exercise its historic role in confronting state power when it is opposed to community and liberation."

Raskin's statement on behalf of the PAC indicated that its discussions had revolved around the four major issues which

testimony was solicited from victims of the crisis of the cities, and from those who work on their behalf. Hearings were held in Seattle, Birmingham, Newark, Chicago, Colon (Panama) and Washington, D.C., with an additional hearing on national issues in Washington.

The testimony of 150 persons at these Hearings, as well as implications for action were deliberated at a UBC meeting in March, 1978. The report which formed the basis of that deliberation, and actions to which UBC bishops committed themselves have now been published by Forward Movement under the title, *To Hear and To Heed*. The UBC bishops pledged to make available copies of it for study and discussion in their own dioceses.

Also authorized at this meeting was a Policy and Action Committee for the Coalition. It is now chaired by Bishop J. Brooke Mosley, who has been released from some of his duties as Assistant Bishop in Pennsylvania to give half-time to the work of the Committee.

Mosley has persuaded an impressive group of 15 persons, clerical and lay, Episcopalians and non-Episcopalians to be members of the PAC. They include: Rebecca Andrade, Tri-Citizens Union, Newark; the Rev. Craig Biddle, Richmond, Va.; Bishop John M. Burgess, professor, Yale-Berkeley Divinity School; Elvira Charles, Crossroads Urban Center, Salt Lake City; William Doubleday, National Gay Task Force; Steven Guerra, Chicago activist lawyer; Mattie Hopkins, public school teacher and Union of Black Episcopalians member, Chicago; John McKnight, Northwestern University; the Rev. Floyd James Naters-Gamarra, Republic of Panama; Marcus Raskin, Institute for Policy Studies; Bishop Francisco Reus-Froylan, Puerto Rico; Edward W. Rodman, assistant to the Bishop of Massachusetts; Harlan Stelmach, teacher and member of the Radical Religion Collective, Berkeley; the Rev. Tanya Vonnegut, Diocese of Indianapolis; and Odessa Woolfolk, Center for Urban Studies, University of Alabama.

challenge modern times: economic justice and the common good, human rights and human dignity, the question of imperialism, and the issue of defense and nuclear war. It promised that the Coalition would be receiving action recommendations from the Committee in respect to each of these issues.

From this first glimpse of what its Policy and Action Committee is likely to produce, members of the Coalition should be prepared to consider the need to reorder the church's life and to act in a bold way with regard to the causal factors of the urban crisis.

Will the bishops hear, and if so, will they heed?

That constitutes a journey into unfamiliar territory for many members of the Coalition and, like their ancient Biblical forebears, they feel more comfortable at home.

When the Urban Bishops' Coalition gathered in Kansas City prior to the meeting of the full House of Bishops, it dealt with a modest agenda. Its decisions reflected both a good deal of caution and, underlying that caution, some uncertainty about what the coalition understands itself to be.

In organizational matters, UBC confronted the need to adopt a budget for ongoing work during the next two years. Since its formation, the Coalition has raised funds through contributions from member bishops, some of whom have access to considerable discretionary funds, many of whom do not; from grants received from three or four foundations, and from gifts contributed by a half dozen concerned individuals.

The figure set for the coming year was \$182,000, with a 15% increase for inflation the following year. That represents, as one bishop who had hoped for somewhat bolder action commented, an amount less than the aggregate invested by parish churches throughout the country each year in altar flowers.

Sometime in the near future the Coalition will have to decide what claim, if any, the concerns so vividly presented in their Public Hearings may legitimately make on normal channels of diocesan or national program funding. If the bishops are to commit themselves to these concerns, as they said they would do earlier this year, much remains to be done to bring their dioceses on board, even in some instances in which diocesan interest was sparked by a local Public Hearing. In the absence of firm decisions on these two questions, the \$182,000 budgeted for the next two years will be less than was spent during the preceding two.

Hesitancy was also expressed regarding staffing for the Coalition. A budget item for support services was retained, but with no commitment to the hiring of a permanent Executive Director.

The Coalition's work since 1976 has been accomplished largely on an *ad hoc* basis. Member bishops have made an in-kind contribution to the two projects which the Coalition has undertaken by releasing diocesan staff members to work for UBC. In other instances, short-term arrangements have been made through which specific projects such as the Public Hearings have been staffed. It is true, however, that without staff, neither the Public Policy Institutes nor the Public Hearings would have been possible. The question is not whether the Coalition needs staff or not, but whether the time has come for the Coalition to realize that it cannot respond adequately to the crisis of the cities on an *ad hoc* basis. Reluctance to face that realization may reveal, again, questions about the Coalition's self-understanding.

Yet the impact of the Coalition has already been felt on the full House of Bishops. That body at its meeting commended John Burt and other leaders of the Mahoning Valley Coalition for their leadership in one facet of the urban crisis and, in a move initiated at the UBC meeting, passed without dissent (and perhaps without full discussion of the meaning of what it was doing) a resolution urging President Carter to support a loan guarantee proposal which would enable the reopening of the Youngstown mill under community leadership. Bishop Burt himself attributes his involvement, now commended by the House of Bishops, to his participation in the Urban Bishops' Coalition.

The House of Bishops, also at the instigation of members of the Coalition, adopted as its own the Lambeth Conference's *Appeal to the World*, which calls for, among other things, a new economic order and a reversing of the process by which the rich become richer and the poor poorer. Such a call is hardly the stuff of which recent Pastoral Letters of the House of Bishops have been made!

However, the unanswered questions remain: How the Coalition understands itself, and the degree to which the UBC has become a body with a common belief about what it means to be a bishop called to respond to the crisis of the cities.

Throughout the Kansas City meeting, the attention of many of the bishops was diverted by concern about the score in the Red Sox and Yankees playoff. One bishop, arriving late for the Coalition meeting, discovered that it had already adjourned and its members had scattered to bars and lounges to watch the game. Perhaps this symbolizes that bishops are distracted men, and that those waiting to hear from them will have to wait a great deal longer. ■

Dean Joseph A. Pelham of the Colgate Rochester Divinity School/Bexley Hall/Crozer Theological Seminary is author of the deliberative document issuing from the Public Hearings sponsored by the Urban Bishops' Coalition.


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*Why human rights activists are crying 'foul' to bold statements issued from the White House.*  
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U.S. Human Rights Record:

More Shadow Than Substance?

by Adam D. Finnerty

On a recent Saturday morning, I awoke early to the sound of a television set. I discovered in the next room an 8-year-old guest who was watching a cartoon about American history. Little smiling Pilgrims shook hands with little smiling Indians. Little pioneer wagons rolled happily across the Great Plains. And at one point a little smiling cowboy got hit by an arrow — but only in his 10-gallon hat. Blue, pink and green sections of the North American continent were miraculously transformed into portions of the U.S. polity, all without one shot being fired or one drop of blood spilled. In the background, a catchy ditty told how we Americans always needed elbow room, its lyrics extolling Manifest Destiny and the idea that one day we might just need to claim the moon.

I can remember similar happy portraits of U.S. history from my own grade-school years. The United States, we were told, was the Golden Door through which the wretched refuse of the world could enter and find happiness. We were the keepers of the Bill of Rights and the Constitution, and we reaped the joys of the free enterprise

system. We maintained the "Arsenal of Democracy" and claimed the leadership of the "Free World."

All in all, it was a rosy picture of who we were as a people, and this image played an important role later in maintaining public support for a self-righteous foreign policy that backed brutal dictatorships in the Third World, and which led to the bombings and the burnings in Southeast Asia.

Today this rosy image is being revived under the guise of President Carter's "human rights" campaign. Once again, we Americans are being encouraged to think that we are better and wiser than we really are.

I must confess at the outset that I found President Carter's human rights campaign to be enormously refreshing. After Lyndon Johnson's "coonskin on the wall" approach to the war in Vietnam, and his invasion of the Dominican Republic; after Richard Nixon and his "withdrawal" from Vietnam while escalating the bombing; after Gerald Ford and his public justification of our "de-stabilization" program in Chile — Jimmy Carter has been a breath of fresh air.

But President Carter's human rights campaign has been accompanied by a surprising lack of candor. In his first two years in office, the President has chosen

to mount a white horse on behalf of the American people. Armed with foreign aid cuts and plenty of media coverage, he has been busily pointing out the transgressions of others, while quietly ignoring our own.

Three dangers are inherent in President Carter's "white horse" approach to human rights. One is that, by focusing attention on the United States as a guarantor of others' rights, he detracts from the long and arduous task of developing international mechanisms for this work. A second is that by pursuing a policy of moral unilateralism — that is, setting this country up as a judge of behavior — he is continuing a pattern of U.S. intervention in the affairs of other nations. And third, he is contributing to the re-formation of illusions about ourselves as a people — and such illusions can be the basis of military adventures in the future.

To put it very bluntly, *the United States has been a major violator of human rights — both domestically and abroad* — and we need to be honest about our own record if we are now going to contribute to a new atmosphere.

During the first two years of the Carter Administration, it has become quite fashionable for Americans to give themselves verbal pats on the back over

Adam D. Finnerty is a free lance writer who lives in Philadelphia. He is currently working on a book called *Rules of the Game: A Primer for Americans on Human Rights*.

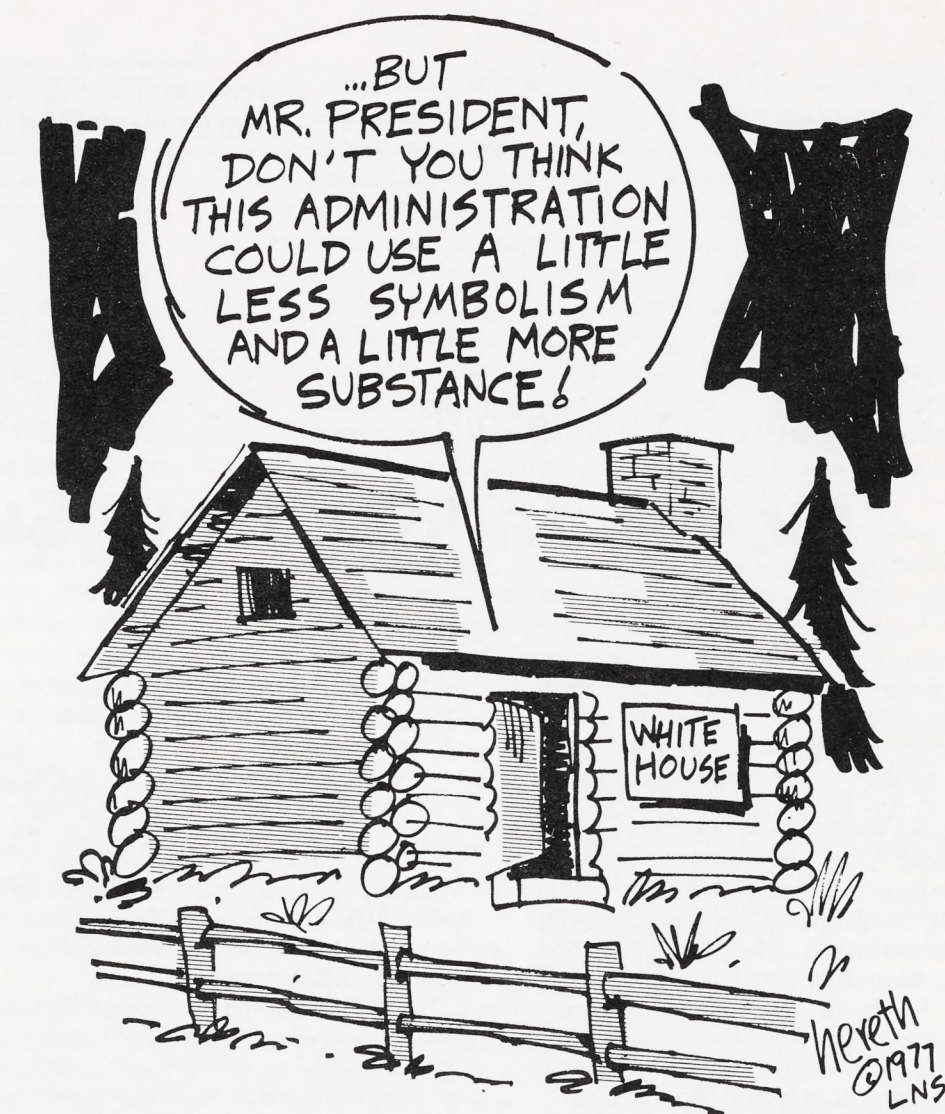
our wonderful record on human rights. As *New York Times* columnist Anthony Lewis put it, "he (President Carter) is giving not just Americans but people in the West generally a sense that their values are being asserted again, after years of silence in the face of tyranny and brutality." And Senator Daniel Moynihan, writing in *Commentary*, exclaimed, "what needs to be explained is not why the United States has raised this standard, but why it has taken so long."

Most of us know full well why the United States has taken so long to wax eloquent on the subject: For 14 years we supported torture, mass killings, political assassinations, napalm bombing, tiger cages, press censorship — all in the name of "freedom" for Vietnam.

But Vietnam is not the only foreign land in which the U.S. has abetted human rights violations. When the U.S.-trained and U.S.-supplied Chilean military took over and unleashed a program of terror, they did so against a clear background of official U.S. displeasure with the democratically-elected Allende regime — expressed through our attempts to hamstring Chile's economy in the international marketplace. And, as we later found out, our overt displeasure was matched by our covert funding of opposition groups and strikers.

Then there was Brazil. One of President Carter's early initiatives was to show the Administration's displeasure with the repressive military junta there. To this end, Rosalyn Carter and State Department Human Rights Secretary Patricia Derian each made trips to that country, protesting human rights violations, and the President himself met with six members of the opposition while he was in that country. But Jimmy Carter never mentioned that the U.S. Government had helped bring the generals to power in the first place.

Our Ambassador to Brazil, Lincoln Gordon, was in close touch with the military conspirators when they took power in 1964. In fact, he was personally in charge of "Project Brother Sam," an



American plan to intervene with naval and airborne units if necessary in support of the military conspirators.

But the Brazilian military managed to take over without that boost from the U.S. Their junta was immediately recognized by our government, and plans for emergency and long-term economic aid were finalized — plans that had already been formulated by a special inter-agency task force, assembled prior to the coup.

These are just two of a very long list — the Philippines, South Korea, Iran, to name a few — of countries that are notorious for torture and other human rights violations, and whose rulers have

been brought to power, or kept in power, with U.S. support.

Commenting on U.S.-Latin American policy in the Kissinger era, one career diplomat put it, "All (Kissinger) asked from the Latin Americans was that they be kept quiet so as not to interfere with his important matters. So he often backed the leaders who had the muscle to keep their people quiet."

If we add "maintaining a favorable investment climate," and "fighting Communism" to the desire to keep the people "quiet," then we have a pretty complete description of U.S. policy toward most of the Third World for the last 33 years.

But what about conditions at home? Compared to other countries, isn't the U.S. record outstanding?

If we are frank about it, we can say that in our 200 years as a nation, the white people in the United States have treated the other white people fairly well. For non-whites the record has been close to abysmal.

Consider the history of Black Americans. In 1776, when the Declaration of Independence announced that "all men are created equal," it excluded the 500,000 black men and women who were held as slaves, and who represented one-sixth of the population. For the next 100 years, a goodly portion of the U.S. economy was dependent upon blacks who had been imported from Africa in a slave trade that claimed 5 million or more lives — an atrocity that ranks with those of Stalin or Hitler in the 20th century. And the succeeding patterns of racism and discrimination in the United States were as vicious as South Africa's *apartheid* policies are today.

Consider the history of the Native American population. White Americans are encouraged to accept a national self-image that is surprisingly similar to the smiling cowboy with the harmless arrow in his hat. We would like to think that the United States grew from 13 states to 50 through the simple efforts of little wagonloads of smiling pioneers, dancing and singing their way across the continent.

Of course, that's not how it happened. It happened through war and threat of war, and by systematically pushing the native population off its land and onto reservations.

Many human rights watchers see the Rev. Ben Chavis of the Wilmington 10 and Russell Means of the American Indian Movement as personifying the problem of human rights violations in this country. Circumstances surrounding their jailing are under investigation by Amnesty International and the National Council of Churches has taken up their causes.

The list of human rights violations could go on: the Palmer Raids of 1920,

the Japanese-American internments of WWII, the McCarthy witch-hunts, the COINTELPRO activities of the FBI against civil rights, peace, ethnic and feminist activists. All of these should be a part of the sense of history that any American carries, in part so that we can keep a more watchful eye on our own government.

But the Carter Administration doesn't see itself as having this educational role. It prefers the "onward and upward" approach — or, when necessary, silence.

For example, Samuel Huntington, an advisor to the National Security Council, recently asserted that "the history of this century supports the proposition that the fortunes of liberty in the world are closely and positively associated with the exercise of American power in the world" — something that a Vietnamese or Brazilian or South Korean might find hard to swallow.

President Carter prefers the we're-getting-better-each-day portrayal:

Our Declaration of Independence and the Bill of Rights expressed a lofty standard of liberty and equality. But, in practice, these rights were enjoyed by only a small segment of our people. . . . Some of these hopes were 200 years in being realized. But ultimately these dreams have prevailed.

We were promised more than this mild boosterism when Jimmy Carter was running for office. When campaigning in the fall of 1976, he was quick to mention our sorry history in Vietnam, our violations of the Cambodian frontier, CIA misconduct, and our attempt to oust Allende. As President, however, he finds that the risks of candor are many, and the rewards fewer.

In March of 1977, Brady Tyson, a member of the U.S. Delegation to the U.N. Human Rights Commission and a former missionary in Latin America, made the mistake of thinking that candor would carry over past the election. At a U.N. session on human rights violations in Chile, he shocked the

representatives of other countries when he commented:

Our delegation would be less than candid and untrue to ourselves and our people if we did not express our profound regrets for the role some government officials, agencies and private groups played in the subversion of the previous democratically elected Chilean government. . . .

This was just what one might have hoped to hear from a new Administration determined to be honest about our past. But the State Department immediately repudiated the Tyson statement, and he was made to back down — much as happened with Ambassador Andrew Young when he remarked that there were "political prisoners" in the United States.

Young went on to say that he was referring especially to people who were in prison "much more because they are poor than because they are bad." He, too, was made to recant.

It is easy, I suppose, to forget the skeletons in our closet when one is launched upon a crusade to redeem the world from tyranny. And it is tempting to try to convince the American people, once again, that they are noble, selfless, valiant, and unstinting in their defense of freedom. But we are not all those wonderful things — at least not exclusively. Rather, we are a mixture of idealism and self-aggrandizement — which isn't all that different from other people in the world. And our human rights record is mixed, to say the least.

I think it would be appropriate for the President to get off his white horse. I do not begrudge him his attempt to set a new tone in our foreign policy, nor am I entirely critical of his public attempt to make human rights an international priority. There are many things that I can applaud. But when President Carter allows — nay, leads — us into seeing the world through red, white and blue lenses, then human rights activists need to cry "foul." Not to speak out, and in the strongest terms, can only lead us to future violations of what we supposedly hold most dear. ■

The Case of Chile:

How Private Banks Foil Human Rights

Private U.S. banks have lent almost a billion dollars to prop up the Chilean economy at the very time U.S. government and multilateral loans to Chile were stopped because of continuing human rights violations. Chilean repression could continue only because the Chilean government did not need to depend upon U.S. government or international lending agencies for economic assistance.

Private multinational banks have, in effect, been financing the Pinochet dictatorship since 1976. While most governments have reduced or eliminated economic and military assistance to Chile because of the junta's human rights violations, the tremendous increase in private bank loans has made it possible for the junta to ignore international criticism and still have access to unlimited financial resources. Thus the lending operations of private multinational banks based in North America and Western Europe have directly circumvented the stated official policies of Chile's major creditors.

Most governments have reduced or eliminated assistance to Chile because of the junta's massive human rights violations. The Chilean junta has managed to ignore these pressures because private multinational banks were simultaneously funneling loans to Chile at unprecedented rates. These private bank loans have now far surpassed public assistance as Chile's major source of external financing. Utilizing new and previously unpublished data, we have demonstrated that the massive inflow of private bank loans since 1975 has made it possible for the junta to thumb its nose at the international human rights campaign and still receive massive inflows of resources from abroad.

In 1977, when "human rights" became the new watchword of U.S. foreign policy, more American dollars flowed to the Chilean government than ever before. There has been remarkably little discussion of the conflicts between the officially stated human rights policies of the U.S. government and the behavior of private U.S.-based corporations and banks. In June 1977, Pinochet rejected \$27.5 million in U.S. economic assistance which the State Department temporarily held up to obtain human rights concessions, because he was confident that private banks

would ultimately provide the loans.

- In 1976, when the U.S. Congress put a \$27.5 million ceiling on future assistance to Chile, private bank loans to Chile increased more than 500 percent over the previous year to \$520 million.

- Total private loans skyrocketed again to \$858 million in 1977.

- In 1978, borrowing from private foreign sources will reach nearly \$1 billion.

- U.S. private banks have provided \$927 million of the approximately \$1.5 billion of Chile's total private borrowing since 1973.

- In 1978, private creditors will account for over 90 percent of Chile's total borrowing.

Since the beginning of 1978, private multinational corporations, which have made few extensive direct investments in Chile since the coup, began to demonstrate renewed interest in Chilean investments. By far the largest investment in Chile since 1973 and certainly one of the largest in Chilean history, was Exxon's \$107 million purchase last January of the state owned La Disputada copper mines. This investment came on the heels of Goodyear Tire's decision to purchase CORFOINSA for \$36 million. The Exxon investment was significant not only because of the size of the transaction, but also because it may serve as an indication to other firms that the Chilean junta is now considered stable enough in financial circles to warrant large direct investments. Like the influx of private bank loans, increasing investments by multinational corporations will surely be exploited by the regime in its attempt to gain internal political legitimacy and diffuse international criticism of its human rights violations.

Until 1978, most multinational corporations which had projects approved by the Chilean government were still reluctant to commit funds. If a major foreign investment boom does come to Chile, it will likely be confined to the mining sector. Despite the fact that the government of Chile has done everything possible to attract foreign investment, including dropping out of the Andean Pact, the junta's policies of free trade virtually insure that a large part of

by Isabel Letelier & Michael Moffitt

Chile's domestic market will be supplied by imports rather than local investment, and consequently, unemployment will remain at record levels.

What has clearly changed in Chile is the business climate. During the first three years of its existence, the junta was largely unable to attract private loans or investments. Now, however, private banks have lent the government enormous sums of money, suppliers credits have soared and multinational corporations have begun to return. According to U.S. Commerce Department figures, rates of return on U.S. investments in Chile have recovered from the low levels of 1974 and 1975 and now are comparable to rates of return in other Latin American countries. Chile has also sacrificed the welfare of its people and health of its industrial structure in order to give top priority to establishing its credit worthiness in private capital markets.

The improvement in the climate for foreign investors, however, should not be confused with a return to the prosperity and freedom which Chileans once enjoyed. Some observers have asserted that the slight recovery in Gross Domestic Product which occurred in 1977 is a sign that the economy is recovering from the deflationary policies of 1975-76 and that the economic recovery will hasten a return to democratic rule. But the kinds of economic policies which are the hallmarks of the Pinochet regime in Chile can only lead to a more rigid polarization of Chilean society. A small group of firms and individuals are in control of Chile's entire productive apparatus and the junta is attempting to auction the rest of the economy to foreign corporations. A tiny minority can avail themselves in conspicuous luxury consumption while the majority struggles to maintain a standard of living fit for human beings. Moreover, these acute social conditions are not the result of any preordained natural order, but are directly related to the policies of the military junta. That is the kind of economic strategy which requires a continuing *de jure* or *de facto* state of seige to exist.

Clearly, in the case of Chile, there is a direct conflict between the freedom of private enterprise and the international efforts to restore the human rights to a country



PETER BARRY CHOWKA

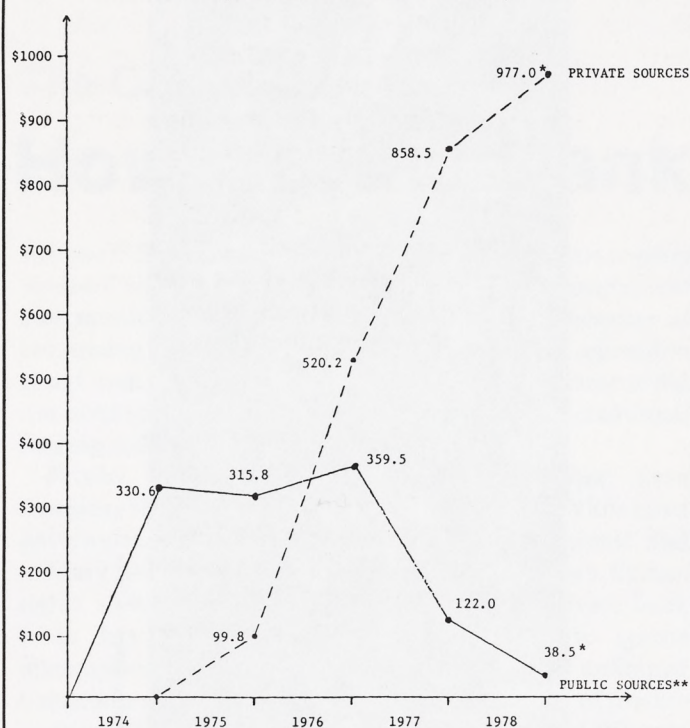
Michael Moffitt and Isabel Letelier at the grave of their murdered spouses.

In September 1976, the Washington, D.C. community was shocked by the assassination of Orlando Letelier, former Chilean ambassador to the United States, and a co-worker, Ronni Karpen Moffitt, when a bomb exploded in the car in which they were riding.

Ronni's husband, Michael, survived the explosion and has been working since with Letelier's widow, Isabel, to expose human rights violations in Chile.

Recently a U.S. Grand Jury indicted seven men in the murder case: three Chilean officials, including the former head of DINA, the Chilean secret police; and four right wing Cuban exiles. The indictment followed testimony by Michael Townley, who said that he had been hired as a DINA agent, assembled the bomb, and planted it under the car. Townley, an American, had lived in Chile since 1957 and has worked for the CIA.

Chile's Foreign Borrowing, 1974-1978
(in millions of U.S. dollars)



*Projected.

**Public Sources include only U.S. bilateral aid, multi-lateral development assistance, and drawings on the resources of the IMF. Does not include non-U.S. bilateral assistance.

which enjoyed them for so long. It is a fact that in mid-1976, at a time when the human rights movement was becoming most effective in reducing the flow of resources to the junta, private banks began to loan on a large scale to the Chilean government—which gave the junta a green light to go on violating human rights. Freed from international pressure, Pinochet has acted with impunity, attempting to solidify and enhance his rule. While exercising all of the traditional levers which governments and international organizations have used effectively to influence the human rights situation in Chile, it has become necessary to broaden and deepen worldwide awareness of the unseemly flow of private dollars to finance the Chilean dictatorship with the same vigor. ■

(The above article was excerpted with permission from "Human Rights, Economic Aid & Private Banks: The Case of Chile," in the Chile Committee for Human Rights Newsletter. The complete newsletter can be ordered for 50¢ from the Chile Committee for Human Rights, 1901 Q St. NW, Washington, D.C. 20009.)

Human Rights Update

Congress has refused to extend human rights provisions to the U.S. Export-Import Bank and is balking at applying them to the International Monetary Fund. The Genocide Convention still has not received Senate approval, and the Human Rights Covenants languish in Committee. The U.S. still sends substantial military aid to repressive governments.

But we can identify certain hopeful signs:

President Carter, Patricia Derian, Assistant Secretary of State for Human Rights and Humanitarian Affairs, and her staff continue to emphasize human rights. The State Department's human rights reports (a Congressional requirement), while inadequate in some degree, have highlighted this issue. The Carter Administration, in implementing the Harkin amendment on international financial institutions, has voted "no" on 11 loans and abstained on 21 loans to human rights violators which could not be justified as serving basic human needs.

Religious and other organizations are now mobilizing a major campaign in support of Senate approval of the UN Human Rights Covenants. These Covenants stress economic and social rights in addition to civil and political rights — a significant new dimension to the traditional concept of human rights.

Human Rights Day (Dec. 10) and Week (Dec. 10-17) will mark the 30th anniversary of the signing of the UN Declaration of Human Rights and will be the occasion for much public activity.

Senate and House approval of a bill to require judicial authorization of most government wiretaps is a significant step forward in protecting citizens' privacy.

— FCNL Washington Newsletter

Salute to Michigan

We are happy to welcome as readers of
THE WITNESS 1,000 individuals and
families from the Diocese of Michigan,
who are beginning a special six-month
subscription with this current issue.

The circle grows !!!

CREDITS

Cover and pp. 13, 19 Vicky Reeves; cartoon p. 8, Hereth/LNS; photo p. 11, Peter Barry Chowka; graphic p. 14, Gina Clement.

Continued from page 3

think of a land near at hand in which the identical rules of hospitality apply?

Jesus came early to taste the bitterness of insecurity that accompanies absence of wealth, position and influence. For he was only a few days old when he found himself a refugee, not only with "no place to lay his head" but no country he could claim as his own — compelled to flee in order to escape the violence of a mindless terrorism. Would Vietnam refugees, and Thai refugees, and Palestinian refugees, and Jewish refugees understand this?

He was part of a mobile society whose forefathers endured wilderness wanderings, and whose great-great-grandchildren relived a nomadic heritage by participating in vast shifts of populations that stretched family ties to the breaking point. Can we in the neighborhood in which we now live identify with this?

He came early, this Jesus, to recognize the inhumanity of ethnic and racial discrimination, a discrimination more powerful than the Temple ceremonial was powerful, more divisive than the religious law was inclusive. Later he dramatized this,

saying of a selfless minister on a violence-infested roadway, "And he was a Samaritan."

Reviewing a recent play, Walter Kerr wrote: "T.S. Eliot once said, 'I will show you fear in a handful of dust' — and he did it! In *A Delicate Balance* playwright Albee talks about it, sometimes wittingly, sometimes ruefully, sometimes truthfully. But showing might have been better." Apparently, that is what God thought also — not about fear, but about love. The prophets had spoken. And the angels had sung. But God acted! God acted in the person of a baby who could make sounds but not words; who could not even sing. But who had within himself the power to be . . . to show forth . . . to act . . . to live for others. And — to die for them as well.

In the Christmas baby God said, "You do not get peace and justice merely by talking about them. You get peace and justice by loving others more than you love yourself. Words are not enough." And that is the joyous trumpet with which St. John's Gospel opens, "In the beginning was action. That action was love. That action is God." Christmas is the deathless celebration of so great a gift. ■





A Parish Looks at Its Money

by Charles L. Ritchie, Jr.

Through the smoked air of the meeting room Shirley Johnson glanced over her shoulder at the clock. 9:48. "Vestry meetings should always end by 10 p.m.," she remembered being told. As a newcomer, only the second woman ever to be elected to the vestry, she knew she must not be responsible for prolonging the meeting.

Mr. Breakstone was winding up his lengthy answer about how the parish budget would be balanced. "... and so, you see, if we keep only the necessities of repairs and maintenance, on a very modest scale, and give our rector the 5% increase we all voted for, we will have to reduce our outreach program from \$1,800 to \$1,100. While I am reluctant to recommend such a reduction, I see no other recourse."

George Hennings spoke, stifling a yawn. "I move adoption of the budget as proposed." Somebody seconded, and it was quickly carried.

Shirley looked at the time again, but several persons had risen to put on their coats, and she could not see the clock. Her face flushed as she cleared her throat and rapped on the table. "Excuse me," she said loudly, "I know I am a new member of this vestry. I know you have just adopted a budget, and I didn't hear anyone say 'nay,' not even myself! But we just killed off the \$350 that helped support the new co-op that many of us are deeply involved in and very

hopeful about. I suspect we also have just reduced the day care center allotment. I'm sorry, I know it's late, but we really haven't discussed this enough."

"Shirley dear, if we don't have the money we can't very well do these things, can we? How would you propose we balance the budget?"

"Well, I have no solutions," Shirley replied. "I'm sure we all do the best we can in supporting the church, but surely we can't just let it *die*. I mean, next year we'll reduce it a little more and the year after we won't even be able to support ourselves, let alone any outreach. I mean, after all, the building and grounds already take about all we can raise beside the rector's salary."

Several people moved back, coats still on. Shirley saw the clock reading 10:15. "Oh, my God," she thought, "what a way to start on the vestry!"

"Look, Shirley, why don't you join us on the Budget Committee and you can bring up your recommendations about this at another meeting? It's past time for adjournment and we've already kept some people from — well, you know, it *is* the All-Stars game tonight. Thanks a lot, folks, and goodnight!"

Approximately one year later:

"Shirley, welcome to the Budget Committee meeting. I recall you had some observations at the Annual Budget Review meeting, and perhaps you can help solve some of the difficult problems we seem to have here at St. James! Once again we face a decline in attendance and therefore in income. Now, lady — and gentlemen, I have put together a tentative budget. I don't think it's too bad. We can make do

Charles L. Ritchie, Jr. is an investment banker who has been an active layman for many years, serving as a vestryman and as a deputy to General Conventions of the Episcopal Church.

for another year. The wall behind the sacristy needs to be repainted and we'll have to put a steel supporting brace on the steeple. Our endowments will just about take care of that. We can give the rector a 3% increase and I'm afraid we'll have to do without the luxury of our outreach program. Well, I don't mean 'luxury,' except in the sense that we cannot afford it at all."

Shirley blurted out, "Mr. Breakstone, we're dying faster than I thought. In fact, we're about to be dead!"

"Do you have some specific suggestions?"

"Take this city block, these bricks and mortar, and this petering-out, tired, scared congregation and give it a reason to live. This community has a need for space. We have some Sunday school rooms, the choir room, this room we meet in and the big kitchen. We have the small yard which could be a garden and a play area. And best of all we have a number of good people who need to live more usefully — who need to be needed, who I am sure would like to be involved. I mean, let's give the church, or at least open the church up, to the community! It could be a valuable resource for everyone, and everybody's life could be enriched."

"Oh, Shirley, interesting thoughts; you make it sound so simple. You know we have a charter and by-laws, and we operate under the laws and canons of the diocese as well as the national church. We can't do what you suggest. Besides, our endowment would be jeopardized. The terms under which the money was left to us in trust, are very clear: 'All of the funds must be used solely for the support of the congregation of the Church of St. James and nothing else.' Why, we could lose the endowment income entirely by following your suggestions."

"But why not?" asked Shirley, "Is it better to die with an endowment than to live without one?"

"Look, Shirley," Mr. Breakstone said, "There are all the people of this congregation for whom we are responsible. Take the Jephthams. They were married here 57 years ago; she was christened here and her brother and father and one son are buried here. There are many of them for whom we have the obligation to continue the *traditions*, and we have no right to make changes such as you suggest."

"But the Jephthams get to church only once a month, maybe. I mean, they moved from this community years ago; it's a long drive for them, and neither one, I gather, is able to drive their automobile. There are many of the congregation who have also moved from this neighborhood."

"Shirley, it was the Philstocks who built this church, and their family endowed it. They still come to church regularly. In fact, the new stained glass window is in memory of his old maiden aunt, who died last year. So you see, they are still active and deeply involved."

Shirley changed her tack. "I gather from the income statements that the offerings and pledges are down for the third year in a row, our costs are up because everything costs more. Where are we going without a change in direction, without a change in program?"

"Well, dear, I'm no seer — or should I say prophet? I wouldn't know. All we can do is what we perceive to be the work of the Lord in the vineyard in which we are placed. But we will certainly keep your observation in mind as we prayerfully put together our budget recommendations for the meeting next Monday night. Thank you so much for the honor of visiting with us, and goodnight, my dear."

"Oh," said Shirley, "I didn't realize I was just a guest tonight. I thought I was asked to *serve* on the Budget Committee."

"Well, perhaps there was a misunderstanding. We might clarify that on Monday night. See you then, eh?"

The following Monday night, vestry meeting:

"... and, oh yes, I should mention that Shirley was invited to attend the Budget Committee Meeting. I thought she would be here, of course. She had some rather unusual suggestions; the Budget Committee did not consider them practical or particularly pertinent. Well, gentlemen, I guess that completes your Budget Committee report."

"I move adoption of the budget for the coming year." There was a second.

"If there is no dissent, we'll consider the budget adopted unanimously." A moment later: "Oh Shirley, good evening."

"I'm sorry to be late. Mrs. MacIntyre's boiler exploded and we have been helping to get the children farmed out to neighbors. Mrs. MacIntyre had to be hospitalized. Father Whiteside, Mrs. Whiteside very kindly took one of the children into the rectory for the night."

"What a shame. Are they the MacIntyres whose boy was arrested for possession of drugs last month?"

"I don't know, really. Her husband died a year ago, and she works hard to make ends meet. She teaches at the public school across Pine Street and her youngest..."

Father Whiteside interrupted. "Ahem... Shirley, we have just adopted the budget for the next year. We're sorry you weren't here and we understand the delay. Mr. Breakstone said you might have some remarks. Would you care to say anything?"

"Well, I guess I was wondering if we could make better use of our church facilities and our church people, you know, get more involved in the community, help the community, and by doing so help ourselves, too."

After some discussion, Mr. Breakstone said "Shirley, you certainly have raised some interesting and complicated questions. If it is agreeable to everyone concerned I would like to ask you to serve on the Budget Committee for next year so that your ideas can be very carefully considered. Now if there is no further business I guess we can adjourn. If Father Whiteside would dismiss us..."

"Excuse me," said Shirley, "I'm afraid I don't want to serve on the Budget Committee. I don't think I can help very much. And I just heard the ambulance siren. It sounded like it stopped at the rectory. Mrs. MacIntyre's youngest child was pretty badly hurt in the explosion. I think I'd better go see if Mrs. Whiteside needs a hand." ■

WISE AS \$ERPENTS\$

by William A. Yon

Through most of its recent history the Episcopal Diocese of Alabama has had in its table of organization an agency responsible for representing the church's concern for the life of our society. It was called Christian Social Relations and had a nominal appropriation of \$2,000 or \$3,000 a year, usually unspent. On the other hand, through the hotly controversial years of the General Convention Special Program, this diocese did without exception meet its full quota of financial participation and in at least two years went beyond what was called a "Faith" contribution.

At the beginning of 1977 a new Department of Church and Society was formed with a budget of \$10,000 loosely designated for "responding to (society's) most urgent needs." We have had little difficulty finding individuals and organizations to which these funds could be allocated.

The Church and Society department has learned much during this year about what is being done and what remains undone in our society to "feed the hungry, clothe the naked, visit the prisoner." In speaking on behalf of this department, I will not be speaking about particular needs and priorities in our society. The variety, depth, and extent of these needs has been amply documented. My comments will focus on the readiness of this diocese to respond to such needs, and will make some suggestions about the nature of our response.

Our diocese has, perhaps more effectively than others, created and maintained an attitude among its members and parishes that money is a gift from God to be used by us as faithful stewards for the accomplishment of what God wants done in the world. If an average weekly contribution per communicant family of \$7.20 does not in absolute dollar figures look like anything to crow about, it must be noted that this figure in the Diocese of Alabama is 79% higher than the average for the whole Episcopal Church, and has for a

The Rev. William A. Yon served on the staff of the Diocese of Alabama from 1963 until 1973. He is currently rector of a Birmingham parish, engaged in private practice as an organization consultant, and serves as chairperson of the diocese's Department of Church and Society.

INNOCENT A\$ DOVES\$

number of years been the highest of any diocese in the church.

Intelligent and effective stewardship education throughout the diocese has emphasized not only the importance of individuals giving as God has given to them, but also has stressed parish and diocesan policies regarding "outside giving" which would be supportive of and congruent with this claim upon the individual. Parishes are encouraged to adopt as a goal the use of 50% of their income for meeting the needs of those outside the parish. The diocese in 1976 adopted as a working policy to increase its outside giving by 5% per year until a goal of 50% is reached. If we are faithful to that intention, more than \$1,000,000 in new money for outside purposes will be generated over the next five years.

IF we are faithful to that intention. The stumbling block which confronts the diocese is the same one that confronts the parish and the individual family as it weighs what it will spend on itself and what it will give away. The very strong tendency — I'll say the damn near irresistible tendency, rooted in our nature — is to decide *first* on what we want for ourselves, to label those wants as needs, to call them givens, to treat them as divinely mandated responsibilities — and then and only then to look at how much is left over to give away.

For example, Mr. Jones aspires to be a tither. But year before last he bought a new home. Last year he bought a new car. Next year his oldest child enrolls in college. There isn't 10% left over. Should he default on his mortgage? Let the bank take his car? Neglect his children's education? Obviously not. The sin of it is that he will go on year after year making new commitments which will ever preclude the fulfillment of his aspiration to become a tither. The pity of it is that he could have provided shelter and transportation and education for his family on 90% of his income if he had merely decided to do so; although admittedly not in precisely the same style.

I am laboring my point. Let me bring it home. The diocese will not succeed in fulfilling its intention to give away half its money as long as in its planning and decision-making

"Mr. Jones aspires to be a tither. But year before last he bought a new home. Last year he bought a new car. Next year his oldest child enrolls in college. There isn't 10% left over. The pity of it is that he could have provided shelter, transportation and education for his family on 90% of his income, if he had merely decided to do so, although admittedly not in precisely the same style."

processes it deal first with what it wants/needs/must have, and only then looks at what it has left to give away. It simply won't happen. The alternative is to set aside the outside money at the start, off the top, the "first fruits of the harvest." No generalized exhortations will actualize that alternative. It must be carefully built in to every step of the budgeting process where commitments are made that limit future options.

Suppose, then, that this diocese is able through clear intentionality and careful planning to make available \$1,000,000 new dollars in the next five years to address basic human need. What do we do? Where do we start? What style of response would be appropriate to the social condition we are addressing and congruent with the peculiar mandate we have as followers of Jesus?

I will suggest two styles of response, paradoxically related to each other on the order of our instruction to be on the one hand as *"innocent as doves"* and on the other to be *"wise as serpents."*

The first style that would seem to be an appropriate form of church response is that of gap-filler, utility infielder, or to use a somewhat more respectable image, servant.

As the Department of Church and Society set out to use its little \$10,000 last year, we asked ourselves and others

simply, "what needs doing?" Some of the human service agencies which we approached seemed a bit disconcerted by the ingenuousness of the question. Accustomed to dealing with the predetermined guidelines, stipulations, conditions, limitations, criteria, and provisos of other grantors, the more successful agencies have developed the art of fitting their needs to the grantors' criteria. But we were simply asking, "Now, really, tell us what it is you think you need to do the job you want to be doing here?"

Many of them had gaps, unmet needs that fell through the cracks of other grantors' criteria. So we wound up buying a kitchen table for a half-way house for ex-offenders which received public funds for staff, house, and food, but not for anything on which to slice the onions. We provided a half-time salary for a driver and gas money to operate a van to transport old folks. The cost of the van had been funded, but nothing allocated to operate it. And so on.

This is the *innocent as doves* style, a servant church going and asking "what needs doing?" and offering its support and encouragement with the least red tape possible. I find it offensive to contemplate the possibility that as the church mounts a major new thrust to meet human need its means of doing so will become as controlling, as demeaning, as mechanistic, as bureaucratized as most such efforts already are. The only worse thing that I can imagine is for us to do nothing in order to avoid that possibility.

Innocent as doves, but also and paradoxically, *wise as serpents*. Several years ago, when I was standing on a corner waiting for the light to change, I recognized a familiar figure next to me. Not thinking that he would recognize me in spite of the fact that we are both Episcopalians, I stuck out my hand and said, "Afternoon, Mayor Siebels. I'm Bill Yon." After he returned my greeting, as the light changed to amber, I asked "How are things going?" What does one expect from such a question more than "Pretty good. How about you?" That was not his response. Frowning and shaking his head as we started across the street, he said, "I don't know. You try to do one thing and that gets half the people mad at you, and you try to do something else and that gets the other half mad. Well, I'll tell you one thing," he continued, "when I ran for mayor I said I was going to be mayor of all the people and that's what I'm trying to do."

What does one say to a man so obviously discouraged? "Well, Mayor Siebels, I think you're doing a good job. Hang in there!"

A shattering event, that little 90-second encounter. Things were not the way I thought. "The Power Elite" I had read about. The power structure, I had read about. I had thought this meant there was a little group of men (yes, *men*) who run

things, who get together for lunch once a week or once a month and decide how things are going to be and then that's the way they are. All the rest of us just have to live with what they dish out.

Well, now, I knew that it was probably more important to be rich than to be mayor, but I would certainly have thought that if there is any such thing as a "power elite" the mayor would at least be on the list. But he seemed to be feeling just as impotent as I, just as trapped by conflicting forces and pressures, just as fated to cope with the way things are, just as powerless to shape them the way they ought to be.

• Reflection No. 1: If the mayor is not as powerful as I thought he was, maybe I'm not as powerless as I had thought I was.

• Reflection No. 2: Maybe, in a sprawling, complex urban setting, power is diffuse, rather than concentrated. No one can make happen what he wants to make happen on his own, but only as he forms effective alliances, hooking his little piece of power together with some others. Only later did I hear Alinsky's biting dictum, "*The isolated individual is social dust.*"

I got together with some friends and we made a list of all the groups and organizations that were attempting in isolation, to "do good" for the city. Without much effort we convened an exciting evening meeting of some 60 persons representing over 30 of these organizations, including everything from the "foul-mouthed" Vista workers to the "refined" Junior Leaguers. It did neither of them any harm to be in the same room with the other. It was a good first step toward building a coalition, to combine the power of these otherwise relatively powerless agencies.

But that's the end of the story. That was the first and last meeting.

The hypothesis was sound. In their isolation these groups were ready and willing — even eager — to make common cause with each other to strengthen their impact on some of the intractable problems of our society. But it wasn't *my* job to organize that coalition and it wasn't anybody else's job either.

So, finally to my point. If this new response of the church to the urban crisis which we are contemplating is not only to be innocent, but also to be wise, it *must* include a clear commitment to invest staff resources and organizational support to the creation and maintenance of power coalitions. The cost of such a commitment is considerable. We give up unilateral control of some of our resources. The promise is also considerable. It is the promise of making a significant impact on those conditions in our society which rob Jesus' special friends of their humanity.

Dear Folks

by Abbie Jane Wells

From Abbie Jane Wells of Juneau, Alaska, come these reflections of what Mary might have said in a pre-Holy Days letter from Egypt, after "Bethlehem plus 2 years and 9 months."

Dear Folks,

It is quite an experience to be an Israelite living among the Egyptians — trying to explain to the Boy about the history that informs our religious celebrations — trying to explain to him why the Egyptians don't do like we do — and at almost 3 years of age he can sure ask questions!

Trying to explain Passover will be worse next year than it was last, for he will ask more questions. How tell him so that he doesn't throw it up to the children he plays with, so he doesn't call them names because of what their ancestors did to our ancestors? Joseph and I talk long and hard about how to do it so as not to downgrade the people we live amongst and their children the Boy plays with.

I don't think I ever wrote in any of my letters about what a load off our shoulders it is no longer to have those priceless gifts the boy received. As I told you before, Joseph had to sell them in

order for us to have something to live on until Joseph found some work. And what a relief it was no longer to have to worry about the gold, frankincense and myrrh being stolen as we did on the trip to Egypt when there was no way to keep them safe from robbers. The thing that saved us no doubt was the fact that we looked too poor to have anything of value. Instead, everybody felt sorry for us and fed us instead of trying to rob us. We would never have made it if it hadn't been for the people who shared what meager food they had with us.

I have been busy making cloth on the loom that Joseph finally made for me. So now we all have some clothes that aren't one patch on top of another. It took Joseph a long time to scrounge enough wood for the loom — wood is so expensive we couldn't buy any. And this place needed so much done to it to make it halfway comfortable.

We were lucky to find this abandoned stable. Many people, especially

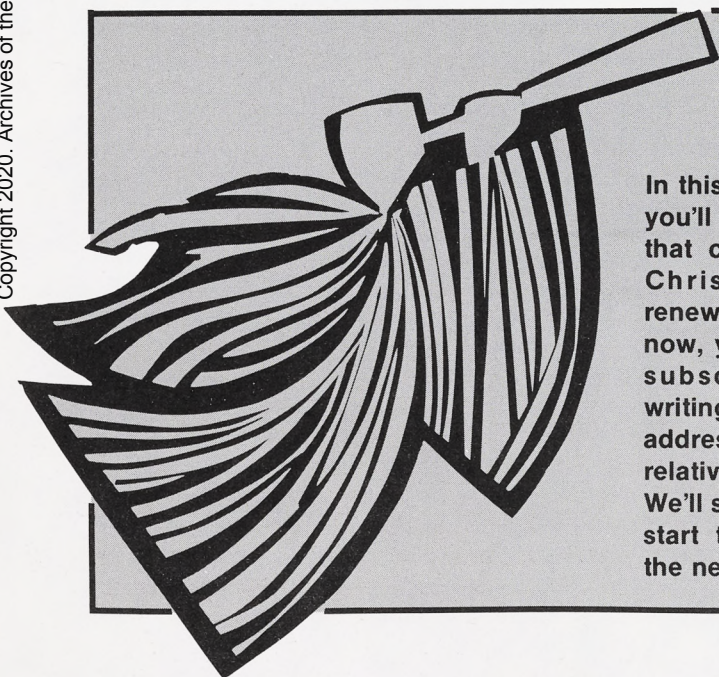
refugees like us, are having to live in caves. There really isn't enough for the Egyptian poor and hungry, much less us.

Joseph and I are getting ready for the Holy Days, which means more questions from the people we live amongst — and from the Boy. And we will try to answer the questions and do our religious celebrations so as not to carry on the ancestral quarrels. It really is an ongoing challenge to try to keep the faith as we would in Israel. We do miss having family and religious community to worship with, and rabbis handy to give us answers when we are not sure what to do, to tell us how to answer the Boy's constant questions. We try our best to explain that "When in Egypt, do what the Egyptians do" isn't the right policy for us.

We look forward to the day when we can return and see you all.

Till then, I send our love,

Mary



Of Gifts, and Special Friends . . .

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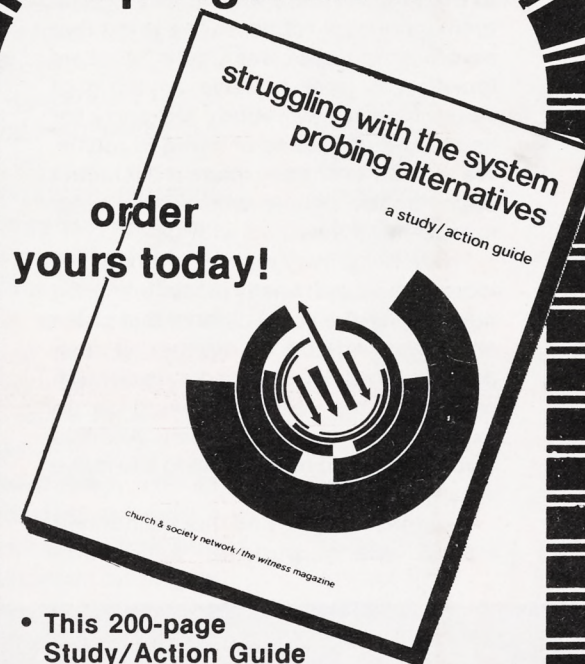
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