

THE WITNESS

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Breaking Through Stress Points

Sheila Collins
Wm. Stringfellow
Lawrence Carter
'Carolyn Taylor'



View Is Editor's Only

Re Helen Seager's article "Irresponsible Abortion" (May WITNESS) which is a response to an editorial, "The Episcopal Church and Abortion" in the March 4 issue of *The Living Church*:

Because editorials in *The Living Church* are generally unsigned, Ms. Seager naturally assumes that the editorial in question represents the opinion of *The Living Church's* "editorial writers" or "editors." In fact, the editorial expresses the views of the editor (The Rev. H. Boone Porter) only. This opinion is not necessarily held by other members of the editorial staff.

Eleanor S. Wainwright, Assistant Editor
The Living Church
Milwaukee, Wisc.

Arms and the Women

I doubt that many of my views would get warm responses from your readers — maybe a few, but not more than a few. In reading Margaret Arms' article on her feelings of frustration, despair, disappointment and the like at her situation in Colorado, I was struck by the deep kinship I felt for her as I move from the opposite direction. Indeed (in the same issue), when I read William Stringfellow's words: "There is a point at which a Christian is called upon to dust his or her feet and move on, and I wondered . . . whether I had yet arrived at that place" — I couldn't believe my eyes. These had been my precise words at my nadir, which occurred about two years ago. I, too, was confronted with the fact

of my deep, irrational love affair with the Episcopal Church and the fact that she could probably become the whore of Babylon, and I would still be loathe to stone her.

But back to Ms Arms. For me, too, it was the Eucharist that sustained my soul when I felt myself teetering on the brink. I, too, have known the anguish and the loneliness of having deeply and honestly held convictions gratuitously psychoanalyzed or simply ignored. Finally, I, too, have been sustained by what I can only describe as a revelation: that the church of Jesus Christ is a divinely-ordained reality over and above whatever time or season in which it may find itself, and that the secular overlays that may be thrust upon it do not, in the long run, threaten it. (I almost shudder at the thought of submitting that last clause to your readers!)

Anyway, here I am, in there pitching alongside Ms. Arms. As convinced of the wrongness of women's ordination as she is of the rightness, I have to smile at the delicious thought that it just might be people like her and me, who have tasted the cup of despair from different sides and have found that we are not abandoned and not schismatics, through whom God may work to save the church. The possibilities of synthesis are a little frightening.

The Rev. James M. Abernathy
Freeport, Texas

Kansas Church Nearer

I thank you for the May issue of THE WITNESS. As a deputy to General Convention, I look forward to your viewpoint.

In the May issue there is an article by Margaret F. Arms. I enjoyed the article and felt her pain and anguish as a woman. There is some historical inaccuracy. It states "on Jan. 25, 1860" a committee tried to find a place to worship, "(The nearest church was 700 miles away in Topeka.)" On that date, there were established Episcopal Churches, with buildings in Manhattan, Ft. Riley, and Junction City, Kansas. All three of those parishes are west of

Topeka and therefore closer to Denver. The buildings at Ft. Riley and Junction City are still in use, while Manhattan has a building built in 1867. The church at Ft. Riley was turned over to the Roman Catholics for their use in 1936. That leaves the Church of the Covenant, built in 1859 as one of the oldest churches in this area.

The Rev. James S. Massie, Jr.
Junction City, Kansas

Ms. Arms Replies

My source for the statement that "the nearest church was 700 miles away in Topeka" is Allen Breck, *The Episcopal Church in Colorado 1860-1963*, Big Mountain Press, 1963, p. 8:

Various proposals were made for the name of the new congregation. The most appealing was that of William H. Moore who suggested 'St. John's in the Wilderness' because the mission was seven hundred miles from the nearest church, "that of the Rev. C. M. Calloway, at Topeka, Kansas Territory."

(Breck's source was an account of the meeting by the Rev. John H. Kehler which appeared in the *Church Journal*, 1860.)

The persons attending that meeting must have been unaware of the churches which the Rev. James Massie, Jr. mentions. I will forward a copy of his letter to Allen Breck for his information.

I am deeply touched by the Rev. James Abernathy's letter, although I can see that in many ways we do come from opposite directions! I think it was Nelle Morton who wrote something to the effect that when we can hear each other's stories and feel each other's pain, then healing can begin. If my article helped with that process, I am glad.

Margaret F. Arms
Lakewood, Colorado

Why No Procession?

In the light of the current series in THE WITNESS by William Stringfellow

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THE WITNESS

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Acting Out of Character

Robert L. DeWitt

"All the world's a stage . . ." But who authors the play? Shakespeare, in the quote, was referring to the basic human creation, the successive stages in human aging. We rightly ascribe that creation to the Creator. But how people play out those successive ages and stages of their lives is a different drama. This is where the tragic inter-play of individuals and groups and races and classes and sexes of people are enacted. This is the drama of human society, for which not the Creator but society itself is responsible. And many people across the world are increasingly discontent with the roles they have been assigned.

It is as though a stage play was suddenly interrupted by an actor in a tragic role stepping out of character, coming down stage, and saying to the playwright, "This is a bad play and you are a poor writer". The play struggles on, but the ad-libbing accelerates, and the flow of the drama is lost.

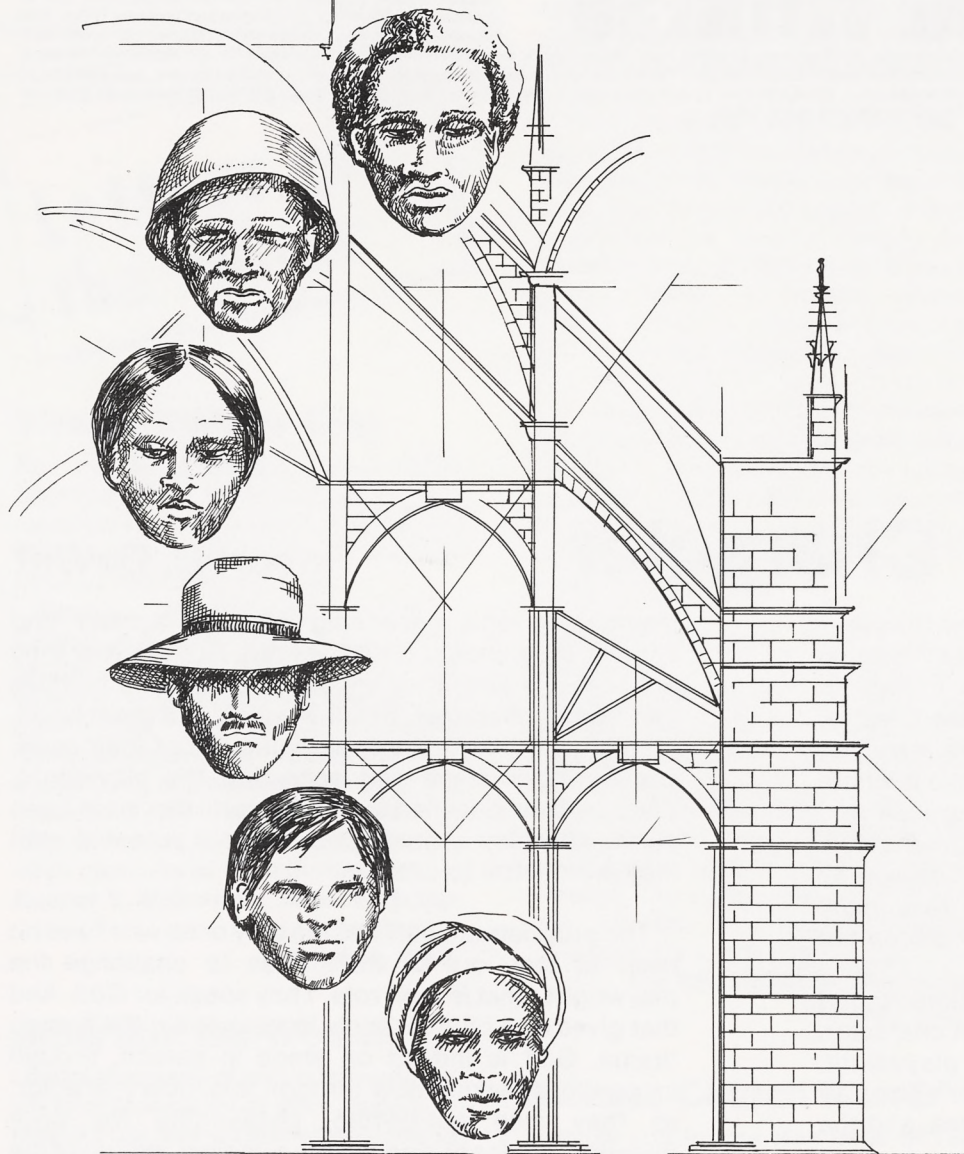
This is what happens, for example, when a group of workers go on strike. They seek a different role, want their lines re-written. If the strike is successful, the "play" will not go on until lines are re-written, roles recast, and a better production results. For example, the United Farm Workers are today confronting the author in the play in which they find themselves so mis-cast, with such poor lines. The drama of harvesting farm produce for human nourishment has a great theme, but it is a poor play in its present run in the Imperial, Salinas and San Joaquin Valleys.

Clergy-wives and the world sisterhood of women is another example. Co-workers with men in the

maintaining and enhancing of both society and church, they should be co-starred. But the way they are cast, the lines they are given belies and belittles that heroic character. Small wonder, and great boon, that they are increasingly stepping out of their roles, coming down-stage and accosting the playwright. They are over-qualified for the bit-parts they have been given. The play cannot reach its epic potential until they are central to casting.

The prophets are perhaps the only ones who have no need to step out of their roles to challenge the playwright. That is their role. They speak for God. And that gives us a clue to God's investment in the human drama. God is indeed on stage in person, though incognito, speaking now through this, now that actor, as they step out-of-role, challenging the poor directing, the inept staging, the mindless writing of the play. Prompting various members of the cast, God is saying: "You have bungled my play. You have made of it a human tragedy, whereas I intended it as the Divine Comedy, the creative drama of the God of justice and mercy co-authoring with the people of God".

In this issue of THE WITNESS we hear striking instances of people doffing their assigned roles and speaking out critically on their own behalf — clergy wives, farm workers, a lay theologian. And against that backdrop, Sheila Collins provides an analysis that helps us move beyond anger and break through some of the "chains that bind — racism, sexism, classism" — and to rewrite the drama of our times. ■



Chains That Bind: Racism, Sexism, Classism

by Sheila Collins

It is becoming clear in the United States that in spite of the proliferation of therapies and religious cults attempting to create more powerful individuals, there is a growing feeling of powerlessness among the people which is acted out in various forms of sublimated or overt rage: Right wing movements which create scapegoats out of feminists or gay people; taxpayers' revolts which punish even those who vote for the cuts; increasing racism, crime, domestic violence, mental breakdowns, ulcers and heart attacks. This powerlessness can only be addressed by attention to the socio/economic/political conditions for such behavior.

Those who have been active in working to transform the structures of oppression known as racism, sexism, class exploitation and imperialism have long been divided over how to define the source of the problem and therefore over where to place energy in trying to change it. Is the major contradiction the sexual division between men and women, as some radical feminists assert; is it white supremacy, as some black nationalists would insist; is class exploitation or capitalism the answer, as Marxists would argue; or is it a matter of the inherent sinfulness of selfishness of humankind, as most Christians would assert?

I would like to offer a way of looking at the problem of injustice — whether it be

Sheila Collins is with the National Division of the Board of Global Missions of the United Methodist Church. The above article is a result of her work with the Theology in the Americas project, "Women, Work, and the Economy."

sexual, racial, economic or nationalist injustice, by examining the relationship between the three institutions or social organizing principles which dominate all of our lives. In complex concert, they shape our consciousness of the world — that is, whom we identify with, how we feel about ourselves, where we plug into systems of injustice, what our life possibilities are. These three institutions are patriarchy, Western Christianity, and capitalism.

First, some definitions:

By patriarchy, I refer to a term which arose to explain the apparent dominance in terms of status and power of older men within certain kinship systems. Though feminists have extended the meaning to include the whole pattern of superior/subordinate relations between men and women, I will be using the word as denoting a social system in which the status of women is defined primarily as ward of their husbands, fathers, or brothers.

Western Christianity is that institution which emerged with the Constantinian accommodation. It is the ideological glue which held the Roman Empire together and has continued to serve the interests of the ruling powers in every era by claiming to be able to explain why things are as they are. It is to be distinguished from the primitive Christian community whose heritage is recorded in the books of the Bible.

Capitalism defines a set of economic relationships, that is, it specifies the relationship between those who produce the goods and services needed to make a society function and those who own the resources and tools needed to produce the goods and services. In capitalist societies the relationship between producers, or workers, and owners is one of antagonism — the owners having the power to manage and buy the labor power of the workers. Though there has been a persistent myth that we are free to choose how and where we shall live in this country, the reality is that at least 96% of the people must sell their labor power to multinational corporations, small businesses or the government in

"When we put Christ's words about family together with his denunciations of wealth and power and his promise that the meek shall inherit the earth, we have a powerful revolutionary force that shakes the foundations not only of civil and religious power, but also the psychic foundations upon which our identities are built. No wonder he was killed!"

order to survive. The differential ability we have to sell that labor power and to get a good price for it conditions where we live, how long we will live, how we will feel about ourselves, and how we will relate to others. Because of the necessity to sell our labor power in exchange for economic survival, capitalism's economic relations have tended to subsume all other relationships beneath them. Custom, tradition, family ties, religious belief have only existed so long as they reinforce or, at least, present no threat to the relations between capital and workers.

First, let's examine the patriarchal model a bit more closely. Anthropologists differ as to when the patriarchal family arose, but most tie it to the rise of the state as a political entity in Western culture, to the development of class societies and to the institution of slavery. The state arose as a result of conquest and slavery breaking up the extended kinship group which had been the locus of both productive and reproductive activities. With the separation out and specialization of certain productive activities from the reproductive unit, along with the separation of land from its collective ownership, came the differential valuing of male and female roles. Surplus wealth and power became associated

with the males. Females, tied to the land through child-bearing and the reproduction of daily life became, like the land, the property of men. Thus, class divisions, slavery, private property, hierarchy, and the differential valuing of gender roles all appear to be linked together in an historically specific dynamic.

What did the patriarchal family model mean for different members of the family? Prior to the rise of capitalism in the latter half of the 18th century, economic activity took place primarily in and through the family unit with roles differentiated by age and gender. Within the family, the father had legal and symbolic or ideological authority over all other family members. Wives were legally dependent on their husbands. Their role was to maintain the reproduction of family life and to oversee the development of the younger generation, always, however, within the parameters set by the patriarch or family head. Boys grew up knowing that they would automatically inherit the patrimony when they came of age, the eldest, of course, standing to inherit more than the others. Daughters held lowest rank and were expected to serve the interests of their fathers and brothers until their identity was transferred from their father to that of another patriarch into whose home and family they would move.

This is basically the family model of biblical times, and its extension through history can be glimpsed in the marriage ceremony in which the father "gives the bride away," in laws which prohibit a widower from getting his wife's social security, and in the acceptance by women of their father's and husband's surnames.

Capitalism inherited this basic family pattern and the internal psychic conditioning which it produces. Fortunately, the patriarchal family model suited nicely certain internal dynamics of the economic system.

Let's take a look at how the patriarchal family meets these needs. The archetypical family consisted of four roles divided along age and gender lines. We will call these roles: Daughter,

Wife, Brother, Father. I have used these particular terms instead of the usual couplings: brother/sister; husband/wife to indicate the inequality which exists in terms of power, status and rewards between members of the same generation. In the patriarchal family a girl was not expected to have the same access to power, privilege and responsibility as her brother. In the event that she was the eldest child, the patrimony would skip her entirely to be inherited by a younger brother. Likewise, a wife did not share equal power, privileges and status with her husband. Indeed, whatever status and power she had was vicarious, through participation in her husband's title and property. This legacy continues in the discrimination against women in credit and housing and in the degradation with which welfare mothers are treated who are, in essence, wives without husbands to give them identity or status — hence, non-persons.

We are socialized into these roles through the family, taught to measure our life options, to relate to each other as younger and older males and females on the basis of differing life expectations and values.

Capitalism takes people who have internalized these roles and moves them into the workforce, out of the workforce and around inside it according to established patriarchal family role patterns. Whereas individual family units had been the locus of economic activity before the rise of capitalism, capitalism removes economic production from the home, turning the entire economy into a patriarchal family. The Father, in whose name and title all property and status resides, now becomes the class of ruling men who own and manage the resources and tools upon which all productivity is based. Those who reproduce, discipline and maintain the workforce under the Father's rule — that is, the state and voluntary sectors are to the capitalists as Wife to Father. The patrimony, which had formerly been passed on from father to eldest son is now, under capitalism, transformed into access to the top of the hierarchy — access which is no longer

inherited but must be competed for by the younger generation of men — by all those primarily white men who are employed in heavy industry, small business and management and who still dream of making it to the top of their particular ladder.

The illusion of access to the Father's prerogative produces a great deal of false consciousness in white males — prevents them from recognizing that objectively they may have more in common with the Daughters than with the Fathers they are seeking to emulate.

The Daughters are all those whose unpaid, underpaid or unrecognized labor serves the interests of the societal Fathers or is used to promote the Brothers' aspirations to the Father's role. Here we include all those — primarily housewives and minorities with jobs as farmworkers, maintenance workers, waitresses, Kelly Girls, etc., whose essential contribution to the economy is either unrecognized or is seen as marginal and therefore is characterized by insecurity, low wages, little status and few if any benefits.

In looking at the political economy of the family, or the familial organization of the economy, we must mention one more role or category of importance to the total picture, a role which is generally not seen as one at all because it remains outside the family constellation entirely — that is the role of the alien, the slave.

The distinction between slaves and women in ancient times was probably one of degree, both being relegated to the private recesses of the household and to the realm of necessity where violence and coercion were justified as the means of liberating men from such necessity. But such super-exploitation did not stop with the ending of slavery.

Precapitalist forms of production utilizing labor relations similar to slavery have always existed within the heart of capitalism. One thinks of the relations which characterize the life of the farmworker family or of the domestic worker.

While there is an important historical and psychic connection between the roles of Slave and Daughter within the dominant ideological family model, there is also an important distinction which must be taken into account.

Unlike the role of Daughter in the patriarchal family, the role of Slave was a static one, admitting of no change in status or power. Growing up within the family, the Daughter could at least look forward to being a Wife which, if this did not give her ultimate status or power, set her over others, namely the younger generation and slaves. Though in the American system of slavery subtle class distinctions arose as between house slaves and field hands, there was nevertheless the knowledge — even among the household servants — that one was outside the family entirely. Even the child of a master and his slave could claim no place at the family table.

Therein lies the terrible dilemma for white women, for in societies built upon a foundation of exploited and alienated labor, there is no way some women can achieve a measure of status and power without stepping on the backs of other women. So long as the realm of necessity is not recognized as the essential foundation of the social good, we will continue to have progress for some at the expense of the many.

Each new group to enter capitalist society from the outside such as the waves of immigrants which flooded into the United States follows the passage of the Slave, but racism and imperialism function to keep the Slave role from being entirely absorbed by the Family model. As the Family extends beyond the single nation-state to embrace the world, we see in the international division of labor the extension, or perhaps the reinstitution, of the static category of slavery to all those people — some in the United States but most in the Third World — who are increasingly

locked into a perpetual cycle of poverty and exploitable labor. Indeed, it does not take too much imagination to see in the dormitories erected by multinational corporations for young, female electronics workers in Southeast Asia the outlines of the old slave quarters of the southern plantation.

Socialized through the family into specific familial roles based on gender and age — roles which become the psychic baggage that we carry around with us for the rest of our lives — we are moved into and out of the economy on the basis of generalizations about the functions of these roles. As they operate in the workplace (including the workplace that is the church, the parochial school or the convent), each of these roles — Daughter, Wife, Brother, Father — can be distinguished by its relation to indices such as job security, the amount and kind of space which is allocated to the workers, the relationship to others in the workplace, the amount of control one has over the work process and what is produced, the expectation or lack of it for upward mobility, and the differential rewards, status and power that are given to each.

Reactionary trends such as the Bakke decision and Weber case, racism among the white working class, the tax revolt movement and the backlash against feminism and homosexuality gather converts as the promise of access to the patrimony diminishes for more and more white Brothers. Fearful of dropping back into the feminized role of Daughter, and sensing the push from below as women and minorities crowded together in the Daughter roles seek to become Brothers, the white male, working-and-lower-middle classes are structurally conditioned for racism and sexism. Moreover, working

and middle class women, knowing subconsciously that there is no secure place for them in the economy, may revolt against a women's liberation movement that they fear may strip them of their lifeline of security. In all of this are the ingredients for fascism if the situation becomes desperate enough.

It is not enough to treat racism, sexism or class antagonisms as separable problems or as causes in themselves. They are inevitable products of a family pattern which, if functional for civilization in previous eras (and this is questionable) is no longer so today. As incorporated by an economic system based on inequality and exploitation, the combination of patriarchy and capitalism will destroy human civilization if it is not stopped.

Though originating as a revolt against the hierarchical sex, class and national divisions of ancient society, Western Christianity has served primarily to rationalize, through reference to cosmic authority and weekly infusions of lessons in obedience and passivity, the patriarchal superstructures of feudalism, mercantile capitalism and advanced monopoly capitalism and to reconcile the contradictions of the system in times of crisis. Thus, in times of recession and depression, we find a rise in the proliferation of authoritarian forms of Christianity, evangelical movements, and the like.

Since the time of Constantine, if not of Paul, the Christian Church has played the role of the dutiful Wife to the Fathers of every era. Through an ideology of male dominance and female submission, a disrespect for the realm of biology and necessity, a polity based on hierarchy, and a language which equates the deity with the civic and religious power brokers, the church (with some exceptions) serves the interests of patriarchal authority, socializing and disciplining its flock to fit into the unequal gender and age-based roles of industrial capitalism.

The notion of apostolic succession — a notion which Jesus — who gathered his ministers from fishing boats, from rural hillsides and from city streets — would have been horrified at, is the old rite of

primogeniture writ large. The Father's place can only be inherited by the male heirs. Those who challenge this assumption threaten the very foundations of our psychic conditioning from infancy onward. If the Brothers are to move over to allow the Daughters a crack at the Father's role in a system in which there are few Father roles, the threat may be more than the Brothers can bear. This is so because all those clergymen (the Brothers in our family) and their religious Fathers (cardinals, bishops and the Pope) serve within a larger system of Wives to the real Fathers — that class of financiers who really run the world. The subconscious knowledge that their function vis-a-vis the secular world is really a feminine one — and that in the world of production, distribution and armaments they are virtually powerless — makes the male clergy ever more jealous of their male prerogatives and ever more threatened by those who would expose that role for the sublimation that it is. The common ecclesiastical practice of having the clergy's parsonage, manse or rectory provided and furnished for him by the church — and the attitudes on the part of the clergy and parish trustees which are engendered by this relationship — reflect the dependent, feminized role which the clergy have been assigned.

By continuing to play the roles of Daughter and Wife both in the church and secular world, women have helped to perpetuate this unholy alliance between Brothers and Fathers. Within the church, nuns and laywomen have served as Wives to their religious Fathers and Brothers, carrying out the unrecognized, unrewarded work of nurturing, maintaining and socializing the younger generation according to the

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"And to the angel of the church at Laodicea write: 'The words of the Amen, the faithful and true witness, the beginning of God's creation.

" 'I know your works; you are neither cold nor hot. Would that you were cold or hot! So, because you are lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spew you out of my mouth. For you say, I am rich, I have prospered, and I need nothing; not knowing that you are wretched, pitiable, poor, blind and naked.' "

The Revelation to John 3:14-17

Has God Abandoned

In the most sombre terms, the question confronting the Episcopal General Convention in 1979 is — simply and starkly put — *Has God abandoned the Episcopal Church?*

That is the theological agenda for Denver.

I do not have great expectations that this will be recognized, if only because General Conventions in the recent past, say, since Seattle, have been, on the whole theologically confused and inarticulate. The House of Deputies is perhaps too numerous and too busied in the legislative process and, anyway, tends to defer to the other House in matters deemed theological. Yet the House of Bishops, as transcripts of their deliberations would document, is composed of theological dilettantes — allowing for a few distinguished exceptions — who indulge pompous ritual language in place of theological discourse. In any case, the ethos of a General Convention in both Houses is so politically inverted that it is difficult for straightforward theological issues to gain recognition and, thence, to be addressed lucidly. At the same time, theological questions are characteristically incarnated in other agenda items so that they are dealt with, if somewhat inadvertently or unintentionally. I suppose that is the way this question of whether God has abandoned the Episcopal Church is likely to be answered at Denver. It is the issue which haunts this church now.

The contingency of God's abandonment of the Episcopal Church is implicit in every matter to be deliberated at Denver, as it has been in the comments on the state of the church which have already been published in this series in THE WITNESS. That is, perhaps, most obvious in considering the scope of the institutional crisis which the Episcopal Church shares with so many other institutions in American society

the Episcopal Church?

by William Stringfellow

and, indeed, in Western culture. It is accompanied by a preoccupation with mere institutional maintenance and survival, with a widespread demoralization of the church's constituency, and the emergence of a sort of anti-leadership in the church's management prone to lawlessness and capriciousness, unaccountable to people and intolerant of dissent or other nonconformity, diluted in moral authority, disoriented about priorities, bereft of aim beyond embellishment of the ecclesiastical fabric, lost in witness.

In the attrition of such malaise, it is too simplistic to heap the blame for all that seems wrong upon the incumbent managers or putative leaders of the institution — just as, lately, has become the case with the regime of President Carter. It is too easy to conclude that the problem is bad leadership. I do not retract a statement I made at the Minneapolis General Convention that, in the Episcopal Church at this time, the problem is not that the church does not have good leadership but that it has *no* leadership. The church's nominal leadership — much like that of the nation — suffers incapacity and dysfunction, is itself victimized by the broader and exceedingly more complex institutional crisis, rather than being free and capable of transcending it. An implication here is that a mere change in the church's nominal leadership — as much as that has become timely — in itself will not resolve the Episcopal Church crisis.

That is how I come to the question of abandonment. To put it more sharply: Is the present apostacy of the Episcopal Church such that it can be discerned that God has abandoned this church?

If the question sounds strange to our ears, it is

because American Christendom is so complacent concerning the conduct of the Word of God. We suppose that God is indefinitely patient. And we construe this as a license for infidelity to the Word of God. And, then, we succumb to the temptation so to identify the church with God that we act as if the church is God. *That* idolatry of the church is the most incongruous and gruesome form of apostacy.

No doubt God is quite patient, but there is no Scriptural basis for the notion that God's patience is inexhaustible. On the contrary, as soon as the office of God in judgment is affirmed, it has been acknowledged that the patience of God is not interminable. And so in the biblical witness there is emphatic mention of the anger of God, the wrath of God, the vindication of God, even the vengeance of God.

More than that, the very event of Jesus Christ in history discloses the impatience of God with the infidelity of Israel. God does not forswear initiative in common history merely because of the apostacy of the ecclesiastical establishment which professes God's name. And, after Pentecost, after the new Israel had been constituted and dispersed into the world, the New Testament literature is insistent in its warnings to the new congregations concerning the impatience of the Word of God as they become tempted to vainglory, idolatry and other dissipations.

We are, today, in the Episcopal Church in the United States, privy to those same admonitions and we are vulnerable to that same impatience of God which occasions God's ultimate abandonment of a pretentious church. ■

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



A clergywife who wrote anonymously in a recent issue about the pain and suppression she felt in her role describes the sympathetic response she received from WITNESS readers.

On Liberating the Clergywife

by 'Carolyn Taylor'

When I wrote to THE WITNESS seeking a support system as a clergywife, I was almost crippled by the fear that the letter would be rejected as having come from the "lunatic fringe." (See March issue, Letters to the Editor.) I was so insecure I questioned whether there was a real issue, or if my emotions had carried me to such a supersensitive state that I imagined offense where there actually was none.

Well, hold on sisters and brothers, the tiger is out there — for sure. It is not a figment of my imagination. And, lunatic or not, I've found a lot of company in letters received from women and men across the country, who document similar experiences. (Editor's Note: Carolyn Taylor's letter drew more response than any article which has appeared in THE WITNESS over the past three years).

I am not alone. You are not alone. And, what's more, there is among us an abounding love, a healing that has come to me through those letters, which somehow needs to be shared with those who have written and by those who have remained silent in their struggle.

The healing has come in many forms. First, in the empathy and deep feeling expressed. There was the woman, who wrote, "I almost cried upon reading your letter, for myself and the ways my experience is like yours, and for you in your loneliness."

Heartfelt sentiments poured in from

every section of the country, from big cities as well as small towns and suburbia. Among them were clergywives and daughters, clergy themselves (both men and women), laywomen, widows of clergy, the husband in a clergy couple, and two bishops. Their ages seemed to range from early 30's to the golden years. But they shared the isolation, the pain, the anger and hope. They spoke sometimes in two and three-page, typewritten letters, of the paralyzing effect of being forced to live according to the expectations of others, and the tension that such denial of self creates. Several likened life in the rectory to that of other "public wives." From these responses, it seems to me that the church has developed a subtle and effective system to keep the clergywife in her place. Evidence of this is found in the experience of clergywives who complain of being ignored or excluded. One recalled the experience of coming into a room where churchpeople suddenly ceased talking, because "the rector's wife shouldn't hear that." Another was depressed and insulted over having her suggestions systematically dismissed without discussion at ECW meetings when anyone else was given a polite hearing.

Still others, including myself, cited exclusion from consideration for the vestry or other parish decision-making offices. Whatever the expression, the

message comes through: Stay in your place, don't rock the boat, be a holy noodle-head, or else risk being called "uppity" or "rectorine," with all of the ramifications.

Correspondents alluded to how life in the church has robbed them of their self-esteem, caused marital strain or even sent them into crippling depression. Life in the rectory, it seems, demands putting on a public mask for fear that the real you won't be accepted. There was the postscript from one young wife, "My biggest problem is being the only person my husband-priest gets mad at — he keeps a perfect mask on at all other times. He's a good, gentle man, but all work and personal frustrations come down on me."

One diocesan officer regretted having shed his public mask and pondered whether his frankness about personal problems had caused his bishop to be half-hearted in recommending him for a new job. He asserted that most search committees "just won't even consider a divorced priest; and if it seems that the wife is 'uppity,' they drop him, knowing that there are many other clergy to consider."

That word "uppity" stung me at first, but with the help of affirming letters, I've come to see that for clergywives maybe "uppity" means healthy. Women who wrote saying that they had achieved some peace and self-respect in their lives as clergywives chronicled how they had refused to stay in their place. One said she didn't mind being a welcome mat in the church, but she vowed never to be a doormat. At the same time, it was equally evident that she was eager to exercise a supportive ministry with her husband.

Through such examples, I feel that I too have been empowered to take charge of my life as clergywife and to use all of my talents in God's Name. In fact, this article, whatever its virtue or fault, is possible now only because I have been validated by having heard

from so many who affirmed my "secret" thoughts by sharing theirs.

The advice of one writer rings especially true, and I'm trying to do as he said. That is to "live prophetically, as if what you want to achieve has already happened." It may sound like whistling in the dark, but it's also faithful to the Gospel.

Of course, God also helps those who help themselves, as one writer put it: "You cannot wait for someone else to liberate you. Christ has done that for you. In order to make this liberation felt, you must now act upon those things you know are just."

One woman, who has left the Episcopal Church and become a clergyperson in another denomination, said, "I am slowly digging out the anger and restructuring my identity." She saw that process as making herself whole and paraphrased the Lord's command of "Be ye perfect" as "Be ye whole."

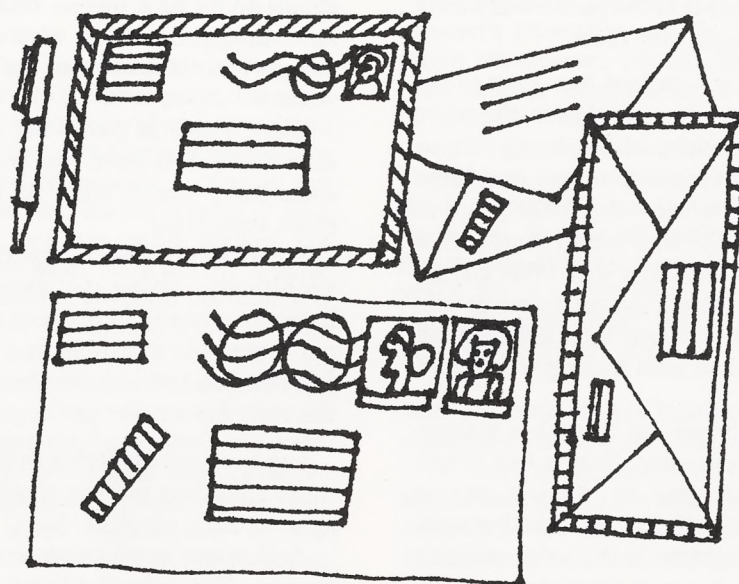
More hope was expressed by a woman who had earned her Ph.D. in her early 40's by studying the sociological implications of her role as clergywife. She said, "I don't mean to minimize the pain you feel by telling you

how I turned it into a field of study; what I hoped to convey was how it is possible, by the grace of God and some good therapy and accumulation of years of experience, to find some satisfaction and comfort being married to your husband even if he is a clergyman."

This letting the real-me come forth, is not without its risks. But, those who have written have convinced me that no amount of smiling, cake-baking, shuffling, saying "yes-um," can provide the sense of self-worth that living prophetically can.

Yet, the transition may prove to be a time of pain. Another Ph.D. candidate wrote, "Achieving some personal respect for myself has interrupted my previously ultra-passive nature as 'always-there-and-caring-first-for-you' clergywife. It was in the ensuing marital strain that I finally recognized the need — and absolute unavailability of — pastoral support and counseling."

Marital strain was mentioned by a number of persons. Many picked it up in my letter, when I wrote that my husband viewed me as a "sore puppy." One priest-writer lamented that when



his wife had expressed similar feelings years ago, he had been insensitive, and, as a result, she had "become almost totally alienated from the church, and poured her energies into social work, where professionally, she is very successful. But too much of our lives proceed along separate tracks today."

Another priest expressed the feeling that he was often caught in the middle; he empathized with his wife's hurt and, yet, he felt powerless to effect meaningful change. "From time to time," he said, "I have thought of leaving the priesthood (at least the parish ministry) because of the strain it has put on our marriage."

Working as a team was the initial hope of that couple, but they no longer see that as a possibility. One widow said that her pursuit of ministry outside the church meant that "each night at dinner I could bring new and interesting happenings to share with all the family, rather than go over plans and problems my husband had been working on all day." She also felt able to be herself, with all her strengths and weaknesses standing on their own, in pursuits outside the church. She and another woman explained that their psychic salvation was related to making it plain from the start that the parish was hiring their husbands, not them.

An issue which laid heavy on many was the lack of pastoral care, the sense of utter isolation, of not being able to confide in friends. A widow in a large eastern city wrote, "In all the years of parish work . . . with lots of contact on a friend-to-friend basis with other clergy, never was there a pastor-to-clergywife gesture, until the year after my husband died." She had been a clergywife for 26 years.

Some advised me to seek a woman pastor or counselor. Others had found help by starting or joining prayer groups outside the parish. Another said, "What brought me to this point of liking my life as it is now is that I dare to have

true friends in the parish with whom I share everything." Brave woman! I have sensed that my reluctance to enter deep friendships in the parish has to do with tradition and the hope of not playing favorites among the faithful.

Two bishops wrote — and when we move from our present parish, we'll look first in their dioceses. They both felt I should express my need for pastoral care to the bishop. They spoke of wanting to be true to their charge as chief pastor, but of having experienced difficulties. One bishop said, "Let me try to suggest another problem for which I do not know the answer. Now, as a bishop and on the other side of the fence, I have encouraged both clergy and clergywives to come to me to talk about things they wish to in confidence, and I have discovered that in most cases I am the last person in the world they feel they can talk with about personal matters."

He continued, "The clergy feel it is liable to be a hindrance to their career if I know certain things about them. Wives, likewise, seem to feel that if I know there are problems in the family I am liable not to assist their husbands in 'moving upward'." Later, he suggested that perhaps a clergywives anonymous group might be a way to find support. And, finally, he added, what is true for clergywives is also true of bishops' wives.

Okay, that's in part what the letters said. We're all in pain, that is clear. And some have found ways to make life more acceptable.

Where to now? Well, first I'm slowly, agonizingly, trying to answer those letters personally in between caring for our 2-year-old daughter, and holding a full-time job I do at home, besides being the chief lay worker in the parish.

I also am remembering in my prayers those who have written, most of whom assured me a place in theirs.

And, where confidences would not be broken, I've offered to put people in

touch with each other in the same geographical areas, so that they can create a support group locally. Incidentally, I continue to be willing to do that — anyone interested, just send me a note in care of THE WITNESS.

To others with whom I've been in further touch, my husband and I have offered our home as a place of refuge to sort things out, if needed.

Several women and I have exchanged phone numbers, so as to create a "hot-line," a possible support in times of stress. Others have asked to join a support group by correspondence. How that will work, I don't know. A newsletter? Individual, confidential letters? Maybe both?

Sharing the letters with my husband has permitted us both to grow in tolerance and understanding. I think that he may be a little less threatened by my feelings, seeing that others have come to creative solutions. Also, hearing similar complaints from many others has given credence to my arguments. It has bridged the gap between us in that he is genuinely supportive and compassionate, and I am able to better fight the "victim" role. We've been talking about the issues, hearing each other without screaming out of terror that one of us may desert the ship.

I am overwhelmed by what has happened. I want to see it happen to others, too. And, it seems clear that a series of conferences might offer the opportunity to analyze the systemic nature of this particular oppression and to participate in the loving ministry that is pushing for a vehicle of expression. I envision three conferences in all: one for clergy spouses, one for clergy, and, later, a joint conference for spouses and clergy. I am not skilled in such matters, but I feel certain that if the need is expressed and the time is right, the means will be found to bring the resources together to enable God's healing hand to touch our lives. ■

Continued from page 7

Father's rules. In running hospitals and half-way houses, soup kitchens and shelters, in rolling bandages and sending canned goods to needy families, religious women have provided the mop-up operations for the casualties from patriarchal industrial capitalism.

With its emphasis on individual piety and spiritualized reality, Christianity has reinforced the cult of individualism so necessary to the functioning of capitalist ideology — an ideology which prevents the realization of collective suffering and collective power.

Most of the major religions contain in their source documents the seeds of their original revolutionary fervor — stories, themes and symbols which have been suppressed, ignored or distorted by those classes which have sought to use religion to support their own ruling interests.

Though Western Christianity has served to legitimate patriarchal capitalism and often brutal repression, its original insights act as a stinging critique on its own practice. In pointing out how the scribes and Pharisees reveled in their position as religious and community leaders, Jesus adjures his listeners: "But you are not to be called rabbi, for you have one teacher, and you are all brethren. And call no man father on earth, for you have one Father, who is in heaven. Neither be called masters, for you have one Master, the Christ. He who is greatest among you shall be your servant; whoever exalts himself will be humbled, and whoever humbles himself will be exalted." (Matt. 23:8-12).

In the Gospel of Matthew, Jesus declares that the message he bears will result in the breaking apart of the entire system of family roles based on age and gender. "For I have come to set a man against his father, and a daughter against her mother, and a daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law; and a man's foes will be those of his own household. He who loves father or mother more than me is not worthy of me; and he who loves son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me; and he who does not take up his cross and

follow me is not worthy of me. He who finds his life will lose it, and he who loses his life for my sake will find it." (Matt. 10:35-39) In another passage, Jesus insists that children are to be seen and heard "for to such belongs the Kingdom of Heaven." (Matt. 19:13-15) Jesus appeared in resurrected form first to women, who in ancient Palestine were denied status as public witnesses by the religious and civil law.

How do we interpret passages like these? Christians have usually managed to avoid them perhaps because their implicit truth subverts so much of what institutionalized Christianity has been about — the legitimizing and reinforcing of patriarchal role patterns. But when we put Jesus' words about the family together with his continuous denunciations of wealth and power and his promise that the meek shall inherit the earth, we have a powerful revolutionary stance that shakes the foundations not only of civil and religious power, but also the psychic foundations upon which our identities are built. No wonder he was killed!

We know that there were those for whom his transvaluing of all commonly held values was a liberating event. Jesus' destruction of the old family model established the truth of a new kind of human community, a new conception of the family — one that was not based upon the arbitrary designations of gender or age or the location of one's birth, but on commitment to a higher good. Take, for example, that passage in which he is told that his mother and brothers are waiting for him and he replies: "Who is my mother, and who are my brothers?" And stretching out his hand toward his disciples, he said, 'Here are my mother and my brothers. Whoever does the will of my Father in heaven is my brother, and sister and mother.'

In the new family that Jesus was about creating there was no earthly Father, because there was no pyramid of power. Those who, in his time were categorized as Slaves, Daughters, Wives and Brothers were transformed in the familial economy of Jesus into ministers with equal authority to serve, heal,

teach, announce, liberate, and feed. They did not have to go through the rigors of an ordination process, be certified by the ruling elders, be of a certain age, or sex or race or class. The only requirement for entry to this ministry was that they love one another, feed his sheep, liberate the oppressed, bring sight to the blind, and live out the egalitarian demands of the Gospel. To those, who, in Jesus' time, functioned as Fathers or had ambitions in that direction, Jesus had but one message: "Turn around; sell all that you have and distribute to the poor and come, follow me." In other words, shed the trappings and illusions of authority, for there is no hierarchy in the household of God. ■

Resources: The above article was presented in its original version as an address to the Second Women's Ordination Conference for Roman Catholic Women in Baltimore. I am indebted for its theoretical model to the work which has been developed around the themes of patriarchy and capitalism by the *Project on Women, Work and the Economy of Theology in the Americas*, especially to Batya Weinbaum who has done pioneering work in developing the basic analytical framework, and to Viana Muller who has explored some of its historical roots. Further elaboration of the major tenets of this paper can be found in: *The Curious Courtship of Women's Liberation and Socialism*, by Batya Weinbaum, (South End Press, 1978, Box 68, Astor Station, Boston, MA 02123, \$4); "The Formation of the State and the Oppression of Women: Some Theoretical Considerations and a Case Study in England and Wales," by Viana Muller, in *Review of Radical Political Economics: Women, Class & the Family*, Vol. 9, No. 3, (URPE National Office, 14 Union Square, West, Room 901, New York 10003, \$2.50). **S.C.**

(Editor's note: Sheila Collins' article is excerpted from the TIA Document No. 8, "The Familial Economy of God." Full text is available from *Theology in the Americas*, 475 Riverside Drive Room 1268, New York, N.Y. 10027. Reprinted with permission.)

More New Readers

The June issue of THE WITNESS, which carried a feature article on the implications of government nuclear policy, as reflected in the Three Mile Island accident and the injunction against *THE PROGRESSIVE* magazine, has attracted some 650 new readers from the Diocese of Central Pennsylvania. We are glad to welcome these new friends to our mailing list!

Elect

BOOM

Christ knocked St. Paul off his horse
and illumined him with tender fallout
of grace and seventh heavens.

Well jivers God is not going to knock

your silly ass off a horse

and saul-saul you;

you are going to sweat out your fate

like big feet in a number six boot

or wait it out on a continuum of tedium,

sliding up and down the normal curve

till you bump your ass on reality.

That's the only way you can make it

when the Baltimore Catechism lets you go

and you're too scared

for forty nights in the desert.

— Charles August

Lawrence Carter Farm Workers, Growers Reap Bitter Harvest

But Cesar Chavez and
the UFW still sing
with confidence, 'Venceremos!'



Approaching a lettuce field on the outskirts of Salinas, Cal., at 6 o'clock on a cold foggy morning, one hears the traditional battle hymn of the Civil Rights days. Soon one sees a line of some 50 men and women pickets carrying red flags with the familiar black eagle of the United Farm Workers Union. They are singing in Spanish, but the meaning is the same as in the past: *"We Shall Overcome."*

On Jan. 19 of this year, the farm workers in California's winter lettuce bowl in the Imperial Valley began

The Rev. E. Lawrence Carter, author of "Can't You Hear Me Calling?," spent many years in California and has been in continuing contact with the United Farm Workers.

walking off the fields in protest to the take-it-or-leave-it attitude of some 28 California and Arizona lettuce growers to the new contract demands of the United Farm Workers Union. The contracts had expired in December and January. By the end of January, more than 4,200 workers were on strike.

Then on the morning of Feb. 10, Rufino Contreras, a 28-year-old striking lettuce worker entered the fields of the Mario Saikhon Company to talk with the strikebreakers, as allowed under the California Agricultural Labor Relations Act. He and other strikers were fired on without warning. Rufino, hit in the face, fell to the ground and the others took cover. Realizing he

was injured, his fellow workers tried to assist but were held back by gunfire for an hour. He died before an ambulance could reach him.

Five days later, a foreman and two other Saikhon employees were indicted for the murder of Rufino Contreras, and were released the same day on minimal bail. On April 24, it was announced that Judge William Lenhardt had dismissed the charges against the three "on grounds of insufficient evidence." In contrast, in the Imperial Valley there have been 240 felony arrests of farm workers. Over 200 of these wound up with no charges at all, and most of the others were reduced. The Contreras case is seen by the

farmworkers as "a blot on American justice," and the Imperial Valley arrests, clearly as harassment from the sheriff's department of Riverside County.

In this way the scene in the California agricultural regions was set for a long hot summer unless serious contract negotiations would be undertaken by the growers and the union. With the end of a ruined lettuce crop in the Imperial Valley in which the growers were said to have lost millions of dollars, even with the importation of undocumented strikebreakers from Mexico, the strike moved on to the Salinas Valley. After the Salinas Valley it could move to the San Joaquin Valley and on to one after another of the lettuce and vegetable growing regions in California and Arizona.

A further setting for violence is that strikers in the Salinas area see imported "scabs" working in the fields protected by 10 to 20 sheriff's deputies, squad cars, and paddy wagons stationed between the picket lines and strikebreakers in the fields.

But at the heart of this controversy, calling for non-violence and discipline, stands a charismatic, determined man. Cesar Chavez, now 52, is anything but the stereotype of the average labor leader. Modest in lifestyle, he is overtly religious, even ascetic. He prays, often fasts, and works 20-hour days. He speaks simply but effectively, without a trace of the jargon frequently associated with the labor movement.

But it takes more than charisma to make a successful movement. And under the leadership and inspiration of Chavez, the United Farm Workers Union has racked up an impressive record in its short and harried life. It has established a credit union, a retirement village primarily for the old Filipino

workers who were the original strikers in 1965, day care centers for farm worker children, a pension fund, a medical plan that operates four professionally staffed clinics in California, a group health plan, an insurance program, a cultural school for farm worker children in Delano. In addition there is in progress a developing educational center in Keene, Cal., to teach skills in consumer education, language training, citizenship preparation, cross-cultural learning, non-violence, contract bargaining, and training for administrative work.

It is these advances which have added credibility and clout to Chavez and the union in bargaining with the growers. Add to this the mystique of ethnic solidarity and history which provide the movement with stability and strength.

Also not to be discounted is the fact that friendly unions, churches, religious orders and "just plain people" have been contributing some \$14,000 a week to send relief food trucks to Calexico and Salinas where the strike has moved, according to the Rev. C. Wayne Hartmire, director of the national farm worker ministry. The NFWM is coordinating a food drive for strikers' families. Strike pay is \$25 a week, not enough to feed large families. At present there are 20,000 farm workers and families in the Imperial-Calexico region.

To understand what is going on in the fields of California and to grasp the scope of the grower-farm worker struggle, two areas must be understood. They are the history of the California migrant farm worker, and the psychology of Chavez and the United Farm Workers Union.

In the past 50 years there has been an

enormous development of agriculture in the San Joaquin, Salinas and Imperial Valleys of California. It received a tremendous boost in the 1940s when a number of canals were built to bring water from the Colorado River to irrigate the vast and arid Imperial Valley, an area of roughly half a million acres. Today in this one region alone the variety of crops grown staggers the imagination — 25 major crops ranging from lettuce and other table vegetables to sorghum, oats, flax and wheat. Every month of the year there is a harvest of from nine to fifteen different crops. The other rich agricultural valleys of Salinas and San Joaquin likewise produce mammoth harvests throughout the year, though somewhat more seasonal due to the cooler climate of central and northern California. During the summer months there is intense heat for the farm worker and in the winter months in the north there is the cold and damp to endure along with the seasonal layoffs.

At present 35 companies dominate the agribiz empire in California — some of them national corporations, some multi-nationals and some conglomerates. The small farmer's share of the pie is so small as to be insignificant. Farming is big business for big businesses. From time to time the Farm Bureau or some grower group will produce a small farmer who will say on cue that the UFW is ruining his farming enterprise. The truth is that of 35 companies, three have the lion's share of the lettuce business — Sun Harvest, a subsidiary of United Brands; Castle and Cook, and Bruce Church.

In terms of the total U.S. market, 90% of all the lettuce grown in the United States during the winter months comes from the Imperial Valley, and



87% from the Salinas Valley in the summer months. In the last eight years, lettuce growers have made \$195 million in profit, after cost. Last season alone in the Salinas Valley they cleared \$71 million on sales of \$201 million. It is an understatement to say that these profits have not been shared with the workers. (For those who worry about the cost of lettuce in the stores, only 2.4¢ out of a 79¢ head of lettuce goes to farm workers).

Before the union contracts were due to expire at the end of 1978, the union made a study of the wage structure of the farm worker, whom they discovered to be 30 to 40 years behind industrial workers in wages and benefits. According to Marshall Ganz of the UFW, they found that in 1970 the Sun Harvest contract contained a base rate of \$2 an hour. In 1978 it was \$3.70 an hour. When applied to cost of living figure using 1967 dollars, it was found that in 1970, \$2 was worth \$1.71 in purchasing power and that in 1978, \$3.70 was worth \$1.84 — an increase of 13¢.

On Jan. 5 of this year the UFW presented its proposals for new contracts to the industry. These included a cost of living provision and a provision for a paid union representative to travel with each crew to administer the contracts. (Migrant labor goes from crop to crop from the Mexican border to the Oregon state line). The union proposals also included an increase in the growers' contribution to the medical plan, travel expenses and guarantees of earnings for the first week of harvest. Up to now the farm workers had to pay their own travel from place to place.

On Jan. 18, the same growers who had supported Nixon, Ford and

Reagan and who had increased the price of lettuce by some 100% in the past year, told the union with straight faces that it was their patriotic duty to uphold the Carter administrations' price and wage guidelines. Because of this they said they couldn't offer anything beyond 7% with only a 2¢ increase for the medical plan.

The strike was on.

As a matter of fact, lettuce and other unprocessed foods are not covered by President Carter's price guidelines. The growers are asking farm workers to stay within the 7% wage guideline while insisting on the freedom to raise prices as they will. The workers are responding, "If you will stick to the President's price guidelines we will consider the wage guideline more seriously."

President Carter's wage guidelines are not supposed to apply to workers who earn less than \$4 an hour. The majority of vegetable workers earn less than that. The minimum wage in UFW lettuce contracts is currently \$3.70, and the workers are demanding an increase to \$5.25.

A 7% increase in fringe benefits for farm workers amounts to almost nothing. Employers now contribute 15¢ per hour to the pension plan; a 7% increase would yield 16.1¢. (The California average contribution to workers' pension plans in California is 81.2¢ per hour).

As this is being written, all 28 lettuce growers are meeting with the union to present a joint new proposal. This is the first meeting in four months. Whether or not these will be serious negotiations remains to be seen. The growers will also probably continue their efforts to emasculate the California Farm Labor Relations law with various bills in the

state legislature sponsored by grower interests. The combined power of the Farm Bureau and the various growers' associations is a formidable political machine.

Most recently, Cesar Chavez called for a boycott of Chiquita Bananas to add bargaining power to the UFW side.

"United Brands is the parent company of Chiquita bananas," he explained. "United Brands owns Sun Harvest, which is the world's biggest producer of iceberg lettuce. We have had a contract with them for years, but now they are refusing to negotiate in good faith. Farm workers don't work all year round; the majority only make \$3.70 an hour. No one can support a family on that."

"The company is bringing in strikebreakers and using the rural court and sheriffs in a concerted effort to break our strike. This curtails our ability to picket, and the violence of the growers and threats of more murders of our brothers and sisters like Rufino Contreras force us once again to ask for help."

A Sun Harvest official said that he was skeptical of Chavez' ability to carry out the threat: "You need machinery in cities all across the country to do that. We don't think Cesar has that machinery anymore."

No matter what the outcome, "La Causa" won't go away. The UFW has pledged that it will work until contracts are signed not only in California, but in Texas, Arizona, Florida, Michigan, Illinois, New Jersey — wherever migrant labor is used in U.S. agriculture. The UFW sees itself as more than a union; it is a movement. And Cesar Chavez believes that it will overcome. Why? "Because," he says, "the cause is just." ■



Continued from page 2

discussing issues pertinent to the forthcoming General Convention of the Episcopal Church, I would like to raise a question.

Recently it came to my attention that there will be no general opening Eucharist, and that at the large services which will be open to the public the clergy will not be vesting. I have thought about this and the reasons for it, and I seem to sense a waffling attitude, if not downright deviousness.

Could it be that those at the top are copping out? Heaven forbid! Surely there must be a good explanation for canceling the procession which is one of the most inspiring moments in the life of our church — when the entire representation, in all its diversity, can be seen by the whole body.

I suggest that there may be two reasons for this action. The first is that, for the first time in the history of the church, there will be five women clergy deputies. The only time a *woman* is clearly visible as a priest is when she is in vestments; deacons can and do wear clerical garb. I don't run into this kind of soft-in-the-head thinking in Alaska, but I know that it exists, doesn't it, sisters?

The other reason probably pertains to liturgy. If the Presiding Bishop uses the new Prayer Book he will be criticized. If he sticks with the old one, likewise. Tough.

So, I intend to wear my vestments. I call upon my unknown four sisters to do the same. Perhaps there will be male clergy deputies who feel supportive. Welcome, brothers!

The Rev. Jean Elizabeth Dementi
North Pole, Alaska

Words Misused

The May issue arrived today and it is a winner! One of the best yet. Congratulations.

However, many of us Episcopalians expect to see words properly used in publications aimed specifically at Anglicans; i.e., "Rev. Ryan," page 11, and "Rev. Yon," page 19. Will you please

be so good as to put the enclosed pamphlet, sexist and dated as it may be (What Do I Call Him? A Word on Ecclesiastical Titles) into the hands of your copy editor? But never mind — you have a great magazine there!

The Rev. Thomas H. Lehman
Newton, Mass.

Boost From Canada

I very much enjoy the articles in THE WITNESS magazine. There is much in terms of social analysis and justice that is pertinent for us in Canada.

Margaret Marquardt
Vancouver, B.C.

Send in the Clowns

I find I agree with nearly everything I read in THE WITNESS. I am thankful in this cynical, inturnd age for its refusal to come down off the barricades. I know the Episcopal Church needs it and I know I need it.

Yet I never finish it without a sense of sorrow and incompleteness. It is, in part, I think because too often I sense the issues around the gospel are assumed to be the gospel. That is, however important the issues of sexism are, and however stupidly we manage to deal with them, they can never pull down the great central truth of the cry, "He is Risen." The polemic of much of the writing in THE WITNESS makes it difficult to see that the argument is from the ecstasy of faith.

Secondly, what I always liked about the view from the left was that it had a sense of humor and a sense of the absurd and, above all, a sense of its own foolishness. Lately, maybe because we are less in favor, what we mostly sound like is self-righteous. Too much, I think of the stuff in THE WITNESS is like that. Whatever has happened to our sense of grace and joy, self-depreciation, and cheerfulness as the children of God? We have become as heavy-handed, moralistic, and pompous as those brooders on the right. Where did we lose the precious sense that we are fools,

clowns, the local village idiots swept in off the streets to sit at the heavenly banquet?

The Rev. Douglas Evett
Ann Arbor, Mich.

Lutheran 'Witnesses'

I would like to "witness" briefly to the excellence of your magazine, and especially the June issue. I sometimes wonder why I should be subscribing to an Episcopalian publication when I seldom read those of my own church; but each time such a thought crosses my mind I remember some of the excellent articles I have read during the past year or so, and go on.

William Stringfellow's articles on the Episcopal Church reflect many failures and problems in my own communion. I wish we had someone who could — and would — speak out as plainly as he does.

The articles by Samuel Day and Bishop Thomas Gumbleton were also outstanding. I shall be quoting them extensively. Carter Heyward's article (if I understood it at all) seems to see almost everything, human and divine, in terms of sexuality, which, as far as I am concerned, is a dangerous oversimplification.

Thank you for some exciting writing and witness.

C. P. Smith, Pastor
Zion Lutheran Church
Medford, Ore.

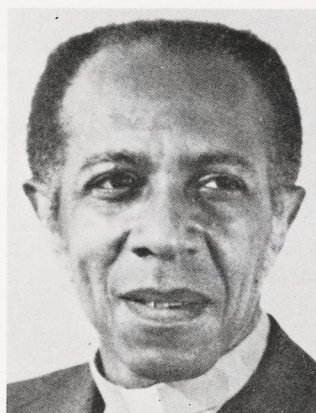
Reader Repents

Your consistent support of the dispossessed mandates my support. I repent only of not acting sooner!

The Rev. James A. Hammond
Williamsville, N.Y.

CREDITS

Cover, p. 4, Sue Rheiner, adapted from a design by Marlene Brasefield; p. 10, Peg Averill/LNS; p. 11, Dana Martin; pp. 15, 16, 17, United Farm Workers' posters.



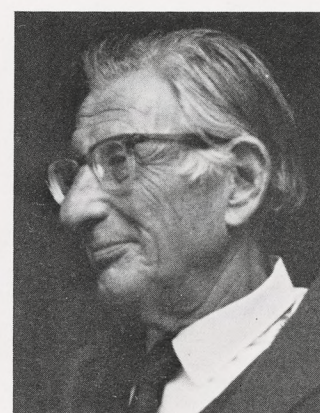
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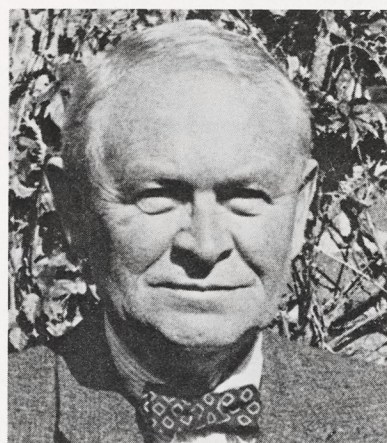
Cueto



Nemikin



Corrigan



Fletcher



Hooks

Dear Witness Readers,

If you are at General Convention in Denver, we will be pleased to greet you at the exhibit area where Church and Society members and WITNESS staffers will be in Booth 47.

You are also invited to join us at the ECPC Awards dinner on Sept. 11, where the William Spofford award will be presented to the Rev. Paul Washington; the Vida Scudder award to Maria Cueto and Ralsa Nemikin; and the William Scarlett

award to the Rt. Rev. Daniel Corrigan. A special citation of merit will also go to Dr. Joseph Fletcher, author of *Situation Ethics*.

Guest speaker will be the Hon. Benjamin Hooks, executive director of the NAACP. Send in your reservations today, using the coupon below. Your acknowledgment will be in the mail within a week after your request is received in the Ambler office.

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