An abstract geometric design composed of numerous triangles of varying sizes and orientations. Some triangles are filled with a teal color, while others are white. The triangles are outlined in black, creating a complex, faceted pattern that resembles a stylized star or a cluster of crystals. The design is positioned on the left side of the cover, partially overlapping the title.

THE WITNESS

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ARCHIVES AND HISTORICAL
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AUSTIN, TEXAS

The Many Facets Of General Convention

Robert L. DeWitt
Annette Jecker
John Skinner
Mary Lou Suhor

Jesus Healed Women's Bodies

Georgia Fuller



Reservations Re Liturgy

I have some reservations about the confession section of "Liturgy of Reconciliation Between Men and Women" in the July WITNESS.

First, a minor point: The women are to confess their anger and they are to vow not to give up their anger. You cannot do both — not if you mean the same thing by *anger* both times.

Second: People are being identified with what is worst in the structures within which they participate (i.e., when "men" dictate the restricted role of "women" and view them as *followers*, *wards*, *victims*, and *inferiors* whom they do not trust). It is important to recognize the participation of individuals in structural sin. It is inaccurate and wrong to identify a person (or persons) with the totality of a structure. (Persons can only confess the sins *they* have committed.)

Third: the confession assumes the division of the body of Christ into separate, warring camps. This is a false division. Even when individuals feel such alienation, other individuals, within the body and not fully on either side of the confrontation, are as likely as any to initiate the process of reconciliation.

We can do better than this.

John Mangels
Berkeley, Cal.

Ms. Lieurance Responds

First point: John Mangels is absolutely right; the use of the word "anger" is often unclear throughout the service. I would only add that in the confession, women do not repent their *anger*, but their *fear* of it.

Second point: The restrictive roles for women and men in the church are, indeed, dictated by an oppressive structure and not by any one person or group. Yet, I would contend that structures do not build themselves, but are created and supported by persons. I agree that persons can only confess the sins *they* have committed. I think that acquiescence in an oppressive structure is a sin — and it is that sin of accepting, at best, or actively promoting, at worst, the stereotypical roles of women and men that is repented here. Without the acquiescence, the silence, the fear of asking questions, the structure could not exist and to this extent, I cannot separate persons from structures.

Third point: I assume that John Mangels does not mean to deny the presence of division in the church today, but rather take exception to the idea that there are only two camps and everyone must be in one or the other. On the issue of the role of women and men in the church, however, I do question the existence of neutral observers. These are not union-management negotiations where someone in neither category is brought in to mediate. We are *all* in this union and we all, in some way, partake of the fruit — bitter or sweet — of sex-role stereotyping. I think it is important for us all to confront ourselves honestly about how we participate in that stereotyping and, with that knowledge, to begin to confront each other. True reconciliation of differences cannot occur without honest delineation and airing of those differences. It is to this end — true reconciliation out of honest discussion and faithful confrontation — that the Study on the Community of Women and Men in the Church is aimed.

Kathy Johnson Lieurance
New York, N.Y.

Issue a Delight

Just received your July issue and what a delight! We are pursuing reprint permissions for the poem, "Martha," the Liturgy of Reconciliation Between Men and Women and the Bill Mauldin cartoon. Enclosed is a copy of our *Women in Transition* newsletter. We're

small, struggling, determined, eager, and excited to discover people like you.

Marie Wells
Kentfield, Cal.

Up for Grabs

Yes, God has abandoned the Episcopal Church. We are on our own. No wonder William Stringfellow, in his recent series, is horrified. So am I. Leadership has become focused on W.S. and J.C. — Use your own initials. Who are we to be the leaders of the church?

"Give us a king" is not for us. What we are to become as persons and as a church is up for grabs. Just to consider W.S. and me is to conclude that God is infinitely patient. We wouldn't have a chance otherwise.

It is not up to *leadership* to know what the church is and is to become. It is strictly up to W.S. and J.C. I, at least, will work to maintain the institution. Bad as it is, I cannot imagine what I would have become without it.

Never mind the end-of-the-world warnings. Nothing so easy is going to happen to us. We will live. We will fail. We will hope. We will care. God did not give us freedom for nothing.

John Clark
Poughkeepsie, N.Y.

God Alive, Churches Not

Hooray for William Stringfellow. Indeed, Christian hypocrisy has not ended. After I had the experience of bearing five beautiful children, I was embarrassed to find myself a Christian. In the '60s, I could not find one single church which was Christian in any real sense of the word. Christ is not dead, but the walking dead are still in Christ's church, and it is anybody's guess how they will be driven out. In fact, some of the churches seem to have a definite fascist bias.

I would say that what has killed churches is spiritual sloth as much as general greed, avariciousness, and lust, which one finds in all departments of this degenerative and lethal society which we all made together. This is US that WE are looking at. No one did this to

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Building Bridges

Robert L. DeWitt

A major shift in traditional attitudes in the life of the church is often signaled by a strong and vocal minority which takes exception to the conventional wisdom and traditional attitudes. This may well be what happened at the recent General Convention on the much-publicized question of whether the church should ordain homosexuals.

After three years of study the Joint Commission headed by Bishop Robert R. Spears, Jr., had issued a unanimous report which essentially recommended that the national church take no position on the question of whether homosexuals might be ordained. The report favored leaving that question to individual bishops and dioceses, who would therefore be free to base their decisions on the individual candidate's qualifications for ministry.

This recommendation was rejected by the convention, which passed a resolution of which the final statement is as follows: "We reaffirm the traditional teaching of the church on marriage, marital fidelity and sexual chastity as the standard of Christian sexual morality. Candidates for ordination are

expected to conform to this standard. Therefore, we believe it isn't appropriate for this church to ordain a practicing homosexual, or any person who is engaged in heterosexual relations outside of marriage."

This action by the convention does not have the force of canon law, but is instead in the nature of "an advisory" — a distinction lost on most people, both in and out of the church. To them, the church has "voted against" homosexuals. It was for this reason that 34 of the bishops voted against the resolution which passed, and some 21 of them (eventually 23) put their names to a statement which was introduced by Bishop John Krumm after the vote had been taken. Of significance was the evident change of mind toward a more open attitude on the part of a number of bishops since the cautious and conservative pastoral letter of 1977, in which the bishops had said they would "agree to deny ordination to an advocating and/or practicing homosexual person." The size and strength of this minority may well presage the future.

More than 150 clergy and lay persons associated themselves with the dissenting bishops' statement, full text of which follows:

Affirmation of Conscience

We bishops in the Church of God who associate ourselves with this statement — affirm our belief that Holy Matrimony between a man and a woman as a covenanted, exclusive, and (by God's help) a permanent relationship is the predominant and usual mode of sexual expression, blessed by God, for

Christian people particularly and for humankind generally. To this state the vast majority of persons have clearly been called.

We also affirm the sacrificial sign of celibacy, for the small minority genuinely called to that state, as a valid and valuable witness to a broken and

selfish world of the virtues and spiritual power of Christian self-denial in the service of others.

Nothing in what follows is intended to deny or to weaken either the vocation to Christian marriage or to Christian celibacy; and nothing, especially, is intended to weaken or demean, or deny

the centrality of, the institution of the Christian family.

However, there is a minority of persons who have clearly not been called to the married state, or given the graces for it — whether they realize this before, or painfully and often tragically discover it afterwards — and who are incapable in the very nature of their formed personalities of conforming to the predominant mode of behavior. Why this is so is a mystery known only to God; even the researchers of modern science have been unable to provide an adequate answer for it. Nor is there convincing evidence that these people of homosexual orientation have been given the very special and extraordinary grace the church has always seen to be necessary for the healthy expression of Christian celibacy.

We who associate ourselves with this statement are deeply conscious of, and grateful for, the profoundly valuable ministries of ordained persons, known to us to be homosexual, formerly and presently engaged in the service of this church. Not all of these persons have necessarily been celibate; and in the relationships of many of them, maintained in the face of social hostility and against great odds, we have seen a redeeming quality which in its way and according to its mode is no less a sign to the world of God's love than is the more usual sign of Christian marriage. From such relationships we cannot believe God to be absent.

Furthermore, even in cases where an ideally stable relationship was not, or has not yet, been achieved, we are conscious of ordained homosexual persons who are wrestling responsibly and in the fear of God, with the Christian implications of their sexuality, and who seek to be responsible, caring, and non-exploitive people even in the occasionally more transient relationships which the hostility of our society towards homosexual persons — with its concomitants of furtiveness and clandestinity — makes inevitable.

We believe that the action of this House, which declares that it is not appropriate for this church to ordain a practicing homosexual or any person



who is engaged in heterosexual relations outside of marriage, while it has the specious appearance at first glance of reaffirming and upholding time-honored verities, carries with it a cruel denial of the sexual beings of homosexual persons — against whom, given the title of this resolution, it is principally aimed. It also carries with it, in implied logic, a repudiation of those ministries, by homosexual persons and to homosexual persons, already being exercised in our midst; and it invites, furthermore, the prospect of retroactive reprisals against ordained homosexual persons, with consequences of untold harm to the church and its people,

whether homosexual or heterosexual.

This action also speaks a word of condemning judgment against countless laypersons of homosexual orientation who are rendered by its implications second-class citizens in the church of their baptism, fit to receive all other sacraments but the grace of Holy Orders — unless, in a sacrifice not asked of heterosexual persons generally, they abandon all hope of finding human fulfillment, under God, in a sexual and supportive relationship. This action, thus, makes a mockery of the vow and commitment which the church has made to them in that same sacrament of baptism, to do all in its power to support

these persons in their life in Christ — all of these persons, without exception — and calls into question the vows of us all to strive for justice and peace among all people, and respect the dignity of every human being.

Furthermore, speaking for the future, if these recommendations were to be carried out as this House seems to intend, they would fatally restrict our traditional freedom and duty as Bishops in the Church of God — with the concurrence of our standing committees, ministry commissions, and the like — to determine the fitness and calling of individual persons to Holy Orders — with each case being decided, not on the basis of the individual's belonging to a particular category or class of excluded persons, but on the basis of his or her individual merits as a whole human being, and in the light of the particular circumstances obtaining in that case.

We have no intention of ordaining irresponsible persons, or persons whose manner of life is such as to cause grave scandal or hurt to other Christians; but we do not believe that either homosexual orientation as such, nor the responsible and self-giving use of such a mode of sexuality, constitute such a scandal in and of itself.

Our position is based, consistent with our Anglican tradition — which values the gifts of reason and welcomes truth from *whatever* source — on the insights of what we understand to be the best and most representative current findings of modern science and psychology on this subject. But even more, our position is based, ultimately, on the total witness of Holy Scripture. For we are persuaded that modern exegesis and interpretation of the Scriptures — in the light of the original languages and our enhanced understanding of the cultural context of the particular passages which relate, or seem to relate, to the subject of homosexuality — gives no certain basis for a total or absolute condemnation either of homosexual persons or of homosexual activities in all cases. Holy Scripture indeed condemns homosexual excesses and exploitation, but it no less condemns heterosexual

excesses and exploitations as well; and as the cure for the latter is a more responsible and less selfish expression of heterosexuality, so the cure for the former is a more responsible and less selfish expression of homosexuality, not a conversion from the one to the other. On the other hand, the total witness of Holy Scripture is to a gracious God of justice, mercy and love. It is on that witness we take our stand, and it is to that God we make our appeal.

Taking note, therefore, that this action of the house is recommendatory and not prescriptive, we give notice as we are answerable before almighty God that we cannot accept these recommendations or implement them in our dioceses insofar as they relate or give unqualified expression to Recommendation Three.

To do so would be to abrogate our responsibilities of apostolic leadership and prophetic witness to the flock of Christ committed to our charge. And it would involve a repudiation of our ordination vows as bishops: in the words of the new Prayer Book, boldly to proclaim and interpret the Gospel of Christ, enlightening the minds and stirring up the conscience of our people, and to encourage and support all baptized people in their gifts and ministries . . . and to celebrate with them the sacraments of our redemption; or in the words of the old, to be to the flock of Christ a shepherd, not a wolf. Our appeal is to conscience, and to God. Amen. ■

(Signers of the above statement were Bishops Morris Arnold, Robert M. Anderson, Charles E. Bennison, Edmund L. Browning, John M. Burgess, Otis Charles, David R. Cochran, Ned Cole, Robert L. DeWitt, William A. Dimmick, Wesley Frensdorff, John M. Krumm, H. Coleman McGehee, C. Kilmer Myers, Paul Moore, J. Brooke Mosley, Lyman C. Ogilby, Frederick W. Putnam, Francisco Reus-Froylan, Robert R. Spears, William B. Spofford, Richard M. Trelease, and John T. Walker. Approximately 150 priests and laypersons also signed the statement.)

An Obituary

His god had become, unfortunately, seriously diminished over the years, the result of personal horrors and world events too large for tears.

Instead of wonder sourced,
his god was only demented.
In his memory of God there coursed
no incense wisps lifting up to Grace,
only dried herbs crushed by unrelented
grinding day to day in place.

He had often wondered
why God seemed either
a distant grave-digger
or a fragmentary glimpse
of some awe-ful nothing
out of which everything
said about him was plundered
for its effect.

So it was quite unremarkable
and really superbly just
that when he died
there was no rejoicing in heaven,
no grief on earth.

It fell to the lot of the monument maker
(paid by his own burial insurance policy)
to write his epitaph.
This careful soul, after considerable study
of the matter, did
without rancor,
carve into the marker
"He wondered, but not much,
his god too small for awe.
What he saw touched neither his soul,
his pocketbook, nor his pain.
Had he been known at all, his death
would have been observed with relief.
He was a thief: he robbed God of grandeur,
himself of meaning."

The morticians carried out their duties
as per contract. Although he looked
about as good
as in real life, the skills of the embalmer
were unseen. No one asked to see the body.
No words were needed to comfort
those who mourned.

His death was the end of nothing useful.

— Mark Harris

Sideshowes Spoke to 'New Age'

It may be a cliché to invoke the analogy of a three-ring circus to the Episcopal General Convention, but that's the most accurate figure around. At high points it was all mimes, music, balloons and cotton candy, celebrating the presence of dreamers, servants and jesters, prophets and revolutionaries. At lows, it meant beware, Christians, the lions and the elephants have just passed through, throwing their weight around — watch your step.

By far the most exciting dynamics were in the side shows as groups like Integrity, the Episcopal Women's Caucus and the Urban Bishops' Coalition tried to impact events in the main ring from the periphery.

Integrity's efforts to influence the vote on homosexual ordination were formidable, performed valiantly against overwhelming odds and in the midst of some hostility, as borne out by the usurping of its booth in the exhibit hall.

John Lawrence, Integrity president, told *THE WITNESS* "While we were winding up our own convention, our booth was not staffed, and we discovered that a group holding views opposite to ours had taken it over and was distributing literature. And worse than that, an effort had been made earlier to cancel our hotel reservations and space in the exhibit hall. My roommate received a call from a convention official asking if it was true that I was ill and the Integrity space was to be relinquished. Fortunately, he was able to assure that he had just brought me to the airport."

Net result was the same convention which overwhelmingly voted in the new Book of Common Prayer, turned around in the gay vote to blunt the

effectiveness of its use among at least 10% of the church's constituency.

An attempt early on to divorce the women's efforts from that of the gays failed, thanks to close understanding between Integrity and the Episcopal Women's Caucus. When the Rev. Carter Heyward concelebrated a Mass at Integrity's Convention, the next day's headline in a Denver paper read, "Lesbian Priest Will Not Be Punished . . ." for celebrating at the Integrity event. Asked to comment on the story, Heyward responded: "It didn't bother me. Of course, I would have been worried had the headline read, "Lesbian Priest *Will* Be Punished."

Her attitude was characteristic of the good humor and joint efforts between

women and gays to establish solidarity in their struggles. A high point for Integrity — and all convention goers who attended their closing event — was a concert by two ordained ministers of the United Church of Christ, Sue Savell of New York and Stacy Cusulos of San Francisco. The two lesbian/feminist songwriters played guitar and sang past midnight, to standing ovations.

Ultimately, women fared far better than those openly gay at convention. As one caucus member put it, "the tradeoff was that the voting delegates ended up being nice to the women because they knew they were going to zap the gays." And a deputy commented in the *General Convention Daily* that in the final vote on homosexual ordination,



From left: Raisa Nemikin and Maria Cueto receive the Vida Scudder Award from Bishop John Hines, as Maria's mother, Josefina, looks on.

by Mary Lou Suhor

"the teeth behind the smile came out."

For a reporter, GenCon presented a constant series of choices as to what events scheduled simultaneously should be covered. The opening of the House of Bishops and the House of Delegates was a prime example.

Rather than flipping a coin, I'm usually guided by the Mae West principle: "When choosing between the lesser of two evils, I always like to try the one I've never tried before."

Thus it was that I went to the House of Bishops, hoping to get a sense of things to come. After the opening formalities, I sat up when a bishop was granted privilege to interrupt the regular agenda.

Turned out that this bishop serenaded Presiding Bishop John Allin for seemingly endless choruses ("Jack's been working on the railroad, all the livelong day" . . . the railroad supposedly a figure of the church). This was followed by the presentation of a toy train, brought in on a table and set to running around a circular track. The train derailed its first trip around. My notes read: "Bishops seem to have trouble distinguishing between working on the railroad and playing with trains."

Following this, the Presiding Bishop took the opportunity to comment on a trip to Kansas, where a cattleman had presented him with an electric branding iron — which I've always thought of as an instrument of torture. Pulling it out from behind his chair, as Johnny Carson might pull out soap for a TV commercial, he noted that the iron bore the initials *VIM* and that any bishop who didn't go along with it might have the brand applied "in a suitable location."

In the shadow of performances such

General Convention

Eye of the Needle

by Annette Jecker

"And Jesus said to his disciples: Truly, I say to you, it will be hard for a rich man to enter the kingdom of Heaven." (Matthew 19:25)

Apparently unaware of these words, or hoping for evidence to the contrary, some 10,000 Episcopalians gathered in Denver for General Convention, all somehow engaged in charting a course to "the kingdom."

The setting was certainly one that conjured up in the imagination a scene of the Palestinian market place 2,000 years ago, rivaling Hollywood's best.

Spread out over a city block of space, church vendors offered their silver and gold and ecclesiastical paraphernalia, symbols of wealth and prosperity, while officious participants hurried to committee meetings and legislative sessions. The evening found well-dressed deputies and bishops alike pouring out of expensive hotels into Denver's finest restaurants. Meanwhile, the outcasts of the city, their minds and souls drowned in liquor, hovered under trees and on street corners, a ready reminder to all lest the church should forget what her business was all about.

Such was the gathering of the

leadership of the Episcopal Church, at a time when the world is described as "two thirds hungry and one third on a diet," an injustice which is more than an embarrassment to society and a mockery to the One in whose name business was conducted here.

If the cost estimate of \$800, more or less, per participant is correct (depending how far away from Denver one lived, about \$8 million was spent in two weeks for hotels, air fare, food and the like. That is about half of the amount which the National Church has budgeted for its entire program for the year 1980! The cost for the convention set-up alone, aside from the staggering amount of energy required to stage it, ran into the hundred thousands of dollars.

The expense and time factor involved also effectively screens out those poor or middle class persons who can't possibly leave their workplace for two weeks, thereby skewing representation in the House of Deputies to high level executives, or to those who work directly for the church as clergy or in bureaucratic positions.

When we are asked the question, "Just what or whose money was spent in Denver?" we will candidly have to admit to the inquirers that it was their money — they, the people in the pews. Their \$2 or \$5 or \$10 per week contributions to the local parish or parish organization, given in good faith for the "work of the church," pay for this and other conventions

Annette Jecker is a member of the Department of Missions of the Diocese of Newark, a member of the Diocesan Episcopalian Church Women, and Senior Warden of the Church of the Incarnation, West Milford.

as this at the main event, it was the various caucuses and coalitions that kept alive the more burning questions as described by Harvey Cox in *Feast of Fools*:

"Given the fact that in festive ritual, our fantasy life is both fed and kept in touch with the earth, how can we eat the Bread and toast the hope in ways that ring true? How can we keep restating the vision of the New Age so that the poor and the persecuted continue to push and the princes and potentates never feel secure?"

For the Episcopal Women's Caucus, "pushing" meant in part struggling to gain visibility for ordained women in eucharists from which they had been shut out. The Rev. Patricia M. Park, EWC president, said, "Nobody gave any thought to the fact that the dioceses that were asked to coordinate the daily eucharists were those that didn't have any women priests. Whether deliberate or not, the effect was that women priests were excluded from celebrating, and that leaves me feeling angry. If I had been in charge of arrangements, I would have been more careful to get a more representative group of dioceses."

Host Bishop William Frey of Colorado later made an apology to both houses, assuring that steps were being taken "to remedy the situation immediately," and concelebrated a Mass of reconciliation with Park.

The Women's Caucus proved instrumental in surfacing women's and minority concerns at several luncheons open to the public. The Rev. Suzanne Hiatt debunked several myths at the first: "The term clergy 'deployment' comes from the military and implies that someone wise and knowing is in charge. The truth is that there is no strategy, there are no generals, there is no plan," she said. "Another myth says that there are still few ordained women in the church, but there are some 175 priests and 170 deacons, all of whom

have been ordained since 1974. Seventy of the 93 dioceses in the church now have women priests serving in them. Our political opinions range from radical to reactionary."

Marjorie Christie, a deputy from Newark, told the Caucus that the fastest growing group of employed women in this country are mothers of children under six. The number of female heads of households is also growing and half of these are headed by women whose incomes are below the poverty level, she said, and the church is not hearing their cries of anguish.

Perhaps the most dramatic intervention came from Mrs. Agnes Taylor, a mother of 10 children and one of the few underprivileged class to gain a microphone during convention. She described the work of North Porch, which she co-directs with the Ven. Martha Blacklock, archdeacon of Newark. "I'm one of the poor women they're always talking about. For us, survival is the name of the game in a society not geared for the survival of the poor," she said. "The result is frequently loss of identity until one becomes a number. You move from being Mrs. Taylor to the 'Taylor children's mother' to a social security number, and once you've lost your identity you've lost your being. The country looks upon us as 'those people.' But women are offered a chance to be themselves and to discuss their needs and problems at the North Porch," she said.

The Urban Bishops Coalition proved itself well organized and a strong advocate for the poor. The coalition presented a many-faceted program which:

- Raised the consciousness of convention goers through five breakfast seminars, all related to the exploited of the cities for whom the good news is seldom economic. Speakers included Gar Alperowitz, co-director, National Center for Economic Alternatives;



Bishop Daniel E. Corrigan dons a red tie after receiving the William Scarlett award at ECPC dinner.

Frances Fox Piven, author of *Regulating the Poor*; Walter Bremond, executive director, Black United Fund; Fouad Ajami of the Center of International Studies, Princeton; and Earl C. Ravenal of the Institute for Policy Studies.

- Produced a slide show on problems of the cities, which made its debut at the convention, plus a panel on energy chaired by Governor Dick Lamm of Colorado, to orient both houses to the current crisis.

- Lobbied for a package of resolutions, targeting urban concerns as a major focus for the social mission of the church, as well as for the restoration of \$300,000 to the budget of the Coalition for Human Needs.

- Worked closely with the Episcopal Peace Fellowship to establish a Joint Commission on Peace.

- Publicized its forthcoming national assembly in February to organize an Episcopal Urban Caucus, broadening the Coalition to include priests and laypersons.

Although blacks seemed to maintain a low profile in general at this convention, an impressive black presence was manifested at the ECPC

Awards Dinner at which Benjamin Hooks, executive secretary of the NAACP, was featured speaker. Addressing an audience of more than 450, Hooks urged white liberals to join again with blacks as they did in the '60s, to insure first-class citizenship for everyone. "Blacks have paid their dues," he said. "We seek help and hope from those who control the institutions of power in this country."

He recalled the "dark and difficult days" following the death of Martin Luther King, turmoil in Africa, bitterness over school busing, the Bakke case, and Proposition 13, but added, "we shall not despair."

His address, delivered in the preaching style of Dr. King, was punctuated with remarks from an "Amen" corner of blacks who responded enthusiastically. His dramatic closing brought the crowd to its feet, cheering. Also worthy of note were a stirring invocation by Mattie Hopkins of United Black Episcopalians, "the only time in history we've every heard a grace before meals applauded," said many diners; and hilarious asides by Barbara Harris of the ECPC Board.

As highlight of the event, Bishop John Hines, former chair of the ECPC Board, presented the William Scarlett Award to the Rt. Rev. Daniel Corrigan, under whose leadership the Joint Urban Program was fashioned; the Vida Scudder Award to Maria Cueto and Raisa Nemikin, former director and secretary of the National Commission on Hispanic Affairs; the William Spofford Award to the Rev. Paul Washington of the Church of the Advocate, Philadelphia; and a citation of merit to Dr. Joseph Fletcher, author of *Situation Ethics* and *Humanhood, Essays in Biomedical Ethics*.

Back at General Convention, in the Hispanic sector, Puerto Ricans worked

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past and future. Even those commercial participants, claiming expense accounts, pass on their convention expenses to the people in the congregations through the wares or services their churches buy from them.

To the question, "How judiciously was this money spent?" come various answers and opinions. There are those who will admit that the degree of responsible stewardship displayed in Denver and at other conventions is not impressive. As an example, President Charles Lawrence stunned the House of Deputies when he announced that it cost \$400 a day just to fill the water pitchers on the delegates' tables at Convention Center. He suggested each delegate draft a volunteer to fill the pitcher.

Several suggestions have already been made to reduce the cost. They range from a cut in the number of deputies, to a time study examining convention length, to holding it on a college campus under fairly spartan living conditions. This last suggestion deserves more than a passing thought, if for no other reason than that the next General Convention to be held in New Orleans is now scheduled to begin during the last week of August, 1982. This is a time when many college campuses are still uninhabited by their students. Certainly, every proposed measure of conserving the church's resources deserves serious consideration.

But a thought more fundamental than the question of stewardship was expressed by Bishop John Walker of Washington when he admonished the church "to look at how we spend our money and ask ourselves: what does this have to do with the Gospel of Christ?" In more specific terms: what do \$8 million conventions have to do with, and do about, the down-trodden, the poor, the sick and the

oppressed? What did "Hunger Day" (the mere forgoing of one breakfast and one lunch, a benefit to most everyone's waistline, often canceled by a better-than-ever supper) have to do with the starving peoples of this world? And more specifically, how much rice would \$100 million, the magical sum sought by the national VIM campaign, buy for the starving peoples of Cambodia? And what does a Eucharist of life — celebrated in front of Convention Hall, while the slow death of alcohol was numbly looking on — teach us about our utter lack of understanding of the depth of human despair and need? Or, in the words of Francisco Reus-Froylan, Bishop of Puerto Rico: "On whose side are we? We cannot serve two masters! The defense of the human rights of people cannot take place while we stand as allies and supporters of those who oppress."

The church needs to put an end to her identification with, and support of, the same establishment which has exploited the poor. The church needs to stop serving her own constituency and start serving those she was called to serve: the hungry, the thirsty, the naked, the sick, the homeless and the imprisoned. The church must not only preach the Gospel, but also act it and live it, and that means more than just lip service. And the leadership of the church must show by its example that it cares!

A visitor said that conventions were necessary to decide upon the missionary strategy of the church and preserve the Faith from heresy. Would that the church and convention were preserved from the heresy of the worship of self and of mammon, for "again, I tell you, it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God." (Matthew 19:24). ■

'Must We Choose Sides?'

A new Study/Action Guide entitled Must We Choose Sides? made its debut at General Convention. Unique in formulation and format, the Guide has been praised by theologians Robert McAfee Brown and Harvey Cox and by Catholic reviewers such as Sister Mary Luke Tobin of the Thomas Merton Center for Creative Change, Gary MacEoin, noted author and expert in Latin American affairs; and Sister Lora Ann Quinonez, executive director of the Leadership Conference of Women Religious.

THE WITNESS thought that the story of the birth of Must We Choose Sides?, plus a brief description of contents from the book itself, was worthy of sharing with our readers, since the Episcopal Church Publishing Company played a vital role in its production.

Must We Choose Sides? Christian Commitment for the '80s is published by the Inter-Religious Task Force for Social Analysis. In 1976 a previous study/action guide on the social mission of the churches was published by the Church and Society Network in collaboration with THE WITNESS magazine. Entitled *Struggling With the System/Probing Alternatives*, it made its appearance in 1976 at the General Convention of the Episcopal Church in Minneapolis. The first printing was sold out in several months; a second printing is now virtually exhausted.

The Episcopal Church Publishing Company, which funded the initial project, was faced with the question of whether to authorize a third printing, finance a revision, or terminate the project. It commissioned an evaluation of the original study guide, seeking responses from every known person or group who had used it. The survey produced three major recommendations. First, a growing need was identified for such a resource to serve a broader-based Christian constituency. This suggested that to drop the project would be irresponsible. Second, some of the material in the first edition was found to be too limited or dated. A thorough revision was therefore in order. Third, a more representative study/action guide could be produced if an inter-religious editorial group was formed to take responsibility for the new project's direction. On this basis, the task was begun.

The Episcopal Church Publishing Company allocated funds for an editorial conference to initiate the new project. Invitations to join an editorial working group were extended to representatives of other progressive church networks and interfaith groupings who had already expressed a strong interest during the evaluation of the first edition.

The editorial group includes representatives of the Methodist Federation for Social Action, the World Student Christian Federation, THE WITNESS Magazine, the Church and Society Network, the New York Circus (an urban ministry of the Lutheran Church in America), the Board of Global Ministries of the United Methodist Church, the *Radical Religion* quarterly, Theology in the Americas, Christians for Socialism and the Data Center project of the Investigative Resource Center. The group consists of people from the West Coast, Mid-West and East Coast, six women and seven men, people who

are ordained, or lay, or religious. The group includes people who are affiliated with the Roman Catholic, Lutheran, Methodist and Episcopal churches, the Reformed Church in America and Disciples of Christ. With the exception of two members who had significant coordinating responsibilities for the project and received part-time salaries, the editorial group either gave time from their jobs, their personal lives, or both, without pay.

One of the first questions to be faced had to do with a major weakness of the first edition — that it attempted to speak to too wide a spectrum of interest, to those whose experiences were too divergent. The decision was made, therefore, to produce two volumes instead of one. The first would speak to people actively questioning the present order and seeking a systemic social analysis. The second volume would address itself to those who have done some theoretical work on the sources of our social discontent, but are asking



***Must We Choose Sides?* is a carefully developed, step-by-step analysis of the systemic problems that must be challenged if we are to have a just society. It starts where people are and helps them move toward where they ought to be. Discussion participants will have every chance to probe, question, examine and reexamine, in the light not only of careful social analysis but also of the resources of a biblically grounded Christian faith.**

— Robert McAfee Brown

what they can do about it. *Must We Choose Sides? Christian Commitment for the '80s* is the first of the two. The second will be available in May, 1980.

The Editorial Working Group held several plenary meetings to determine editorial policy, to agree on a profile of the constituency for whom the book was intended, to define tasks and to decide on content of the volume. Working in smaller units in different geographical areas, they completed specific assignments which were reviewed by the entire group. This was not the quickest, nor the easiest way to accomplish this task. The hope is that it may have been the most effective.

Serious discussion and debate of various theological and political points of view punctuated each successive editorial meeting. Many opinions were changed; some were not. Throughout the process, however, all editors shared

the firm conviction that there is no more serious and important task for people than to commit themselves to and engage others in the struggle for a more just society.

In addition to adopting a collective editorial model for producing the book, the editors also encouraged group process in its use. Following each set of readings a group exercise is suggested which is intended to draw on the life experiences of the persons using the book, both to test and to illuminate the value of the readings.

As a general rule, our bosses, schools, churches and the mass media — those opinion-makers who interpret daily events — teach us to see the world from the perspective of those who control the decision-making in our major institutions. Our history courses, for example, have emphasized the politics of bishops and kings, generals, presidents and industrialists. Our knowledge of church tradition has focused on the “great men” or “fathers”

Not only is it concise and eye-catching, but it offers a surprising number of meaty articles inviting the reader to further study. I can think of a number of groups for whom this book will be a boon. Many of them are tired of discussions that go nowhere, and are ready for the practical aid which social analysis brings to a too vague and generalized concern.

— Sr. Mary Luke Tobin

I have just spent several weeks looking at current material aimed toward a genuine response to the epochal challenge of Liberation Theology in the U.S., and I can say without reservation that *Must We Choose Sides?* is the best I've seen. Not only is it theologically sophisticated, but it's presented in a way that lay people without 'technical' theological training can use it. I am having our bookstore order it in sufficient quantity to be used not only by my students but by the people in the churches they serve and in the groups they belong to.

— Harvey Cox

of the church. The language used to interpret the economic and political changes which are occurring in the United States and around the world is the language of the propertied class which controls our government and our financial institutions.

This perspective never reveals the daily struggle of housewives, factory, farm and office workers — those who produce the social wealth and are now losing ground in the battle to create a better life for themselves and succeeding generations. Neither does perspective “from above” consider how lay people, especially women, have made the church a viable community institution.

The editorial group believes that a new analysis of the world is not only necessary to our physical survival but is essential to our spiritual survival as well. The perspective explored in the sessions of the book is forged out of the daily struggle against alienating work and unemployment, racism and sexism, poverty and exploitation, political domination and cultural imperialism — injustices of all kinds.

In the midst of all this, the voices of the prophets manage to break through, albeit in surprising ways. As a modern ballad puts it, “the words of the prophets are written on the subway walls and tenement halls.”

Those subways and tenements are often the settings for an endless series of horror stories which roll forth nightly on the late TV news: murders, rapes, fires, rent strikes, unemployment, lack of



“One of our mandates in the Leadership Conference of Women Religious is ‘education for justice that leads to systemic change.’ Many women religious, therefore, who are seeking a resource toward that end will find *Must We Choose Sides?* a useful tool for social analysis. Its emphasis on the praxis model (action and theological reflection) and the inclusion of group exercises following each study session also makes the methodology of the book extremely practical.

— Sister Lora Ann Quinonez

heating oil, energy crises, etc. With so many seemingly unconnected problems coming at us — and just before bedtime — it is difficult to analyze and make connections; to see how we can make waves, can effect change.

A primary goal of this study guide is to investigate the realities of our national life; to help toward an analysis of how problems are interconnected and why one class exploits another. By participating in the group exercises after each session, the editorial group hopes the users of the guide will find clues, together, on how to impact the system with hope and conviction, rather than fall prey to despair and fatalism.

The over-all title — *Christian Commitment for the '80s* — carves out the constituency for whom the book was produced. Obviously, Christians are not the only committed citizens. But Christians have a Biblical mandate to feed the hungry, clothe the naked, visit the prisoner, free the oppressed.

Christ's continuing denunciation of wealth and power and His promise that the meek shall inherit the earth provide a powerful stance that shakes the very foundations of civil and religious power, which leads to sober reflection in these sessions around the question: *Must We Choose Sides?*

People can understand neither their own world nor what is required of them as Christians, however, if they are exposed only to the analysis of controlling class interests. They need to see

the world as *their* world and how they affect and are affected by what happens. This view of the world is disturbing and conflictual. It also provides courage, deep vision and forms of human community which people are in desperate need of discovering.

Following is a brief synopsis of the six successive sessions, taken from the introduction of the book:

Session 1:

Ordinary People, Extraordinary Dreams

Perhaps many of us will feel that the dreams expressed by the “ordinary” people quoted in this session are not unlike our own, and therefore not “extraordinary” at all. What makes them extraordinary is that they cannot be fulfilled under working conditions enforced by the present economic order. This session and the following are aimed at investigating the question: “What kind of a society is it in which only a small percentage of the people have any chance of getting work which is fulfilling?” and “Can we do anything to change it?”

We are invited in the first group exercise to share our own experiences as working people (what we like about our jobs, what we find alienating and oppressing) and to share our own dreams.

Session 2:

We Make History . . . Or It Makes Us

Having shared our personal view of life at work, we move on to look at our experiences in historical context and to examine the workplace itself as part of a system. We investigate how work is organized, our participation (if any) in its control, the fundamental differences between workers and owners. The readings introduce a few concepts to help us to develop a social analysis. We also probe the question: “How is our religious practice influenced by our class background?”

Session 3:

Confronting Capitalism

This session moves us deeper into systemic analysis, asking us to examine the structure of the capitalist system. First, a group of writers affiliated with a

Christian missionary order take on the task of testing the myths of capitalism. In addition, a Canadian philosopher presents elements of a classic Marxist critique of capitalism. As the second reading points out, Marx did not think capitalism would fail because it is unfair or unjust, but because the system itself creates problems it cannot solve. Runaway inflation, massive unemployment and the continuing energy crisis are just a few indications that capitalism is creating sufficient problems to stimulate a radical critique of itself.

In this session we probe the reality behind words charged with political and moral responsibility — like “exploiter and exploited,” “oppressor and oppressed” — which make us angry. We try to channel that anger constructively in a group exercise designed to explore not only the injustices of capitalism, but also the organized forces confronting those injustices.

Session 4:

Elements of Class

How do we understand class and where do we locate ourselves in the social strata? That is the burden of investigation for this session. So frequently we hear fearful reference made to the “class struggle,” as though

“*Must We choose Sides?* is a real answer to the needs of the growing number of Americans who suspect that our present economic system can no longer provide well being and may soon not even ensure order in our society. It starts at the beginning, making no assumptions of significant knowledge of the levers of power and privilege, then quickly takes the reader deeper than most have ever gone into the systemic causes of today's malaise and tomorrow's threat.

Developed by a wide-based ecumenical group, it stands firmly in the Christian tradition and carries that tradition to its logical conclusion of direct challenge to a capitalist system based on greed and selfishness.

— Gary MacEoin

the very mention of it is to advocate violent upheaval. This session seeks not to advocate it but simply to recognize class struggle as a fact. The first reading examines what role people play in the production process, in decision-making, in control over what they do for a living. It contrasts what the tiny propertied class owns and controls to what the rest of us have.

The second two readings attempt to locate the churches in class struggle. Which class interests do the churches uphold? More often than not, the churches defend the interests of the propertied class. But because our churches are multi-class organizations, this is not always true. The prophetic church has always taken up the struggle of the poor and working people. Our churches provide no sanctuary from class conflict in secular life.

The exercise for this session is a role play. It is designed to help us look at some of the hard questions we face in taking responsibility for the stewardship of church property.

Session 5: Reclaiming Our Christian Tradition

Why "reclaiming" in the title for this session? Because ever since the days of the early church, the reigning political and social powers have fought to prevent the Christian faith from threatening their established way of doing things. Jesus was a champion of the oppressed, and God continues to "put down the mighty from their thrones and exalt the humble." But today, many know that religion is more preoccupied with its "spiritual" role and preserving the *status quo* than with exercising its prophetic role or becoming involved in

social mission.

Yet, there have always been those who believe that there can be no real peace and love without justice, and that faith must be linked to practice, each informing the other. This session tries to help us to recapture that ancient tradition of the Christian faith.

Session 6: A Reform Is A Reform . . . Or Is It?

Finally we address the overwhelming question: "How do we organize to assure that we are not simply undertaking Band-Aid approaches to solve problems which have deep roots in the heart of our economic order?"

While there is no easy answer, we are convinced that we have been involved in sufficient action and reflection since the '60s and throughout the '70s to summarize our experience of the past and develop a clearer direction for struggles continuing into the '80s. This session presents a few guidelines and a framework for group process so we can judge for ourselves whether our own current efforts will produce substantive reforms or not.

Some of us insist that we think our way into new ways of acting. Others argue that we act our way into new ways of thinking. It is our hope that this study/action guide will enable us to do some of both. It has been designed to help committed Christians break away from worn-out concepts and do some creative new thinking. Equally important, it should effectively move us to answer affirmatively the question: *Must We Choose Sides?*, whereby we strengthen our commitment to the class-conscious struggle, and act our way into a new way of thinking. ■

Continued from page 9

toward a "New Age" by lobbying successfully for autonomy of their church. "Chains must be broken so that ties may be strengthened," said the Rt. Rev. Francisco Reus-Froylan, Bishop of Puerto Rico, as the church was set free to determine its own future.

In sum, what conclusions can one draw from something so prodigious as a two-week General Convention? At one



Bishop Hines presents the William Spofford award to the Rev. Paul Washington.

of the Urban Bishops Seminars, Respondent Marion Kelleran described herself as "an Emmaus Road Christian. I always seem to know *after* the fact." Would that the facts were even *that* clear to this reporter.

Certainly it can be said that here and there, a small flame broke through — in some of the resolutions, in minority statements, in events in the sideshows. And perhaps those disappointed by the events under the big tent can find solace, again, in the words of Harvey Cox: "*The new church we look for need not come entirely from the churches of today. It certainly will not. It will come, if it comes at all, as a new congeries of elements — some from the churches, some from outside, some from the fertile interstices between. And it will assume a shape we can hardly predict, though we can sometimes see its outlines — in fantasy.*"

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Collegiality: Resource or Bondage

by John E. Skinner

In the Episcopal Church we have heard a great deal recently about the importance of collegiality. Much of this emphasis has come directly from that assemblage of persons called the House of Bishops. Collegial spirit has become an important facet of that group's ongoing agenda, and to defy that spirit is to incur the wrath of that group's members.

Collegiality is derived from the word, college (in Latin, *collegium*), which means a society. The most usual meaning of the word, college, is a body of persons having common interests or corporate functions, and traditionally it has referred to a group of clergy living in common on a foundation. Furthermore, it can point to a body of scholars incorporated for study or instruction, especially in the higher branches of learning. Here a faculty of a college, seminary, or university is its obvious application. So a collegial spirit can be seen arising in these various assemblages of persons.

Often overlooked is the meaning of the word, college, in English slang. Here it means a prison. Undoubtedly, many rigidly organized and tightly knit groups, clerical or academic, have had this character. To think an original thought or to engage in an apparently outrageous deed is forbidden. Reality is limited to the confines of the collegial group and its pronouncements. Anomalies by definition are outlawed and must be cast into outer darkness. The collegial group thus becomes a prison house of the spirit.

Collegial spirit, however, can have many positive characteristics. It may serve as a support for the common efforts of those within a particular group. It is one way in which the intensity of individual experience is shared by many, is expressed in an ordered fashion, so that the

intensity of the moment does not self-destruct. It is the kind of mutual encouragement, the *esprit de corps* that strengthens an interdependence of persons committed to a common task.

This may be illustrated in many ways but perhaps two examples will suffice. In the first place, the faculty of a divinity school or a theological seminary finds itself committed to the common task of study and instruction. The collegial spirit which develops helps to make for a more cohesive group, engenders cooperation rather than competition, support for each individual member rather than isolation and alienation of the individual members from one another. Such a collegial spirit can be a dynamic expression of the common efforts of a faculty dedicated to the Gospel and the great tradition passed on in response to what the Gospel has meant and what it continues to mean. But this collegial spirit should not become itself the definitive factor demanding a conformity from all of the colleagues; rather the collegial spirit should be an expression of the commitment of a varied number of individuals to a common task. It should not be a commitment resulting in conformity which would stop true learning, but rather a commitment resulting in creative inquiry which opens up novel dimensions to enrich the past and the present.

In the second place, those priests of the Church, now exclusively male, elected by both clergy and laity to serve as bishops find themselves as an episcopal group committed to a common task. That task entails the care of all the churches, the shepherding of the flock of Christ, and being the focal point of authority for the many in the one diocesan structure. The peculiar makeup of the General Convention of the Episcopal Church also gives these priests a unique political power as this is expressed in *one* of the two houses of the Convention, the House of Bishops. The other

The Rev. John E. Skinner is professor of theology at the Episcopal Divinity School, Cambridge, Mass.

"The bishops need to make a clear distinction between their membership in one of the two legislative branches of the General Convention and their membership in their own club or college. The drift towards authoritarianism due to a lack of this distinction means that the college or club acts in a quasi-legislative way that practically works itself out as the law of the church. The House of Deputies should not permit this sort of thing to occur."

legislative body, the House of Deputies, constitutes the bicameral character of the General Convention.

The House of Bishops currently serves two purposes. It is one of the two legislative branches of the General Convention which meets every three years. As a legislative body it has no authority to meet without the presence of the House of Deputies. And yet in order to serve its other function, it meets when General Convention is not in session as a college of bishops concerned with the common task of being a bishop. The individual bishops come together for mutual support, to affirm their commitment to the Gospel, and to consider their peculiar duties in relationship to it. As a result, a collegial spirit develops which should be the expression of that support for each bishop and the awesome duties surrounding that office.

As in the case of a theological faculty, the collegial spirit here should not seek to dominate the individual spirit but rather create a healthy tension between the two, represented by collegial nurture and episcopal freedom. When a collegial spirit becomes authoritarian and attempts to dominate, each individual bishop may be transformed into an abstract expression of that collegial spirit, and the church may end up with only one 'bishop,' namely, the collegial spirit itself of the college of bishops. The individual bishop must conform to it or be censured by it. When these things happen, the lowest common denominator often becomes the collegial spirit and a frantic effort to save the present by living in the past ensues. Furthermore, it is horrendous to think about it, but if a particularly forceful and charismatic bishop were to become presiding bishop under these circumstances, that person could well become the incarnation of that authoritarian collegial spirit, and thus assume the status of dictator of the episcopal college.

The bishops need to make a clear distinction between their membership in one of the two legislative branches of the General Convention and their membership in their own club or college. The drift towards authoritarianism due to a

lack of this distinction means that the college or club acts in a quasi-legislative way that practically works itself out as the law of the church. When this happens, there is no balance of political power provided by the House of Deputies, and the result is a church drifting in the direction of episcopal domination.

The House of Deputies should not permit this sort of thing to occur. If it threatens to do so, then perhaps a unicameral Convention structure would be more appropriate with each diocesan delegation having its bishop as one of the clerical members of the Convention. The college of bishops would then cease to have any legislative authority in the church.

A collegial spirit which demands subordination to it as the true sign of one's vocation as a bishop is an extremely dangerous trend. The individual bishop is handcuffed in his use of personal initiative within his own diocese. The more he is infected by this kind of collegial malady, the less he is able to make any decisions which call into question the collegial consensus.

No one, faculty member or bishop, should wish to offend deliberately the other members of the collegial group. But group decisions based on collegial consensus usually are "safe" ones and reflect a tendency to preserve the *status quo*. In spite of all the necessary emphasis on corporate responsibility and involvement, there are times when the individual alone may be a majority of one. The individual faculty member or bishop must have that space to act freely and decisively, even though in some cases it may go contrary to the collegial spirit.

Individual decisions are not always correct; neither are corporate decisions. Because of this, the healthy tension between collegial spirit and individual freedom must be maintained at all costs.

The Gospel is our judge on these matters. Decisions, corporate or individual, which favor some but neglect and abuse others, are always subject to question. The Gospel is also our judge on matters of conscience. Conscience is culturally conditioned and unless it represents the healthy tension between past reality and future possibility, conscience may also err. If we feel our conscience has been violated, when some other person is reaching out to individuals who in the past have been neglected, abused, or oppressed, then we need to have our conscience grounded in the Gospel rather than in social or ecclesiastical mores.

In conclusion, collegial spirit cannot be identified with the Holy Spirit, and neither can the spirit of the individual be so equated. It is more likely that God's Holy Spirit which cannot be structurally entombed, even ecclesiastically, will be found hovering within the tension between collegial spirit and individual spirit. ■



Jesus Healed Women's Bodies

by Georgia Fuller

I speak out as a woman who has never had an abortion. I speak out as a woman who fervently hopes she never needs an abortion. I speak out to say, loud and clear, that there are millions of Christian women like me.

We recognize the facts of life — rape, contraceptive failure, incurable genetic disease. We need safe alternatives when the inadequate societal, medical or economic structures of U.S. life leave us alone with an unmanageable pregnancy. We need more choice, not less.

We have one important challenge to make to the fanatical fringe of the “pro-life” movement, especially the National Right to Life Committee and March for Life. In a free-choice society, if a day passed during which no woman had an abortion because no woman needed one, WE would be happy. If a year passed during which no woman ever had an abortion because no woman needed one, WE would be ecstatic! We challenge March for Life and the National Right to Life Committee to help us build that free-choice society. We challenge them to pour their time, energy and money into preventing the causes of abortion. We especially challenge the Christians within those groups.

Jesus told us that the Kingdom of God was at hand. Jesus

Georgia Fuller, Ph.D., is chair of the National Committee on Women and Religion, National Organization for Women (NOW). The above article first appeared in the *Pennsylvania NOW Times Magazine*.

called us to help build that Kingdom — a holy reign of justice and peace. A Kingdom in which, to paraphrase St. Paul, with the contemporary idiom, there is neither male nor female stereotyping; black nor white racial divisions; rich nor poor distinction in access to essential medical services (Galatians 3:28).

There can be no justice and peace where there is rape and incestuous rape. There can be no justice and peace where there is ignorance about human sexuality and inadequate, even primitive, responses to our bodies. There can be no justice and peace when parents who bear genetically damaged children must suffer a lonely heartache and a lifetime of enormous medical expenses. There can be no justice and peace as long as social, legal *and* religious distinctions still separate children of God by labels of legitimacy and illegitimacy.

The call of Jesus to build God's Kingdom of Justice and Peace here and now has not been accepted by the fanatical fringe of the “pro-life” movement. Why not, we ask? At its basic foundations, this fringe is not truly pro-life; nor is it truly Christ-like.

First, the fanatical fringe of the “pro-life” movement is not truly *pro-life*. It could be called, with more accuracy, a *pro-fetal-life movement*. A recently published opinion survey in the appendix of *Are Catholics Ready?* correlated responses to issues of sexuality, racial equality and social aggression. The sample population was 5,592 church-going Catholics.

The question was phrased in terms of support for a fetal life amendment to the U.S. Constitution, not in terms of abortion itself. (Undoubtedly there were many more moderate people who feel abortion is murder, immoral or undesirable but who do not support the fetal life amendment. They were not correlated in this survey.) The results show a moderately negative correlation between the fringe who support the fetal life amendment and their opinions on issues of societal justice. In other words, the survey respondents who were constitutionally pro-fetal-life also tended to favor the death penalty and the maintenance of U.S. military superiority. They were, additionally, inclined to think that racial equality in the United States has gone too far.

The survey results further show a strong, positive correlation between the proposed amendment and sexual traditionalism. In other words, the respondents who were pro-fetal-life wanted to forbid the use of artificial contraception, remarriage after divorce and sexual relations by engaged couples. They also wanted to maintain a celibate priesthood. The fanatical fringe of the “pro-life” movement is *NOT* pro-life. It is pro-fetal-life, pro-sexual repression and pro-separation.

Secondly, this fanatical fringe is, at its fundamental base, not Christ-like. It espouses a modern, political extension of the body-spirit dichotomy or dualism. Periods of Christian thought have taught that a pure, perfect soul — which was the created image of God — was somehow trapped in an imperfect, evil body. The path to spirituality was to transcend this body — symbol or cause of the Fall — including sexuality.

One modern consequence of this thought is the maintenance of religious celibacy. This is the forerunner of today's assertion that a pure, perfect fetal soul is created within a less-than-perfect-body which then loses its rights. This is pro-separation — separation of the spirit and the body. This is pro-repression — repression of the body which God created. And, this is heresy.

I used to skip the miracle stories in the Gospel. They made me uncomfortable because I grew up in this heresy — the heresy that denigrated the body. Why would Jesus heal bodies, I thought? Why would Jesus touch bodies? My *body* wasn't nearly as important as my *mind*. What we need in the Gospels, I used to think, were less miracle stories and more good parables — like the Prodigal Son!

As a feminist, I gradually began to appreciate my own body — even to like it and to respect it. I became open to healing — healing that flows from the Spirit and is, in reality, united and interwoven with the body. As my feminism became united with my Christianity, I became open to the miracle stories.

Liberal Christian thought is inclined to teach that Jesus came to tell us that each person is important to God. Jesus tells us that each man and each woman is precious. We must move one step further. Jesus tells us that each woman's body is precious — each man's body is precious. Every aspect of it! Bodies were precious enough for Jesus to touch and heal! Jesus touched the body of Simon-Peter's mother-in-law, in the Gospel of Mark (1:30-31), and the fever left her. Jesus touched the daughter of Jarius, in Luke 8:49-56, and she arose from the dead. Jesus touched the crippled woman, in Luke 13:11-13, and she stood up straight.

And in the Gospel according to St. Matthew we read: And behold, a woman who had suffered from a hemorrhage for twelve years came up behind Him and touched the fringe of His garment; for she said to herself, "If only I touch His garment, I shall be made well." Jesus turned, and seeing her He said, "Take heart, daughter, your faith has made you well." And instantly the woman was made well. (9:20-22)

For twelve years this woman had bled. Possibly the result of a first century botched abortion. And Jesus healed her body! Jesus healed the bodies of women. Jesus did not exploit them as tools for public policy! Jesus cared deeply

and passionately about the bodies of women. To be truly Christ-like, we must care deeply and passionately about our own bodies. This must include a deep and passionate respect for our own intimacy, our own sexuality, and our own procreative powers. Our freedom of choice in matters of abortion and sterilization must be personally informed — not publicly restricted. In order to exercise our freedom of choice with passionate respect, we must continue to demand adequate information about human sexuality and safe methods of contraception.

We, who believe in choice, are a threat. We are a threat to those Christians who seek to separate the body and the spirit. They then seek to repress the body, perhaps unaware that it deadens the spirit. They attack us so viciously because we are exposing them as being un-Christ-like.

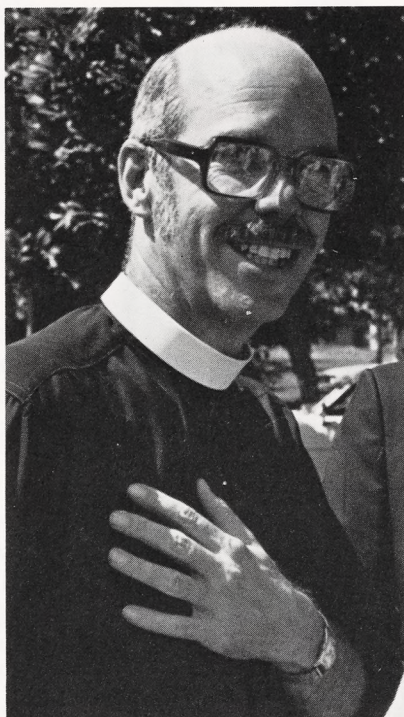
We are a threat to those Christians who fail to build the Kingdom of Justice and Peace, because justice confronts the status quo. We are exposing the fact that rape and incest are tools of patriarchy. Men stay in power through physical and psychological abuse of the bodies of women.

In the name of Christian justice and peace, we ask, "Who benefits when women are subject to violence? Who benefits when women are denied respect for and control of their own bodies? Who benefits when women are denied respect for an understanding of their own procreative powers?"

In the name of Christian justice and peace, we ask, "Who benefits when a poor woman is forced to care for extra children?" The effect of denying abortions to poor women is to lock her entire family into a cycle of poverty. An increased pool of poorly-educated and opportunity-limited workers is the tool of traditional capitalism.

In the name of Christian justice and peace, we ask, "What is the true moral value of a society that places the burden of its morality on the backs of those least able to bear it?" Today, some say abortion is immoral, so we must maintain our national morality by forbidding poor women to have abortions. Ten years ago, many of these same people, particularly the leadership of the fanatical fringe, said welfare children were immoral. They tried to maintain our national morality through a sociopolitical climate that cut welfare allotments and forced sterilizations. Abortions were even forced on poor, particularly minority women, during the years when abortion was illegal!

Because Christians in the fanatical fringe of the "pro-life" movement cannot answer these Christian challenges, they attack us. We must maintain and refine our understanding of the unity of the body and spirit that demands passionate respect for our bodies. As we struggle to develop our new understanding and are attacked, we can remember these words of Jesus: "Blessed are you when men shall revile you, and persecute you . . ." (Matthew 5:11) ■



The Rev. Richard W. Gillett

New on ECPC Staff

The Rev. Richard W. Gillett will join the staff of the Episcopal Church Publishing Company on January 1. He will have particular responsibility for the development of the Church and Society Network, and will serve in a consultative capacity to THE WITNESS as well. Founder and director of the first industrial mission in Puerto Rico from 1967-73, he has since been serving as director of community outreach for All Saints Church, Pasadena.

A major article by Gillett, analyzing the right-wing shift of history, its consequences on morale, and projecting Christian tactics for the '80s will appear in the December issue of THE WITNESS.



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find a treasure . . .**



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Now surely you *have* two friends? ? ?

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us.

I have a son who is a Marxist, and he is a much better Christian than any Christian I have ever met. Theologians have much to answer for. God is by no means dead, but exoteric Christianity must surely be in its last stages. If it were not, how could the country as full of churches as it is, be in the condition and be as lethal as it is?

As Stringfellow says, authority in our public life has become a very great problem. Dan Zwedding has pointed out that we are educated for a dictator. We no longer live in a Republic, which assumes responsibility and sanity. Our economic system has an agribusiness that poisons us as well as a berserk technological machine connected to our military life (the Caesar part) which threatens the life of every man, woman, and child in the world.

The quotation from the Revelation to John, 3:14-17, was never more apt. We do not know that we are "wretched, pitiable, poor, blind and naked." God has abandoned not only the Episcopal Church; God has abandoned the country, more or less. Who at this time would dare to stand up and be counted as loving us all enough to start telling us true things, speaking of our errors, and leading us away from our self-created fires and radioactive mess?

Marion Wylie
Oakland, Cal.

Applies to Scientists

The article by T. Richard Snyder in the October WITNESS was excellent and the scope of its application is far wider than theological education. In particular the point he made about "focus on the subjective and autonomous person" was important: "We have displaced any sense of corporate, structural, public accountability for the Gospel with a personalized understanding of faith and salvation."

In July I attended the MIT World Council of Churches conference on "Faith, Science and the Future." The

greatest problem and stumbling block in the conference was the emphasis placed upon self-knowledge, self-definition, and subjectivity with reference to scientists. This amounts to blaming the scientists as a group and as individuals for the current problems we have with technology.

Not only does assignment of blame in this way sidestep an important part of the process of solving the problems, that of understanding the underlying cause of the misuse of technology, but it removes theologians from the situation and allows them (as many did most vehemently) to deny their own complicity.

Blaming the scientists adds insult to injury inasmuch as individual scientists up until now have been among the most vocal in protest. Without help from the institution which should most be able to aid in matters of conscience — the church — some scientists, acting alone out of conviction and without help (usually with opposition) from their professional community, have exposed destructive research, refused to work on research they consider harmful, even shut down offensive laboratories, and tried to warn the rest of society of dangerous consequences in certain areas. The destructive work which the scientist finds himself or herself doing and the destructive uses to which technology is put are symptoms of a deeper disease where the scientist is a tool used by the institutions; the scientist may be the executioner, but the sentence has already been passed. Since scientists have virtually no help in dealing with questions of responsibility and complicity, they are among the major victims of technological oppression.

Because of the mechanization of destruction, the individual is alienated from the damage caused. This makes it difficult if not impossible for the individual to evaluate his or her own responsibility and act on this evaluation. It also makes it imperative that we have a mechanism in which to raise and discuss questions of individual

responsibility. I think here the churches have an important job to do, and that the WCC has made a good beginning.

Sara Winter
Pennington, N.J.

Beyond the Pale

When are you people going to realize that your particular emphasis is no longer in fad? Hopefully the Episcopal Church has moved beyond your silly little games, and has begun to involve Jesus Christ in the solutions to the world's problems.

May I suggest that you read a book called "Growth and Decline in the Episcopal Church"? I consider myself a liberal, but you are beyond the pale. I do a lot of prayer time over the problems that you people are causing.

The Rev. Eugene A. Combs
Henry, Ill.

Helpful to Seminarian

My June issue of THE WITNESS never arrived in my mailbox. I have the feeling it was ripped off, along with my *Christianity and Crisis* "Coming Out" issue. I hope the issues were meaningful to whomever took them. Could you please send me a replacement copy? I have been keeping my issues of THE WITNESS and have found them most helpful for my seminary studies, for information, clarification and insight, not to mention some spiritual uplifting and hope. I would be willing to help in pushing info about your periodical, perhaps expediting orders. I know that the word/Word needs to get out!

George F. Neumann, Jr.
CDSP
Berkeley, Cal.

CREDITS

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