

VOL. 63, NO. 4
APRIL, 1980

William Howard
Mattie Hopkins
Cornel West

Copyright 2020. Archives of the Episcopal Church / DFMS. Permission required for reuse and publication.



Anne Braden



Letters

to the

Editor

Forum for Controversy

This is simply a reflection of my feelings, intended as support for the work which you are doing. I particularly address your publishing of William Stringfellow's "An Open Letter to the Presiding Bishop" in your January issue. This took courage to publish, and I for one, greatly respect that courage.

Although I do not feel as strongly as Mr. Stringfellow, I think that the church today very much needs to hear this sort of thing. I am delighted to see THE WITNESS allow itself to be used as such a forum.

I have had the experience of writing for publications whose editors have chosen to rewrite my material to remove any suggestion of controversy and give the material a "rose tinted" hue which was not intended. This sort of thing must be countered with efforts such as yours. Bravo for taking the risk.

The Rev. Richard Bridgford
Norfolk, Va.

Support Stringfellow

For a long time we have been aware of the absence of any stand on vital issues on the part of the Presiding Bishop, John Allin. Furthermore, we were shocked when the Presiding Bishop ignored his subpoena to testify at the Wendt Trial. We were shocked at his remarkable position taken contrary to the General Convention against women priests. And more than anything else we were shocked that he was partially the cause of imprisonment and then total lack of support of the two women on the Hispanic desk, who for their Christian ethics went to jail—receiving no assistance until under pressure a meager sum was squeezed out of the Presiding Bishop's discretionary fund.

We also call for the resignation of John Allin as Presiding Bishop of the Episcopal Church, U.S.A. Thank you, Mr. Stringfellow, for having the courage to write your Open Letter to THE WITNESS, which has expressed, and pinpointed, the feelings of a vast number of the membership of the Episcopal

Church, both lay and clergy.

And to THE WITNESS, thank you for your courage in sharing and giving us the opportunity in turn to express our beliefs.

Frances L. E. Ruegg
Mary F. Brinley
Chestnut Hill, Pa.

Christian Candor?

I ought perhaps preface this comment on William Stringfellow's Open Letter to the Presiding Bishop by stating that "I am not now, and never have been" a great defender of Bishop Allin's occupancy of his office. Still, I am moved to rise to his defense in not replying to the Stringfellow letter, as I would to the defense of anyone subjected to such an onslaught.

In the name of pastoral responsibility and concern for Bishop Allin as a human being, Stringfellow supplies him with a crushing picture of himself which is neither objectively verifiable nor subjectively tolerable. His "image of

Continued on page 22

An Open Letter to William Stringfellow

My brother, peace! I write this letter within the context of my deep respect for you, and my sincere admiration for your work and ministry. I write also in basic agreement with your "Open Letter to the Presiding Bishop." I do not write to attack, or to disagree, but to seek, with you, to serve our church and the Church Universal through ache, mutual search and mutual hope.

I wonder if, in your own Open Letter, you do not miss something of the special and unique charism of our beloved PECUSA? Believe me, as a radical myself, I am not sure I like taking a

"conservative" side. And I am *not* saying that "though what you write is true look what we have done!" I am saying rather that I see our church and the Anglican Communion of which it is a part as the singular most prophetic manifestation of Catholic Christianity in centuries.

Two questions come to mind. Though what you write is true and I applaud your integrity and your courage, do you see this other side of which I speak? If so, the second question: Given this special charism of our Communion and church, is not the Presiding Bishop—necessary as he might be for order and

organization—somewhat of a non-issue? What I am saying is, (and I accuse myself of this) do we not spend too much energy in anger over little people who ultimately have little to say? The Presiding Bishop may not swallow the ordination of women but the ordination of women is a fact and it will be the women and not the P.B. who will overcome. The Presiding Bishop (and many another) might be cruel to homophiles—but the persons who are so oriented will overcome. And for every John Allin there is a Paul Moore, a

Continued on page 22

THE WITNESS

Robert L. DeWitt, Editor; Mary Lou Suhor, Managing Editor; Kay Atwater, Robert Eckersley, Richard W. Gillett, Ann Hunter, Susan Small, Lisa K. Whelan, Hugh C. White, Jr. Editorial and Business Office: P.O. Box 359, Ambler, PA 19002. Telephone (215) 643-7067.

Subscription rates: \$9.00 per year; \$1.00 per copy. *The Witness* is published monthly by the Episcopal Church Publishing Company. Board of Directors: Wesley Frensdorff, Steven Guerra, Barbara Harris, Suzanne Hiatt, John E. Hines, Mattie Hopkins, Joan Howarth, James Lewis, H. Coleman McGehee, Joseph A. Pelham, Robert S. Potter, and Helen Seager. Copyright 1980 by the Episcopal Church Publishing Company. Printed in U.S.A.

Cult, Cause & Commitment

Robert L. DeWitt

How do we keep hoping in the face of discouragement? How do we maintain a faith when it is challenged by harsh and bitter realities? These questions, unasked, were nevertheless brooding in the atmosphere in Indianapolis in mid-February when some 500 laity, priests and bishops met to form an Episcopal Urban Caucus.

Gathered together were many who had been prominently identified with the significant issues of social mission which have claimed national attention over the past two decades. Stubborn issues, refusing to go away. A case in point is the continuing tragedy of racism, addressed in many of the pages of this issue of THE WITNESS. A casual observer might have found the tone and resolutions of the assembly quite predictable, and might well have felt it was all just an emotional and ineffective exercise recalling the hemorrhaging hearts of the do-gooders of the '60s.

But such an evaluation would have missed a deeper dimension of what was going on. The social mission of the church for some years has fallen on hard times. Those gathered at the Assembly were the weary warriors who had not bowed the knee to Baal, and were looking for the consolation of Israel. Indeed, the analogy is suggestive. During the great feast days in ancient Israel, the league of tribes gathered for a deeply meaningful cultic event. On those occasions they recalled what God had done for them, and what God expected of them. And out of this cultic remembering there arose a new resolve that strengthened them to be faithful to their side of the covenant. Those great feast days were

precursors of the Easter Festival which, in commemorating the Resurrection, looks back in gratitude to a mighty deliverance by God, and looks forward to a life of renewed faithfulness. Christians signalize this heritage of gratitude when they sing the familiar Easter hymn:

*Come, ye faithful, raise the strain
Of triumphant gladness.
God hath brought this Israel
Into joy from sadness . . .*

Indianapolis was in that tradition. Not one vital cause was left unnamed in the lengthy litany of social concerns. It was a cultic event. It was a remembering, and a resolve. As in those days of ancient Israel, when the tribes of Judah, of Manasseh, Levi and the others would have their own particular input of remembrance and concern, so it was at this assembly. Women, Hispanics, Blacks, Appalachians, those on relief—each was anxious to hold up its concerns to the other “tribes.” And out of these shared concerns came a common resolve. This league, like ancient Israel, had a sense of solidarity, manifested in their electing a governing board of four bishops, four clergy and eight lay persons. These have been charged with the responsibility of gathering up the intercessions in the assembly’s “litany” and establishing coherence and priorities for the actions to follow.

As with the community-building efforts of ancient Israel and of the early Christians, so it is

Continued on page 19

*The civil rights movement did not die
a natural death; it was aborted by wealth and power.
Lessons learned during that struggle merit
serious study in the '80s as the political Right
gains momentum.*

Civil Rights Movement: How It Succeeded, How It Failed

by Anne Braden

I want to recall the history of the civil rights movement of recent decades in this country, not as history in the abstract, but because I think this movement provides lessons that this nation needs desperately to hear at this moment. In fact, I think that the very future of this country, and maybe whether we have a future or not, depends on whether the lessons produced by that movement are heard and heeded.

What we usually call the civil rights movement developed in the Southern United States in the late '40s, and actually continues to this day. But unfortunately there is a great deal of confusion about exactly what this movement represents and what happened to it.

Anne Braden is an Episcopalian journalist who has been active in movements for civil rights, civil liberties, peace and labor for the past 33 years. She is co-chair of the Southern Organizing Committee for Economic and Social Justice, and vice-chairperson of the National Alliance Against Racism and Political Repression. Her recent address at Haverford College, sponsored by Students for Democratic Education was taped for *THE WITNESS* by Muhammad Kenyatta. Excerpts appear above.

One reason is that a couple of myths have arisen. The first myth tells us that the civil rights movement achieved its goals and simply faded off the scene. That is patently untrue. The civil rights movement accomplished many things, but it did not achieve its basic goal. In the early days people involved in the movement used to talk about what they called the Beloved Community. Just what that meant was not always spelled out but it was a powerful idea, and because people believed in that idea they were willing to risk their lives. Some of them died, gripped and inspired by the vision of a whole new world. And that basically was what the civil rights movement was about. The Beloved Community was not just to be people loving each other, although that was certainly a part of it. It was to be a just and fair society, a society in which racism and oppression had been eliminated. That was the goal; obviously, it was not accomplished.

To emphasize that, let me give a few facts. In Mississippi in the 1960s black people represented 26% of the state's poor people (poor by official government standards). By the mid-'70s that percentage had risen to 34%. In the 1960s in Harlem the infant mortality

rate among blacks was 37 deaths for every 1000 babies born; in 1976 it had gone up to 43. Among black teenagers the suicide rate *doubled* between 1965 and 1975. A few years ago the median income among black families in this country was about 62% of the median income of white families, but the latest figures show that black median income is 57% of white, getting worse. A few years ago unemployment rates among black people were 1½ times as high as among whites. Today black unemployment rates are 2½ times as high as among whites. Again, getting worse.

The most appalling situation of course is the unemployment figure for black youth. Even by official government figures, at least one third of our black youth cannot find jobs. But according to unofficial and certainly more accurate surveys that have been made by groups like the Urban League, at least 60% can't find jobs. And in some inner cities the figure is 75 and 80%. A whole generation of young black people in this country is systematically being destroyed. It doesn't take much imagination to figure where a lot of them will end up—either in prison, or in military service, or dead. This is a

national disaster, and the fact that it is not being treated as such is evidence of how deeply ingrained racism is in the United States. I'll guarantee you that if 75% of young white people couldn't find jobs, something would be done. So the idea that the civil rights movement won its goals and faded out of existence is clearly a myth.

And then there is the second myth, the totally opposite view, that the civil rights movement accomplished nothing at all except to elevate a few blacks into positions of prestige and/or into the middle class, and left life for the masses unchanged. And a corollary to this myth: the goals were really unattainable, so people just got frustrated and gave up. But that is not true either. In the first place the civil rights movement accomplished some remarkable things. It tore down the structure of public segregation in the South. Twenty years ago people said that was impossible. And it won the right to vote for *everybody* in the South. I grew up in Alabama in the days of rigid segregation, and I don't know anybody who would want to go back to the days when it was worth a black man's life to walk into a white

restaurant. Or when whites who challenged the status quo could also be met by howling mobs. As for the vote, it may not have made a revolution, and black elected officials don't always do what the black man and woman on the street wish they would do. But if one is going down to city hall to protest police brutality, or to the school board to try to deal with racism, it makes a difference if there are some black people in public office.

Beyond these concrete achievements, there is the undeniable fact that the civil rights movement changed the way millions of people in this country think. It certainly changed the way black people think. For it spread across the land the conviction that blacks didn't have to continue to live in the oppression under which they lived for 300 years. It changed the way many white people think, too, and made them reexamine the racist history of this country.

But I have another theory about what happened to the civil rights movement. Neither did it accomplish its goals and fade away, nor did the people involved in it grow frustrated and quit. I think that beginning in the mid and late 1960s

that movement was thrown into temporary disarray because it came under a staggering and sustained attack by powerful forces in this nation which were determined to kill it. Thus, it became an aborted revolution. It is important to understand what those in power did and why they did it. To do that we must analyze just what the civil rights movement represented, what it accomplished and why people in power were afraid of it.

The modern civil rights movement had its beginning in Montgomery, Ala., in December of 1955 with the Montgomery bus boycott. It was not the first time that blacks had fought for freedom. That had been going on since the first slave ship arrived on these shores. But Montgomery marked a qualitative change. Black people in Montgomery decided in mass that they would take no more, that they would not be second class citizens any longer. And they moved. And from there the concern spread, as there were more bus boycotts in cities and hamlets all across the South. People challenged at first the symbols of segregation, such as segregation in public accommodations. But they also challenged segregated



hospitals that had been letting black people die on waiting room floors. They challenged segregated schools, and black children walked through the mobs to go to token desegregated schools in those days. In 1960, a new generation of black students came onto the scene, moving into action, sitting at the lunch counters, going to jail, winning victories. And then moving out into the community in Mississippi, Georgia, Alabama—the deep South—to organize young and old people to win the vote and human dignity. Across the whole country, people were catching that spirit of freedom, and demanding change. A mass movement of black people in this country started in the South and spread from there. It was a movement joined first by a few and then by great numbers of white people who said: Your struggle is our struggle. You are fighting for all of us. We'll go to jail too, and we'll die if necessary. And some of them did. Let's look at the setting in which that happened.

In 1955 this nation was gripped by a great silence, a great social fear. After World War II the people who own and run this country moved to try to control the world and establish the "American century." So they set out to do what they called "containing communism." At home they tried to move to regain the ground they had lost during the upsurges of people's movements in the 1930s, when this nation's industrial workers organized for the first time and forced economic reforms. So we had the witch hunts, the Red scare, the loyalty oath, the purges, the splitting of the labor movement. We had the beginning of "the silent '50s." And then, in the most suppressed section—the black community—and in the most unlikely of all places—the cradle of the Confederacy, Montgomery, Ala.—a new movement started. Over the next decade it grew into mass proportions and the results were electric and

contagious. Suddenly white students found that they, also could speak and act. In California, white students were inspired by what black students were doing in the South and from California that student movement spread all across the country. About the mid-'60s, among women and other sections of the population, a massive movement was building to stop the U.S. involvement in Vietnam. In the early '70s it won the support of the majority of the people in this country and stopped the war.

Let's never forget that the people of this country organized and turned their government around and away from the crimes it was committing at that time in



Southeast Asia. Meantime, catching the winds of the times, poor people across the country, white as well as black, jobless people in Appalachia as well as displaced black sharecroppers in Mississippi, were also organizing. White women began to talk about their own oppression as women and we had the beginning of the new women's liberation movement. Suddenly white workers in the South began to think about what the black freedom movement meant for the mid-'60s. They began to see that it was to their advantage to link up with that movement. Black and white woodcutters, for example, in the mid-

'60s began to organize in the deep South.

In the mid-'60s the civil rights movement moved on from the symbols of segregation to address itself to economic issues. People in the movement across the South were beginning to say: "What good is it to be able to sit at a lunch counter if I don't have money to buy a hamburger?" So the movement began to look to the struggle for jobs and the right to organize a union. And in 1968 the Poor People's campaign was launched, designed to unite poor Blacks, Chicanos, Puerto Ricans, Native Americans and Whites in this country in a giant demand that this nation reorder its priorities and begin to deal with the needs of people. Martin Luther King, Jr. went to Memphis to help the garbage workers there in their fight for a union. The way was being cleared for a massive merging of the civil rights movement and a new grass roots labor movement in this country.

If you were one of the people in power when all this was happening—one of the people who owned and controlled the nation's resources—what would you have been thinking? Obviously, that movement was threatening your wealth and your power. I think you would have done everything you could to stop it. And that precisely is what the people who run this country did. They saw that the key to the whole thing was the black freedom movement, and if they could destroy or even cripple it temporarily, they could destroy the whole movement, or at least delay it for their lifetime. So Martin Luther King was murdered in Memphis. Key organizers of the black freedom movement across the land were suddenly under attack. Some were murdered in cold blood—as witness the attack on the Black Panthers. Many more black organizers were framed on ridiculous charges and sent to prison for long terms. Meanwhile those in power moved to

weaken and destroy organizations, to infiltrate them, to co-opt people who could be co-opted.

Don't ever let anyone tell you that the movement in the late '60s and early '70s simply died. At the very moment when it was on the verge of accomplishing some basic changes in this society, it was at least a temporary victim of the people who wanted to kill it and knew that it was in their interest to do so. The fallout from that massive attack of the late '60s set in motion forces that plagued us all through the decade of the '70s, and pose a grave danger to the future of this country.

Racism, which had been on the defensive through the '60s because of the force of the civil rights movement, was on the offensive again. In academic halls, pseudo-scholars began to peddle ideas that had been discredited decades ago about light-skinned people being superior to dark-skinned people. The Ku Klux Klan, which had been virtually destroyed by the momentum of the '60s movement, had a resurgence all across the country. The courts began to retreat on human rights issues. Congress began fencing in the civil rights legislation it had passed a decade earlier. Suddenly the idea of so-called reverse discrimination was gaining popularity. We were being told that black people had made too much progress, and it was white people who were discriminated against. That is what is being said by the Ku Klux Klan, and a lot of people are listening to it. Klan leaders say that they are for equality for everybody, but right now, black people are getting everything, and somebody has got to protect the rights of white people.

That is why the Klan has come to Decatur, Ill., to San Rafael, Cal., and why it's going to Long Island, N.Y. Those who argue for reverse discrimination in court rooms, academic halls, and respectable publications may say it more politely, but they are also saying the same thing.

If those things weren't being propagated in high places, the Klan couldn't be reviving as it is today. At the beginning of the 1980s we probably face the greatest time of crisis that has ever existed since the birth of this nation. We are living in a moment when society is literally falling apart before our eyes. The economy is in trouble, people are finding it hard to survive, middle-class people as well as the poor. Our cities are decaying, our school systems are deteriorating, and many people are becoming cynical. And the only answers the people who run this society seem to have is to build more and bigger prisons, and to spend more and more of our nation's resources on so-called defense when we already have enough nuclear arms to blow up the world several times.

In this situation, thousands or maybe millions of white people are being sold on the idea that if they can't get a job it is because a black person got the job as the result of an affirmative action program. And if they don't have enough to live on because prices and taxes are too high, it's because their pay checks are being eaten up by government spending on so-called give-away programs to blacks.

If enough white people become convinced that it is blacks and other people of color in this country who are causing their problems, then the needed scapegoat has been found. We can well have the potential mass-base for fascism in this country. We don't have a fascist society at this point, but the foundation for a police state is being laid.

We are the richest country in the world. But the people who run the economy are either unwilling, unable,

or both, to make the changes necessary to insure enough for everybody. In that situation, the people in power have apparently made a *de facto* decision—that if there is not enough for everybody, black people and other people of color can do without. If there is not enough decent housing for everybody, black people can live in slums. If there is not enough good health care for everybody, blacks can die young. The very essence of racism is the proposition that where burdens are to be borne, black people must bear them.

But once we tell people they are going to be oppressed, in actions if not in words, they are going to rebel. Eventually those in power are going to have to set up a police state to keep them under control. The task of the police will not be to protect, but to control the community. And that is why we are seeing all over this country a rise in crimes of police against the people, and that is why they are building more and more prisons. Ultimately, a police state must use storm troopers. And that's what the KKK, small in size now, could be.

Before the civil rights movement, the South was the closest thing to a police state that ever existed in this country. The people who ran it in the old days had decided that if there were burdens to be borne, the blacks could bear them. To maintain that state of affairs they had to create a police state. What some of us who are white learned was that once that happened, it imprisoned not only blacks, but us as well, except for a few in power.

It took the blood and the tears of the civil rights movement and it took the lives of some to break that police state. We were able to do it only because we had help from all over the country; it is almost impossible to break a police state from within. I suggest that if the South moves backward, the political climate moves to the right, and the

Continued on page 21

CREDITS

Cover, Gina Clement; pp. 5, 6 LNS; photo p. 8 by Rosie Saffold, A.D. magazine; graphic p. 11, *Human Rights Perspectives*; photo p. 16 by Jacqueline Gill; graphic p. 20 courtesy National Farm Worker Ministry.

Gospel Liberation Themes: A Challenge to Blacks

by William Howard

Some writers indicate that the Black Church's deviation from its militant mission became more pronounced soon after the Civil War. Then, legal slavery had ended and the challenge of giving order and normalcy to black life was first on the agenda. By no means was the black community ever free from tyranny and intimidation in this period; if anything white terrorism showed a marked increase.

But clearly we can say that for the first time during their history in the United States, black people were in a position to proclaim what they wanted, not just what they *didn't* want. They were able for the first time on these shores to complete the phrase: "TO BE FREE IS. . ."

There were three options: they could return to their African homeland; they could struggle to build a structurally more just society in the United States; or they could work to be included in the on-going life of the young nation.

Our history will show that each of these options was pursued by different segments of the black population, although at the time the primary motive of each group was to insure its survival in the best way it knew how. The choosing of options in a detached and objective way was too sophisticated a luxury for a people newly freed from



bondage in a hostile environment.

But clearly, far more Africans chose to work for "civil rights" within the context of the given America, than chose to repatriate to Africa or to work for the fundamental transformation of the socio-political order of the country.

To this very day, those of us who consider "inclusion" to be the best alternative still prevail, and this is just as true in the church as it is in the greater community of black persons. We have seemingly put all our marbles together in one basket. Either we win an equal opportunity here in the United States or we will go down trying. This perspective is being promoted by some black people and a few liberal white people as the

only chance for authentic liberation and human fulfillment that is available to this country's black population. This has been the line of all the major civil rights organizations, and it has certainly been the line of those pastors and churches which have cried out for justice over these many years. But who among us has asked about the implications of inclusion? Inclusion for whom and for what? Who among us has really analyzed what it means to be included in the political, economic and social system in which we live? Such analysis would surely reveal that not only is it impossible for us to have justice within the present order, but as long as the machinery of this order

The Rev. M. William Howard is president of the National Council of Churches of Christ in the U.S.A. This article is taken from his keynote address at the Black Theology Project's "Operation Soul" in Philadelphia.

functions, and functions well, it continues to insure imperialistic domination of peoples in most other parts of the world. And in the face of this conclusion, which road do we choose? Perhaps that is the most important question for us in this generation. Will we confine our struggle for a just society to a domestic affair or are we searching for international or global conceptions of the factors which control our fate?

It is imperative for the Black Church to meet these questions head on and to explore them to their greatest depths, because more and more our congregations are stimulated by what they observe in their daily lives, to question much of what we have taught in the past. It is hardly likely that many will derive a clearer understanding of our world order if it does not come from the church.

What earthly message can the Black Church bring to explain corruption in high places; what explanation can it bring to rising inflation, the declining value of the dollar on international markets; what explanation for the rising trade deficits or the high rate of unemployment among our youth?

Or better yet, how can black clergy who worked so hard for Jimmy Carter explain why his performance for the poor has been so lacking?

Could it be that our understanding of the situation is faulty? Do we still presume that if a few well-intended, good people could just be placed in the proper positions, then they will

"The Black Church which teaches that upward class mobility, the acquisition of things, and electoral politics are the best signs of hope against the lingering ravages of slavery is a Black Church which is doomed to be judged by its own sermons."

maneuver and make things better? Then, we really have not yet realized that the structure of our society breeds injustice. Its very fabric breeds oppression and requires selfish competitiveness. *And* it is this structure that we want to include us—this structure in which we have chosen to sink or swim. Do we think that we can humanize a structurally unjust system by participating in it, or is it really our hope to get in on the action—corruption, greed and all the rest—and “git while the gittin’ is good?” If the latter is our hope, we have not only abandoned the large majority of our people and our link with the radical origins of the Black Church, but we have given up all claim to Christ’s Gospel itself.

What, then can be our alternate course? Is it not our charge to build this kingdom on earth? Is not this kingdom a center of life, of love, of caring one for another? Is it not that place where animal and plant life are in harmony, where race and class no longer contain human relations? Where conservation and ecology abound? Where each person has his worth?

Oh, what a beautiful city!

But will we ever get there? Will the *new day* just evolve from nothing? Do we think, one morning when we rise up, we will magically look out upon the

acceptable year of the Lord, without struggling to free the captives or to give sight to the blind?

We know that day will never come. And we know in our hearts that if the new day will come, it will be the least of our brethren who bring it.

That is precisely where our whole Black Church tradition hangs in the balance: will it continue to preach the coming of a new day without taking up its cross and ushering the new day in? Will it continue to disdain oppression, while pushing hard to be enveloped by a structure that proliferates oppression?

Our people need opportunities to think and examine without fear “what are the chains that bind them in this world.” Just a little bit of observation will tell us that these chains are not confined to our neighborhood; not even confined to our city, state or nation. Instead, we will learn that one of our greatest and most formidable enemies is a world-wide economic system which thrives on cheap labor, which thrives on cheap natural resources, which thrives on an almost mindless, insatiable public bent on *consumerism*. This system respects no national boundaries, and those who would resist it are compelled to reach out to people of many nations to form relationships of solidarity and mutual opposition.

Without these global relationships with other oppressed peoples we are unable to recognize certain relevant signs of God’s kingdom. This will be true because we will be too blinded by our own luxury and flamboyance. We will be too limited by our own conviction that to consume is superior. More and more, the Black Church which teaches that upward class mobility, the acquisition of things, and electoral politics are the best signs of hope against the lingering ravages of slavery, is a Black Church which is doomed to be judged by its own sermons. ■

In Partnership With Apartheid

My remarks today will focus on observations made in connection with our 17 day visit to South Africa. I first want to attempt to describe, in some measure, the South African arrangement. The apartheid system in South Africa is brutally enforced by the police and upheld by racist laws which represent a daily violation of the humanity of the black population in South Africa. We talked to a number of business leaders among white South Africans who fully agree with that estimate. The South African government does not recognize black humanity.

One could say, "Well this is bad and we oppose it, but what does this have to do with U.S. foreign policy?" The U.S. involvement with that racist regime—the economic, political, diplomatic, military, and cultural ties between our government and the apartheid regime of South Africa—constitutes a partnership of serious import. Three hundred and fifty U.S. business corporations operate there. These 350 U.S. corporations employ about 60,000 blacks in mostly menial, low-paying jobs with no union and another 40,000 whites, mostly in upper salary, white collar occupations and managerial positions. These circumstances put the U.S. government and our corporations in an uneasy partnership with South African apartheid.

Economically the apartheid regime needs a 7% annual growth rate. From their own capital they can generate 3 to 3½% a year or about half of what they need. The system needs \$600 million to \$2 billion a year in new capital to grow. If we insist upon disinvestment because of disenfranchisement, then we would make a valid contribution to the liberation of black people in South Africa.

What do South African blacks think U.S. companies

should be doing? Although opinion is divided, most think they should be disinvesting. We talked to dozens of workers in American owned plants and none of them were willing to compromise a few token concessions of an affirmative action type as a substitute for their full human rights in South Africa. Black South Africans who talk of disinvestment do so in private conversation for to do so publicly would be to risk jail. They informed us that Section 2 of the "Terrorism Act" prohibited any South African or "non-citizen" (i.e. blacks) from arguing the case for disinvestment under penalty of a minimum of five years in prison.

We met with the leaders of the Mobil Corporation of South Africa at Mobil House in Capetown. When we asked the company leadership if the oil they sell to the South African government is resold to Rhodesia and was thereby in violation of the embargo that is supposed to be effect, they replied that the South African "Official Secrets Act" prevents them, by law, from answering any questions regarding where they get their oil or to whom they sell it. Furthermore, they said that the General Law Amendment Act of 1974 requires them to apply to the minister of economic affairs to get permission to answer questions like the one we were asking. This is an example of the extent to which U.S. corporations accommodate the rules of the apartheid regime.

We visited Ford in South Africa and found that 80% of its labor force is nonwhite, but 88% of its supervisors and managers are white. We asked the representatives of the Ford plant management if their company was in compliance with U.S. Commerce Department regulations issued in February of 1978, regarding sales to the South African government (police and military). Their reply was the following: "Our company has told us that these regulations apply to U.S. origin products only, but that products licensed elsewhere can be sold to the South African government." They went on to say that about 10% of their sales are to the South African government and that they hesitate to refuse sales because the government has the power to affect a general boycott of Ford products in the South African market.

We visited General Motors of South Africa, their assembly and manufacturing plant in Port Elizabeth. They

The Rev. Jesse L. Jackson, national director of Operation P.U.S.H. (People United to Save Humanity), spent 17 days touring South Africa in July, 1979, at the invitation of the United Congregational Church of South Africa and Bishop Desmond Tutu, general secretary of the South African Council of Churches. The above is excerpted from the Rev. Jackson's testimony before the House Committee on International Relations, Subcommittee on Africa Sept. 6, 1979, and reprinted with permission of the *Corporate Examiner*, publication on the Interfaith Center for Corporate Responsibility.

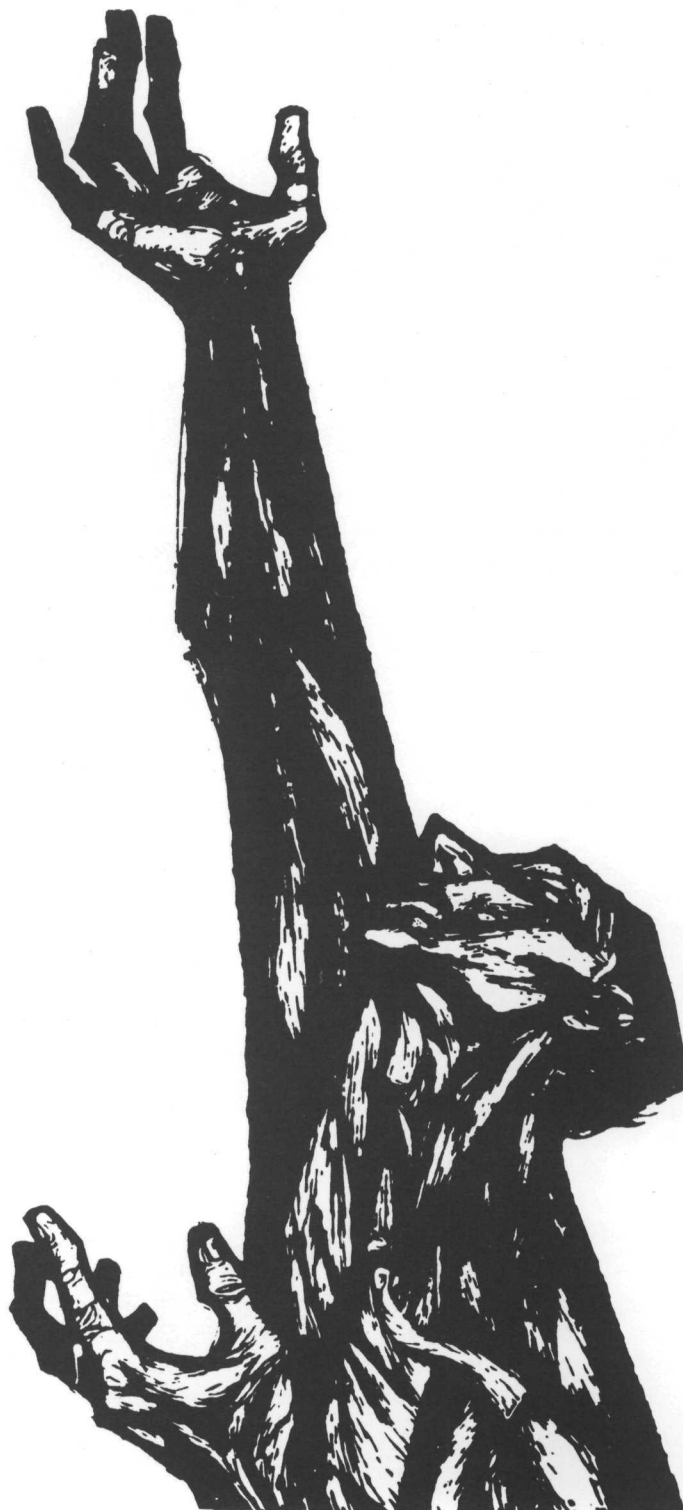
by Jesse Jackson

have one African foreman and no black employees in such white collar jobs as the timekeeping department. We asked the leaders of the GM plant how they would describe their relations with the South African government. Their response was, "Good. The South African government is a big customer."

In terms of assessing current U.S. policy toward South Africa, it is clear that the United States is a partner with South Africa, with its capital in the form of investments and loans. And capital attracts capital. The United States contributes to the social acceptance of South Africa. U.S. companies exploit cheap labor. U.S. companies abide by South African law. Additionally, South Africa makes \$1.2 billion a year from the sale of the gold krugerrand and more than half of this amount, roughly \$600 million, is money or foreign exchange earned by South Africa from sales of the krugerrand in the American market. So America must make a decision about South Africa. The United States must determine which side of history it chooses to be on.

Finally, if I may be permitted a very personal word. Some persons were critical of us because they said, "You haven't been here long enough and you don't understand apartheid." And there may be some things that I do not understand about South African apartheid. But I doubt there are many. I told the press when they challenged me, "*You* apparently don't understand. I was born and bred in apartheid—not in South Africa, but in South Carolina." The division on color is nothing new to me. I waited on tables. I catted and shined shoes while the white boy was the cashier. I grew up where it was against the law for a black boy to know what a white boy knew. I know about the signs in buses reading, "Colored from the rear." I know about "Three-fifth human," Plessy vs. Ferguson, "Separate but Equal," Dred Scott, "A black's got no rights that a white man must respect." I told them, "Maybe y'all don't know me, but I know y'all."

Change is going to come in South Africa. Whether it will be essentially economic, political and peaceful or whether violent and relatively sudden is yet to be determined. This lies largely in the hands of those with power in Pretoria. I am also convinced that the United States for moral, economic, political, national interest and national security reasons ought to help facilitate the change there.





7 Tensions Enroute To Social Revolution

by Mattie Hopkins

The following is a condensed version of the keynote address given by Mattie Hopkins before 500 persons at the Indianapolis Assembly in February which organized the new Episcopal Urban Caucus. Ms. Hopkins is an educator and community activist from Chicago.

You are being asked to join a revolution! Now, I was warned by a long-time friend not to use inflammatory words that would upset people and turn them off. I mean, by revolution, something very simple—an elementary dictionary definition. I mean a complete change, a turning around in ways of thinking and acting. Let me paraphrase from the paper Dr. Nathan Wright presented at the Convocation of Black Episcopalians in April 1978:

Our accustomed approaches to the world reflect the self-interest and limited life experiences of one particular group of the human family . . . The unfortunate aspect

of such an approach is that all who are brought up in a pro-white culture tend to think and feel and act in pro-white ways.

So first, we need a revolution against this pro-white view of the world.

Now we should all recognize that there has been a revolution of self-perception among Black Americans, among Hispanics, among Native Americans, Asians and others. This has also been generally true among the colonized, exploited and impoverished people of the world. However, the church has not been attuned, nor particularly sympathetic to the changes in self-perception of either its members or the nonmembers in the communities

which surround its properties. Let me paraphrase Dr. Wright again:

White religious tradition, at its best, tries very hard to make life better, while the people cry that life needs to be changed, transformed. A religion related to a culture of power seeks to lessen the burdens of the poor, while the poor desire full release from poverty. Making the penal system more humane may seem to be a worthwhile and Christian goal, but the prisoner longs for release from captivity (all of the captivities that have brought about the physical one). Those whose religion is the status quo want to minister to the helpless, but the helpless yearn to be self-sufficient.

If, as the testifiers urged in the hearings held by the Urban Bishops Coalition, and as our Lord commands, we are in fact to be “advocates of the poor,” we are discussing *revolution*! We must face this squarely and relinquish the view that: “Well, everything isn’t perfect, actually nothing is. But, isn’t it much better than it was?” Or, “I’ve just returned from extensive travel, and how grateful we should all be that we live in America.” This is an ever-so-subtle implication that God would not have been so good to us, if somehow we weren’t just a little bit better, a little bit holier, a little more deserving. But men, women and civilizations wax and wane. The Egyptians, the Syrians, the Babylonians, the Greek and Roman civilizations rose and fell. Modern Italy, France and England have lost their places of prestige and power. God has not promised immortality to the culture or the power of the United States.

If we decide to join this revolution we must be prepared to join it where it is; and to follow the lead of those who want aid but not domination or subjugation.

And I emphasize here to *join* the revolution. That means that it is already

going on! The question to the church in general, and to Episcopalians specifically is, “Which side are you on?” We do not have the power here to decide whether this revolution should occur. It is occurring. It may succeed, it may be doomed, it may again be temporarily slapped down—but it is! Dr. Frederick Williams at the same Convocation of Black Episcopalians said in his paper:

“There are those who believe that the struggle for equality and survival belongs only within the context of black history! They too are wrong! It goes beyond the history of one people. It belongs to all who know that until all are free, none are free . . .”

Understand also that revolution is not new. Throughout history revolts have gone on—slave revolts, peasant revolts, labor revolts, black revolts, Irish revolts. Our purpose here is to find out where we fit in. What is the unique quality, the power, the talent in the Episcopal Church that can serve the revolution in long term. This is complex, and not for those who want a quick and easy victory, or for those who bore easily and turn to other issues.

It is obvious that we do not have the answers to the ills of cities and are only beginning to perceive the root causes. I believe that the root causes for our condition today are racism and the insatiable greed for wealth and power. The Rev. Joseph Pelham’s analysis in *To Hear and To Heed* comes to the same conclusion:

“As tired as our society may have become of being confronted with the reality of racism, it is clear that no effective response to the problems of the cities can occur which does not include a more serious effort to neutralize the effects of white racism than has ever been undertaken, both by the whole society and by the church. The crisis of the cities is a crisis wrought by the results of the

persistence of this flaw in the American character. Any attempt to escape from or evade this fundamental fact will condemn all responses to this crisis to ineffectuality. Likewise sexism, classism and domestic colonialism as causal factors in the crisis must be faced and addressed.”

Racism is a complex and deeply rooted manifestation of sin. It assumes racial superiority and it must be accompanied by power. Persons or institutions may be prejudiced, discriminatory or biased, but it is only when they have the power to exert their influence or superiority that they are racist. I don’t believe in black racism, brown racism, for those groups have no power. Racism is woven into the woof and warp of this society and affects social status, political participation, economic opportunity, cultural acceptance, and most importantly, life and death. The organized church and particularly this church, has had a long history of racism. What it has done is to be part and parcel of the secular society’s sin rather than the bearer of the Good News.

Given the current history of the divisions in both society and the church, it is hardly necessary to remind you of the havoc that sexism has wrought. Here again the church has faltered behind the secular society in righting this flaw in its fabric.

The economic problems that we will be discussing here are also long term and complex. John McKnight, urban affairs analyst, poses the puzzle of a society, technologically advanced, where fewer and fewer workers are needed. This is not new. Planners have been warning us for many years about cybernation. Labor unions have fought the introduction of machines that replace workers. The technology is here—much that we don’t even know about—ready to take our places not only in the factories and on the farms,

but in the offices. What we have left then, are people with nothing to do, “a useless class”—John McKnight’s designation. Of course we have other designations, some we know better: welfare mothers, ne’er-do-wells, lazy, unmotivated, unskilled, uneducated, misfits. And around them has grown up a whole industry of workers who serve those useless ones: social workers, counsellors, therapists, etc., many of whom spend a good deal of time decrying the depravity of the persons who are responsible for *their* jobs! But will this society with its value system continue to tolerate useless consumers? Will it continue to pay for services to people who are nonproductive? There are many suggestions by those in power of the answer to that question: the gearing up of the war machines, the expansion of the drug traffic, the cutting back of essential goods and services to the cities, mandatory birth control, euthanasia, fatal force, the death sentence.

Panthers Quoted

When President Carter made his State of the Union message he said that the United States would protect the Persian Gulf “by any means necessary, including armed struggle.” Now, let me repeat that. “By any means necessary, including armed struggle.” How many of you have heard those words before? Who from? That’s right, the Black Panthers. I just want you to know whom your President quotes.

How shall we, as a church people, respond to this reality? I’m not a Biblical scholar but the measuring rods for our behavior and action seem clear to me:

“Thou shalt love thy neighbor as *thyself*.” “Forasmuch as you have done it to the least of these, *you have done it to Me*.” “Forgive us our sins *as we forgive others*.” “Your kingdom come *on earth as it is in heaven*.”

As we analyze causes, and plan our

actions, there will, of course, be tensions. First, there will be the tension between binding up the wounds and changing the system. Some testifiers brought to the Urban Bishops’ hearings great gaping wounds and serious hurt. Just this week I watched a community cry in anguish and curse in anger as they recounted their many attempts to get the city administration, the insurance companies, the fire department, the arson investigators, to do something about the fires in their neighborhood. And now seven people are dead because of greed and neglect. Other testifiers spoke of the length and depth of the deterioration of the American fabric, the degeneration of the system. How do we deal with the tension between the immediacy that requires time, manpower and money to alleviate pain as against engaging in the long-term struggle to change the system? The two are not exclusive, and one does not supersede the other. However, the wounds must be bound in such a way as to be a first step toward changing the system. That is not always easy to do. The recent experiences of this church with GCSP are a striking example. People who haven’t the faintest idea of what the goals of that program were, or who spent the whole six years trying to kill it, are still bad mouthing this attempt at community empowerment. Perhaps it is the internal war waged against attempts such as this that makes the cynics brand the whole church’s involvement in the ’60s as an intervention on the side of the status quo—buying off leadership, substituting palliatives for cures, rerouting agendas.

Secondly, there is the tension between individual witness and collective action. Many feel that pietistic self-searching, dedication to self-improvement and personal closeness to God, and making a personal witness with their lives is sufficient. There are those who want to

work only on the one-to-one basis, who believe strongly that that is the only way progress is made. How do we continue developing ourselves and our one-to-one relationships and still involve the institution in a war that needs concerted action, powerful economic pressures as well as moral suasion to be joined successfully? Already tension has developed over whether to work through the parish, the diocese or the national church. The strategy groups cannot allow themselves to argue the relative effectiveness of working at each level. Problems come in all sizes, enough to be tackled by any size group.

Thirdly, there’s the tension between Evangelism and the Social Gospel. It cannot be overlooked that “evangelism” is a code word also. Part of this has to do with the fact that some of the most evangelically-oriented denominations are the most racist, the most politically reactionary, and the least interested in the welfare of anything except their coffers. It was just at the close of a period of unprecedented (for Episcopalians) involvement in some of the battles against oppression that the church, turning its back on that involvement, turned to Evangelism. The implications are hard to ignore! It never ceases to amaze me that there could be any tension here. There are so many scriptural references to the work to be done in the “vineyards,” so many calls to “go forth” and so many denunciations of selfish piety while the brother suffers, that I hope that, at least among those who have cared to come here, this would be a minor tension.

Fourthly, there is the tension between our commitment to the cities, vs. the suburbs, rural areas, small towns, etc. There are those who would distract from the central task of dealing with the cities by insisting that the same ills apply elsewhere. As *To Hear and To Heed* points out, the problems are concentrated and acute in the central cities. It attests to the failure of the

"systems" that the problems follow wherever you go. Concomitantly, if solutions are found for the cities, those solutions will be applicable elsewhere. There are also those who say we can't solve the problems of the cities alone. We must involve suburban church members. Well, most suburbanites know what's happening in the cities better than the urban dwellers. Many of them are part of the problem. But the best way to capture the interest and involvement of the suburbanites is to raise some hell in the city.

Next there is the tension between what Joseph Pelham calls "cities in distress" and "people in distress." We have all seen federal, state and local funds put into downtown monstrosities, malls, shopping centers; the destruction of old housing to make way for highrise, over-priced apartments, quickly turned into condominiums to make sure that the poor have no opportunity to return. Meanwhile, funds for rehabilitation of housing in communities for small businesses, banks or essential services run dry, and the inhabitants are pushed out or left to die.

An examination of any city's planning commission records will show a consistent movement towards the ultimate goal of clearing out neighborhoods, moving people and establishing the citadels the "system" needs for its convenience. For the last 20 years the systematic removal of people and reclaiming of Chicago's lakefront has withstood every effort, no matter how well organized the opposition, as the banks, the political structure and the universities have moved unerringly toward their goal.

Last year in the Chicago area, one of the mainline white ethnic churches in one of the white ethnic neighborhoods was in head-to-head combat with its parishioners because it wanted to tear down housing and small shops to make room for a shopping mall and parking. The church had the city declare the area

a "slum"—a term usually reserved for black and brown enclaves. I don't know how the matter was resolved, but here was the church fighting its own people, to improve the "city."

If I were running the revolution, the first thing I'd do is change the language. First, second, third, fourth worlds? Non (as in non-white). Others (as in other than white). The city dwellers are largely "others" and I quote from the Rev. Richard Tolliver's testimony at the National Hearing:

"Just as the operationalized concept of 'urban renewal' in the mid '50's became synonymous with 'black removal,' so too the term 'urban crisis' has become a referent to the meshing of pathologies which engulfs the lives of most central city dwellers, namely Blacks and persons of Spanish heritage. The U.S. Bureau of Census' most recent demographic studies clearly indicated that the majority of the Black and Hispanic population of this country resides in the central cities of the 12 largest standard metropolitan statistical areas."

A few pages of statistics later, he declares:

"I have gone to great detail providing this demographic data so that our urban bishops can be very clear that when they talk about developing a strategy for the church's mission to the cities, they are referring to the formulation of an urban policy for Black and, to a lesser extent, Hispanic Americans."

Which side are you on?

Then there is the tension between service vs. servant. Churches and church people are always about the business of doing a service for someone or something—good deeds. But the Biblical concept of the mission of the church and of the Christian has always been cast in the "servant role." One

point bears making here. Among other things, a servant takes—does not give—orders. Are we ready to join the revolution where it is and accept leadership from those most intimately involved? Or do we, despite our dismal failures, still believe that we know best? Are we ready to stop analyzing the victim, and to attack the victimizer? This revolution requires that complete turnaround in thinking and attitudes that have kept us from dealing sanely with the world about us. As long as we believe that the welfare mother wants to be on welfare, and is happier than those who work; that the underemployed are happy, happier than those who have the responsibility of keeping the "system" going; that the children don't want to learn, and wish to grow up to be unemployed and on welfare; so long shall we excuse our failures and ignore the challenge.

Finally, there is the most important tension of all: between intellectualizing, studying, analyzing, and action!

What we are here for is to plan action. This is not a workshop, or an institute or a non-credit course. This is an action-oriented assembly where we are to design our marching orders and then go forward to implement them. From 1976 to this point, this movement has been very proper—very non-threatening—very Episcopalian. It shall remain so through February 16. What it becomes after that is in our hands.

We must decide what we want and believe that we can do it, devise ways of doing it, think through who will help us to do it, set up our timetable, costs and other details which will take these plans out of the realm of fantasy and into feasibility.

This is the challenge!

God, in God's infinite mercy—or in absolute desperation—calls us Episcopalians again, to choose up. We're late, but as we plunge toward World War III, we may just come in at the nick of time! Which side are you on?

Black Theology & Socialist Thought

by Cornel West



Cornel West is Assistant Professor of Philosophy of Religion at the Union Theological Seminary, New York City. The theme of this article is amplified in his chapter on "Black Theology and Marxist Thought" in *Black Theology; A Documentary History, 1966-1979*, edited by Gayraud S. Wilmore and James H. Cone, published by Orbis Books.

"Black socialist theologians hold that a refusal to come to terms with class inequality results in a highly limited view of black enhancement."

Black Theology is at the crossroads. Academic legitimation threatens to dilute its content, curb its rage and render it complacent. The rise of multiple liberation theologies—Latin American, Feminist, Hispanic and Gay—has removed it from mainstage and made it one voice among a chorus of often persuasive critiques of the Christian heritage.

The present challenge facing Black Theology is twofold. First, how can it best promote the liberation power of the Gospel in the face of the escalating siege upon the black community? Second, how can it aid in the stage-setting for the badly needed dialogue between prophetic and progressive elements in our society and world? I suggest that Black Theology can best promote the liberating power of the Gospel, on the existential, political and socioeconomic levels, by *turning more seriously and humbly* to the Black Church. I also suggest that this more authentic embracing of the Black Church, or more concrete rooting of Black Theology, would serve as the springboard for a genuine theory and practice which could bring together diverse prophetic and progressive elements in our society and world.

Black Theology, as a distinct movement in the past decade, was initiated by a courageous group of black preachers and theologians who actively opposed white racism in American society, especially in its religious establishments. The history of black theologizing, as a distinct set of reflections and practices, began the moment black slaves tried to make sense of their lives and understand their situation in light of biblical texts, Protestant hymns and Christian testimonies. The *Black Church*, a term which designates a set of distinct institutions, came into being when black Christian slaves decided, often at the risk of life and limb, to share with each other their common sense of purpose and similar understanding of their circumstances. As with any Christian community, this theological sharing contained many voices, some more prophetic than others. The evolution of this multiplicity of voices constitutes the theological traditions within the history of black theologizing, with some of these traditions still to be unearthed. Black Theology is linked to a particular tradition

within this history, a prophetic one whose voice was heard clearly in the past decade.

The first point, and paradox, in regard to Black Theology is found in the name itself. This designation for a current movement linked to a particular tradition has two noteworthy consequences. First, it tends to downplay, even neglect, certain aspects of antecedent black theologizing. In this sense, it can be viewed as slightly ahistorical. Second, the designation tends to make a particular movement within the history of black theologizing appear as *the* tradition in this history. In this sense, it can be viewed as monopolistic.

These two consequences resulted when gifted, outraged and impatient black theologians endeavored to make their voices heard—critically against and vociferously to white society—without a well-developed knowledge of the history of black theologizing. Yet, such theologizing was, at the time, necessary and legitimate.

The second point regarding Black Theology is its present relationship to the Black Church. From its inception, Black Theology has considered itself at the service of the Black Church. And since Black Theology is but an historical instance of the theologizing of the Black Church, this subservient role is an appropriate one. Yet two questions arise. First, how is Black Theology actually accountable to the Black Church? Second, to what extent is Black Theology merely an academic critique of the Black Church?

When I suggested earlier that Black Theology can best promote the liberating power of the Gospel by turning more seriously and humbly to the Black Church, I meant that Black Theology must not only *consider* itself a servant of the Black Church, but also more importantly, *be* a servant of the Black Church. To be a servant is to serve. Black Theology can best serve the Black Church by institutionalizing its understanding of the Gospel within the Black Church. This institutionalizing primarily consists of establishing more strong *ecumenical* bodies and groups, such as the past National Conference of Black Churchmen or the present Black Church Union; and, in a more grassroots manner, creating institutions which produce Sunday School materials, Baptist Training Union lessons, published sermons and media messages in light of the liberating power of the Gospel.

Academic legitimization of Black Theology runs the risk of reducing Black Theology to a mere academic critique of the Black Church. Black Theology must be critical of the Black Church. Every theological heritage stays alive and thrives on self-criticism. But effective criticism presupposes a situating and positioning of the critics. As Max Weber has taught us, institutional affiliations lead to institutional loyalties. Therefore black theologians—any theologians, for that

matter—must be in Academia, but not of it. Academia must be viewed as a means to church service, rather than an end in itself. Only this kind of attitude ensures that Black Theology remains a vital part of the history of black theologizing of, for and by the Black Church, rather than a reified and rarified activity which merely titillates academic theologians.

Black Theology has suffered from the underdeveloped knowledge of the history of black theologizing to the extent that certain moves within this history have only recently received attention. The particular move I have in mind is that made by black socialist theologians in the past and present who have grappled with the relation of the Gospel to racial oppression, class exploitation, maldistribution of national and international wealth and white socialists' paternalism.

The black Christian socialist presence in the history of black theologizing deserves serious attention for three basic reasons. First, we live in a fallen world in which life-and-death debates and struggles regarding the morality and merit of capitalism and socialism are continually occurring. Black theologians (including, of course, black preachers and conscientious lay women and men) ought to play a crucial role here. Knowledge of what black Christian socialists have said and are saying may aid in black theological participation in these debates and struggles.

Second, Socialist and Communist movements in the West, especially in the United States, have had peculiar relations with the black community. Black theologians ought to know the context of these relations, what the opinions of black Christian socialist participants in these relations were and what the status of these relations presently are. Third, knowledge of the lives and thought of black Christian socialists may teach black theologians not so much how correct the former were, but rather, may indicate the serious shortcomings of other major prophetic figures in the black theological traditions.

It is highly significant that the major prophetic figures in the history of black theologizing—from Richard Allen through Marcus Garvey to Martin Luther King, Jr.—have adopted some kind of race analysis of American society. Race analyses assume that the major obstacle which impedes black enhancement is the institutionalizing and legitimizing of the idea of white supremacy in U.S. society. Race analyses assert that black people are socially degraded, politically oppressed and economically exploited primarily because of their color and culture. Therefore proponents of those analyses promote and encourage the deep sense of group-consciousness in the black community and holds

white racism to be the main enemy.

Race analyses result, ironically, in two widely divergent dispositions toward American society and two different views of black enhancement. The first disposition heralds a complete rejection of U.S. society. This disposition reflects the belief that white racism so deeply pervades and permeates society that any hope for genuine human interaction, integration or alliances is doomed. This viewpoint claims that black distrust of whites requires either a black return to Africa or a separate black nation in the old Southern Black Belt. This Black Nationalist view—that of Marcus Garvey, Chief Sam and Elijah Muhammad—may sound ludicrous in light of the interdependence of the world, but it is important to note that this view had been supported by impressive black mass movements in the past and continues to be a vital element in present black movements. The point to accent here is that this solution reflects the desperation of black people who are reacting and responding to a deeply-felt white racism.

The second disposition of race analysis proponents is that of complete inclusion within U.S. society. This disposition reflects the belief that black group-consciousness can serve as the basis for a potent interest-group, thereby facilitating black entree into the mainstream of society. Therefore, this viewpoint—that of Frederick Douglass, R.R. Wright and Martin Luther King, Jr.—promotes various programs of black politics and black capitalism in an attempt to acquire a bigger black piece of the pie.

Race analyses have been the dominant mode of understanding U.S. society in the history of black theologizing. This had been so primarily owing to this country's unswerving commitment, from its inception to the present, to the institutionalizing and legitimizing of the idea of white supremacy. We can expect race analyses to play a prominent role in black theologizing until this commitment is annulled in practice.

Racism, Class Hierarchy

Black socialist theologians, such as Bishop James Theodore Holly and the Revs. George Washington Woodbey, George Frazier Miller, Samuel J. Comfort and perhaps the later James Cone, acknowledge that a major obstacle which stands in the way of black enhancement is the concept of white supremacy in U.S. society. They then go on to link this obstacle to another impediment, namely, class hierarchy in this society. Black socialist theologians hold that a refusal to come to terms with class inequality results in a highly limited view of black enhancement.

It is important to point out that black socialist theologians understand the notion of class in a Marxist, rather than Weberian, way. Consequently, they view class as

a particular relation of a group of people to the land, instruments and capital necessary to produce goods and services in U.S. society. The group which owns the land, instruments and capital constitute the capitalist class and the groups which do not own the land, instruments and capital constitute the noncapitalist classes. The noncapitalist classes are divided, to put it crudely, into the group which is hired (and fired) by capitalists, namely, the working class, and the group which remains chronically unemployed, namely, the underclass. Within the complexities of post-industrial capitalist America, the capitalist class—or ruling class, since its primary aim of profit-maximization is the most dominant and successful one in American society—consists essentially of transnational corporations which own large segments of the means of production and employ a disproportionate number of the citizenry. Of course, elected and appointed government officials also rule. But, since their rule is undeniably sedimented, permeated by and usually subordinated to the primary aim of the capitalist class, it is appropriate to designate the latter, the ruling class. The most glaring example of this relationship between the capitalist class and government is the historic refusal of the latter to ever even raise the issue of redistribution of the wealth by calling into question the primary aim of the former.

Black socialist theologians reject the Weberian understanding of class. This view of class merely equates class with income or financial remunerations of peoples' employment at the marketplace. This view permits such vacuous notions as an upper class or middle class to flourish. For example, in this view the upper class consists of those who either receive wages or possess the wealth over an arbitrarily selected level and the middle class consists of those who receive wages between that level and an arbitrary minimum.

This Weberian understanding of class, as exemplified in the recent controversial book, *The Declining Significance of Race*, by William Julius Wilson, is not wrong. It is just trivial. It does not help us grasp the internal dynamics of post-industrial capitalist America, its power transactions and its fundamental problems. Instead, it merely provides an income measuring rod which tells us who and how many make what. Since it robs the notion of class of its power components, it can never yield persuasive reasons as to *why* who and how many make what. For example, Marxists and Weberians agree that 0.5% of the U.S. population has owned over 20% of the wealth throughout the 20th century. Yet, Weberians see only an *upper* class and the highly dispersive character of ruling, whereas Marxists see a *ruling* class and a highly ideological character of Weberian

analysis.

The Weberian understanding of class also leads to gross misconceptions regarding class equality. In this view, class equality consists of everyone receiving the same amount of income, regardless of what people do with their lives. Such an utterly ridiculous egalitarian vision is often associated with socialist notions of a classless society, or society of class equality. Nothing could be further from the truth. In Marxist terms, a classless society means a society in which those who produce goods and services collectively own the land, instruments and capital necessary for such production and democratically control the distribution of the goods and services produced in society. In short, socialists favor a decentralized *democratizing* of the production process, not a vulgar *leveling* of incomes.

Top Political Agenda

Black socialist theologians hold that black enhancement is best achieved by simultaneously calling into question the institutionalizing and legitimizing of the idea of white supremacy *and* actively promoting the democratizing of the workplace in American society. As we saw earlier, the former has been and still is central in the history of black theologizing, whereas the latter has been and still is marginal in this history. The goal of black socialist theologians is to understand both in light of the liberating power of the Gospel and put both at the top of the political agenda of the Black Church.

The Black Church has remained, for the most part, aloof from U.S. socialist movements because of two basic reasons. First, the perennial tyranny of white racism, in its most vicious or its most subtle forms, over the black community has compelled the Black Church to keep group survival at the top of its political agenda. Second, the paternalistic practices of past U.S. socialist movements lend little credence to the idea that black survival has something to do with socialism. The major perspectives on the race problem within U.S. socialist movements—from the ethnocentric views of Victor Berger through the hands-off policy of Eugene Debs to the black pseudo-deification platform of the Weathermen—provide no basis for serious interaction between the Black Church and socialist movements. In fact, the only major Socialist group in America ever to make significant inroads into the Black Church has been the Communist Party. And this owing to the large black influx (in the 1930s) into the Communist Party, including Benjamin Davis, James Ford and Angelo Herndon, who had some understanding of the dilemma and predicament of the Black Church, caught as it was between survival and vision. The exit in the late '50s of many blacks from the Communist Party left this brief dialogue in shambles. Only

in the past few years has it been renewed.

The future of the relations between the Black Church and socialist movements in the United States is open-ended. First, and most important, it depends on cultivating the black Christian socialist tradition within the theologizing of the Black Church. If a meaningful dialogue is to take place between the Black Church and the socialist movement in this century, there must be a cluster of trustworthy black Christian socialists *within* the Black Church, black Christian socialists who view themselves as committed to the preservation and perpetuation of the best in black religion. Second, U.S. socialist movements must acknowledge that there can be little substantive black participation without a dialogue with the prophetic and progressive leaders of the Black Church. This is not to overlook the significant presence of black secular elements in socialist movements, but to call attention to where most of the grassroots leadership, be it progressive or pragmatic, lies in the black community.

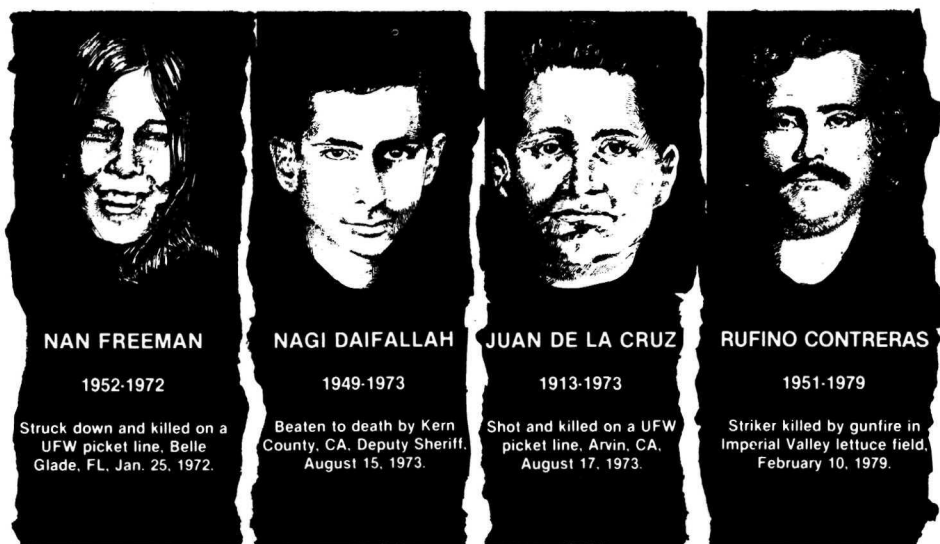
If there is to be a socialism which protects liberties and precludes poverty in the United States, there must be a major Socialist Party. If there is to be a major Socialist Party, it must consist of a multiracial, white and blue collar working class alliance. Obviously, if this party is multiracial, there must be substantive black representation. If there is to be substantive black representation, progressive black preachers and theologians must be present. This presence will be guaranteed only if black theologians accent the black Christian socialist tradition in the past and present of the theologizing of the Black Church, and if non-black socialists acknowledge the indispensability of the participation of prophetic black preachers and theologians within the decision-making processes of the Socialist Party. This is the road Black Theology ought to travel, the political agenda the Black Church (and community) should promote, and the particular outlook non-black socialists, be they Christian or non-Christian, must support. ■

Continued from page 3

with us today as we face the mandates of mission that thrust before us the awesome challenges of racism, sexism, classism and imperialism. Our hope and our faith are set in the context of an ongoing dialogue with the harsh realities of our life. God has spoken, what is our response? For the newly formed Episcopal Urban Caucus, until it meets in its next assembly one year hence, heavy responsibility for the answer to that question lies with its newly-elected board. ■

FARM WORKER WEEK 1980

April 28 - May 4



Declaration on Liberation of Farm Workers

We, the farm workers of America, have tilled the soil, sown the seeds and harvested the crops. We have provided food in abundance for the people in the cities, the nation and the world but have not sufficient food for our own children. While other workers have overcome economic injustices, we have inherited the exploitation, the suffering and the poverty of our fathers and their fathers before them.

But despite our isolation, our sufferings, jailings, beatings and killings, we remain undaunted and determined to build our Union across the land—as a bulwark against future exploitation. Just as work on the land is arduous, so is the task of building a union. We pledge to struggle as long as it takes to reach our goals. Above all we believe that men and women must act toward one another in a spirit of brotherhood and sisterhood and that our Union shall guarantee that all are treated equal in dignity and rights.

We remember the marches and

pilgrimages and struggles of our past. We remember the lives of our martyrs: Nan Freeman, Nagi Daifallah, Juan de la Cruz and Rufino Contreras. With their sacrifices clearly in view, we do solemnly declare before the civilized world which judges our actions and before the nation to which we belong the plan we have formulated to end the injustice that bears down on us and our children.

(1) We know that the poverty of the Mexican and Filipino workers in California is the same as that of all farm workers across the country, the Blacks, poor Whites, Native Americans, Puerto Ricans and Arabs. We will continue our social movement in fact and not in pronouncements by uniting under the banner of our Union all farm workers regardless of race, creed, sex or nationality.

(2) We will seek the support of all political groups and the protection of the government, which is also our government, in our struggle. We will no

longer be treated as a special, lower class who are supposed to be content with an equality which is not quite equal.

(3) We will demand recognition by our employers and the public of our right as farm workers to organize and to engage in collective bargaining.

(4) Because we are among the poorest workers in the land we are beset with the twin evils of substandard wages and crippling inflation. We will negotiate to change our condition. From our employers we seek only that they bargain in good faith.

(5) To gain the just ends we seek, we will engage in the following actions, using the way of non-violence:

a. We shall strike. We are poor, we are humble; and our only choice is to strike at those ranches where we are not treated with the respect we deserve as working men and women.

b. We will boycott. When our employers use cruel and unjust

means to weaken our strike we will not surrender to their corrupt power; instead we will take our cause to the people of the cities and world who will support our strike with their boycott action.

c. We will go to court. We will use the laws of the land to protect our right to strike and boycott and to punish those employers who stray from what is lawful in their dealings with their workers.

d. We will engage in political actions. We will register, we will

vote and we will use our political strength to reward our friends and defeat our enemies.

(6) In pursuing our reasonable goals we shall work and cooperate with our brothers and sisters in the labor movement, with the churches and the synagogues, with other civic, social and political organizations and with all men and women of good will.

(7) In cooperation with our friends we shall oppose the recruitment and mercenary smuggling of men, women and children to break strikes; with equal

energy we will fight against professional strikebreakers and against the infamous bracero program and all slave labor programs, no matter what their name.

As farm workers we have suffered and we are not afraid to suffer more in order to win our cause. Our men and women and children have suffered at the hands of a cruel agricultural system. Now we will suffer for the purpose of ending the poverty, the misery and the injustice. The time has come for the liberation of all farm workers. *Viva La Causa!* ■

Continued from page 7

machinery for a police state now in embryo develops more fully, the nation is going to be in a much more tragic situation than we in the South experienced over the last few decades.

This doesn't have to happen, if the lessons produced by the civil rights movement be heeded today. We know that every gain that black people made in the last few decades actually opened up new opportunities for a better life for whites. For example, I know white children who are doing better in school because they were able to go to Headstart programs. That, like all those so-called compensatory programs in education, came along with the black parents' struggle for a better education for their children. I know poor and middle class white young people who are able to go to college today because they got a federal grant. Those didn't exist until blacks struggled for educational opportunities. I know white youth who couldn't find a job until they got into the CETA program. That came about because blacks struggled for jobs. Think of all the whites who get help with legal problems through the whole network of public service projects. Those are direct results of the civil rights movement. Think of health clinics which have been set up because blacks have been struggling for health care.

There is also the larger picture: The black struggle cracked open this whole society in the silent '50s and made it possible for everybody to struggle; made possible the anti-war movement in the '60s, made possible the new women's movement, made it possible for workers in the South, white as well as black, to organize unions, made it possible for the elderly of all races to organize and demand some sort of decent life in their old age, made it possible for handicapped people in this country to organize and demand their rights.

The oppression of black people is the basic economic, political and social fact of this society. Essentially this nation was built on the fruits of slave labor. Oppression of black people is woven into the very fabric of the country. Thus it is only natural that when measures are taken to end that oppression, the key to changing the whole society has been touched. If the foundation stone of a building shifts, the whole building moves.

Recently I came across a quotation of Bob Moses from a speech in 1964. Bob Moses was the young black man who inspired and led much of the civil rights movement in the early '60s in Mississippi. He said: "The Negro seeks his own place within the existing institutional framework, but to

accommodate him, society will have to modify its institutions, and in many cases to make far-reaching fundamental changes. The struggle for jobs for Negroes forces questions about the ability of the economy to provide jobs for everyone within our present socio-economic structure. Lack of legal counsel for Negroes brings into focus the general lack of legal counsel for the poor. The function of the white American is not so much to prepare the Negro for entrance into the larger society, to clean him up, straight-jacket him, necktie him, make him presentable for the supper table, but rather to prepare the society for the change it must make to include Negroes."

That's what Bob Moses said 15 years ago. That, of course, is what white Americans have failed to do. We are left with a society that still doesn't have room for black people. And I submit that a society that doesn't have room for black people will ultimately not have room for any of us. Even if it did, it would not be a place fit to live in. Conversely, once this society is changed so that there is room for black people, it will be a society where there is room for everybody. These are the lessons it seems to me that the civil rights movement of recent decades has to offer America, lessons that America so desperately needs to hear. ■

Continued from page 2

ambivalence and elusiveness" was noticeable in the controversy over the ordination of women after an "initial hysteria" over the Philadelphia ordinations. His behavior must stem either from "lack of conviction . . . or expediency," and in either case is "incongruous" to his office. The suffering he caused the two church employees is due either to "deliberate intent or omission." His attitude toward the ordination of homosexuals is both "cruel and hypocritical." The only good word to him is that he is probably a "victim of the present malaise of the Episcopal Church." In some fashion he is thus "not to blame" for all that is amiss, though he is "blameworthy" because he is the Presiding Bishop. An interesting distinction.

I am much concerned about what Stringfellow describes as lack of leadership in dealing with issues now confronting the church, most recently in the matter of the continued use of the 1928 Prayer Book. But I can't imagine that Stringfellow's "analysis" of Bishop Allin's actions and of the person who lies behind them can be helpful to anyone except the author and those who agree with him. Reinhold Niebuhr used to try to divide people (usually Republican

politicians) between "fools and knaves," but did it just for fun—not as an exercise in Christian candor. I just don't see how Stringfellow's letter "gits us forrader" at this point.

Floyd G. Patterson
Episcopal Divinity School
Cambridge, Ma.

No More Beige Mush

In response to William Stringfellow's open letter to the Presiding Bishop, I wish to commend you for your decision to publish the letter and to applaud Mr. Stringfellow for his insight and courage.

I was touched by his poignant remarks concerning etiquette and caring. It does seem that the Episcopal Church as an institution cares mightily about etiquette, good taste and good form. In many instances, to be found in bad taste is to be judged as having made a more significant and egregious error than to be found untruthful or unfaithful. So often when attempting to come to grips with an issue or a person in the church, I have found myself dealing with beige mush and have been informed that beige mush must be the order of the day, because after all to confront, to contend, to wrestle, to struggle was in bad taste. Beige mush and good taste translate

into nobody being genuinely present to anybody. We are left pacified, aimless and on the road to insanity.

Jacob wrestled with the angel at the river Jabbok, and although the angel showed a breach of etiquette and bad taste, and although the wrestling permanently wounded Jacob, it likewise saved his life. John Allin has been given a similar gift. As the angel was reluctant to loosen his grip, I hope William Stringfellow does not back off.

The Rev. Michael Chase-Dwinell
Cape Elizabeth, Me.

Cancel My Sub

Unfortunately, Stringfellow is still as corrosive as he is intelligent. You cannot, however, heal a sick body by scolding it—no matter how shrilly or inexorably. Nor can you heal it by removing one organ no more diseased than the rest. The same holds for editorial policy, of course. Please remove my name from your lists.

Gilbert E. Doan, Jr.
Philadelphia, Pa.

Whither 'The Witness'?

Prior to the General Convention I had high hopes that William Stringfellow's series of articles on critical issues in the

Open Letter *continued from Page 2*

Coleman McGehee—and a William Stringfellow—to keep them honest.

I guess I am saying that the P.B., as much as I care for him, is very small potatoes. I do not deny that your letter should have been written, and I applaud it. I simply wonder, after years of ache and crying out myself, what is the use of it. The church—as club—serves us; she names things, facilitates Eucharist and so forth. But all in all "religion" is a bummer and *Christ* is life. I get the feeling that the church (as club) shall go on (someone once said "so will organized crime as long as someone pays the bills"). But "the club" is not *the* church—at least does not limit the church to her own lines, and one learns, I think, to live with her—at times enabler and at times the one organization that

"kills its own wounded."

I love her, Bill (and I know you do also)—and at the same time I still cringe for I know that Jim Pike, Jr. died largely because the church opted to be safe rather than holy; that his father suffered needlessly because the church was frightened, little, whining and breathless (which is to say lifeless). Even now, in this area, I face the rejection of the righteous to an extent that I cannot narrate—and I am no real threat, a poor monk, with a little cottage, without influence.

But our church speaks by her agony, by her fear and by her ache—and by those whom she has brought forth into life, not the least of which is yourself. Yes, we could use a man or woman P.B. helping us and enabling us rather than

standing in the way, with too many cares to answer your own Open Letter. Yes, things could be better. But have we refused to accept the fallen nature of persons and churches (and monasteries and hermitages)?

I don't know.

If I had your ability and talent (and maybe even holiness) I would state my own case better and probably shorter. Perhaps my case is this—that the Presiding Bishop is not all that important. There is life in this PECUSA, and there is a certain humility and within it one can meet God—with or without John Allin.

Christopher Jones, O.M., Prior
Transfiguration Retreat Monastery
Pulaski, Wisc.

life of the church would help us to realize the wholeness and unity that we all long to achieve.

But Stringfellow's post-convention piece that was commissioned by THE WITNESS did not answer the question of "Where does the church find itself after Denver?" In it, he turned instead from issues to personalities and elected Presiding Bishop Allin as a scapegoat for the sins of the House of Bishops if not the whole world.

Indeed, I feel THE WITNESS owes its readers a clearer picture of its own philosophy in supporting such a partisan, political viewpoint. Is THE WITNESS a witness for truth or for the prosecution?

Martha S. Miller
Ft. Washington, Pa.

Lacks Logic

Concerning the open letter to the Presiding Bishop, written by William Stringfellow, I find it most petty, disruptive, and lacking in logic or reasoning. While I disagree with Bishop Allin on one or two items, he does express spiritual leadership, long lacking in the Episcopal Church.

Charles S. Peete, Jr.
Memphis, Tenn.

Best Issue Yet

I have been a reader of THE WITNESS since its re-birth in 1974 and while all the issues have been mind-provoking in different ways I've never commented on anything. Yet the January issue is in my mind the best yet and I would share my comments on two articles.

Bill Stringfellow's letter to the Presiding Bishop sums up my feelings about the man. Indeed, he has done more to harm the church in these past years with his own lack of collegiality among his fellow bishops, lack of concern for sister and brother clergy and his inability to deal with the mission of the church at home and overseas. His own conduct during the Wendt trial and his lack of support for the women of the church, no matter what he feels about the question of women in the

priesthood, leads me to ask, when will we once again have a bishop who presides?

Second, "The Loveable Paradox" by Bob Semes brings back all sorts of fond memories about Jim Pike. I only knew the man from a distance, yet his influence on my life is what in part led me into the ministry of this church. It's about time we consider the full impact he has had and may still be having. Perhaps, even a date on our church calendar should be set aside lest we forget. It could read, *James Albert Pike, Bishop and Martyr.*

Vincent F. Scott
Penn Yan, N.Y.

Wants Extra Copies

I have just finished reading the January issue of THE WITNESS. As an Episcopalian, I appreciated Bill Stringfellow's letter and feel that unfortunately he is right on target. It comes as no surprise to me that there will be no reply to that letter.

However, I am writing to you not about Bill's letter, but about the articles by D.J. Kirchhoff ("Believers in Capitalism Must Fight Back") and David J. Kalke ("Unmasking the Strategy of Multinational Corporations"). I agree that few issues could be more crucial to the social mission of the church in this particular time. I would like to share those two articles with members of our staff. As you perhaps know, Church World Service has over 25 offices in this country. The staff often must deal with the issues covered in those two articles. I see them as important, ongoing professional staff development and education materials.

Ronald E. Stenning, Director
U.S. Program, CWS
New York, N.Y.

Timely Explanation

Every copy of THE WITNESS has many pertinent articles but the January issue was especially good. The articles by Daniel Kirchhoff and David Kalke are very timely. We hear references to them, especially on talk shows, but no one ever takes time to explain the situation as

these two articles do. I am enclosing \$10 for extra copies so that I can distribute them to advantage.

Although 1979 has been a great year, I suddenly seem to be living my age—86. It is all I can do to accomplish the necessities for my 96-year-old brother and myself. May 1980 be a creative year.

Ruth Haefner
Portland, Ore.

Keep Debate Going

I feel the necessity to say that Vol 63, #1, was a courageous issue. David Kalke's article was incisive and the failure of Daniel Kirchhoff to deal with specific instances of abuse indicates the basic policy of transnationals, namely, "Watergate" style coverups. Keep the debate going!

James W. Wiberg
Salem Lutheran Church
Ironwood, Mich.

Suggests Resources

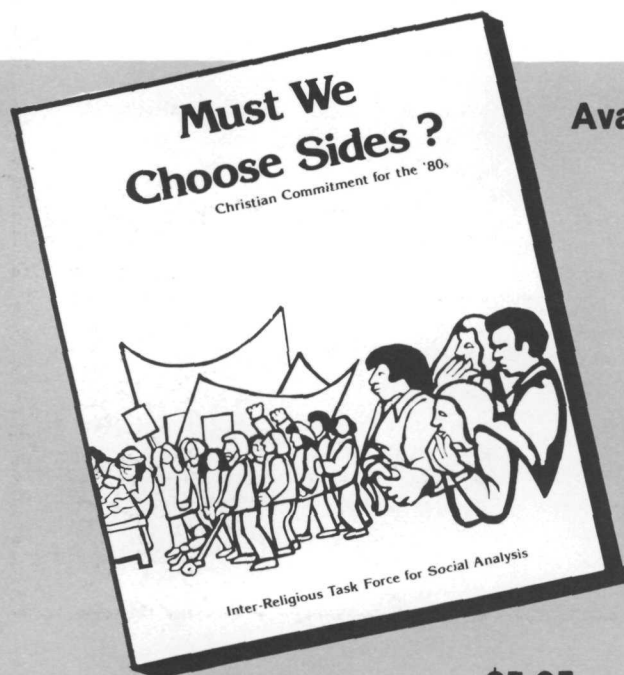
Thank you for the interchange between Daniel Kirchhoff of Castle & Cooke and David Kalke of Theology in the Americas. As Kalke notes, Kirchhoff's speech shows how defensive and intolerant the multinationals are becoming when faced by responsible church criticism.

Readers who wish to learn more about Castle & Cooke may be interested in an excellent slide package entitled "Managing the Global Plantation," which was produced by the American Friends Service Committee in Hawaii. It is available for a suggested rental fee of \$15 from the Michigan Farmworker Ministry Coalition, P.O. Box 10206, Lansing, Mi, 48901. Also, a packet of information about the churches' challenge to C&C is available from the Latin America Task Force, 1524 20th St., Detroit, MI. 48216, for \$2. In addition, those interested in the living and working conditions at the Michigan Mushroom Farm, a C&C subsidiary, may send \$1 for our report on that issue.

The Rev. Joseph Mulligan, S.J.
Latin America Task Force
Detroit, Mich.

The Episcopal Church Publishing Company
P.O. Box 359
Ambler, Pennsylvania 19002
Address Correction Requested

NONPROFIT ORG.
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
North Wales, Pa.
Permit No. 121



\$5.95

Available through **THE WITNESS**

Must We Choose Sides ?

Christian Commitment for the '80s

A New Study Action Guide for Use in Parishes, Groups, Classrooms

- A critical examination of the nature of work, the workplace, and the economic system, produced by an ecumenical team, the Inter-Religious Task Force for Social Analysis
- Provides in-depth analysis to help readers identify their position within the class structure
- Six comprehensive sessions with group exercises to enable Christians to "do theology", incorporating insights from their own experience, applying tools of social analysis, and participating in theological reflection.

Readings include works by Sheila Collins, Studs Terkel, Gustavo Gutierrez, Frances Fox Piven, Frank Cunningham, Maurice Zeitlin, Peter Dreier, Marge Piercy, William Tabb, Eugene Toland.

☐ Enclosed is \$6.55 (includes postage and handling) for a single copy of the Study/Action Guide. (Please make check payable to THE WITNESS).

☐ Send me information on bulk order discounts for five or more.

Name _____

Address _____

Mail To: THE WITNESS, Box 359, Ambler, PA. 19002



Order *Must We Choose Sides?* and receive THE WITNESS free for six months. If you are a subscriber, we will extend your subscription. If not, we will send six complimentary issues.