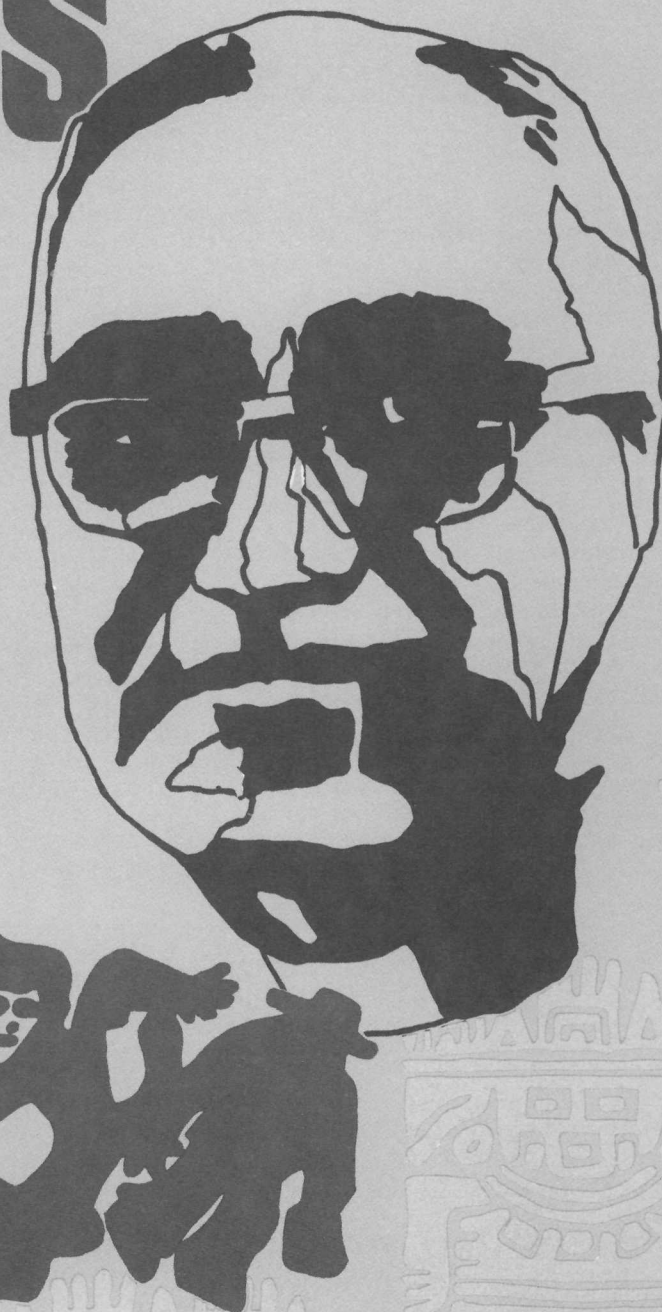


THE VOL. 63, NO. 9 SEPTEMBER, 1980 WITNESS

Hispanics & Latins: Front & Center
Richard W. Gillett

Post-Election Choices
Gar Alperovitz





TMI 'Trustanoia' Irksome

It is astonishing, considering Three Mile Island and all that goes with it, that we are still here. It is a miracle. (See Lock Hoehl's series, "Three Mile Island, 10 More Years of Ambiguity" beginning in June WITNESS.)

For instance, there were 50 incidents last year where the computers which now threaten us with annihilation had a malfunction. We have made a system so lethal that it is second to none, and even TMI hasn't awakened many of the sleepers.

Nukes aren't new. Hiroshima and Nagasaki took place over 30 years ago. I remember my generation's downright refusal to discuss these events. We are paying for that now. Nukes were felt to be a necessity for reasons of empire and so we were lied to about the nature of the industry. Nuclear bombs, nuclear energy, and nuclear waste are all part of a particular mind-set.

When mistakes have been made, they must be corrected. We can't correct mistakes until we acknowledge them, and there's the rub. We suffer not only from hysteria and paranoia, but has there ever been a people with as much "trustanoia" as we have displayed? We've let "George" do it — People are not things. All this stuff going on is not necessary. That's what's so awful about it.

Your magazine gets better all the time. Most relevant — and that is how you know it's godly. Most Americans fear knowledge.

Marlon Wylie
Oakland, Cal.

Racism Ignored

Hugh White writes an article giving direction to the newly established Episcopal Urban Caucus and not once does he mention the cancer of racism that pervades every level of society and all the ideologies that would change this society (June WITNESS). He carries on as if racism were merely a symptom of more basic injustices. Few Blacks will buy this, for they have confronted and endured racism on too many fronts to minimize its influence on any ideology. If the church is to work "from the ground up," it will not only listen to the voice of the poor, but will open itself to leadership and decisions from these groups. The day is past when White, middle-class liberals can impose their solutions on the poor because they know "what is good for them." It is not only the conservative who finds it hard to move out of the way!

If the Episcopal Church Publishing Company really wants to move beyond its usual stance of dated liberalism, I suggest it call for more articles from persons of the calibre and experience of Archdeacons Loretho Wooden of Southern Ohio and Henry Hucles of Long Island, of Paul Washington of Philadelphia and Kwasi Thornell of St. Louis, and even the Black members of its own Board of Directors. These people can give a ring of authenticity to THE WITNESS that so far many Black church people find absent.

The Rt. Rev. John M. Burgess
Vineyard Haven, Mass.

Gracie Copies Available

You may not have known, when the June WITNESS was being prepared, that David Gracie's article in a slightly different form had already been published by the *Forward Movement*, under the title, "Signs of the Kingdom." Your readers might want to know that copies are available at 25¢ each, plus postage and handling from FM Publications, 412 Sycamore Street, Cincinnati, Ohio 45202.

The Rev. Charles H. Long, Editor
Forward Movement Publications

Frensdorff Gives Hope

Articles like Wes Frensdorff's in the June WITNESS are certainly disturbing. I just about relax into comfortable despair for the future of the church when hope appears. Bishop Frensdorff suggests that self-support can be achieved in people-poor as well as poor-people areas.

As an inner-city priest, I would like to see the ideas which Bishop Frensdorff presents given an enthusiastic trial. Roland Allen's condemnation of colonial missionary methods may apply equally to Jersey City as to Peking. Canon 8 might give urban Christians a chance to be the church without having to pay Harvard-educated priests.

Certainly the old clergy-dominated, money-dependent model is not notably successful nor theologically consistent. As you say about the inner city church, "we need first to set it free to become fully *indigenous* in the life and culture of the people where they are." Thanks for that encouragement for this part of the vineyard, or factory.

The Rev. George C. Swanson
Jersey City, N.J.

Urges Resistance

It's a shock to realize that only seven years have passed since the last helicopter lifted the last American off the Saigon embassy roof. But already America's political leaders are testing the waters with an old-style, men-only, military draft registration of 19 and 20 year olds. (See Ron Freund's article, "Right to Bear Arms, For Whom?" June WITNESS.)

If there is little or no non-registration, it will be concluded that a new crop of young men has forgotten Viet Nam and is ready to serve the Pentagon in more military adventures. And that conclusion will lead to those adventures — or at least make them more likely.

I do not believe military force can any longer be accepted by humankind as a means of resolving disputes. Other means must be found or we shall all

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THE WITNESS

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Waiting for the Train

Robert L. DeWitt

Dark times always prompt references by the hopeful to the metaphor that there is "light at the end of the tunnel." However, the darkening time in which we find ourselves today has elicited cynical variations. "Yes, but you see that light only by looking over your shoulder." Or, "Yes, but it is an approaching express train."

There is substance to both these sardonic quips. The "looking over the shoulder" version is illustrated by the phenomenon of "Born Again politics." This is a term sometimes used to characterize the half-dozen new evangelical organizations strenuously engaged in politics. One of them, "Moral Majority," was formed only last year by the Rev. Jerry Falwell, whose fundamentalist "Old Time Gospel Hour" attracts a national weekly viewing audience of 25 million. Their target is to have 5 million new voters registered by November, and they claim to be half-way to that goal. Their platform? They oppose, among other issues, the Equal Rights Amendment, abortion, homosexual rights and government intervention in Christian (i.e. non-public) schools. They are demanding increased defense spending, and Bible-reading and prayer in the public schools. In their rear-view mirror they see an image that touches deep nostalgic and simplistic

chords. And their sheer organized numbers underscores that they are not to be taken lightly.

But there is also evidence of the "approaching express train" version of the light in the tunnel. A number of our most prominent political leaders are or have been members of the Trilateral Commission, that elite group of international movers and shakers which published *Crisis in Democracy*. The burden of that book is that our world is in grave danger by virtue of an "excess of democracy" which threatens to prevent the appropriate and free expansion of corporate interests around the world. The clear implication is that we must have less democracy. Other words for that are restriction and oppression. The recent and current profits of the petroleum industry, together with the cutbacks in government services to the poor, is a part of the blinding beam from that approaching express train.

But that oncoming train makes itself known by other signals, as well. Early in July a Westchester-bound train carrying Fourth of July celebrators home from New York City, stalled by a power failure for over an hour in the Bronx, was attacked by a large crowd of local residents that hurled rocks, bottles, fireworks and

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"The helicopter swoops down, a huge bird of prey, its blades flattening the sagebrush and exposing what appear to be small vulnerable animals, frozen in fright. The hunters' panel trucks come to a crashing halt in the circle thrown by the helicopter's searchlight, and the game is rounded up and tossed in.

"A congressman, along for the ride, has a child's excitement operating the searchlight while the prey — docile, confused, formless — turns out on closer examination to be fathers, mothers, children, mechanics, farm hands, Catholics; huddled masses, as the Statue of Liberty says, yearning to be free."

— Robert Sheer, in the *Los Angeles Times*, 11 11 79

Hispanics and Latin America:

Moving Center Stage

by Richard W. Gillett

The above is a scene repeated daily and in endless variation along the Mexican border as "illegal aliens" try to enter the United States and are caught by the U.S. Border Patrol. In 1978, some 800,000 were arrested along the border; many more than that number escaped detection and entered. Here are other recent vignettes involving Hispanics:

- A Puerto Rican fisherman from the Island of Vieques, off Puerto Rico's east coast, takes aim from his dinghy with a slingshot at a U.S. Coast Guard patrol boat trying to clear him from his own fishing waters so that the U.S. Navy can continue to bombard his island for gunnery practice.

- "I used to think of Mayor Bradley as tall and powerful. Today I feel as tall and powerful as he." The speaker is a diminutive elderly Mexican-American woman exulting at the end of a meeting of 1200 members of the United Neighborhoods Organization (UNO) with Mayor Tim Bradley of Los Angeles. He has just made major concessions on city housing policy to UNO, a new community action organization in the sprawling Mexican-American community of East Los Angeles.
- In San Salvador, as over 100,000 people are amassed in front of the Roman Catholic cathedral

for the funeral of assassinated Archbishop Oscar Romero, a bomb detonates at the edge of the crowd. The people panic as gunfire crackles, and thousands rush for refuge into the cathedral. Soon, it is packed so tightly that the people cannot move. Gunfire and explosions continue outside, where a score have died in the melee. The heat mounts inside the church; people die of asphyxiation, but though dead, remain upright, so tightly packed are they. Then, astonishingly, over the bombs and gunfire and prayers, comes the sound of cheering. Something is inched forward, carried by hands over heads. The cheering is a chant that everyone in the cathedral soon joins in. "*El pueblo unido jamas sera vencido.*" ("The people united shall never be vanquished.")

The object is the coffin of the slain archbishop, sustained aloft by fingertips, making its tenuous way into this sanctuary of faith and terror. "Even in death the archbishop transformed despair into courage," writes Jorge Lara Braud, an official of the National Council of Churches and an eyewitness to these events.

While politicians, commentators and the mass media continue to fulminate over the "Russian threat," the Middle East or Iran, a steadily growing historical current is beginning to push insistently onto the American agenda and demand recognition. It is the rise of the Hispanic.

The current emanates from Chicano neighborhoods in Los Angeles, or from the Island of Vieques off Puerto Rico. It is evident in the sheer growth in numbers of Mexicans and Central Americans spilling across the border in the Southwest, or the prominence of a separate question addressed to Hispanics on the 1980 U.S. census form. This new movement of history also encompasses Central America — Nicaragua, El Salvador, Guatemala, Panama — as well as Mexico itself and the rest of Latin America in a prominent new way. Most compelling of all, a new Christian theology of liberation, deeply indigenous to a people's own blood, tears, terror and hope, is taking root in Latin America.

Latin America — historically of third rate interest to our country, object of insulting stereotypes and humiliating jokes; a region to exploit, extract from, and then visit as a tourist — is without doubt bestirring itself, moving onto history's center stage as the 1980s begin.

Coincident with this over the last 10 to 15 years, has been the rise of a vast new colonialism of the multinational. U.S. direct investment in Latin America leaped from \$9.7 billion in 1966 to \$32.5 billion in 1977, by far the highest investment in any region outside Europe and Canada. And — should it surprise? — world arms imports to Latin America (mostly

from the United States) increased overwhelmingly from \$250 million in 1968 to almost \$972 million in 1977 to protect such investments.

No wonder, then, that Hispanics in this country and in Latin America are moving towards new assertions of dignity, claims to justice — and in the Christian community, new witness to the ineffable power of the Christian Gospel. This article will endeavor to document and interpret the Hispanic phenomenon; to examine the impact of multinationals and of U.S. government policy upon Latin America, and to probe why liberation theology is taking hold among the people.

By the end of this century, Hispanics will almost certainly overtake Blacks to become the biggest minority in this country. Add to that an estimated 7.4 million undocumented, plus the almost certainly larger count to come from the 1980 census, and the number is at the 20 million mark. Hispanic immigration into the United States is running about 1 million persons a year, fed chiefly from the burgeoning Mexican population. A Roman Catholic priest in Miami puts it this way: the United States is now the fifth largest Hispanic country in the world in population, after Mexico, Spain, Argentina, and Colombia.

Where have Hispanics concentrated?

We are accustomed to thinking of the Puerto Ricans in New York (over a million), and of Mexican-Americans in Los Angeles (where they are the great majority of that city's approximately 1.8 million Hispanics), and in the Southwest. But, Ohio and Minnesota now have as many Mexican-Americans as Colorado and Nevada. Miami numbers more than 600,000 Hispanics, mostly Cubans. Interestingly, Chicago is the only big city whose Hispanic population is shared by Mexicans, Puerto Ricans and Cubans in roughly the same proportions as they share the total Hispanic population of the United States. (Mexican, 59.4%; Puerto Rican, 15.1%; Cuban, 5.7%, Central or South American, and other Spanish, 19.8% are the proportions of Hispanic population).

So much for statistics. What of the life of Hispanics in this country?

Historically, the presence of Hispanics on the North American continent predates the landing of the pilgrims in New England. In the Southwest, the Spanish-speaking — whom Anglos frequently describe as "aliens" — predate them by three centuries; in Puerto Rico, they were there almost four centuries earlier.

The five southwestern states where most Chicanos live comprise territory once almost totally under the Mexican flag. Mario Barrera of the University of California at Berkeley writes: "In the 19th century the area now known as the Southwest was incorporated into the United States

through a war of conquest. With the Southwest came a population of former Mexican citizens who were granted citizenship by the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo (1848). These were the original Chicanos. During the remainder of the century a social and economic structure crystallized in the Southwest in which Chicanos and other racial minorities were established in subordinate status. It is into this structure that succeeding generations of Chicanos have been fitted during the 20th century, with some modifications."

As supporters of Cesar Chavez and the farmworker struggle best know, the "subordinate status" of Chicanos has benefitted U.S. (and sometimes Mexican-American) economic interests. California agriculture depends upon Mexican farmworkers to reap its massive harvests. The garment and restaurant industries in California would collapse without the Mexican-American labor force, much of it undocumented immigrants. And of course, many Anglo families along the Southwestern frontier would have to clean house themselves if their "illegal" maids were sent back to Mexico.



This race and class prejudice is reflected in many other areas:

- in the recent effort in Texas to deny to undocumented children the right to attend public schools;
- in the forced sterilization of Latino women at public and private hospitals;
- in sweeps for "illegals" by the INS in residential areas, and entry into homes without a warrant;
- in repeated violations of the minimum wage law in the garment industry (over a 16-month period, California labor

standards officials found 25,993 violations out of 6,185 firms inspected, including 80.8% found in violation of minimum wage or overtime provisions in the garment industry).

But the Chicanos are beginning to stand up. In Los Angeles and San Antonio two powerful Chicano community organizations, formed under the initiative of the Industrial Areas Foundation, are pressing private enterprise and local government for a share of power. Thus, in UNO in Los Angeles, the elderly woman quoted at the beginning of this article is typical of many newly emboldened. UNO is organized through 20 parishes (19 Roman Catholic and one Episcopal). The most striking feature of UNO and of COPS in San Antonio, is their rigorous self-discipline and tight organization. It remains to be seen, however, whether their ideology and organizational objectives will be comprehensive enough in the long run sufficiently to challenge the roots of established economic power and end the class domination that has characterized the history of the Southwest.

But it is Puerto Rico, and the Puerto Ricans in the United States, which, like a pressure cooker taxed way beyond tolerance, may violently explode at an unpredictable moment. When that happens, our country will be totally unprepared to understand either the long history of repression and exploitation behind Puerto Rican-U.S. relations, or the depths of misery and squalor which are the continuing lot of most stateside Puerto Ricans. Unless a massive education campaign is undertaken to help us see otherwise, this country will turn upon Puerto Rico with a vehemence that will make our jingoistic outburst against Panama (when the Canal was turned over) pale by comparison.

Writes correspondent Geoffrey Godsell of the *Christian Science Monitor* after a walk through a Puerto Rican section of New York: "At first sight much of it looks like devastated sections of some British or German cities a few months after the end of World War II: vacant, littered lots and the skeletons of abandoned tenements." Puerto Rican author Piri Thomas writes of a lifetime of endurance by Puerto Ricans in New York and other big cities of "despair, frustration, exploitation, hot and cold running cockroaches, king-size rats, crummy tenement slum houses, poor education and much job discrimination . . ."

And the statistics back up Thomas. As a group, mainland Puerto Ricans are worse off than Chicanos, Cubans, and Blacks: median family income of Puerto Ricans in 1978 was only \$8,282, compared to \$10,879 for Blacks, \$12,835 for Chicanos and \$15,326 for Cubans. Thirty-nine percent of all Puerto Rican families are below the poverty level, as compared to 21% for Hispanics as a whole.

Ironically, unlike so many Hispanics in the Southwest, Puerto Ricans are U.S. citizens. The irony is compounded: they were *made* citizens by a unilateral decree of the U.S. Congress in 1917, 19 years after the United States invaded and conquered Puerto Rico as booty from Spain in the Spanish-American War. Before that, this Caribbean nation was successively occupied by Holland, Britain and Spain, in a colonialist experience dating back 400 years.

"The first four decades of U.S. occupation were years of outright exploitation," wrote Ruben Berrios in *Foreign Affairs* in 1977. Vast areas of land were converted into American-owned sugar plantations, and Puerto Rico became known as the "poorhouse of the Caribbean" — the "Haiti" of that era. After World War II a huge industrialization program began, culminating in extensive American multinational and banking establishments in the 1960s. Agricultural land shrunk dramatically, and a people who in earlier decades grew 75% of the food they ate, now import 90% of all food consumed on the island. Despite the industrialization, unemployment runs between 30 and 40%. Eighty percent of the population qualifies for food stamps.

Concurrent with corporate exploitation is military domination. About 10% of Puerto Rico is military bases and reservations, including Ramey Air Force Base, where nuclear weapons are stored.

This U.S. domination is arousing increased resistance, both on the Island of Vieques, and in Puerto Rico. Advocates for independence persistently hammer away at the illusion that Puerto Rico is a "free associated state" (its official designation). It is as obviously convenient for U.S. business, governmental and military interests to perpetuate that myth, as it is embarrassing to have it known that the United Nations Committee on Decolonization and other international bodies have repeatedly affirmed Puerto Rico's right to self-determination.

In this context stateside and island "terrorist" violence (whether one condones it or not) must be seen as an expression of a centuries' old people yearning to breathe the political freedom won by so many former colonies in the Third World since World War II. (See "The Puerto Rican Connection" by Mary Lou Suhor in *THE WITNESS*, June 1980).

Somewhere in the 1960's, U.S. capitalism began to have trouble with its insatiable need to expand in order to survive. The need became pressing for huge corporations to accumulate more capital; the market was becoming saturated, competition with Europe was increasing, and workers were demanding ever higher wages. Thus, the search for a new reserve of cheap labor, cheaper productive facilities and land, and pliant governments. Attention began to center heavily on Latin America.

The rise and level of increased U.S. direct investments in Latin America is astounding: from \$9.7 billion in 1966 to \$32.5 billion in 1977. Such investment is radically changing the face of Latin America. It is frequently resulting in the retiring of productive agricultural land and the crippling of rural peasant self-sufficiency; the forced migration to the United States of landless peasants; the concentration of political as well as economic power in the multinationals in the Latin American countries; and the resultant vast increase in American arms sales to those countries. The latter is needed by those governments to hold in check populations thus deprived, thus bypassed.

For example, in Mexico's northwest, the irrigated vegetable fields have come to resemble the enormous cultivated tracts of California's Central Valley. Millions of pounds of tomatoes, asparagus, cucumbers, fruits and other non-staple "luxury" goods, financed by U.S. brokers and grown in Mexico are shipped to this country every year, while in Mexico the number of landless peasants has increased from 1.5 million in 1950 to 5 million today. Further, Mexico's agriculture is in such sad shape that it now imports corn, its most basic foodstuff. Names like Del Monte (one of two firms controlling 90% of Mexican asparagus production), Pet Milk, Ocean Garden, and Imperial Frozen Foods dominate this process. In Colombia, the highway through the rich Cauca Valley in the south passes through mile after mile of new sugar and sorghum fields (export crops) punctuated only by billboards advertising the latest in farm machinery and pesticides. In Alto Parana, Paraguay, the survival of 50,000 Indians is threatened as agribusiness buys up their land (Gulf and Western, 135,000 acres; Florida Peach, 43,000). They will sell the valuable timber and plant soybeans — for export.

While agribusiness giants are thus pushing peasants off land and contributing to hunger and malnutrition, U.S. food processing companies are busy making "junk food junkies" out of the urban population. Particularly in Central America and Mexico, such corporations as General Foods, Beatrice Foods, Kraft, General Mills, Pillsbury and Standard Brands, have pushed Koolaid, candies, chewing gum, pizza mixes, imitation cheese, and — would you believe? — instant tortilla mix. The population is seduced into consumption by U.S. ad agencies, J. Walter Thompson prominent among them.

How interpret the meaning of this new American penetration? The internationalization of capital is not new — although its scale is. It is the internationalization of the *productive process* that is new. The division of labor has become international. Certain parts of a productive process move, say, to Mexico or Brazil while other parts stay here. The capital to finance a new engine plant in Argentina or a

new “farm” of soybeans may reside in yet a third country, while the overall coordination of the whole process is managed from the United States. But a crucial element in this new “internationalization of labor” is that Latin America has been chosen by U.S. multinationals out of all the areas of the underdeveloped world as the most profitable source for the cheap and exploitable labor that puts the product together.

In this sense, think of the “global village” metaphor in another way: we in the United States live on the main street. We brag about the tidiness and efficiency of the village and the productivity of its inhabitants. We admit to a few deficiencies, but we maintain that comparatively speaking, no other village has achieved such a high standard of living or held to such moral values. But at the edge of the village there is a circle of misery, squalor, and terrible repression, heaped upon a mass of human beings whose very toil makes it possible for us who live in the center of the village to enjoy our “standard of living.” That, in a nutshell, describes the emerging relationship of Latin America to the United States.

Because of technology, computers, instant communications and the new technical ability to subdivide the productive process among countries, a giant, totally integrated international productive machine has emerged. The slaves at the machine are Latin Americans; U.S. capitalists are the production managers.

Perhaps the most grace-full thing in all of this is that the churches of Latin America are interpreting the meaning of this exploitation and repression with a new theology: the theology of liberation. More than that, bishops, priests and lay people of the Roman Catholic Church, from Archbishop Romero of El Salvador to priests and nuns in Argentina, Brazil, Chile, and throughout Central America are becoming martyred, almost weekly recently, in the struggle. Notable likewise is the prominence of women at various levels. In Nicaragua almost 30% of the guerrilla movement were women; at Puebla, an uncomfortable pope heard women who had travelled from as far as Argentina to petition him for intervention in the disappearance and/or torture of their husbands and sons.

The Central American countries we used to deride as “banana republics” are producing the most noble current examples of courage and martyrdom. Archbishop Romero’s weekly radio broadcast recounting the latest atrocities of the government, appealing to President Carter to veto a military assistance package of \$5.7 million to the ruling junta (it fell on deaf ears) and supporting the peasants, without doubt cost him his life. (When is a bishop in *this* country going to start a weekly broadcast supporting jobless blacks, Hispanics, oppressed women and the poor of



Appalachia?)

And it is precisely this sense of identification with the poor that is the wellspring of liberation theology, for liberation theology begins with the condition of the poor. Writes Peruvian theologian Gustavo Gutierrez:

“The exploited sectors, the despised races, the marginalized cultures, those whom we do not know in their energy and vitality unless we look at them from the underside of history, those that the Bible calls the poor, they are the historical object of a new understanding of the faith.”

It is the “underside of history” that, with the help of our Latin American and Hispanic brothers and sisters, we may be beginning to glimpse as the 1980s unfold. Continues Gutierrez: “God’s love is revealed to the poor and they are the ones who receive, understand and announce this love. *In this perspective the evangelizing task consists in inserting oneself in that process of announcement.*” (italics mine).

As North Americans, inserting ourselves into that process of announcement will require first an openness to Hispanics, both in this country and in Latin America, which will mean the dropping of our historic prejudices. It will require the humility to accept a new reading of history, from their perspective. Finally, it will require a commitment to a rigorous social analysis of the underlying causes of this vast economic exploitative system, and the will on the part of the church here to risk its very life — even as its sisters and brothers are now so dramatically doing in Latin America — to proclaim the new vision of the People of God living in justice and sisterly and brotherly love. ■

TIA Hispanic Project:

We Are a Beautiful People



Hispanics meeting nationally for the first time on an Ecumenical level in San Antonio recently came up with the question: "Since the focus of our theological reflection is the rich Christ who becomes poor, and the poor are the chief embodiment of Christ, how is it possible to evade the economic question?" Excerpts from the statement below show how they responded. The full text can be obtained in Spanish and English from the Hispanic Ecumenical Theological Project, Theology in the Americas, 475 Riverside Drive, New York, N.Y. 10027.

We are a group of Catholics and Protestants who have met to reflect on the meaning of our Christian Faith in the light of our experience as Hispanic people living in the United States. As far as we know, this is the first time that Hispanic Catholics and Protestants have met at the national level to reexamine their faith, putting aside past rivalries and letting themselves be summoned to new communion by the Spirit of Jesus Christ. This communion is the result of a convergence of our faith through a new commitment to the poor among our people, or, to put it theologically, of our commitment to the Christ who, being rich, became poor for our sakes (*Philippians 2:5-9*).

We are a group of 60 Hispanic Christian men and women. Among the Protestants, we represent eight denominations. We include ordained men and women and lay persons, community organizers, teachers, church bureaucrats, social scientists and farmworkers. We are also Mexicans,

Puerto Ricans, Cubans, as well as immigrants from Spain and 10 other Latin American and Caribbean countries. Universal race that we are, we run the gamut of skin colors, since we are blacks, whites, mulattoes and mestizos. What a beautiful people we are!

We do not want to appear hopeless romantics. The obstacles that might have prevented this communion for us are still real. Not long ago, as Protestants and Catholics we denied each other's Christian identity. Such antagonisms have left their mark on our catechisms and in much other literature still in circulation. Even worse, that mark is still to be found in painful memories, in injured spirits, in alienated communities and in divided families (*I Corinthians 11:18*).

On the other hand, our very history as diverse Hispanic groups is still a source of disagreement. It is unreasonable to hope that Chicanos and Puerto Ricans, humiliated for centuries by dominant groups in this country, should display

the kind of gratitude and national solidarity that recent Cuban immigrants have shown as a result of being welcomed and given help. Nor is it reasonable to suppose that those who have already "made it" within the "American dream" should display the same anger as those of our people who have been battered against the walls of prejudice. Similar conflicts exist between our unrepentant "machos" and our new feminists, between the academic intellectuals and those who struggle at the most basic level of human existence, between those who have been tamed by the church and those who have been liberated by their faith, between those who are comfortable and those who are poor, between those who are articulate and those who are tongue-tied, between those highly schooled from south of the Rio Bravo and those still unschooled from north of the border or vice-versa.

It is natural for those very real differences to heighten when we are confronted with the challenge of taking

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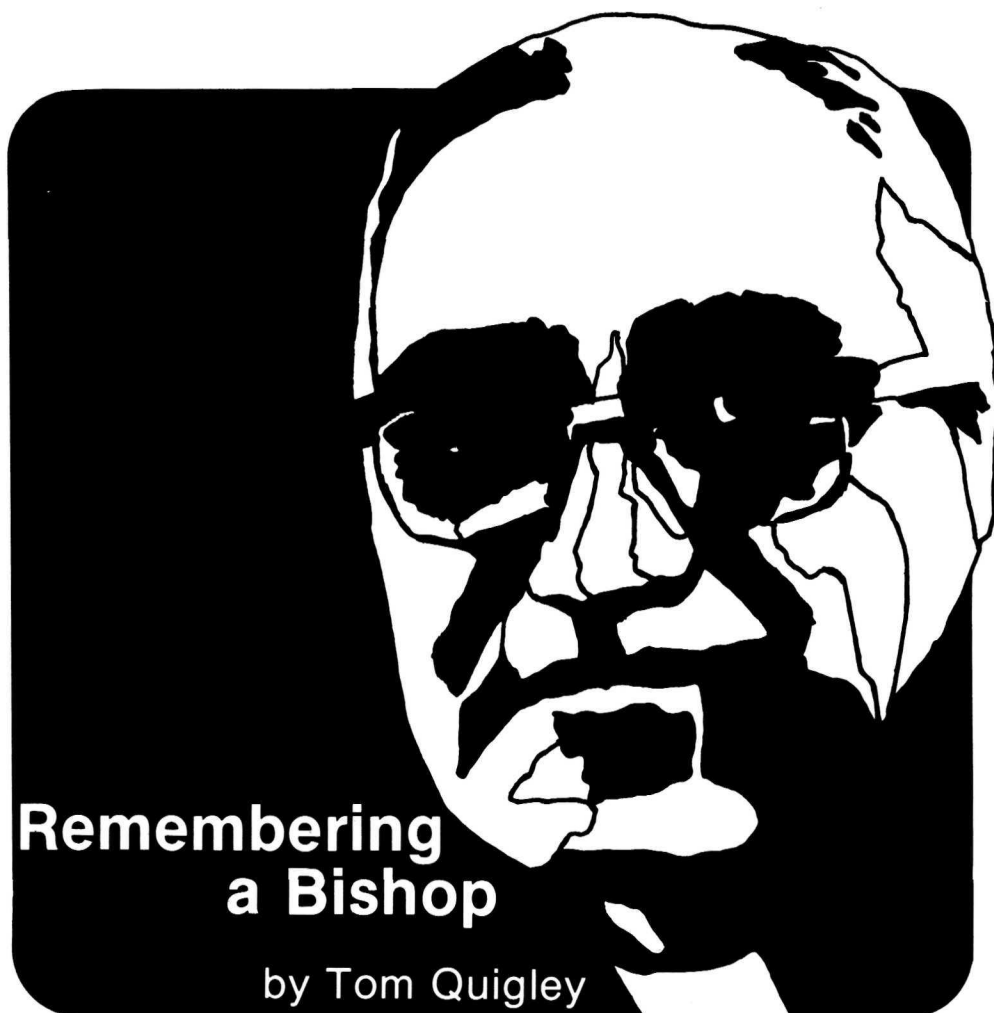
A more unassuming international figure one could hardly imagine. He was not just humble, though he was certainly that, but genuinely shy. The first time I met him in the Spring of 1977 he had been archbishop of one of the world's most turbulent cities for less than half a year. Two of his priests, including one of his dearest friends, a former student of his, had recently been assassinated by government thugs. The entire Jesuit community in the country was under threat of extermination by the White Warriors Union. World attention was focused on El Salvador and on the new, surprisingly outspoken archbishop, Oscar Arnulfo Romero.

We entered a room in the section of the seminary that houses the offices of the archdiocese, Jorge Lara-Braud of the U.S. National Council of Churches and I, two foreigners come to see what we could do. Some 20 others sat around the long oval table with us, the recently formed Emergency Committee that was then meeting regularly to discuss the crisis in El Salvador. There were diocesan and Jesuit priests, sisters, lay men and women, the auxiliary bishop, Rivera y Damas and, somewhere among them, Monsenor.

Everybody called him just that — Monsenor. Not a title really, more an affectionate, deeply loving nickname. Dad. Poppa. Monsenor. Even though every bishop in Spanish America is called that, in El Salvador when they say "Monsenor always did this" and "Monsenor said that," now even after his death, they mean only Oscar Romero.

Everybody spoke at the meeting; people had reports, analyses, conclusions. Jorge and I had our pieces to say. But the little man,

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indistinguishable from the rest except for his cassock and simple pectoral cross, listened, smiled gently, and only at the end said a few words. Mostly words of gratitude for our coming, of hope we would have a fruitful visit and, finally, of regret that he could not then — though he would like eventually to do so — accept our invitation to visit the United States. He said he had to stay with his people.

Two years later he did accept and plans were set for him to address the Governing Board of the NCC and meet with U.S. Catholic bishops; but the October coup intervened and he had to cancel. He never left El Salvador. He is still with his people.

Much is made of the "conversion" of Oscar Romero, and I believe he did go through extraordinary changes in his

last three years. But it was not Saul on the Damascus road. He was a good and holy priest, conservative and traditional, as was typical both of the clerical training of the time and, more importantly, of his humble roots. When the truly ancient Archbishop Chaves y Gonzalez finally retired in 1976 (he's still serving as a parish priest in Suchitoto) all the progressives wanted the bright young auxiliary of San Salvador, Arturo Rivera y Damas, to succeed and were crushed when Rome named Oscar Romero to the post. "It's all over," a Central American Jesuit told me then; "the Vatican doesn't know what's happening here."

But he was not Saul, nor was he a mossback; he was a humble man of the people and nobody's fool. Ambassador White, I suppose meaning no harm, told

a group in Washington last April that the Jesuits "gave the archbishop one of their crash courses." A simple *cure de campagne* in the hands of the wily Jesuits, filling him with political theories coated with the sugar of liberation theology.

An even less sensitive and intelligent former ambassador, who represented Richard Nixon's government during the massively fraudulent elections in 1972 when Napoleon Duarte won the presidency but was prevented by the military from wearing the sash, recently wrote that the archbishop's "character was as good as his judgment was bad."

The typical State Department line: Put down what you don't understand; deny what doesn't conform to your pet theory. They never did understand him, or his people. They still don't.

Monsenor was bright by anybody's standards; he was sent to Rome for advanced studies, taught in seminary, read widely, made bishop in a system that prized intelligence if not always creativity and courage. But far more, he was a leader that merited the term brilliant, a brilliant leader of the kind that calls to mind John XXIII and maybe Mao — representatives of the people who knew that leadership has to do with evoking, calling forth the wisdom that is in the people.

Although we corresponded in the intervening years (he was an extraordinary correspondent, communicating with scores, maybe hundreds of people all over the Americas and Europe) we didn't meet again until Sunday, March 23. Five of us from the U.S. churches had gone on a hastily formed ecumenical visit to El Salvador, seeking to express the solidarity of the U.S. religious community with him and the people of his country and to learn what we could of the current, rapidly changing situation.

We were seated, Quaker, Episcopalian, Methodist and Catholic,

in the sanctuary of the old ramshackle, tin-roofed wooden Basilica of the Sacred Heart. The huge, cavernous poured-concrete cathedral 10 blocks down the street, left unfinished by the previous archbishop who said "we must stop building cathedrals and start building the Church," was unavailable; one of the popular movements had taken it over some weeks before. The basilica was packed, mostly with simple working people, families, kids on their fathers' shoulders. The entrance hymn began and with it, applause starting at the rear and undulating up to the front as the archbishop and the priests and seminarians, vested in brilliantly colored stoles over their albs, moved joyfully up the aisle.

How describe a triumphal procession when there wasn't a trace of triumphalism anywhere? The applause was thunderous, shaking the corrugated roof, teasing tears out of the most nonliturgical of our company; it was simply a pastor receiving the loving embrace of a people who saw themselves, their suffering and their hopes, embodied in this humble figure.

It didn't occur to me then but it has often since, that that day, the eve of his martyrdom, was as vivid a re-creation as I could imagine of the palm-strewn path into Jerusalem.

His homily on that occasion is now famous, translated and published around the world. He told soldiers, simple peasants themselves for the most part, that they are not bound by unjust orders to kill; standard textbook theology but if applied in the concrete, usually considered treasonous. It was so described in the Monday morning paper by an Army spokesman.

The most quoted line of all was heard in its entirety only by the score of us nearest to him in the sanctuary. When he said, addressing the government, the military, the security forces, "I ask you, I beg you" the applause was already deafening; "I order you . . ." and it was

an explosion, blocking out the words everyone knew would follow: "in the name of God, stop the repression!"

But the military heard. Indeed, all of Central America did, since on that day the archdiocesan radio station, YSAX, went back on the air for the first time in weeks after having been bombed out of commission. Monsenor's sermons were the most widely listened to program in the entire country, and his broadcast that day, the first in weeks and the last forever, was no exception.

As we recessed out of the basilica, receiving applause and smiles and handshakes we knew we had done nothing to merit, we North Americans wondered among ourselves how long it would be before some response would be made to this holy man. The radio station had been bombed immediately after the Feb. 17 homily in which he read the letter he wished to send — if the congregation would approve it — to President Carter. The tin roof shook with approval on Sunday and YSAX was bombed on Monday.

But we know now that his assassination was not directly tied to the content of that March homily. Documents which almost certainly link former high officials of the military and international right-wing terrorist groups to the killing, including a Nicaraguan hitman, show that it had been in the works for some time. The date was probably chosen because it was known in advance that the archbishop would be celebrating a sparsely-attended memorial mass in the hospital chapel at Divine Providence on March 24, the first anniversary of the death of Sara Meardi de Pinto, mother of the editor of opposition newspaper *El Independiente*. (Not incidentally, the paper has since been bombed and Jorge Pinto, the editor, machine-gunned in his car, but both survive and are continuing. Brave people, these Salvadoreans.)

In a more profound sense, though, I

believe that sermon was the symbolic occasion for his death. He is stirring up people; he has blasphemed against the idols of the state; it is better that one man die; what need have we of further witnesses? And Caesar, too, strutted upon this stage, unwitting and unwilling, perhaps, but present nonetheless. If you let this man go, thou art no friend of the United States. He is spoiling the Grand Design, playing into the hands of the Marxists, the "bloodthirsty terrorists" and the "Pol Pot Left," as the State Department, with its penchant for one-liner analysis, likes to characterize the massive campesino and worker movements. He must be stopped.

The U.S. didn't pull the trigger but it helped provide the ammunition. It sought, in unprecedented ways, to pressure Monsenor, to lecture him as one might an errant schoolboy, to seek Vatican intervention to have him quieted, to put out the word — in an act of almost criminally stupid arrogance

— that the information flowing daily into the *Arzobispado* from eyewitnesses all across the country was somehow less to be trusted than the intelligence gathered by the U.S Embassy, locked behind its fortress walls and in effective communication only with the Salvadorean government. It beggars belief, especially when successive ambassadors and State Department officials have privately acknowledged that "our intelligence on El Salvador is not very good."

Monsenor had a simple proposition. The military and their masters, the oligarchy, had failed for a half a century to bring justice and prosperity to the people; the government that took power last October only increased the repression while constructing a facade of long-overdue but, under the circumstances, impossible reforms, refusing all the while to deal with the undeniable reality of popular awakening and organization. It was time, he said, to give the people a

chance, to let the now developed people's movements, democratic and revolutionary, join with all others of good will to create a new and just society.

He had no fear of the church being snuffed out in the process, any more than the *campesinado* or the urban workers or the teachers would be; they are all the co-makers of the nation they are struggling to build. A profoundly Christian sense informs the whole process, not because some of the popular movements were in fact organized by priests, but because the people's revolutionary consciousness has grown up hand in glove with their Biblical awareness that they are a holy people called to freedom.

It may take a special grace for them eventually to forgive their persecutors, especially the bungling policy-makers of the United States, but they will never forget their martyrs. El Salvador will never forget Oscar Romero. Nor should we. ■

Continued from page 3

obscenities. "You live in the comfortable suburbs, we live in the bombed-out Bronx — how come?" they seemed to say. That question is echoed by the millions of Hispanics in this country, described by Richard Gillett elsewhere in this issue. And echoed by other millions of Blacks. By the millions of indigent aged in our society. By the millions of unemployed. To the comfortable they are saying: "How come we are afflicted, and you are not?" The answer to their question lies deep within an economic system which has gone awry, as Gar Alperovitz points out, also in these pages.

Setting aside any umbrage at its Chinese origin, we need to see the wisdom of the familiar adage which counsels that it is better to light a candle than to curse the darkness. Certainly, we are in a tunnel, and it is dark. And the only two lights we see, fore and aft, are threatening ones. But so has it always been when history was calling a people to stand upon their feet and lay claim to the dignity and justice which befit the human enterprise. God has better things in mind for us. God counts on us to know this, and to be about it.

Christ Thinks to Himself On Calvary

Now I recognize it:
This is what I was learning about
all those years in the carpentry shop.

Before I entered the desert I knew
what it was to sweat,
wiping sawdust from my eyes
like sand.

Before I started this road I knew
what it was
to carry wood
I had long since wished to set down
for someone else's shelter.

Before I climbed this hill I knew
what nails are for—
creating new structures, building new things.
I knew how easily
they could scratch the builder's hands.

I never knew how deep.

—Christen Frothingham

Continued from page 9

stands vis-a-vis the disastrous conditions of the vast majority of our Hispanic people. We deliberately designed this Hispanic theological and ecumenical consultation around the realities of oppression and liberation among our people (*Exodus 20:2*).

In all these cases the abuse of power by those who run the institutions and the economy is clear. Even clearer are the brutalizing contradictions of a capitalistic system in crisis that requires unemployment, cheap labor, equally cheap raw materials, the transformation of luxuries into "necessities," the disappearance of free enterprise, the accumulation of vast wealth by a smaller and smaller minority, consumption as the primary goal in life, and the sacrifice of human beings on the altar of profits.

Perhaps for the first time, in spite of our political and ideological differences, most of us at the conference did not hesitate to point to this capitalism in crisis as the principal cause, or at least an important cause, not only of persistent economic poverty, so disproportionate among our people, but also of the spiritual poverty of those who have increased their economic advantage at peril to their souls. It was not surprising that this realization could lead some of us to think of what would have been unthinkable in the past: either a radical transformation of this economic system, or its replacement by another system. It should be understood that this, being new ground for us, is in some ways unsettling, for we may appear naive or subversive. But since the focus of our theological reflection was the rich Christ who becomes poor (*Philippians 2:5-9*), and the poor as the chief embodiment of Christ (*Matthew 25:31-46*), how is it possible to evade the economic question?

We sincerely believe we cannot evade it. Otherwise, our understanding of the

Calexico Mass

Huelga flags
stirring limp red
altar in a pick up truck.

Roof monitors scan the crowd
waiting softly on hard asphalt
sun swelters brown faces.

"Pan de cielo"
"Cupo de salvacion"
small boy vomits

"Gracias a Dios!"

—Katrina Carter

Hispanic reality in this country would be very limited. We would not be taken seriously when we say that we are in solidarity with the undocumented immigrants, with the farmers of Ohio, Texas and California, with the indigent of the South Bronx of New York City, the West Side of San Antonio, the East Side of Los Angeles, or Lakeview in Chicago, or with the defenseless inhabitants of Vieques in Puerto Rico under the occupation of the United States Navy, or the suffering Nicaraguans who have been attacked to the point of genocide by the Somozan dictatorship that has been supported by the American government.

We do not wish to blame others and avoid confronting our own responsibility. We think it is imperative to engage in self-criticism as well; it is part of our confession of faith as sinners (*I John 1:8-9*). Cultural shock and the mirage of a consumer society lead some of us to aggressiveness, escapism and social maladaptation. We acknowledge a lack of unity among Hispanic groups, a provincialism of vision, a personality cult among our leaders, and a slowness on our part to contribute to the social and political struggle. We also acknowledge that "machismo" is still a reality in the Hispanic communities and that we have not formed coalitions with other minority groups, especially with

the Black and Native American communities in this country.

We are not assuming that we have reached definitive conclusions concerning political and economic systems that would be more compatible with obedience to the Christ of the poor, or the defense of Christ's poor. What we do affirm is that if Christian love is to be effective (*James 1:15-17*), we must unite with others who are struggling to make political and economic democracy a reality, no matter what terminology is used. What we do know is that we have some political democracy and less and less economic democracy.

The miracle of faith we experienced ecumenically in spite of our pluralism and the complexity of ideological differences, came about from our re-reading the Bible as the revelation of God written chiefly from the experience of suffering and oppression and offered to us for our own full liberation. What happiness we felt in the course of our reflection, that the book that had separated us in the past was uniting us in the present, Catholics and Protestants alike! We also believe that we have come to a better understanding of what the Latin American theologians of liberation mean when they tell us that with respect to the Bible the poor are in a position of "hermeneutical privilege," which is to say, they are in a privileged situation to know God. This is a way of affirming that the lowest have immediate access to the biblical God who from lowliness liberates Israel from captivity (*Exodus 22:21-24*), who raises up prophets as defenders of the poor (*Jeremiah 1:4-10*), who becomes incarnate as a Galilean in Jesus Christ, who eats and drinks with "nobodies," who is crucified because he is a threat to the oppressors, and who guarantees by his resurrection that there will be a day without tears, in which death will be no more, a day without crying or pain (*Revelation 21:1-4*). ■

Choices Beyond the Ballot



Gar Alperovitz

The viability of democracy, both here and abroad, is a subject of more than passing interest in this presidential election year. In this country, what does the flagging participation by voters indicate about the health and the future of the democratic system, and what corrective steps are indicated?

Robert L. DeWitt, editor of *THE WITNESS*, took these questions to Gar Alperovitz, a political economist and co-director of the National Center for Economic Alternatives, Washington, D.C. Alperovitz has served as a consultant with the Episcopal Urban Bishops' Coalition, as well as with the Ecumenical Coalition organized to save the steel plant in Youngstown. With his associate, Geoffrey Faux, he is completing a book entitled *Rebuilding America*, to be published by Simon & Schuster in early 1981. The interview with Alperovitz follows.

Voting statistics in recent years have raised many questions about the effective functioning of our democracy. If something in the range of only 50% of the eligible voters are going to the polls, if a large percentage of those who vote are over 50 years old, if the recent national televising of the Republican convention was ignored by many in favor of a major league ball game, what does that say about the democratic process?

I think that the voting figures reflect a deep indifference in the voting public. I do not think people are apathetic about the future of the nation, but about the choices being offered. When people believe that their vote matters, the figures change. When the Vietnam war heated up, when civil rights heated up, people came out and voted in droves because the choices were significant. And people felt they, themselves, mattered.

You feel the primaries and the election campaigns now in process have not been dealing with significant choices for the voters?

The problem the country has to face is a decision on the whole context of our national future. I don't think the major parties have yet faced that issue squarely. Are we going to discuss and develop a strategy for the larger issues of our history, which will move us a quantum jump upward in our

perspective? Or are we going to be debating a minor tax cut vs. a larger tax cut, a budget slash vs. a larger military budget, giving the poor a small increase in social security and food payments, or take that all away from them through unemployment and inflation? These are all marginal questions. The essential question is to find the direction whereby we can make our economy powerful.

What do you think that bleak outlook will mean for the Black vote in November?

I think Blacks will substantially vote Democratic, even though I don't see much enthusiasm among them for the Carter candidacy. When push comes to shove, however, a lot of them will fear the consequences of a Reagan victory. I think one of the reasons he declined to address the NAACP convention in July was his lack of interest. But, politically, were he to have appeared there he could not have said anything which would have pleased the constituency he is counting on to carry him into office. Anything positive he could have said to Blacks would have been harmful to his candidacy. It is too bad, and it is also dangerous. Ours is really the only advanced industrial society where the indigenous population is fundamentally split on racial lines. To be sure, some of the European countries have ethnic migrant workers, but we are the only country in which

economic decay has its chief impact along racial lines.

I think the possibility of conflict is so obvious, and with that the possibility of violence and oppression, that our future is more chancy and nasty than that of other countries going through equally difficult times. Consequently, a very important moral choice is confronting us — whether or not we will get on with a positive consensus about economic policy and planning in order to avoid some very ugly prospects.

That is a sober statement. Do we need a strong leader, a new Franklin D. Roosevelt, in order to change that prospect?

More accurate is the appraisal that the function of leadership is in substantial stalemate. Give or take some very important decisions on war and peace, give or take some appointments to the Supreme Court, give or take a shading to the left or right on public policies, almost anyone who occupies the White House will find himself in a stalemate. Short range, I don't think much is going to happen of a positive nature because there are too many contending forces on all sides of all questions, which locks decisions into a narrow range of choice. And this stalemate means social and economic decay.

Is this a “no exit” situation?

No. I am only repudiating what a friend of mine calls “instant gratification politics,” that is, when we expect the next election to solve all our problems. The real leverage we need will come from giving people an awareness of the need for major change, and the possibility of accomplishing it in an evolutionary, decade-long framework.

But, meanwhile, as you have indicated, are we not in a very critical economic situation which calls for severe measures?

In the coming period I think we are going to hear a great deal more of the “seemingly plausible” rhetoric about the need to tighten our belts because we are in a difficult economic time. And belt-tightening seems logically to follow in such a time. But this raises the question, whose belt gets tightened? Belts are being tightened for some, and not for others. Extraordinary profits are being made by some major energy companies, by some of the grain dealers, by some land developers. An example in the area of land development is the taking over of inner city housing for condominium development for middle and upper class occupancy, called “urban gentrification.”

On the other hand, other belts are indeed being tightened. Social programs have been cut drastically. Low and moderate income wages are being held back substantially. City budgets have been slashed in their resource allocations.

All of this raises the issue of justice — is there any sense of fairness in the belt-tightening?

But even given the inequities in our present situation, is there any alternative to austerity?

The “seemingly plausible” belt-tightening argument obscures the deeper question of why this wonderfully rich country is not thinking positively about its future. If we were to manage our economy both intelligently and equitably, in my judgment we would be trying to deal with the problems of a positive rather than of a negative future. This is a larger order question than austerity. This is the wealthiest country in the history of the world. For example, we have far more energy than most other industrial nations. The Japanese have no oil. The Germans import most of their oil. If you compare our extraordinary wealth and our potential with the way in which we are mismanaging our economic affairs, the issue takes on a particularly acid poignancy. With equitable and intelligent economic management we would be looking to a positive rather than a negative future. As it is, we are going into a planned recession.

What do you mean by a “planned” recession?

The government's plan, through the Federal Reserve Board, is to slow down economic activity on the theory — I think an obsolete theory — that this will significantly impact inflation. More definitely it will cut down our production and cause the belt-tightening — some belts more than others — of which we have just spoken. Further, even 1% unemployment in this country means the loss of \$100 billion in output. Unemployment is expensive to the economy.

You spoke of our being more fortunately situated, in terms of energy, than a number of other nations. But, regardless, does not our shortage of energy pose a crucial problem for our economy?

I don't think the energy crisis is a necessary factor in slowing our economy. We know from study after study that it is possible to get by on very much less energy than we now use, by a combination of conservation and renewable resources. For example, the average gasoline mileage of our total national fleet of automobiles is in the order of 14 mpg. Yet we also know that we can easily achieve 40 mpg. Just think about that. We could easily save two-thirds of our gasoline if we were to move the auto fleet to this standard. That does not require magic. Actually, there have been a number of studies of cars for city use, projected for the mid-'80s, which can achieve 75-80 mpg. And in terms of housing, we know from the Princeton studies that the average house can improve its energy efficiency by 40-60% from simple insulation techniques. That means a potential 40-60%

increase in fuel efficiency, getting by on half the fuel now needed to heat homes. No, it does not require magic to conserve energy and still allow for technological progress.

But cannot even savings like that be quickly eaten up by inflation if it continues its present trend?

It is not well understood that inflation is socially discriminatory. It is heavily concentrated in the areas of necessities, which makes it peculiarly burdensome to lower and moderate income families. If the price of yachts goes up, that does not affect many people. The inflation we have, however, is concentrated in food, housing, health care and energy. Last year the rate of inflation in those areas together was 17.6%. The inflation rate of everything else in the economy was only about 7-7½%. The significance of this is that the average family in the bottom 80% of the population spends 60-70% of its income on those necessity items. The bottom 30% spends 90% of its income on those items. And the bottom 10% spends 120% of its income on those necessities.

How can people spend 120% of their income?

That is a mathematical figure. What it means in reality is that they have to go into debt, probably borrow against their house if they are elderly and own a home. It means some have to steal to get their groceries. So when inflation is concentrated intensely in these necessity areas, it is severely inequitable, and very, very destructive.

The problem is that our traditional solutions for inflation just don't work. Cutting the budget, for example, does not change the price of oil. Oil is on a separate track. As economists say, "It is sectoral." Or, again, if we try to combat inflation by tightening the money supply as we are currently doing, that increases mortgage rates which show up indirectly in increased rent. In my view we have to stabilize the price of energy and other key necessity areas — food, housing, health care. The intention had been that raising the price of heating oil would increase conservation. We won't increase conservation by raising prices any more than we have. All we will get is more pain, more human suffering.

The government openly admits the economy is in trouble. Is that why there is so much talk about tax credits, in order to stimulate the economy?

The presidential contenders seem to agree on only one point on economic policy, and that is tax cuts. There is no debate about whether to do it. Now, ours is an economy that is moving toward \$2.5 trillion. Tax cuts being discussed are in the range of \$25 billion, or 1% of our total economy. That

is about as effective in any realistic view of history as a mosquito attacking an elephant.

When you speak of revitalizing an economy which is verging on \$2.5 trillion, is there some central factor that can provide the necessary leverage?

The near-term outlook, the next three to five years, I think is rather bleak. We are going to hear a great deal of talk about reindustrialization. This is plausible talk, because we do need to rebuild and modernize our industry. But the current strategy of reindustrialization is mostly to cut back on wages and programs for the poor in order to free money to give back to industry on the theory — and I say "theory" advisedly — that this will help modernize industry. Yet most of the studies of tax credits allowed for new equipment show extraordinary amounts of waste.

For example, I often ask businessmen, "Would you invest in new equipment if you thought we were going into a recession and there wouldn't be any consumers?" The answer is "No." "Would you do it if you got a tax credit for new equipment?" "Well, I'd like the tax credit, thank you, but probably I'd hold back anyway. Oh, I might do a little . . ."

Let me put it this way. If we want to industrialize, we first have to decide that we want a decently managed, growing economy. Given that, the investments will be there. We need the assurance of an economy that functions. And if that credibility is there — what Keynes called "expectations" — then we can expect with absolute certainty that investment will follow. This requires us to plan better.

In short, national planning?

Economic planning is already here. The only question is who benefits from it, who controls it. We see it already in the auto industry where there is a new government plan. There is an energy plan, a steel plan, a transportation plan, an agricultural policy which is in effect a plan. We have a set of integrated policies which move monies, make regulations, provide tax incentives and loans, restrict imports, establish price levels, even establish government ownership in some parts of the synthetics industry.

Go further, and you see that very often the *de facto* control of the planning resides with the big industries and interests involved. So it is a kind of planning without the name, substantially controlled by the several sectors rather than by any larger economic or social values. For instance, we are currently "planning" for high prices in energy, rather than low. We are "planning" for high land value costs in both agriculture and housing. We have a "planned" system which insures that new housing is virtually out of the reach

of 95% of the society. For Americans, this is an historical novelty, because one thing we could always count on for two-thirds of our society was the chance for people to own their own homes.

This means that we are going through a period of great instability. Industrial plants are being relocated, pulled out of cities in the Northeast and upper Midwest — the shoe industry, textiles, rubber, steel, autos. This results in the uprooting of communities. The converse of that would be a policy, a public decision by Congress, that we are going to build up and stabilize jobs in our communities. I think community economic stability will be one of the turning-point issues of the '80s. We cannot have what Mayor Bradley calls "throw-away cities."

With problems of the order you have been describing, what do you think we can expect to see in the short range?

I think we are going to see a lot more inflation and unemployment, recession, energy crisis, military build-up. This will result in cutbacks for low-income people, the poor, minorities. I would expect that more racial conflict, as in Miami, is the end of that line, with the repression it will trigger. Our current economic stalemate and our slow move to the right results in economic decay, which leads to protest, which I think in the '80s will result in violence leading to selective repression. But if that trajectory is projected further it could well lead to massive repression which might resemble what used to be called fascism.

Recently the general shift to the right has emboldened truly fascist groups, such as the KKK and the Nazis, to march provocatively into low income areas, trying



What's the Conventional Wisdom this year?

specifically to generate a counter-reaction. This indeed reminds one of the early Nazi period where it was not the so-called progressive or activist groups that started the interaction. It was the right-wing that provoked it. That nastiness may well be on the increase in this country. And it leads to violence, and that results in law-and-order repression.

Do you see any evidence of the presence of the political factors necessary to turn those corners which must be turned?

It could be that we will see the emergence of a third party, given the way the political spectrum is breaking up. Or there might be the development of a major caucus in one of the parties. Ultimately, perhaps, there might be the taking over of the Democratic party, or a new citizens' party. Or John Anderson's efforts might unfold in a new direction which is unpredictable in the near term. But I am sure that these things will not happen in any positive way unless the ground work is done in advance.

What kind of ground work do you refer to?

My point goes back to the reference to "instant gratification politics." To the contrary, what is of the first order at this stage is the development of awareness, experience, strategy, the development of people. The second order question is what formal political expression that development might take. We are not ready for that question yet. I think the central issue — avoided in this presidential year — is can we achieve a consensus to get on with economic policy and planning for a positive future. A consensus requires, above all, equity. If it doesn't have equity there is no consensus, but a stalemate, which is what we now have. But such a stalemate, historically, is the breeding ground for social protest and new ideas and new directions.

You mean our present impasse may serve as a social compost bed, providing the nurture for new experiments, new directions?

Our time reminds me very much of the late 19th century when Populism was born. At that time, too, the nation's incapacity to act resulted in severe economic consequences. There were repeated recessions and depressions after the Civil War to the end of the century, and the increasing strength of the major railroads and the East Coast financial interests put a terrible hammerlock on other parts of the country. Farmers in the Midwest, the South, the Southwest and in parts of the Plains area were caught between railroads, money problems, the silver-gold conflict. Their lives were terribly squeezed by the failure of the national

economy to deal with their needs. It was in that period that there occurred the rise of Populism which was the root of progressivism and much of the social development that later took its most sharply turned form in the New Deal. During that time there appeared the "lecture series." The Populists did not use the term "organizers," but "lecturers," because the people who did the organizing went around to teach economics, popularly. And they were popular! I think that is the kind of period we are in.

You don't think it is wishful thinking to expect people to react to economic duress by thinking and acting creatively?

Well, reality is a powerful teacher. A reality that is becoming increasingly obvious is that the people who are running our economy and our economic affairs are failing miserably. And we can't get out of the box we are in unless we make some big changes. Those are two things that reality can teach. What we need to do further, both as individuals and as groups such as the church, is to start both national and local discussions of the values, and then the policies, that ought to govern our direction as a nation. That is the kind of work that has to start yesterday! I see no alternative to taking up that challenge and beginning, piece by piece, to rebuild the elements of ideas, of experience, of organizing, of activism, of awareness, that are the forging ground for the new direction. I see that as the most important work of the early 1980s.

What does that imply about the future of our traditional capitalist system?

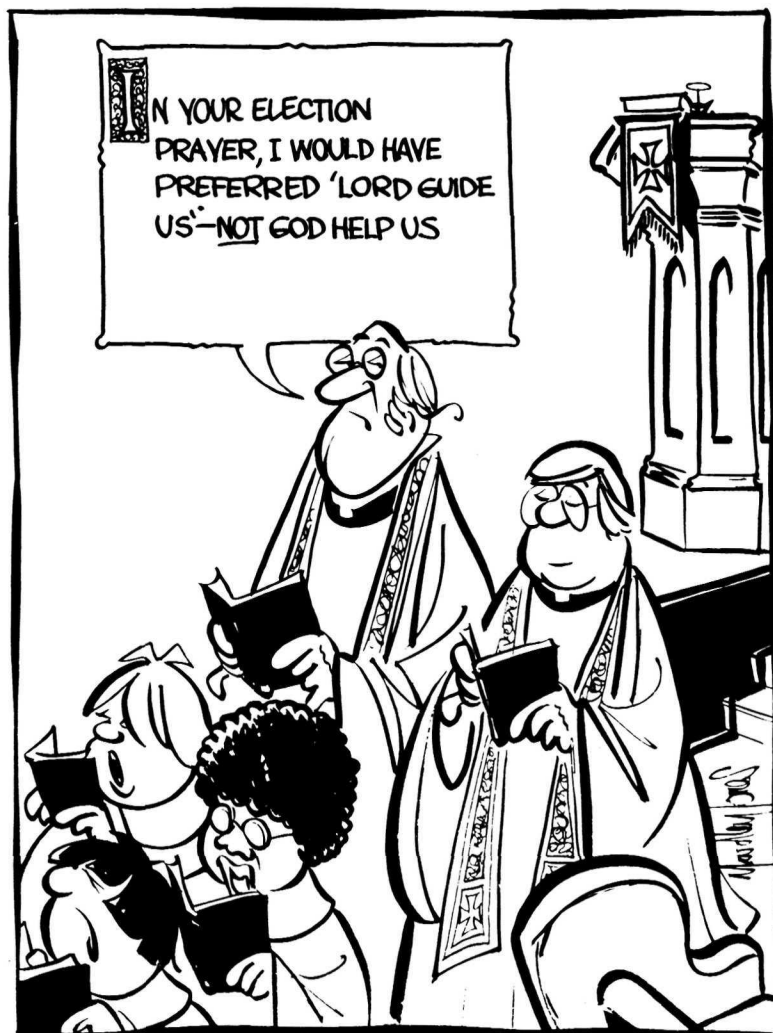
I find such terms very difficult. When you see the steel industry coming to the government for major governmental assistance, when you find the energy companies hand-in-glove with the government for programs and plans to develop particular fields of energy, when you see leading businessmen urging various forms of government subsidy or loan guarantees — this is not free enterprise capitalism where the market decides everything. These are the elements of socialism, or what might be called "corporate socialism," because the corporations are the major participants.

I think we will continue to see the elements of the economy move well beyond free enterprise capitalism. The question is what values will govern that direction — whether it will be participatory and democratic, or elitist and centralized, even repressive.

We are going to see major changes which could be called fundamental changes in our economic system. We don't have the terms accurately to describe it. For example, the proposed worker/community ownership of a steel mill in Youngstown — would that be capitalism or socialism? Actually it is a new genre.

The fundamental question is what values will guide the changes. I think the role of the church could be strategic in the '80s in the forging of the value-content of our long-term economic policy. Very often the religious community hasn't wanted to deal with economics. They have preferred to deal with social consequences. But I think there is a crucial need to infuse a new economic direction with a value content. This requires getting one's hands dirty in economic policy, messing around in questions about industry and steel and autos, as the clergy did in Youngstown by trying to figure out how to run a steel mill in a way that benefits a community, and has some equity to it.

This is a whole new area of ministry, if you like. I've seen some very encouraging manifestations of it, and think it is very important. But I don't think the value content will come from any place else unless the church is involved. The effort will be rudderless. ■



Continued from page 2

perish as fools. So I cannot be a "neutral" counselor to young men as they grapple with the question of whether to register for the draft. But the law provides severe penalties for those who do not comply with the registration law. And one cannot in conscience advocate non-registration to 19 and 20 year olds without subjecting oneself to the same penalties they might incur. So I shall break the registration law. I shall "aid, abet, and counsel" non-compliance with the registration law — though I shall do this in ways calculated to make it difficult for the government to make a case. I hope and believe that so many thousands will likewise refuse to comply that, as during the Viet Nam war, prosecution will prove impracticable.

Just suppose that July 21 were the date for the beginning of registration of men and women alike for a period of service to humankind — with the option to choose military or non-military service. The urban slums could be rebuilt, illiteracy wiped out, land reclaimed, forests planted, lakes cleaned out, new parks and hiking paths built, children better cared for, hospitals and nursing homes more fully staffed, crime reduced, and so on. We could support an imaginative development like that! But a re-run of the old men-only military-only draft is all we're getting. What a dismal failure of leadership!

The Rev. Jack Woodard
Washington, D.C.

Church Opposes Draft

As a church, we wish to express our opposition to the proposed draft registration.

President Carter has made clear from the beginning that he intends for registration to be a signal, to the Soviet Union and the world, of a willingness to go to war. We believe that this action, which clearly embraces violence and alienation as a means of resolving conflict, is incompatible with the life and teachings of Jesus. Jesus' message is one of reconciliation. He calls us to love all men and women, regardless of whether we perceive them as friends or

Correction

In the article entitled "TMI: Who is Responsible?" by Lockwood Hoeft in the August WITNESS, the sentence reading that the Rev. Howard B. Kishpaugh, pastor of All Saints Episcopal Church in Hershey, was resident pastor to 50 evacuees at the Red Cross Shelter in the Hershey Sports Arena should have read 500 evacuees. Sorry.

enemies, and regardless of what the consequences may be to ourselves.

As Christians, we feel we must say no to draft registration and the willingness to go to war there embodied. Accordingly, should draft registration legislation be enacted, some of us will refuse to register and some will counsel others to refuse to register.

As a nation, we are facing a very serious choice. May God guide us and sustain us as we decide where we will put our trust.

**The Vestry and Rector,
Church of the Messiah
Detroit, Mich.**

Registration Insane

What an insanity for our country to call for a peacetime registration now in our nuclear age. Twenty-four minutes is the travel time for nuclear bombs from Washington to Moscow. A single nuclear weapon could destroy Washington or Moscow. With over 30,000 nuclear warheads we are less secure than ever in our history. We have no defense against the 20,000 Soviet nuclear weapons. They have no defense against our 30,000.

By calling for registration of youth we deceive the public into believing the registration will help us. It will further spread the lie that we have some defense against a nuclear attack.

Registration of youth is the first stage of involvement in war. It can easily be interpreted by the U.S.S.R. and others as an act in preparation for war and therefore a threat to world security. Registration and conscription indoctrinate young people with the

military spirit and military ideology. People so indoctrinated are likely to support U.S. intervention by force in the international affairs of other nations and in the struggle between countries where our economic interests are involved. Training large numbers of people in the use of arms and in violence as a means of settling disputes undermines our established methods of political change and prepares people for violent solutions to personal and social problems.

Registration and conscription violate Constitutional guarantees against involuntary servitude. They contribute in a variety of ways to the dehumanization of persons in our society and involve us in the war process. This is another step toward making war thinkable.

To become a soldier is to be ready on another's command (this is what a soldier's duty consists of) to kill all those one is ordered to kill. For the person who understands the true meaning of military service and who wants to be moral, there is only one clear and incontrovertible answer: such a person must refuse to take part in military service no matter what consequences this refusal may have.

**Richard McSorley, S.J., Director
Center for Peace Studies
Georgetown University**

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**Sister Elizabeth Daugherty
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