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this
Jesus
God
rose
up, and
of that
we are
all witnesses

THE
VOL. 64 NO. 4 APRIL, 1981
WITNESS

Lamentation for Easter
William Stringfellow

Guilty of Waging Peace
Molly Rush

ACTS 2:32

LETTERS
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Cover From Seneca?

Your January cover quotes a sign in Baltimore. You may know already that the words on the sign are a quotation from Seneca, and in Latin goes:

*Nos, volentes, ab nesciis ducti,
quod fieri non potest, pro ingratis
facimus.*

*Tantum, in diuturnam penuriam
longe agimus,
quam nunc idonei sumus, res
carentes ad totum facere.*

At least that's the way I received it from a member of the House of Representatives who has it on his wall in Washington. The first sentence is translated: "We the willing, led by the unknowing, are doing the impossible for the ungrateful".

I agree with you about the necessity of independent journalism. There's too little of it about now, especially with the demise of Harry Golden (not exactly a crusader) and I. F. Stone, probably the last really independent voice in print in the country. Then there was P. D. East here in Mississippi, persecuted by the Klan and his own thirst.

I was a reader of THE WITNESS when Bill Spofford was its editor, and about the same time I read *The Churchman*. *The Reporter* was top-notch in its day, now sadly defunct. *Commentary* is strong but ethnic — lots of good public policy debates in its pages.

Compared with these last, the revived WITNESS has seemed thin and strident, predictably left-leaning and unselfcritical. But, what the heck, I'm

willing to risk a subscription in the hope that the Reagan juggernaut will give you something to chew on.

The Rev. Paul E. Cosby
Pascagoula, Miss.

Plant Closure Challenge

I am guilty of subscribing to many of the serious magazines and "think tank" publications. I consider THE WITNESS to be one of the best in this class. I look forward to each issue with great enthusiasm and agree with 99.44% of the articles.

I do want to argue a minute with Richard Gillett and his article on plant closures in the January edition. I grant the accuracy of all of his claims — the trauma of the laid-off worker, the callousness of multi-national corporations in closing plants, etc. But it seems to me that he has ignored two important factors:

(1) Rubber workers union members make from \$11 to \$14 per hour, plus fringe benefits. An 18-year-old, after a few months, is making this maximum wage.

Could it be that some unions have negotiated their members over and out of the economic market? Could it be that we are seeing Veblen's conspicuous consumption in a new group today?

Many corporate executives, with their Lear jets, condos in Italy, etc. are conspicuous consumers. And now union members, like rubber, auto and the building trades, join the conspicuous consumers with their RC vehicles, large power boats, video tape machines and three-car style of life. Could it be that organized labor has lost its original social conscience and is as guilty of money grubbing as the employers?

(2) When a plant closes in the U.S. and opens in Mexico or Brazil, what are the benefits that are brought to the Mexicans and Brazilians? The new wages and working conditions are fantastically better than the squalor and poverty they knew before this closed California plant moved into their city.

We are "one world" and we should

rejoice that Third World workers will be greatly benefited, even though we grieve for our fellow Americans who are out of work.

Claude M. Spilman, Jr.
Indianapolis, Ind.

Gillett Responds

Claude Spilman raises two good questions. The rubber workers, along with auto and steel workers and other highly skilled job categories, do indeed make high wages — when employed! And indeed they have joined the "conspicuous consumption" society. Some sectors in the labor movement are critical of what they interpret as a poor past strategy on the part of labor leadership in this country to go for ever-higher wages and fringe benefits, rather than to raise more fundamental long-term issues such as industrial democracy and worker ownership or partial ownership of industries. This strategic error is becoming more glaring in the light of so many plant closures, since management is now telling many workers they must accept pay cuts if they wish to keep working.

But management has put one over on the public in blaming high wages as the sole cause for their troubles. Meanwhile, as in steel and autos particularly, they have not modernized or economized, instead pushing "conspicuous consumption" full blast themselves while diversifying into other products and discovering cheap non-union labor in the South or overseas, usually in countries with repressive governments.

This leads to Spilman's second question of whether workers in overseas countries are benefitting. Yes, there is some beneficial result, in the employment of some people whose plight might otherwise be desperate. But the kinds of employment offered by trans-nationals overseas tend to fall into two major categories: assembly-line work (say in electronics and textiles) and skilled technical or professional work. In the first instance, young women are frequently employed instead of the

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THE WITNESS

Robert L. DeWitt, Editor; Mary Lou Suhor, Managing Editor; 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.

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Life-and-Death Struggle

by Robert L. DeWitt

Good Friday and Easter speak to us deeply of death and of life, those two antagonists in whose struggle we humans are inescapably caught.

Death, which inexorably keeps its rendezvous with each of us, confronts us in varying forms. It offers for example the options of suicide, or of murder, or of sacrifice.

In centuries past a suicide (a "self-killer") represented perhaps the most despised, the most unforgivable mode of dealing with death. The medieval custom was to bury suicides at a cross-roads with a stake driven through the heart. That practice, gruesome though it was, was at least a negative effort in those dark ages to bear testimony to the divine origin of life. In that view, one who spurned the gift was guilty of the ultimate repudiation of the Great Giver of life.

However, it is arresting that Jesus taught that there is no greater love than to lay down one's life for friends. This could be called suicide, because it is seeking death; but in Jesus' case this was a life-affirming act. It was a seeking of death only in order that others might have life more abundantly. It was an effort to help others value their lives more highly, and affirmed that life is indeed a divine gift to be treasured.

But what do we say of the opposite thrust — the pursuit of policies or the taking of measures which compel others to set less value on their lives? There probably never has been a time when public policies, around the world, actually have set a higher premium on death, never a time when life has been so devalued.

• The war in Vietnam, which resulted in virtually as many suicides as combat fatalities among the American forces, evidenced that the god of death was

done homage by the policies responsible for that cruel aggression, so disillusioning and depressing to those compelled into combat.

• The popular attitudes, local ordinances and church rulings which denigrate gay persons, resulting in a disproportionate number of suicides in the gay community, reveal that the god of death, not the God of Life, has shaped those attitudes, ordinances and rulings.

• Plant closings which wreak economic catastrophe in community after community, causing unemployment, hunger, family break-ups and a rising number of suicides, manifest that the god of death, not the God of Life, is controlling the economy in which those decisions are made.

• Arms budgets of such proportions that they are sustainable only by the reduction of essential human services which enhance and encourage life, unmask a plan for death, not for life.

• An arms strategy which promotes the accessibility and therefore the probability of the unleashing of the disintegrative devastation of the atom is surely a strategy roundly applauded in the halls of hell.

• And when arms and "technical advisors" are made available to the governments of the El Salvadors of this world, who thus learn from their larger neighbors the dealings of death, then death is indeed the prince of this world, and life has become a lonely exile.

This issue is precisely theological. One cannot speak of it without borrowing from the vocabulary of the Apocalypse. When people's dying is so rampantly attributable to death-dealing forces, policies and powers, then that dying becomes indistinguishable

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A Lamentation for Easter

by William Stringfellow

At midday a darkness fell over the whole land, which lasted till three in the afternoon; and at three Jesus cried aloud, "Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani?"; which means, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" . . . Then Jesus gave a loud cry and died.

— Mark 15: 33-34; 37

When I was an adolescent, precocious as I may then have been, the mystery of the Incarnation much exercised my mind. At the time in life when (I suppose) I should have been obsessed with football, sex or pop music, as my peers seemed to be, I was very bothered about the identity of Jesus — preoccupied by issues of who he was and who he is — particularly by the matter of the relationship in Jesus Christ of humanity and deity.

I do not know — yet — how to account for this preemptive, and passionate, curiosity which disrupted my youth. I had not been treated in my upbringing, in either family or church, to sectarian stereotypes of Jesus as chum or sentimental intimate. Indeed, I regarded these as vulgar, possibly perverse, and certainly pretentious familiarities, denigrating to Jesus, even though for the indulgent they often induced ecstasies equivalent to a high attained through alcohol or drugs. I had suffered, instead, prosaic indoctrinations which asserted the "humanity of Jesus" while simultaneously alleging the "divinity of Christ." Such instructions had left me with a stong impression that Jesus was an extraordinary schizophrenic.

Meanwhile, adoptionist notions, which I had heard rumored, I rejected as probable sophistry, since they seemed impotent to dispel the essential incoherence of dogmatics. In the congregation I received comfort from the introit of *The Gospel According to John*, which was recited as the finale of every Eucharist, because that seemed to affirm the integrity and indivisibility of the life of the Word of God in this world and to do so in appropriate syntax.

William Stringfellow is a lay theologian who lives on Block Island, R.I. He spends much of the time lamenting; the rest he spends rejoicing.

Perennially at Holy Week this concern of mine would find focus in the reports in the gospels of the Crucifixion of Jesus, especially the reference to his cry: "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" Oh, dreadful words! Ghastly question! Pathetic lament! Ultimate despair! Exquisite agony! This was *Jesus* crying out. *Why* would Jesus speak this way? *How* could Jesus do so?

*My God, my God, why hast thou
forsaken me
and art so far from saving me,
from heeding my groans?
O my God, I cry in the day-time
but thou dost not answer,
in the night I cry but get no respite.*

Then one Good Friday while I was still in high school I heard a preacher, more edifying for the laity than others had been, remark that these words of Jesus from the Cross are the opening verses of Psalm 22. Later that same day I read the Twenty-second Psalm — perhaps 100 times — but it did not quiet my agitation. I still had all my questions, though the effort distilled them: Why had not Jesus begun the recital of the Twenty-third Psalm, rather than the Twenty-second (as more or less everybody else does at the moment of death)?

*And yet thou art enthroned in holiness,
thou art the one whose praises Israel sings.
In thee our father and mother put their trust;
they trusted, and thou didst rescue them.
Unto thee they cried and were delivered;
in thee they trusted and were not put to shame.*

It was some time after I had exhausted my adolescence when I began to hear the Twenty-second Psalm as a hymn of eschatological hope, rather than a dirge of ultimate despair. If it is concluded that the outcry of Jesus from the Cross was invoking the whole of Psalm Twenty-two, then one evidence that hope rather than despair is the topic, is the radical identification of Jesus with Israel. And this is not simply a matter of Jesus indicating that he shares in Israel's heritage and custom — as had frequently happened in earlier episodes in his life, going back to the time of his circumcision.

In the midst of the Crucifixion, much more is involved.

The identification relates to Israel's vocation as the holy nation called in history to recognize the reign of the Word of God in the world and to pioneer the praise and worship of God as Lord of Creation, on behalf of all nations, tribes, peoples, and principalities. And, even more than that, the connection between Jesus and Israel signified in the Psalm concerns the *disposition* of Israel's vocation.

Thus, condemned by the Roman rulers, defamed by the ecclesiastical authorities, disfavored by the multitudes, betrayed, denied, abandoned by disciples, friends and family; reviled, rejected, humiliated, utterly beset, crucified: Jesus, crying aloud from the Cross, speaks as Israel. In that moment, there is nothing, there is no one left to be Israel except Jesus. He is, then, "King of the Jews," as the indictment affixed to the Cross states; but he is, then, at the same time, within himself, the embodiment of the whole people of God. He alone, then and there, assumes and exemplifies the generic vocation of Israel to trust and celebrate the redemptive work of the Word of God in history. In the drama of the Crucifixion, Jesus invoking the Twenty-second Psalm exposes the Cross as the historic event in which Jesus Christ *becomes* Israel.

*But I am a worm, not a man,
abused by all men, scorned by the people.*

*All who see me jeer at me,
make mouths at me and wag their heads:
"He threw himself on the Lord for rescue;
let the Lord deliver him, for the Lord holds him dear!"*

Another way to behold the peculiar and intense identification of Jesus with Israel's vocation is in terms of the historic fulfillment of that which is written. Jesus was conscientious about this throughout his public ministry, from the time of his first appearance in the synagogue and his reading from Scripture there (*Luke 4:16-30; Matthew 13:54-58, Mark 6:1-6*). What is involved in this, so far as I understand, is not some simplistic, mechanistic process, but faithfulness in the performance of the witness to which one is called. So, here, the words from the cross foreshadow the scenerio of Psalm 22, while the Psalm portends the event of the Crucifixion so that the narrative of the Crucifixion in the gospel accounts becomes a virtual recitation of the Psalm.

*But thou art the one who drew me from the womb,
who laid me at my mother's breast.*

*Upon thee was I cast at birth;
from my mother's womb thou hast been my God.*

*Be not far from me,
for trouble is near, and I have no helper.*

*A herd of bulls surrounds me.
great bulls of Bashan beset me.
Ravens and roaring lions
open their mouths wide against me.*

*My strength drains away like water
and all my bones are loose.
My heart has turned to wax and melts within me.
My mouth is dry as a potsherd.
and my tongue sticks to my jaw;
I am laid low in the dust of death,
The huntsmen are all about me;
a band of ruffians rings me round, and
they have hacked off my hands and feet.
I tell my tale of misery,
while they look on and gloat.
They share out my garments among them
and cast lots for my clothes.
But do not remain so far away, O Lord;
O my help, hasten to my aid.
Deliver my very self from the sword,
my precious life from the axe.
Save me from the lion's mouth,
my poor body from the horns of the wild ox.*

The Psalm bespeaks one utterly assailed by the power of death: beset by the pervasiveness, militance and versatility of death; bereft of any capability to cope with death. The Psalm bemoans the agony of death by crucifixion: the Psalm betells the helplessness of humanity against the relentlessness of the great array of death. *I am laid low in the dust of death.*

That is the human destiny; moreover, that is the destiny of the whole of creation, apart from the event of the Word of God in history. And it is that confession of radical helplessness which is, at once, the preface of fidelity and the invocation of the grace of the Word of God. Sin is, actually, the idolatry of death. The last temptation (in truth, the *only* one) is to suppose that we can help ourselves by worshipping death, after the manner of the principalities and powers. That final vanity must be confessed. Jesus confessed *that* in our behalf when he cried aloud from the Cross. When that confession is made we are freed to die and to know the resurrection from death.

The phrase in the Apostles' Creed, *He descended into hell*, has a similar significance: Hell is the realm of death; hell is when and where the power of death is matured, complete, unconditional, maximum, undisguised, most awesome and awful, unbridled, most terrible, *perfected*. That Jesus Christ descends into hell means that as we die (in any sense of the term *die*) our expectation in death is encounter with the Word of God which is, so to speak, already there in the domain of death.

*I will declare thy fame to my people;
I will praise thee in the midst of the assembly.
Praise the Lord, you who fear the Lord;
all you children of Jacob, do the Lord honor;*

stand in awe of the Lord all children of Israel.
 For the Lord has not scorned the downtrodden,
 nor shrunk in loathing from their plight,
 nor hidden from them,
 but gave heed to them when they cried out.
 Thou dost inspire my praise in the full assembly;
 and I will pay my vows before all who fear thee.
 Let the humble eat and be satisfied.
 Let those who seek the Lord praise the Lord
 and be in good heart forever.
 Let all the ends of the earth remember
 and turn again to the Lord;
 Let all the families of the nations
 bow down before the Lord.
 For kingly power belongs to the Lord,
 and dominion over the nations is the Lord's.

The outcry from the Cross is no pathetic lament, but a lament for Easter. And the hope which it expresses is not vague or illusive or fantasized, but concrete and definitive and empirical. The Twenty-second Psalm (hence, Jesus on the Cross) manifests that hope in political terms. The influence of the Psalm on the Crucifixion underscores the political character of the Crucifixion. The Psalm elaborates the politics of the Cross.

Any public execution is, obviously, a political event in a straightforward and literal sense, but the public execution of Jesus Christ has political connotations of immense, complex, and, indeed, cosmic scope. This becomes apparent, for example, when the images of the Psalm portray the powerless victim threatened by predatory beasts, a familiar biblical way of designating political principalities and powers. It is, after all, in the name of Caesar, the overruling principality, that the sovereignty of the Word of God over Creation is disputed and mocked.

The political reality of the Crucifixion is accentuated in the Psalm where it is announced that the cry of the forlorn is heard and heeded. (*Psalm 22:24b*). Notice the circumstances: the scene is the Judgment, with the whole of Creation in assemblage and with all who fear the Lord of history gathered in an act of praise. Let it be mentioned here that the attribute which chiefly distinguishes Christians is, simply, that they fear the Lord *now* or already — before the Day of Judgment. That means specifically that they acknowledge that they live and act in the constant reality of history being judged by God. Thus, nowadays, when people assemble as congregations in praise and worship of the Lord, this is an anticipation or preview of the Judgment. Where, instead, the regime is glorified or superstition prevails or religiosity is practiced, then the congregation indulges scandalous parody of the Judgment.

Notice, in the context of the Psalm, the event of the Judgment is, so to say, the *first* day that the downtrodden are no longer scorned (*Psalm 22:24a*). For the poor, the diseased, the oppressed, the dispossessed, the captive, the outcast of this world, the Day of Judgment in the Word of God means not only the day of justice, but also the day of justification, when their suffering is exposed as grace.

The politics of the Cross delivers a message to the nations, to all regimes and powers, and even unto “all the ends of the earth,” marked by the Psalm: *Kingly power belongs to the Lord, and dominion over the nations is the Lord's* (*Psalm 22:28*). Now *that* is what the Incarnation is all about.

*How can those buried in the earth
 do the Lord homage,
 how can those who go down to the grave
 bow before the Lord?
 But I shall live for the Lord's sake,
 My posterity shall serve the Lord.
 This shall be told of the Lord to future generations;
 and they shall justify the Lord,
 declaring to a people yet unborn
 that this was the Lord's doing.*

In Psalm 22, the word in the cry of Jesus from the Cross is an assurance of the efficacy of the Resurrection. To become and be a beneficiary of the Resurrection of Jesus Christ means to live here and now in a way which upholds and honors the sovereignty of the Word of God in this life in this world and which trusts the Judgment of the Word of God in history. That involves freedom *now* from all conformities to death, freedom *now* from fear of the power of death, freedom *now* from the bondage of idolatry of death, freedom *now* to live in hope while awaiting the Judgment.

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from murder, and the very ground will cry out.

That crying out — through the countless martyrs of our time — echoes the sacrifice of Jesus on Calvary. Humanity is not a thing of naught. The human soul and the life which embodies it were intended for better things. Every woman and man, every girl and boy, is Jesus' sister and brother. Children of the Eternal One they are, of inestimable worth, of incalculable value. Even as you and I. Good Friday reminds us that life for God's children is purchased at a price, the struggle of life with death. Easter proclaims that the victory is assured, that God is determined that life shall win out over death. Faith therefore calls us, in the meantime, to live our own lives, to die our own deaths, in a mode which extols both the Giver, and the gift, of life. ■

Guilty of Waging Peace

Molly Rush, Plowshares 8 defendant, was interviewed shortly before her trial by Helen Seager, director of the Commission for Women, Commonwealth of Pennsylvania and member of the ECPC Board of Directors. Seager, a longtime friend of Rush who worked with her on civil rights and other projects, probes why the mother of six children took on the nuclear establishment by pounding on missile nosecones at a GE plant.



**Molly Rush, Director
Thomas Merton Center**

Helen Seager: In his final address to the nation, President Carter quoted the phrase “life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness” from the Declaration of Independence. And he said that today “life” means avoiding nuclear war. How do you react to hearing an outgoing president equate avoidance of nuclear war with life itself?

Molly Rush: It is to the point. In the last 35 years we have seen a continued increase in the amount of nuclear weapons. And in the Carter years in particular, we saw the continuation of a policy which began back in Nixon’s time — James Schlesinger’s “counter force” principle — that makes nuclear war more likely. What is tragic is to hear those words from a president whose policies increased possibilities of nuclear war.

Seager: In President Eisenhower’s farewell speech he warned us about the military/industrial complex. How do your efforts and concerns relate to the military/industrial complex?

Rush: Well, it is all part of a self-perpetuating cycle. It includes not just the military industry, it includes the media network and the universities. It is the whole system that we have built up. Industry helps to support the build-up of nuclear weapons by scrambling for armament contracts, and by the way it controls political leadership. It is a self-perpetuating cycle.

Seager: You have attempted to break into that cycle. Would you give a brief recap of what you did and who was with you?

Rush: We were interested in breaking in with a little ray of truth to this whole process, by shining some light on the production of nuclear weapons in a town on the outskirts of Philadelphia — King of Prussia. Eight of us — Father Dan Berrigan; Phil Berrigan; Karl Kabat, another priest; Sister Anne Montgomery; Elmer Maas; John Schuchardt; Dean Hammer and myself — had met and prayed in retreat over a period of some time preparing for a witness that we called “Swords into Plowshares.” We tried to devise a way to get into a plant where some nuclear arms components were being made. Carrying hammers, we went past the security guard while Karl and Anne distracted him long enough for the rest of us to get inside. We managed to get into a machine shop, and found some nuclear nose cones.

Seager: Did you know that machine shop was there when you went in?

Rush: I think we went in with a great deal more hope than information! We felt that grace was really with us that in a few moments time we were able to find and hammer on two of the nose cones before there were many people in the building. Then blood was spilled on both of them and on some secret documents on the desk. We did not know at the time that they were secret — there just happened to be papers on the table — and then we quickly joined in a circle and prayed and chanted and sang.

Seager: You had been together in retreat for the purpose of planning something at that plant?

Rush: Yes, we had for several months considered this possibility. Finally after a couple of preliminary meetings, the date was chosen and we decided to do a retreat together. And then came the certainty that we were prepared to go ahead with the action. I remember at one point we were fearful that we didn't have enough information. We had a series of plans — A, B, C, D, and E. If we did not get in the first door, then we would go to the second, and so on. I remember at that point Phil Berrigan saying, "I think we are going to get inside the plant. I think we are going to find those nose cones, and do some damage to them." And that was a pure act of faith! But that was a turning point, and we just let the fears and the hesitations go, and proceeded.

My own feeling was that, knowing that these re-entry vehicles were built to withstand thousands of degrees of heat on re-entering the atmosphere so they would not burn up on a short trip across the world, I imagined it would be impossible to dent or damage them with little hammers. I can't even knock much of a hole in a household carton, so I really had questions as to whether I would be able to do much damage. I think I was caught up in the myth that the national security system likes to promote about its invulnerability. And it is a myth, because the more weapons we have the more insecure we become, the more vulnerable we are. So for me it was a breakthrough to find that when I hit on those nose cones I was making visible dents!

Seager: You were surprised?

Rush: Yes, I really was. I think we all carry these myths in our minds. These weapons seem somehow so invulnerable, so beyond dealing with, that most people just feel helpless and hopeless. I myself have been through the whole gamut of feelings of despair. The more you look at this question the more you get caught up in the mindset of most experts, that the outlook is very bleak. Many are saying we must turn this around in two or three years or we are going to be at such a new level of danger that it is going to be impossible to stop it. And this "Swords into Plowshares" project was an effort to do something positive.

The steady increase in the numbers of weapons is so dangerous that it is locking us into a whole new way of thinking. Soviet leaders must look at these weapons of ours and see them as intended for first strike at our enemies. They, in turn, feel that they need to be equal to us, so it really puts the whole nuclear arms race on a hair trigger.

Seager: How do you see your action fitting into a larger strategy for peace?

Rush: I think first of all that it was for us an act of faith beyond pragmatic results. We are seriously interested in ending the arms race, in working with God for "Thy kingdom come on earth as it is in heaven." I have been a pragmatist all these years — a community organizer who

tried to get the numbers out, get the votes out, get as many letters to Congress generated as possible, and all that. But I came to understand this situation as something beyond that. It took some education. It represented a challenge to us to get deeper into the question. In the '80s, with the election of Ronald Reagan, and before that with the massive build-up in the military budget and new types of weapons, we can see no easy solutions such as an organizational strategy. All these things don't give very much reason to hope, in short term. I am going to be a grandmother in June, and I look at it in terms of whether that baby will live to grow up. I see it in those stark terms.

Seager: I know of your frustrations with the press, but many who read the Pittsburgh papers were struck with the sympathetic treatment you received. They wrote about you as a mother, about your history, and portrayed you as a serious activist instead of as a "criminal." Do you think that was helpful?

Rush: I think the human interest angle is the thing that grabs people and makes them wonder what in the world would make the mother of six children go off and do this. I have been most conscious of trying to communicate with people, just being myself and not putting myself forward as a heroic super-figure. I think that is ridiculous in the first place, and in the second place that is not what people connect to. They relate to those whom they can understand, whom they can see making soup, doing the dishes, and still thinking. The human interest angle is the thing that gets people's attention and causes a startled reaction. However, if the "whys" are not explained very carefully, the break-in seems like a quixotic gesture.

Seager: I understand you spoke at Shadyside Academy, the suburban prep school near Pittsburgh. What was the reaction there?

Rush: I had been invited last Spring, and was pleasantly surprised that the invitation wasn't withdrawn following our break-in at King of Prussia. I spoke to about 250 juniors and seniors, boys and girls. There was certainly some resistance to what I was saying — there were a few hoots and catcalls. But I felt a serious response from most of the students, and I know I was challenging a lot of their preconceived notions. These kids are very likely to be from families in Pittsburgh who participate in the military/industrial complex — Westinghouse, Gulf, Rockwell — the biggies. I got some belligerent questions from the audience but I had a feeling that the ones who were quiet were really listening to me and hearing what I was saying. There was one young man who talked with us at lunch afterwards who said he wanted to start a nuclear arms study group on campus.

I find it hard to address a high school audience on this subject. But I was trying to talk about the underlying signs of

despair. Maybe they never relate to the nuclear arms race because of how they as students perceive the future, how they live out their daily lives. Are they looking forward with enthusiasm not simply to a career, but to raising a family? Are they ignoring the big realities and just concentrating on personal concerns, selfish questions of what kind of a career they can pursue in terms of salary — immediate kinds of things? At the outset I remember saying that what I want to see for my kids, what I raised them for, was to love life, to enjoy and respect and really like living on the planet that was given to us by the Creator. But that there were two other things in my own life that I want to pass on to my kids, that brought me to what I did at King of Prussia. And one was, in the process of loving life, to be a seeker of truth. And the other part was to be able to hope.

Seager: You touched on all three — faith, hope and love.

Rush: There certainly are those religious dimensions. I have spent seven years at the Thomas Merton Center being educated. I have been director, but I have perhaps been the chief learner, because I have had the opportunity to absorb a lot of information, to meet with people who were deeply involved with the nuclear arms race, justice in the Third World, questions of poverty — a whole range of concerns. These became not simply issues “out there,” but realities in the form of human beings whom I met face to face and talked with. If other people had an opportunity for that kind of education they would come to much the same conclusions I have.

Seager: To return to the press, what have been some of your frustrations?

Rush: I would extend that to all the media. The revival of the cold war has had overwhelming play over the last year or two. There is some solid basis for this — the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan, for example. But this “need” for an increase in military spending, the whole myth of peace through strength has been strongly promoted by the media. I think probably *the* underlying myth of the American people is the idea that the only way you can get along in the world is to be strong and powerful. So we build nuclear weapons. And it is based on uncertainty, on fear, that someone is out to get us — the Soviet Union especially.

It is also a perpetuation of the old notion that wars solve problems, and that preparing for war either prevents war or prepares you to win the war. All of that has changed with the nuclear arms age, but we haven’t yet learned to rethink this whole situation. We are building weapons that in turn induce the Soviet Union to build more weapons, that will make the reality of nuclear war a probability, just maybe by computer error — since computers service all the alert systems. I hate to think of my kids having their lives depend on Soviet computers — our computers have made serious

errors over the past year. What we are doing is practically forcing the Soviet Union to keep up with our ICBM forces in land based missiles. They are far more vulnerable, so I can see them feeling very, very defensive and fearful just as many of us in this country. It is a vicious cycle that is being fueled by this peace-through-strength notion that both political candidates perpetuated in the past election. Arms races lead to wars. Building arms leads to the use of those arms. And the idea that building more dangerous weapons will somehow protect us, is just some form of insanity.

Seager: Two very practical things. Number one, how come you are out of jail? Number two, what is next on your trial schedule?

Rush: We are out of jail for a couple of reasons. In the first place, both Anne Montgomery and I were shipped into five different jails *apiece* — different county jails in the state — because Montgomery County where the men were housed has no women’s prisons. Consequently we found ourselves out of communication with our co-defendants and out of communication with lawyers. Some of the mail from our lawyers, some from our co-defendants was sent back “address unknown”! So at that point, having been in so many jails that it was just impossible to prepare for trial, we appealed for a habeas corpus hearing, appealed for lower bond, and were released.

Dan Berrigan got released earlier due to health reasons on \$50,000 bond. By the time we appealed, our bond was reduced, in Anne’s case to \$2500, and mine to \$5000, and \$7500 for Dean Hammer. I was particularly anxious to be released because the men had been meeting nightly and doing Scripture study, and it was very important for us to have access to that kind of communication and preparation.

Plowshares 8 Declared Guilty

The Plowshares 8 trial concluded on March 6 with a verdict of guilty. Prosecution successfully proved charges of burglary (illegal entry with intent to commit a crime), criminal mischief (property damage), and conspiracy (plotting together to commit a crime). Lawyers have 10 days to file an appeal.

Reached just as THE WITNESS went to press, Phillip Berrigan made the following statement:

“We were not expecting acquittal or even justice — given the nature of our court system; we were bearing witness. But the repressiveness of the court was the worst I have ever seen. The jury selection and the disallowal of expert testimony on the real issue — nuclear war, and the stifling of our own witness were particularly devastating.

“Regardless, we feel that the fact of the trial, and the evening talks at Gwynedd Mercy College gave us an opportunity to tell our story and to have significant press interviews which help people understand the insanity of the arms race, which is really the Doomsday Race.”

¡ADELANTE! (ONWARD)



Do not remember us then,
violated, blood darkening
an earth strewn with bodies,
broken egg shells, discarded,
silent as Victor Jara's lost fingers.
Listen to the wind
shaking these fields,
the poor's voices whispering
into North American ears,
"We are dying while
you arm our assassins."
Bearing this voice, *act*
to hold back the hand that fires.
Remember us *then* as ones
the people taught courage.

Remember us when
they sing again.
Sing of innocence
soaring like doves
against the night fire,
silver cracks of rifle shots.
The death each morning when
mothers dug their children's graves.
Sing of the insolence
of the dead, brushing
the stars above Chalatenango,
when we gringas
stayed with the people
until we broke with them,
like fingers from a hand.
Then sing companeras,
sing with the people,
¡Adelante!

— Renny Golden

(Editor's Note: Sisters Kazel, Clarke, and Ford, and Jean Donovan are the three nuns and lay missioner, respectively, referred to in the story which follows. Sister Carla Piette died earlier while working with the Emergency Refugee Committee in Chalatenango, El Salvador.)

Interview With a Salvadoran Nun

El Salvador: Contagious Courage

by Blase Bonpane and Glenn Silber

The rape-murder in El Salvador of four U.S. citizens — three nuns and a lay missionary, shocked and angered North Americans. It is even probable that the 9,000 Salvadorans who met violent deaths in 1980 might attract some attention as a result of the recent atrocity.

Parents of the slain women were stunned to discover that their daughters were killed with U.S. weapons and bullets. The sisters were also killed by U.S. policy. That policy has maintained dictatorships in Latin America throughout the 20th century. Indeed, there has been little or no substantive change in U.S. Latin American policy since 1903.

Just as the United States selected Anastasio Somoza Garcia as dictator in Nicaragua in the early '30s, we now see

a U.S. "investigative team" landing in El Salvador to name the President and Vice President of that country. The result of their recent visit was to move the junta of El Salvador into a more reactionary position and to dislodge the only progressive voice in the previous government.

Current events reveal that the people of El Salvador have no intention of accepting this heavy-handed intervention. The government "blessed" by the United States represents about 2% of the people of El Salvador.

In Central America recently we interviewed Sister Yvonne, a Salvadoran nun in exile in Nicaragua. Her responses follow:

How long has the church been involved in the struggle in El Salvador?

Personally, I have been involved since 1972. Others preceded me. Our involvement came from the teachings of the Second Vatican Council. Those teachings were specifically applied to Latin America at the Bishop's Conference in Medellin, Colombia in 1968. Priests and sisters were to enter

Blase Bonpane is a sociology professor at California State University Northridge and a Central American specialist.

Glenn Silber is a journalist and filmmaker who recently produced a documentary on the reconstruction of Nicaragua. His films include "The War at Home," nominated for an Academy Award last year for best feature documentary, and "An American Ism: Joe McCarthy," which recently received the DuPont-Columbia Award for excellence in broadcast journalism.

into the hopes, desires and anxieties of the workers and peasants.

How do you interpret the documents of the Second Vatican Council and the Medellin Conference?

That we had to change. We had to leave our comfortable situations. We had to dedicate ourselves to the needs of the people.

What was the response of your religious community?

We went to live in the countryside with the peasants, we began to know their realities and to work together with them.

What was your personal response?

I understood that they were not living as human beings. They live worse than animals, they live worse than the dogs of the affluent. They don't have anything to eat. Children die of malnutrition.

There is no work. Those who have jobs are not paid enough. So we began to form cooperative communities in order that they could help one another.

Did you expect to receive support from government "reform" programs?

Yes, in the beginning we sought help from government institutions. We asked the government to help us in Acajutla where I was working. Aside from the National Government we also asked the local mayor's office to intercede with the land-owners and petition higher salaries for the people. **At what point were you aware that your consciousness was expanding?**

It was in Acajutla when we attempted to communicate with the wife of the mayor. She was a Catholic and the people believed her to be a good woman. At that time we were not

involved in politics. We investigated the miserable salaries paid to her employees. We talked to her in the name of the Gospel. She said she would change. But no, on the contrary, the people who told of this woman's activities were accused of being subversives and placed in prison.

What happened to the prisoners?

They were tortured, beaten and eventually freed. But because of the danger, they never returned to their city.

What resulted from your new awareness?

We all realized that we could not change things by simply meeting and reflecting on the Gospels. We knew something else had to be done.

When did you begin to put your new viewpoints into action?

When Father Rutilio Grande — the Jesuit — was killed. Archbishop Romero asked my community to work in Aguilares. I was still unaware of the extreme level of repression.

When you arrived at Aguilares did you feel that you or the people there were threatened?

We spoke to the Jesuits who had worked there before us. They told us about the situation. They introduced us to community leaders and we realized that everyone was threatened. Many priests told us not to go to Aguilares; they thought we would be killed. The authorities demanded that only Salvadoran religious be allowed to serve. Foreigners were expelled from the area. Security forces followed us, they watched us day and night. The convent was under constant surveillance.

What does it feel like to be under that kind of pressure?

One feels everything. At times one feels fear. But at the same time, since we knew why we were going, it was a question of being motivated by faith. If we believed we might die, we also believed it was our duty as Christians to follow Christ — and they killed Christ.

So we went with that resolution. Even though we were afraid, we consoled one another, and we were ready to be killed.

How did the continuing assassination of priests affect the community, the church?

The death of Rutilio was an awakening for everyone. Everyone was suddenly conscious. We saw the situation in its entirety. We saw that it could not be solved with words. But we still did not know what to do. The death of Rutilio made us understand that there were answers to the situation in Aguilares.

What were the answers?

In Aguilares, in addition to reflecting on the Bible, the people had established a network of communications. Some 30 communities in the countryside and 10 in the city had immediate internal communications. They were practicing the values of the Gospel. The parish was as one family. They were all aware of the miserable conditions on the haciendas.

On one hacienda, La Cabana, the authorities captured two people from the parish in the morning. By noon everyone knew they had been seized. The security forces suspected that we had radio communications. It was also at La Cabana where 3,000 workers were contracted to work for three weeks. At the end of that period the land-owners attempted to pay the workers for only two weeks. In less than an hour all 3,000 workers agreed to strike. All demanded the full three weeks pay. Then the land-owners got frightened. They were unaccustomed to such rapid communication among workers.

Did this level of organization begin after Father Rutilio died?

No, Father had established the communities and the communications network more than a year before he was murdered.

How did the strike affect the people and the role of the church?

The La Cabana strike taught the

people that they could win. They became more curious about the national situation. They determined that organization was the answer, not only on the parish level but among all like-minded people. At this point the community group was like a political organization. At the outset, Father Rutilio did not know how to relate the political issues to Christianity.

Were other political organizations having an impact on the church?

The Christian Democrats existed — but with the calamity of the 1972 elections the people no longer believed in the electoral method.

It was similar to the case of the cooperatives. They never functioned effectively because of the legal restrictions. People simply did not believe in cooperatives or elections any more.

How has repression against the church escalated over the last two or three years?

At the beginning it was very selective. Maybe those in command thought by killing a few leaders, everything would stop. On the contrary, the movement grew rapidly. The para-military hit squad ORDEN watched. Written threats were sent to many people. The church took a stand. It became stronger under pressure. People were being captured. They were never accused of being Christians; they were always called "Communists."

Have you known people who have been killed?

Most of the people I worked with in Aguilares have been killed. Often we would meet in the morning and would hear of the murder of one of the meeting participants by the afternoon of the same day.

How did the people react to this?

With more strength. Some people who were weak were frightened. But positions were defined. The people were determined to die if they had to. They would say, "If they kill me, my wife will

follow, and if they kill my wife, my children will follow." This has actually happened in many cases.

What was happening in the church just prior to the murder of Archbishop Romero?

After the coup in October of 1979 there were differences of opinion within the church. Peasants and workers rejected the new junta saying, "How can a military government which promotes the slaughter of the poor be expected to change?" The priests and sisters who worked with the poor shared the analysis of the poor. Those who worked with the middle and upper classes tended to be on the other side.

Is the church a vanguard?

The church is not a vanguard. The church is not an organizer. It was the people's organizations that were first, not the church. Some within the church considered this process as against the will of God. Others approved of it. Archbishop Romero approved of such organizing. He said, "Being organized and organizing is a political role for the lay person, and it is part of the totality of his or her Christian faith."

Is it true that Archbishop Romero said, "When all peaceful means have been exhausted the church recognizes the right to insurrection."?

The Archbishop was expressing a feeling widely held by the masses. The people said it first. His action was one of affirmation, not leadership. He had to be the voice of the people. Anyone else who talked like that would be killed. He was the only person in El Salvador who could say what the people were feeling. **Since the death of Archbishop Romero are other people able to articulate the feelings or will of the majority?**

I could never do it like him! (She laughs.) Every coordinator of a base community — small groups of 10-12 people — as part of their job must be able to express the feeling of that community. A parish priest must be able to express the feeling of the people

of his parish. When Archbishop Romero spoke it was for an entire church.

Is it now the position of the church to acknowledge the necessity of revolution?

It depends on whom you mean by "the church." The priests are divided. The bishops are divided, in fact some are total sell-outs. But I can tell you one thing, those in touch with the actual situation in El Salvador, especially religious priests who have been working in the countryside — those people are almost 100% on our side.

A personal question — which is also political, of course. (She laughs.) Now that unity between the mass organizations has apparently been achieved, what role do you expect to play in a national insurrection?

There are many roles. For example, I know that it is necessary for the people to take up arms and defend themselves; but I don't really think that is my area. There are many other things to be done like taking care of the sick, the wounded, children who are left orphaned. I do not think it is wrong to take up arms, but I'm not capable.

Are you speaking of a lack of training or of emotions?

Both.

We have heard that in the coming months there will be a national insurrection that will cost more in terms of lives than the revolution in Nicaragua. Can you comment?

It is difficult to say. It could be very, very bloody but it is also possible that it will not be. The press insists on describing the situation as a fight between Left and Right-wing politicians of small groups. They imply that the people have very little to do with it. All this does is create conditions favorable for outside intervention.

From the United States?

Yes. Of course the troops might be Honduran, Guatemalan, Venezuelan or

ECPC Announces Three Appointments

Three new appointments were announced April 1 by the Rt. Rev. Coleman McGehee, chair of the Episcopal Church Publishing Company's Board of Directors.

Mary Lou Suhor has been named editor of THE WITNESS magazine, and the Rt. Rev. Robert L. DeWitt, Senior Contributing Editor and member of the ECPC Board of Directors. Also named to the Board was the Rt. Rev. Otis Charles, Bishop of Utah.

Other members of the ECPC Board currently filling out terms of office are:

Mr. Steven Guerra, Chicago, Ill.
The Rev. Barbara Harris, Philadelphia, Pa.
The Rev. Suzanne Hiatt, Cambridge, Mass.
Ms. Mattie Hopkins, Chicago, Ill.
Joan Howarth, Esq., Oakland, Cal.
The Rev. James Lewis, Charleston, W.Va.
The Rev. Joseph A. Pelham, Rochester, N.Y.
Robert S. Potter, Esq., New York, N.Y.
Ms. Helen Seager, Pittsburgh, Pa.

CREDITS

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others using U.S. money and direction. U.S. money is all that holds the current junta together. It could never survive without U.S. support.

What evidence do you have to support this claim?

The country is broken economically. Large numbers of factories have been destroyed. The rich people have taken their money out of the country. The capital has just fled. It's gone as of now. Without money from the U.S. the junta would not have money to buy the guns they use against us. There would not even be money to pay the bureaucrats working in the government.

Thank you, sister. ■

Part 2

Bishops Ponder Urban Apocalypse

THE WITNESS brought a small group of bishops together recently to discuss their roles vis a vis the urban mission of the church and what they saw as signs of the pending “urban apocalypse” in their dioceses.

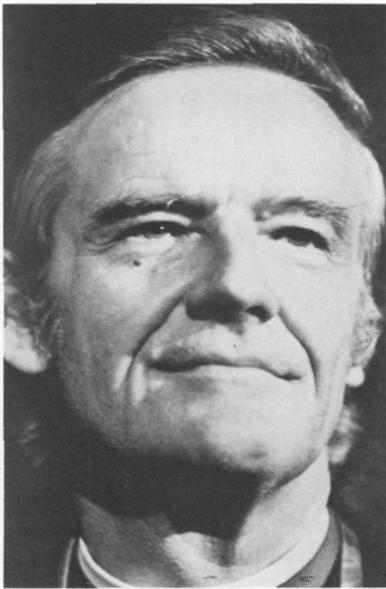
The group included Bishops John Burt of Ohio, Otis Charles of Utah, John Krumm, formerly of Southern Ohio and now Suffragan for the American Congregations in Europe, Paul Moore of New York, John Spong of Newark and Archbishop Ted Scott of the Anglican Church of Canada.

The U.S. bishops have been active in the Urban Bishops’ Coalition which conducted across the country a series of public hearings on the urban crisis, and played a key role in the formation of the Episcopal Urban Caucus in 1980.

Comments by Bishops Burt, Charles and Spong appeared in the March WITNESS. Following are excerpts of comments made by Bishops Moore and Krumm, and Archbishop Scott, in conversations with Robert L. DeWitt, editor of the WITNESS.

Creating ‘Tough’ Centers of Redemption

by Paul Moore



Paul Moore

The building boom in Manhattan is incredible — perhaps more building is going on there than ever before in history. It still has financial problems, but the astonishing thing, in terms of the city as well as the church, is that the center of Manhattan is a glistening, rich and enormously prosperous place where the stores are crowded, prices are sky high, and buildings are continually under construction. St. Bartholomew’s parish has had an offer of \$100 million for the land it occupies, the highest price ever offered for any piece of real estate in the history of the world. Yet, north of 110th street or in Brooklyn, or as is well known, in the South Bronx, there is a total depression and those places are worse off than ever. So the disparity between the showplace, Manhattan and the Manhattan churches, and the rest of the city, is getting greater and greater, which ultimately will cause an

enormous explosion of some kind.

Picture, then, the depressed areas of cities like Paterson, Jersey City, New York, in which there are located little churches. One of the things which we have to do as a diocese, it seems to me, beside the kinds of things that Jack Spong has been talking about (see THE WITNESS, March issue), is to try to make sturdy places out of these rather tragic little churches. How do you create a sturdy place in a depressed area of the city? One of the things I have always been impressed with is the difference between strategizing about urban social action and evangelism at a House of Bishops meeting, and the reality represented by a typical urban parish.

The roof leaks, or three or four people on the vestry don’t want any new people coming in, or there is a priest

who wishes he were somewhere else — how can you use this church as a place of urban strategy? You have to start with that and hope that something will happen — which will help it become what I would call sturdy.

Now what are the components of a lively island in this vast sea of problems? First of all, the band-aid. If people are bleeding you must bind up their wounds, even while you are worrying about who shot them. Therefore, first comes a pastoral concern for each and every individual within the parish and within the community. A second component is liturgical vitality, so that this center of community life is a church, as contrasted with a settlement house or a school or city hall. The center of the church's community life is the liturgy. The central act of worship has to be vigorous. It must reenact each Sunday what that place is all about. It has to be the source of power not only for individual life and survival, but also for the extra energy whereby this community can be turned on. It must have a strongly incarnational and sacramental theology, so that there is no difference for the people between our Lord Jesus Christ present in the people who are hurting, and in the "real presence" on the altar. This is enormously important: that the liturgy and the ministry of social concern and social action are identical. So I would say, first of all, we have to have a vigorous parish life as the nucleus from which to do ministry.

What, then, is the ministry, besides the band-aid pastoral work with individuals, and the liturgical life of the Christian community itself? The vocation of the parish is to be an instrument of redemption, to affect the social matrix in which it finds itself. It cannot be an end in itself, it can only be there as an instrument for redeeming the world. How can such a sturdy little place be a sign of hope? In many ways. First of all, when that liturgical

community is lively in its identification with the love of Christ, it is always a warm, loving place. This in itself is hopeful for those people who walk in the door to get help. Secondly, because it is one of the few hopeful communities in that urban desert, it can be a place where causes like employment, housing, community organizations, can be supported.

Three Parish Models

I can take three parishes as examples of different kinds of congregations within a 30-block area in New York City. One is a parish around which all the housing was torn down during the big bulldozing, public housing era of the '50s. This little parish church was alone, literally, in a 10-block square area. But the diocese kept it alive. New buildings went up. The priest who has been there for 14 years now has 100 acolytes, a huge Sunday School, five or six women's and men's organizations, confirmation classes of 60, 70 or 80, kids going to college — it is a real sign of hope with some impact on the immediate community. The vocation of that particular parish is to be a place into which people can come, be energized, educated, motivated, and get the strength to go out hopeful.

Another model is an old West Indian parish. It is still very strong, its liturgical style is strictly West Indian. Literally, a purple carpet is rolled out when the bishop comes. He kneels down at the prie-dieu and prays for the parish as he comes in the doorway in his street clothes, and then follows a very typical West Indian high mass. That parish represents another kind of vocation, which maintains the soil in which those people still need to put down their roots in order to survive. A people's culture is the soil in which people root. This particular parish provides that culture. The transition to the next generation, a mixed culture of American and West Indian, will be difficult. But nonetheless

it presently provides a sign of hope. It has, however, very little impact on the community around it.

The third model is a parish always in total financial trouble, which can never balance its budget from one month to the next. It is surrounded by an absolute desert of burned out buildings. It is served by a priest who has been on the streets of one city or another for 25 years. It had been White, Gouverneur Morris, a signer of the Declaration of Independence, was buried there when it was a colonial church. Then it became Black. Now it is Hispanic. Today, every important event that happens in that part of the city begins in the basement of that church. It has more impact on its immediate community than any parish church I have ever had anything to do with. I have been there many times for political meetings when the mayor would be there, when the congressman would be there, when the Blacks and Puerto Ricans were trying to create a coalition.

These three churches are extreme models, each one a special kind of structure. Each is an effective parish church. I would say the essentials of an effective parish church — and no church has them all — are first of all, vigorous, creative, dedicated leadership on the part of the rector or priest in charge. And of course, dedicated, creative lay leadership. Secondly, spiritual vitality. There has to be a life of prayer on the part of the rector, there has to be a life of prayer on the part of the nucleus of the parish. Thirdly, the priority of the parish must be for the community, because the church exists to serve the people outside the church. Fourthly, the very subtle factor of identification with the culture of the particular community.

And then there is the necessity of dealing with the anger of the people who live in the inner city. They would be unhealthy zombies if they were not angry. How does a Christian

community deal with that? Not by saying suppress it, nor by allowing it to murder people, but somehow by redeeming it into the enormous energy which illuminates a situation as happened with Martin Luther King, where the anger became identified with power. Within the parameters of the kind of institution I am talking about — with liturgy, with cultural identification, with serving the community outside — this anger can be turned into the energy which is the dynamic of community change.

My job as bishop is to do whatever I can to support and guide these parishes into becoming tough centers of

redemption, so that they will not only be able to serve their community, but also begin to understand their relationship to the larger questions. For example, they should be places where the people who are victims of disintegration of the cities could see that their plight is related to the arms budget. And it may be that the massive power of the disenfranchised sub-citizens of our land can be aroused to come out on the side of peace and against the arms race because it affects their own daily life. So far, they don't see the connection.

I would like to conclude with this observation. We are concerned about

how these places can be successful in changing the social patterns around them. Let us say they fail. Well, this is not a bad thing, for Christians. And if the people involved can fail gloriously, fail bearing witness to the cause, they will get a glimpse of the kingdom. So it seems to me, the final thing that we are responsible for as bishops, is to be sure we have turned every effort, not just to have successful things happen, but to be sure that there are witnesses to the kingdom in all those centers which we call our parishes. And then, if failure comes, it can be a failure which does not defeat, but lends glory to the people who participate in it. ■

Thoughts From Abroad

by John Krumm

Our U.S. congregations in Belgium, France, Germany, Italy and Switzerland are in but not of Europe. They are outsiders, aliens using an alien language, either the victims or the beneficiaries of the city in which they live, but affecting it very little. Our churches in Europe are interested in doing what they can; mostly it's what we call band-aid. But they have very little opportunity to affect their communities.

One thing that strikes me is how very odd, how absolutely incredible, our conversation about urban deterioration would be among a group of, let us say, Roman Catholic bishops meeting in Paris or Rome. This concern with the quality of the life of a community is simply not a major theme of the predominant churches of Europe.

The French Revolution of 1793 really drew a sharp line between church and state. The church was allowed to survive, but the price was that it was not



John Krumm

allowed to interfere. Even the worker-priest movement was not primarily directed toward changing the environment or the social status of the

workers. It was an evangelistic effort to show the interest of the church in the people, in the hope that it would bring them into the life of the church. You cannot imagine the sharp difference between interest and attendance at church on the continent, and in the United States. One of the reasons for that perhaps is this great separation between the church and secular life.

In Europe the city is the concern of the nation. Paris is the showplace, the center of the life of France, and the national government makes many of the decisions about the quality of life there. The decision, for example, to run a roadway down along the Seine on the right bank was made by the President of France, not by any local authority. But there are no bombed out sections of Paris. There are no places where houses are allowed to fall apart. *La gloire*, the pride of France, would not allow it. This is so different from our system, where we don't even make any attempts to

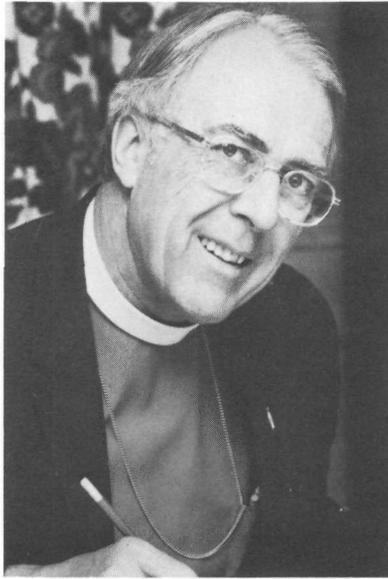
make Washington, D.C. a liveable city. This would be unheard of not only in France, but also in Germany and Switzerland.

The one place where there is serious urban deterioration is in a place where the national economy is in disarray, and that is in Italy. Rome and Naples are terrible looking in many parts of the city, but that is because the national economy is not vigorous enough to deal with these problems. But there is a sense of responsibility there for the quality of life in the city. Our diocesan convention last year was in Rome, and we brought to the ecumenical hearing a representative of an effort I didn't even know existed in Italy, but of course is a familiar pattern in South America. And that is the priest who goes and identifies himself wholly with the people in his very poor district, and they often become almost anti-church. Now that has also happened in Italy. In South America there is a sympathy on the part of many bishops for this movement, but in Italy, pretty unanimously the bishops will have nothing to do with this. The liberation movements which do exist are in the slums of Naples and some other places in Italy which are in serious deterioration, but there is very little sympathy in the church for the experiments that are being done there.

Secularization has reached a more definite and more obvious stage in Europe. In the United States, the churches have gone out and made common cause with secular concerns, but that is not true in Europe. My impression is that we have a lot to learn from Europe concerning the nation's responsibility for the cities. Why doesn't the United States realize that it is on display in its cities, and that its cities ought to be models because they are the center of life, and from them radiate the influences which govern the nation? On the other hand, I think Europe has something to learn from us, about how the churches can take leadership in this.

Christian Commitment Vs. Wayward Technology

by Ted Scott



Ted Scott

What we are seeing today, particularly in North America, is conditioned by an almost total worship of technology. Consider the kind of commitment people admire in the scientific world, in medical projects like heart transplants and other recent developments. People get caught up in that mystique, and they get locked into it.

I want to press this point because recently there was an analysis by a public relations group in Canada of how the Liberal Party won the last election. They discovered a deliberate manipulation of the voters, through use of the media and the technology of knowing what groups to concentrate on. Liberal Party members knew they had only to swing a couple of percents of the votes across Canada to make a switch in government. They identified it, and then selected the appropriate

voices to accomplish their objective. People who get locked into a technological approach can manipulate in almost unbelievable ways.

I believe very deeply that in our world today a kind of idolatry has developed. It is probably stronger in North America, and Canada is very much included in this. That idolatry is built around technological structures, and powers, and forms. You have to stand outside of that before you see the absolute absurdity of it. The arms race is an example of such absolute absurdity in terms of any kind of human future.

We are dealing with a very, very subtle and deep thing here. Stephen Vincent Benet once wrote a series of poems called *Dreams and Nightmares*. One of the situations he wrote about depicted people who had in fact become the slaves of machines, or of the process, and I think that we are very close to that in much of North America. We have become locked into a certain view of success, a certain view of progress, that undercuts any sense of human values. There is an increasing awareness that we are on a road to destruction, but that is a frightening kind of thing to live with. You suddenly become aware that a process to which you have given your life is collapsing. All you hoped for, the promise of science, the expressions of technology, now are becoming the *threat* of science and of present technology. That is scary! When I meet with business people in the board room, there is a kind of optimism, a commitment to the process, a kind of dream of what they can achieve. But then I sit with them around the lunch table when they begin to talk about their

families, and their fears become manifest. There is a dichotomy here, and people are being torn right down the middle.

How can we deal with this? I think we must do so in a prophetic way. One of the elements of prophecy is always the word of judgment. We're in a situation where we are in fact reaping the results of what we have sown. I don't think our present problems were deliberately planned by anyone. They are the accumulated results of the value decisions that we have made as individuals and as groups. We can't solve our problems by just condemning or blaming people, but we have to solve them by analysis, by helping people to see what is happening, and then by challenging them with the fact that as soon as they have new understanding, new insights, then they have a responsibility to respond in terms of those new insights.

How do we help people who have to make decisions? How do we help them as they struggle with new insights about their business, their home, their family, that begin to tear them to pieces? One element is the Biblical word repentance. I do not believe that repentance is a negative thing. It does not mean reacting out of regret, but rather it is a positive refocusing of life in a different direction. And I think people are at the stage now where they see the need for that.

Reflection on these concerns leads to the realization that the sociological nature of our Anglican church poses difficulties for us. There was a time in the Anglican church when we had a very close contact with upper echelon business persons. Now we have in fact lost that because we have become more concerned with the people in need, although not yet identified with them. The tragedy of our society now is that we have a small number of people at the top of things who wield unbelievable amounts of power. Usually it is not the

ones in the public view — very often it is the people behind them. We had an interesting example in Canada where the Argus Corporation by the decision of half a dozen people turned over about \$23 million worth of stock into a pension fund. When so few can make that kind of decision, they are wielding power! We have lost contact with that group, as a church. Yet on the other hand we don't have much contact with the group at the other end who are really suffering, where there is a dynamic in the suffering. When Jesus said, "Blessed are the poor," part of that blessing was that their condition was such that there was motivation to struggle to do something about it.

But we of the church are a part of that middle class that can be manipulated by being kept relatively comfortable so we don't want things to get to the edge. Most people would opt for order without justice, rather than chaos. And I think that is middle class. In North America the churches are very much in that fairly comfortable group. Not many of us now have contact with the lower level of society, although we are getting more identification with them, and that is where some of the real dynamics in the church is beginning to come.

But how to refocus life under the hellish pressures of a society where the power of the sophisticated media is in the hands of a limited few? We are facing the problem in Canada now of an amalgamation of the newspapers. You may get a paper printed in your own area, but the same headlines come across the whole country. I think the only way we can work at that is through a re-establishment of a primary community that helps people come to see, and to sustain, a different set of values. What we have to work at is the shaping of a church which can once again become for people a primary community that informs their values.

A primary community is one in which

the main elements of a person as a human being find their scope. It shapes the pattern of the life in which that person moves. For a typical business executive, that is definitely the business community. In the business community the wife is often interviewed before the executives appoint her husband to the job. There is a sense in which the company owns that family. They are provided with a whole life-arena, all the family benefits, and they become encircled. And this means that for them the church may be an occasional Sunday service with a sermon; but they are not really participating in it, reflecting, using all their abilities to reflect upon the issues they confront. And I think that is what we must try to recover in the church. Occasionally this happens now, where people are hurting enough so they are looking for something deeper, where they are beginning to reflect theologically about basic issues. Then the church touches them at the level where they are hurting, where their deepest concerns are.

Can the church more widely become a primary community where the real issues, the gut issues of life can be worked at, can be shared? Where people could help, and support, and challenge one another in the midst of their dilemmas? This process is taking place in South America, and, as I understand it, is also happening in Africa. You know, there is a lot more optimism in many of the groups in Africa and South America that are utterly impoverished, than in many parts of Canada and the United States. They are beginning to get some insights as to how they can take the initiative to do things on their own. I think we must help people to find that new vision.

I think you and I are going to see in our world, over the next few decades, a lot of suffering and increased disintegration. We are going to have to struggle to find the faith that is deep

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massively unemployed male work force. Many of these women face serious health and safety hazards, long hours (50 to 60 hours weekly) and the abuse and repression of a male management that likes to keep them docile and unorganized. The other category simply takes already working and reasonably well-educated people and gives them a higher wage — again, frequently in a non-union climate. Thus, the masses of poor who most need work are not getting it in large numbers.

Richard W. Gillett
Church and Society
Los Angeles Office

Article in Homily

Your Christmas issue was the best Christmas greeting ever. I used the article, "Twas the Night Before Peace" in my New Year's Day homily. God bless, protect, and strengthen you all.

Denny Steik, S.M., Director
Newman Center
Azusa, Cal.

New Hope for Peace

Thank you for your editorial in the Christmas WITNESS, and bless you for your leadership in these heavy days.

Probably not too many of your readers can remember a cartoon in one of our papers at Christmas, I think, of 1914. It portrayed the foundries of Bethlehem Steel, blazing through the night to supply our munitions dealers. The caption was, "O Little Town of Bethlehem." The years passed, the war to end war was won. "Now we have the League of Nations," we explained. Then came another war, and enlistment. We won the war and reaped the whirlwind.

And now, as momentum grows and the world looks to us — the suppliers of arms to the world — thoughtful people tremble. Tremble we must, but we can pray, and with new hope for the "Peace Churches" are beginning to stand together — Roman Catholic, Eastern non-aligned, Mennonites, Brethren, Friends.

But more than this, today, around this vast globe, God's creatures of whatever tongue or creed begin to feel the stirrings of the Infinite.

Anna Scheffey
Haverford, Pa.

Romero Tapes Available

Tom Quigley accurately described Archbishop Oscar Romero in the September WITNESS as a "humble man of the people." And he correctly characterized Romero's Salvadorans as "a people who saw themselves, their suffering and their hopes, embodied in this humble figure."

We thought your readers would like to know that NCR Cassettes (a division of the *National Catholic Reporter*) has produced a package of six homilies delivered by Romero in his last months, including his last during which he was assassinated — all in Spanish. Celebration Books has published an English translation of the six homilies. In the book and cassettes, Oscar Romero is a key to understanding the new Christianity growing in Latin America today. The cassettes (\$45) and printed translation (Paper, \$4.95) are available from NCR Cassettes/Celebration Books, Dept. 9343, Box 281, Kansas City, Mo. 64141.

Anne Fitzgerald
Kansas City, Mo.

Helpful to Rural Church

I recently saw your issue including the article on the archaeological discovery regarding women priests in the early church. I was unable to get a copy and wonder if it would be possible for you to send it to me.

I look forward to receiving your publication — as a minister in the rural church it is often easy to lose touch with the many pressing issues in society today as well as finding information that will help rural folk understand and recognize their part in the witnessing of the Gospel to all the world.

Diane Nunnelee, Pastor
Eagleville United Methodist Parish
Eagleville, Mo.

Urges New Direction

THE WITNESS approach in presenting the church's position in the world closely resembles the radical departure some churches and their more liberal clergy took in the turbulent '60s. This was when the church was more preoccupied with the pursuit of "a more just society" and the material problems of humanity than it was with an individual's spiritual salvation. Again — it seems that segments of the church see Human Rights as the essence of the Christian message.

I believe that true religion points to the condition of the inward soul of man. Why should we keep reinterpreting the faith so that it shall become a component of this dying world's political idealism?

I particularly take offense to Louis Crew's "On the ordination of Gays" in your October issue. To put it bluntly, sodomy (homosexuality, lesbianism) is an abomination in the sight of God — a sin of the gravest and most serious consequences. The Bible tells us (Rom. 1:28) that it is one of the only two sins for which the Lord God will abandon the individual (the other being the sin of blaspheming the Holy Ghost — Mt. 12:31,32).

My suggestion is to revise the thrust of this magazine to make it more Biblical, eschew the social gospel and concentrate on a person's salvation. No one needs this more than Episcopalians.

Donald L. Adams
Yarmouth Port, Mass.

Continue Gay Support

I had planned to allow our subscription to lapse as I found your issues to be only occasionally as interesting and provocative as I might like.

Your recent issues have reminded me, however, that you are one of the very few church periodicals to stand up and speak out about gays and their place in the church. Because of this I decided to renew after all. Please continue your support of gay/lesbian Christians.

Karen Scott
Indianapolis, Ind.

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enough to let us look at that and not back away from it. We must do the band-aid things, but we must also begin to change direction with some sense of hope. Gradually, a new focus will begin to take shape, and new patterns come into existence. I think this is the real calling of the church.

We are at the point where many people are aware of the crumbling of their situations, but they are so locked into what is, that they are afraid to let go. They have not yet come to the point where they begin to dream of new options. And this transitional phase is going to be a tough one.

What they call in South America the Core Christian Communities are one model of value affirmation that we need now. Those communities are vigorous places where people can meet and analyze their situation in a tough way. We too must be able to call a spade a spade, and call exploitation, exploitation; call manipulation, manipulation; without automatically condemning individuals involved in

that process, and to find a way of working at it. For us this means social analysis, it means biblical study, it means prayer, it means giving some focus to the liturgy in a way that provides hope.

A recent book dealing with the Irish has a dramatic phrase in it which indicates what I see happening in many religious groups today. It said that the church that lives by selling nostalgia deserves to be treated as Jesus treated the money-changers in the temple. Much of the religious revival of today is selling nostalgia — the selling of what was, because people are afraid to move on to what is.

I find myself wondering about the new generation of church leaders, and how much they are affected by the very trends of which we have been speaking. What I have often seen is that when clergy come to the point of ministering to people in some depth, then that begins to widen the scope of their understanding. The Roman Catholic bishops in South America did not set

out to be the shepherds of human rights. But because they were pastorally concerned about their people they were driven to that. And again, Manoel deMello is the pastor of the largest Pentecostal church in Brazil. I am told that when his building is finished it will be larger than St. Peter's in Rome. He did not set out to stand in the Central Committee of the World Council of Churches and condemn the policy of the Brazilian government concerning nuclear development. But as he ministered to his people pastorally at some depth, he was driven to it. As soon as you become concerned with what happens to human beings, then you are driven into a wider set of concerns. ■

Part 1 Available

Readers who missed Part 1 of *Bishops Ponder Urban Apocalypse* (John Burt, "Bottom Line: People and Jobs;" Otis Charles, "MX Marks the Spot;" and John Spong, "Organizing Key to Power") can order the March WITNESS for \$1.
