

God
BLESS
AMERICA
PLEASE!



Regrouping for the '80s
Robert C. Chapman
Malcolm Boyd
Miriam Pickett
David & Darlene Kalke

THE VOL. 64 NO. 10 OCTOBER, 1981
WITNESS

LETTERS LETTERS LETTERS LETTERS LETTERS

Piccard Links People

Thank you so much for Dad's article in the July WITNESS on Jeannette Piccard. I lived with Jeannette and Jean (I think there was some slip-up on the spelling of his name in the article) for almost six months in the spring of 1953. This was a very important time in my life and they played a significant role in it. This was also the time that I directed Jeannette in a memorable production of Chekhov's *Uncle Vanya* in which she played the old nurse, Marina. She gave a moving performance. In short, the article links very important people in my life and I'm delighted to have it.

Robert W. Corrigan, Dean
University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee
School of Fine Arts
Milwaukee, Wisc.

(Dean Corrigan's Dad is The Rt. Rev. Daniel J. Corrigan, whose article "Holy Dying" appeared among our July memorials to Jeannette Piccard. — Eds.)

Rare Spiritual Biography

My youngest daughter now has become a postulant under Bishop Coburn. Her decision to send me THE WITNESS and subsequently, my own subscription to your magazine, led to perusal of the spiritual biography in July regarding Jeannette Piccard, whom I never met. A rare set of essays and poetry!

The Rev. Fessenden A. Nichols
North Conway, N.H.

Moved by Exchange

Recently I realized that I had put off responding to a renewal notice once too often and that I had undoubtedly received my last issue of THE WITNESS.

Then the July issue came. What a special gift that issue was for me. And like God's grace it came totally unearned.

I was moved by much that I read, but most especially by the exchange between Bishop Anderson and the Rev. Alla Bozarth-Campbell on the chancel steps at the Rev. Canon Jeannette Piccard's funeral. Thank you.

The Rev. Louise L. Kingston
Princeton, N.J.

(The "exchange" referred to above is worth repeating — from the Rev. Alla Bozarth-Campbell's moving description of the funeral: "I began to leave the chancel steps from where I led the Prayers of the People. As he came out to proclaim the Greeting of Peace, Bishop Anderson said softly, 'Don't go. Stay by my side and hold my hand.' Dear Bishop, you do not know how much your words meant to me, and would have meant to Jeannette, for what you asked just then is all we ever meant to do." — Eds.)

Radwaste Solutions

Nuclear waste — dispose of it this way, dispose of it that way, it doesn't matter, it's still extremely dangerous. (See Larry Medsker's "Radwaste: Lethal Legacy," July WITNESS). One thing would help more than any of the suggestions, though: *Don't make any more of it!* But nobody will consider it. As a P.S., love and kisses to Abbie Jane Wells for her delightful "solution" in that same issue.

Dom Peter Hartman, O.M.
Pulaski, Wisc.

Re Shareholders Struggle

In a Letter to the Editor in the May issue, Richard Antle asks why the churches which own stock in the multinationals are not "getting together and voting their shares for managements of corporations that promote social welfare?"

In some instances they are. An ecumenical group of Dow stockholders, including Catholics, Disciples of Christ, and Baptists, introduced a shareholders' resolution for two years in a row, trying

to force Dow to suspend production of 2,4,5-T until an independent panel of scientists could clear it of the charges that the chemical causes cancer, miscarriages, etc. The first year the proposal got 5% of the vote, barely enough to squeak onto this year's agenda. This was after Dow made a huge effort to block the resolution, and was forced to include it by a ruling of the SEC.

This year the resolution didn't even get 5%. It was a modest and reasonable proposal, but Dow managed to portray the group as a bunch of wild-eyed fanatics. The sad thing is that we never heard anything about it on the evening news.

Michele Bartlett
Champaign, Ill.

Critiques Ahistorical

Anne Steele's letter critiquing "democratic socialism" (May WITNESS) draws conclusions in a framework of an ahistorical approach that provides no adequate point of departure for further discussion.

Holding up as she does, Singapore, Hong Kong, Malaysia and Sri Lanka as models of capitalist development in underdeveloped countries is a weak case. The first two are really city-states that serve as financial centers for international exchange, export enclaves for particular industries and sources of cheap labor for Western industries (often those having just closed plants in the U.S.). Furthermore, the government of Hong Kong is noted for its complete lack of expenditures on even minimal public services (schools, hospitals, housing, sewage, etc.) As for Sri Lanka, its new "turn to the right" is only a few years old and thus not yet ripe for final judgement. However, it has eliminated rice subsidies for many and reduced them for others, all the while failing to generate much in the way of new jobs through its investment policies.

India is hardly a "doggedly socialist" nation. Neither its present land tenure system nor its rural financial structure

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THE WITNESS EDITORIAL

New Time, New Action

The Moral Majority and the "New Right" have mobilized straight across the nation a continuing and growing threat to human and civil rights. Those of us who are in opposition need to come out of hiding and act with confidence.

Not since the days of Joe McCarthy, the House Un-American Activities Committee and Richard Nixon have the forces of reaction held more power in America than they will hold in the months, perhaps years, immediately ahead. Their agenda for the nation is fully developed and very clear.

They intend, with reference to foreign relations, to: finance the Pentagon lavishly in order to mount a massive nuclear arms race with the Soviet Union; stop American pressure for human rights in South Africa, Latin America and elsewhere; seize opportunities to promote a "tough guy" U.S. image as in the recent decision to produce the obscene neutron bomb.

They intend, with reference to our national life, to:

- strengthen the already strong hand of large corporations by reducing the "windfall profits tax" on giant oil companies, abolishing the Occupational Safety and Health Administration, relaxing the enforcement of environmental standards and obfuscating collective bargaining rights through legislation;

- arrest the development of our democratic tradition by:

- 1) allowing the Voting Rights Act to lapse
- 2) re-establishing Congressional committees on "un-American activities"
- 3) defeating the proposed Equal Rights Amendment
- 4) promoting a Constitutional Amendment to ban all abortions for women
- 5) cutting a wide range of social programs, hitherto accepted, for the elderly and the needy.

There is no item on the agenda listed above that does not impede or emasculate the advances made on

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God, Bless America Please!

by Robert C. Chapman

My life as a priest and civil rights activist goes back 29 years. I am sure that the sermons and addresses that I have been called upon to make as a priest near a couple of thousand, and the addresses for civil rights number into the hundreds. In the past, I approached their preparation with eagerness and a sense of elan. But my enthusiasm is missing today. The Civil Rights Movement is as dead as a doornail — something high school students read about in social studies courses, if they read about it at all.

But in the civil rights days of old, I was fired with hope and with expectation, because I identified with the “dream” of that master speechmaker and latter-day Prince of Peace, Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Besides, Jim Crow laws were dropping like flies: Autherine Lucy had entered

the University of Alabama; James Meredith had entered Ole Miss, and Congress was passing those civil rights laws.

In those days, when I heard Kate Smith sing, “God Bless America,” I wanted to shout “Amen!” (Being Episcopalian, I murmured it, almost inaudibly to myself, of course.) But that hope is not there now:

- Today there is twice as much public school segregation — North and South — as there was in the '60s.

- Today there is twice as much unemployment for black and hispanic male teenagers as there was in the '60s.

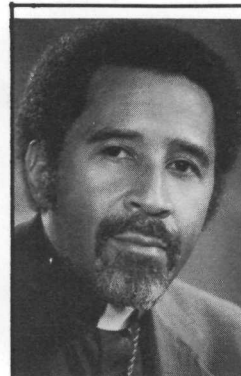
- Today the Ku Klux Klan has open, para-military training for young white children.

- Today the bodies of 28 blacks can be counted, all murdered in Atlanta.

I suffer the feeling of a vast emptiness

where my stomach and viscera ought to be, because the guts have been torn out of everything that so many Americans fought for, marched for, pleaded for, bled for, got jailed, beaten and slain for.

Today, when I hear Kate Smith — or anyone else — sing, “God Bless America,” I want to snap back with: “What *for*?” And even while I shudder



The Venerable Canon Robert C. Chapman is Arch-deacon of New York City. This material is copyrighted and cannot be reproduced without permission of the author.

at what I see, I know that "We ain't seen nothin' yet!" Because Ronald Reagan rode into 1600 Pennsylvania Avenue straight from Death Valley, and he means to show not only black people but all poor people what "Death Valley Days" can really be.

A little rhyme has been circulating among black people ever since there were 13 colonies and some slaves:

*If you're white, you're all right;
If you're brown, stick around;
If you're black, git back!*

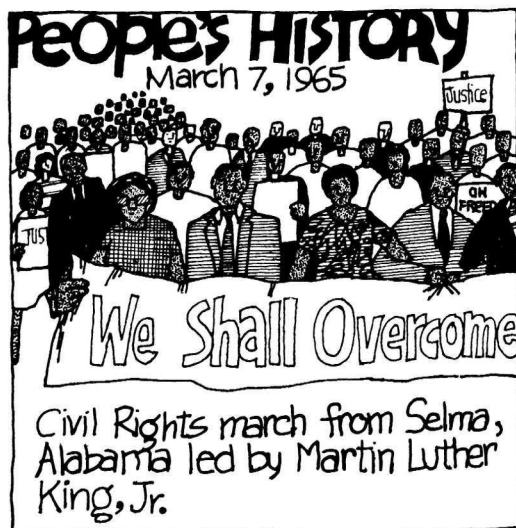
It has always been tragically and cruelly true for black people in America. But the new President has a social program that edits the last line. It replaces the word *black*, with the word *poor*.

Our multi-millionaire President, who has, by his program, announced himself to be the guardian of the purses of the wealthy, would grind the faces of the poor into the very gravel of the hot and arid valley:

*Make them bereft of access to legal services;
Stop offering them opportunities to be trained with job skills;
Make them pay more for their subsidized housing;
Cut down their food stamps;
Decrease their access to health care services;
Cut down their Social Security benefits.*

What is truly important to the national psyche of the United States of today is that we have more horses and more chariots than Pharoah, with all of his vanity, ever had! The purpose of all this armor and vain might, apparently, is to be in a position to assure that the rich keep what they have — at *all* costs! In the face of this inhumane and morally ugly national posture, what we get from the vociferously noble Patrick Moynihans and Bill Bradleys of this world is emasculated acquiescence.

I look for some faint — even false — hope in the America in which we live today.



Yes, I think I would be willing to pick up a false hope, and play, "let's pretend," for America, for a while. But, I can't even find a *false* hope in this ominous day.

I look in one direction, and I find that Secretary of Education T. H. Bell won't push lawsuits to get integration through busing. I look in another direction, and I find Secretary of Agriculture John R. Block, threatening to "use food as a weapon in international relations." Dear God above, the man said he would use FOOD as a weapon!

I make an about-face, and I catch Jeane Kirkpatrick fraternizing with South African military officers, while a Louisiana judge defies a Federal Court Order to send three white girls to an integrated high school. And a Manhattan judge admits that a white, college-attending defendant "deserves" to go to jail for tearing up a summons for allowing his unleashed dog to relieve itself in a public park and punching the black policeman who was serving the summons, and sicking his Doberman pinscher on the cop — but he refuses to send the defendant to jail because, "given his race, his slight build, and his mannerisms, he would not last 10 minutes in there before being raped, and sodomized, and brutalized in ways so

heinous as to stagger the imagination."

What we need to plead is: "God, Bless America — Please!"

I try to wake up from this present nightmare. And I sit down, gasping, and asking myself: "How did we ever come to this madman's end?"

I am an American. That's not America's fault, or mine. It's simply a fact. But I take a deep, lung-filling breath. And I do it again — and again — and, slowly, an enforced calm begins to cool and quiet my tortured soul. I am leaning back in my easy chair, now, eyes closed, and breathing deeply, calmly — and the question dances lightly in the air: "How did we ever come to this madman's end?" An answer begins to emerge.

When I was a child growing up in Brooklyn, in the '30s, times were hard, because we were coming out of what was then called the Great Depression. The presence of six children in our family made it tougher. My dad's hospitalization and his slow recuperation made it even more difficult. What I did not know in those early '30s, but what I grew to learn as that decade moved on, is that the rich color of our skins required payments impossible to complete, in America.

When I was about 10 years old, my father began to take my older brother and me to his monthly NAACP meetings. There, as I would sit in dutiful silence, I began to be exposed to corporate black anger, at the adult male level. Frequently, words such as "lynch-mob," "segregation," "racism," "Jim Crow" were mentioned. And, always, the words came forth in angry tones. I could not have analyzed it at the time, but I sensed that the anger was not a controlled anger. It was more a pitiful, powerless anger-of-frustration. The men, I think, knew, too, but none ever spoke of it as such.

Here were grown men, more significantly, *Christian* men. But for some reason, they dared not mention,

even to each other, their sensation of powerlessness. I believe that that fact contains an explosive kernel of truth. We don't like to admit that we are powerless. Powerlessness is perceived as one of the most dehumanizing of states. It demolishes self-respect. So we hardly admit it to ourselves — and, surely we avoid mention of the word, when we are in the company of others — especially when the fear is that they, too, are powerless, and *know* it!

I think if members of a group are cornered into confessing powerlessness to each other, that group is then forced to confront it in one of two ways: accept it, and be thenceforth servile, or stand up and raise the literal Armageddon against the forces that would render them powerless.

It was not conceivable to those black men in Brooklyn in the '30s that they could really accept the risk of acknowledging their powerlessness. So they learned to run from that confrontation with life. They spoke — and therefore I learned to do the same — as though they believed, indeed, as though they knew, that their corporate anger could lead to actions that would eliminate racism. They were “marching onward.” That's how they planned.

My father, in his idealism and enthusiasm for the “better day” for “Negroes,” wrote and published a poem, entitled, “The Negro Is on the March.” It probably had 10 or 12 short verses, but I used to think of it as having 30 or 40. As the budding child actor in the family, I had to memorize the poem and recite it at the monthly gatherings. I still remember the first verse — which became my first lesson in Black History:

*“From Boston-town, with Crispus Attacks,
To Gettysburg, and Appomattox,
He fought and bled for liberty,
And when they told him he was free
He started on his march!”*

Despite the pain revealed in the vocabulary, there was something “up-

beat” in the tenor of the NAACP meetings. In retrospect, I think it was a false beat, but it was up-beat. Every meeting began with a lengthy prayer, followed by the lusty singing of what they called “The Negro National Anthem.” Although the words to that great song grew to hold a more and more profound meaning for me, still, from my earliest youth, I puzzled over the location of that “Negro Nation” to which the song's title seemed to make such obvious reference. But the song was “up-beat.” Whether I see it now as justified or not, it was leaning toward the optimistic side of life:

“Facing the rising sun of our new day begun,

Let us march on till victory is won.”

The song was God-centered, and, at the same time, it implied love for America: “*God of our weary years,*” the next verse began, and it ended:

“Shadowed beneath thy hand,

May we forever stand,

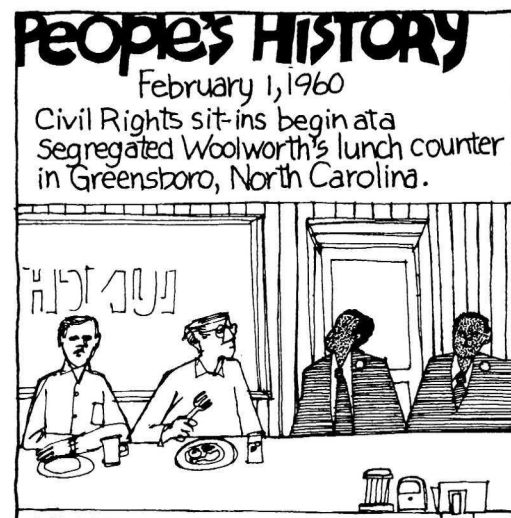
True to our God,

True to our native land.”

So at an early age I was full of a number of ambivalences and confusions of which I was not then aware, but which affected my thinking and my feelings about myself, about my people, and about my country.

I grew up believing that I *should* sing, “God Bless America.” I grew up laughing at pictures of ring-in-nose Africans, who were pictured in my junior high school geography book. I grew up with Tarzan and the Lone Ranger as my heroes — even though Tarzan was the supreme symbol of European superiority over Africa and Africans, and even though the Lone Ranger named his Indian friend “Fool” — which is what “Tonto” means, in Spanish.

I was not just a person; I was a “Negro.” Being a “Negro” meant segregation, it meant lynching, it meant Jim Crow and racism and it meant many other scary things. Negroes were



“on the march, toward victory.” Negroes fought in Boston-town, and in Appomattox, but they had their own national anthem. I knew, also, that the victory that had to be fought for and won was to be fought for here, at home, in America. And I knew, too, that God wanted me to be “true to my native land.” I just couldn't unscramble all of the intermixed pieces. I am not even sure that I can do it today. One thing was never to be doubted. I should always sing, “God Bless America,” and I should always be “true to (my) native land.”

I grew up singing “God Bless America,” even though I was rejected from the glee club of my mainly white high school, without audition, at the same time that I was baritone soloist in my all-black Episcopal Church's choir. All of this is not only nonsense. To our everlasting shame, it is *non-Christian!*

If “Negro,” by this country's functional (as against its academic) definition meant something less than a fully-accredited human being — and it *did* — and it *does* — then it was against *God* that the majority population categorized us as such, and it was against *God* that we acquiesced, powerlessly, to that appellation. As a young Christian, I needed to be taught

by adult Christians — both black and white — that this nation, in its treatment of blacks, was sinning against God and humankind — and was to be resisted in its sinfulness.

As a young Christian, I should never have been taught by Christians to be “true to my native land” when all honor and candor declared the truth that my “native land” was being *untrue* to my God! The moral gap between the two is as broad as the moral gap between worshipping the Lord God-in-Christ and throwing a pinch of salt on Caesar’s altar. But we have always insisted that our followers perform that contradiction — as though it were impossible to love God if one defines his or her nation as being in sin.

That is precisely how we have come to this madman’s end! We have insisted on riding the backs of two horses, each running in different directions. When we actually went in the same direction, that was fine. But when, more frequently, nation and God did not

point us in the same direction, we went with nation. And we have done it so often, that it’s easy to do now.

Sure, the United States can be the strongest nation on the face of God’s earth. And it may worship dollar bills and be insensitive to human need. But this is *God’s* earth, still. And even though we may “kick against the pricks,” this nation is in *God’s* hands — not in the President’s hands.

The message will hardly ever be written on the walls of Congress or the White House more clearly. This is a time for reading those walls. And God wants committed *Christian* response. In the long run — though we may silence many voices of the prophets — in the long run, the Almighty God will emerge victorious, “from sea to shining sea.” The United States has no more control over the power of our risen Christ than did the Egypt of the Pharaohs, or the Rome of the Caesars.

Christians have no choice in this country. We must teach Christ as we

have never taught Christ before. And, specifically, we must teach that the Christ who loved and served the poor and the down-trodden, will have a fierce and holy anger against a nation that spitefully uses the poor and the powerless. Today, that will surely make the misdirected, who would call themselves patriots, rise up to vilify, imprison, or even assassinate us.

But we were called to be “fools for Christ.” It is impossible to do that when everyone proclaims, and *lives* by Christ. Therefore, we live in a day that gives profuse opportunity to those who hear his call. We must be repossessed by the Spirit of Christ. In that Spirit, the soul of this nation may be saved. There is no other way in which it can be saved from its present spiritual folly.

The Pentagon won’t save it.

Anti-Red paranoia won’t save it.

Oil magnates won’t save it.

God can, and will save this nation — if Christians demonstrate their love, above all else — and at whatever risk!

Editorial . . . Continued from page 3

racism, poverty and peace over the past 20 years. To be on the side of justice over against the forces of reaction will require courage and clear thinking. The Gospel is always addressed to the time in which we live, and is the Word of a God who loves the poor and demands justice.

We must become involved anew in this struggle for justice. Many Christians have separated themselves from public affairs to a place of retreat and privacy with like-minded friends. It is time to break out of hiding and become involved with those “strangers who are in need.” We do not have to be in need ourselves to serve those who are. We can associate directly with organizations and groups which represent the poor and oppressed.

We must advocate those public policies that will advance human rights. We must take our perspectives to local churches and secular groups in our communities, to denominations and to political bodies. Our opposition to racism, sexism, class discrimination and imperialism must be made explicit

in all that we advocate.

Two conditions — fear and guilt — immobilize many people. Fear is manifested when people see themselves as inferior in numbers and status. Guilt comes from people’s thinking that they do not deserve what they have in possessions or advantage.

Theologian Dorothea Soelle sees the middle class, especially, afflicted by fear and guilt. “The danger of this is that it binds us in endless wavering. Kierkegaard criticized this type of existence as the infinite reflection which hinders a person from making a decision and taking a stand,” she said.

The fact is, all things in existence are connected and interdependent. We have nothing to fear nor to be guilty about if we are accountable and responsible to the human family for our thinking and actions.

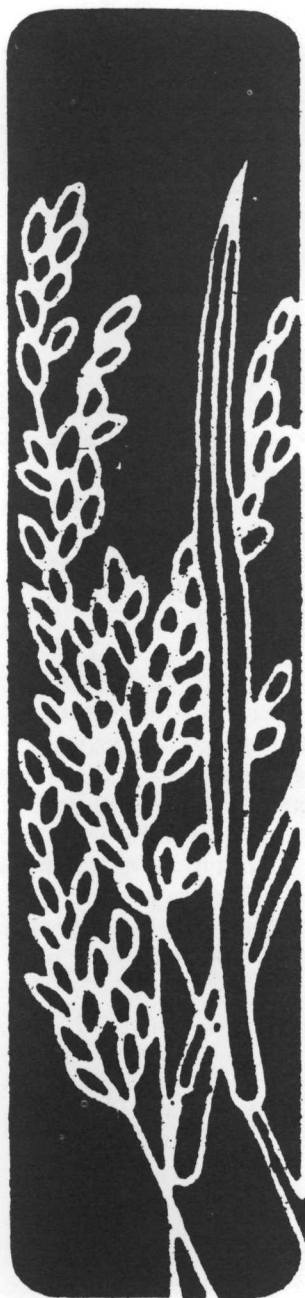
As opposed to the “Religious New Right,” we are persuaded that no one can speak for God. However, we are obliged through our faith in Jesus Christ to be, as he was, in all circumstances for the poor, the oppressed, for justice and peace.

This is a time for new involvement, new reflection, new action. (*H. C. W. and the editors*). ■

Challenge of the '80s

Changing Negatives Into Positives

by Malcolm Boyd



My friend, Alex Haley, popularized the examination of "roots." For many of us, our convictions and responses today have their roots in events, great and small, of the '60s.

Human beneath my armor image-trappings as "the rebel priest," I found myself in Newport, R.I., one weekend in the late '60s to read prayers from *Are You Running With Me, Jesus?* at the Jazz Festival, accompanied by guitarist Charlie Byrd.

One of my loveliest recollections of that turbulent decade has its origin in an invitation I received during my Newport stint to be the guest of Hugh D. Auchincloss at Bailey's Beach. Presumably I would not even meet my host; the invitation was a courtesy arranged by friends.

On the designated day I occupied a cabana belonging to Auchincloss, Jacqueline Kennedy Onassis' stepfather, at the exclusive beach club. I had sunned and swam, and was relaxing inside the cabana while reading a book, when Auchincloss suddenly walked in.

He struck me as being an extremely formidable man, a near contemporary clone of the legendary J. P. Morgan. He evidently tolerated little nonsense and knew his own mind.

Without making a prefatory remark or small-talk to soften the bluntness, he blurted out "Why don't you write some prayers for stockbrokers?"

I looked sharply at him. My initial reaction was to say something like "I thought most prayers in the Episcopal Church *had* been written for stockbrokers." An eye for an eye. A deep bow to the Establishment-on-its-knees.

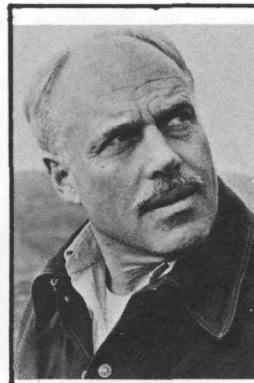
But he looked tame, and I thought a bit sad, under his lion's mane as drag.

I smiled instead and said "It's one of the things I intend to do." After which he guffawed and wheezed, busied himself with the *Wall Street Journal* or a towel, and in a few moments was gone.

Auchincloss had probably encountered my image that same year in the pages of the *New York Times Magazine*. An article entitled "And Now Even Prayers Are Pop" had said: "(Boyd) is an angry man and his prayers are written in a jarringly modern language because he says he feels 'there is something phony about praying to God in Old English.'"

Oh, well. How intense all of us seemed to be in the '60s. Idealism percolated like coffee. We had civil rights, the Peace Corps, demonstrations against war at the Pentagon, assassinations-on-TV followed by mass outpourings of passionate feelings, black consciousness pointing the way toward feminist and gay aspirations, and it seemed the last suicidal hurrah of primitive American nationalism.

Everything seemed bigger than life. In Dallas to speak at a conference in



Malcolm Boyd is a poet, critic, social commentator and Episcopal priest who lives in Los Angeles. He is the author of 20 books including *Are You Running With Me, Jesus?*, *As I Live and Breathe, Take Off the Masks*, and the recent *Look Back in Joy*.

1967, I awoke to find myself on the front page of the *Morning News*: "The Rev. Malcolm Boyd, the controversial priest-laureate for today's 'hip' generation, turned Wednesday morning's session of the National Council of Churches education conference into a shouting match."

However, this was nothing compared to what happened the next day when I casually referred to the existence of an "Underground Church," describing it as a movement characterized by zeal for unity and social concerns.

You would have thought the Red Sea parted. Dutch television was on the phone (yes, there were language difficulties) requesting an immediate interview; news magazines vied with newspapers for full details. The enthusiastic panic which greeted the announcement might have momentarily eclipsed the Second Coming if its time had come.

All in all, it was hard to sort out events in the '60s. They kept hitting our collective consciousness like unexpected explosions. There was little or no perspective, and virtually no shading.

The Cuban missile crisis had already scared most of us nearly to death. I remember walking around New York City on its eventful climactic day, wondering if this was to be my last. Heady stuff for Americans who had long lived as the world's gods. Experiencing stabbing pains of anxiety, now we had a glimpse of our mortality.

There was a youthful, fantasy, golden, god-like aura about John F. Kennedy. As members of a nation, we wept bitter tears when he was entombed. Yet not for a moment did we doubt that his mission would continue, and find its vessel in us.

Life published a special issue that heralded "The Take-Over Generation — Its Breakthrough in Government, Science, Space, Business, Education, Religion and the Arts." The magazine selected "One Hundred of the Most Important Young Men and Women in

the United States." What cheek, what *chutzpah*. It was an era of a legion of new Caesars.

This made the '20s with its Charleston and bootleggers a faded glittering footnote. The "take-over" elite included — let's see — Theodore Sorensen, Leontyne Price, John Updike, Thomas Eagleton, Lukas Foss, John Lindsay, Daniel Inouye, Harold Prince, William Sloane Coffin, Martin E. Marty — and me. Oh, wow.

"Any young American who aspires to join these movers and shakers can find an inspiring model somewhere here," said *Life*. "The 100 had to meet a rigid set of criteria: 1) tough, self-imposed standards of individual excellence; 2) a



zest for hard work; 3) a dedication to something larger than private success; 4) the courage to act against old problems; 5) the boldness to try out new ideas; 6) a hard-bitten, undaunted hopefulness about man."

"Man." *Life* would say "humanity" today, or else "people," and also include more women on its list. But the idea of the *Life* special issue was an uplifting one, meant to inspire people and move them to social action. I sincerely felt that our generation would turn America around, taking monumental, giant strides to eradicate racism. The "dream" of peace seemed a viable goal.

Nonviolence was the key.

I had encountered it in a compelling way during preparations for a 1961

Prayer Pilgrimage-Freedom Ride in which 27 black and white Episcopal priests, including myself, participated. We were members of the Episcopal Society for Cultural and Racial Unity. Martin Luther King, Jr., sent an aide to instruct us in nonviolence as a philosophy, not just a technique. To my astonishment I learned that nonviolence should affect every aspect of our lives. This included, for example, the way in which one picked up a telephone and responded to a caller.

It remains my conviction that nonviolence would have changed the course of American civilization and history, if it had been tried. The fact that it wasn't haunts me more than anything else I've experienced as an American, as a member of my generation.

My silly, childish, Sunday School, Hollywood view of the world was smashed and transformed by the racism and human violence I encountered during the years of the Civil Rights Movement. I saw white U.S. counterparts of "good Germans" bristling with hate, causing untold harm to others who were black.

The most profound experience I had — perhaps in my whole life — took place one summer in rural Mississippi, Alabama and Arkansas. I lived and worked with three young black men of the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee.

A white person in the company of blacks, at that time and in that place, meant "outside agitator," despite the fact one had responded to the Macedonian call of Martin Luther King, Jr. White society saw me as worse than a "nigger." Blacks were not, as a rule, about to trust a visitor from outer space with white skin. So, I was isolated existentially. The word does seem to fit here.

My learning experience was traumatic, for I had been insulated all my life from knowledge of how most black poor people lived in America. And, now I was living *like* them. Because our effort to increase black

voter registration was meant to change conditions that we found unjust and inhumane, it was opposed by extraordinary violence on the part of the white Establishment.

Friends of mine were shot to death. Others were beaten, terrified, deprived of home and work, their lives overwhelmed by terror. The heart of darkness is not an attractive thing to behold. Standing in active opposition to its evil, I was not so much courageous as — what? Obstinate? A “born again” opponent of a tyrannical status quo?

I tried to follow and serve Christ. In the foot washing, the service of others, which has always been recognized as a traditional form of discipleship, one perceives, and serves, Christ in others. This is simply an extension of the meaning of the incarnation. And, Christ identified himself with the poor, the outcast. Surely, this addresses those “theologians” of our day who call loudly for *less* “social action” and *more* “spirituality.”

The struggle of the '60s took its toll in my life. I had understood human sin theologically, but it was awfully hard to take it out of comfortable academe and deal with it in chilling life-or-death terms. I had so many close calls with violence, it became a wonder to me that my life was spared. However, my mind, soul and body were not. They were scarred.

The close encounters with racism seriously isolated me from other people I knew who were scarcely able to imagine this precise kind of experience, let alone deal with its implications and revelations, its fury and dread. How could I easily move back from a world of abject poverty, police brutality, a double-standard in “law and order,” and gun shots fired through glass windows from speeding cars — into a seeming never-never land of choreographed polite manners, rote materialism, trivialized cultural religion, unswerving allegiance to convention, and locked closets



containing unmentionable subjects like racism?

Trying to make the move, I stumbled repeatedly. I wondered: Whom could one trust? How could one respect an outer facade of values that seemed to be a visible contradiction of inner truth?

I came out of the situation with far more hope, and much less optimism than before. God who did not stop the human-packed trains moving toward Auschwitz is God whom I came to know intimately in moments of dire crisis. I knew God to be alive and well, and present, *and yet* respecting human free will by not performing movie miracles on demand.

Years later in the '80s, this would help me to understand the 1978 tragedy of Jonestown and relate it to other events. Jonestown is so logical.

The expectations of the Rev. Jim Jones were apparently fueled by his rage at the injustices of the human condition, partial understanding of Marxism, and an increasing apocalyptic vision. “I have seen by divine revelation the total annihilation of this country . . . we will be the only survivors.”

Jones, like Richard Nixon, taped hour upon hour for posterity. The tapes and their transcripts are a nightmare, sad long days’ journeys into awful nights, with irony itself embedded in a

chaos of ambiguities. Odell Rhodes, an eyewitness who escaped, has described the “constant psychodrama, the close, heavy atmosphere of depression.” Jones established a highly sophisticated concentration camp in the guise of a liberated commune. He was an atheist who claimed to be a Christian clergyman as well as a Communist. “The best testimony we can make is to leave this goddamn world,” he told his doomed followers.

What went wrong in the aborted utopia? A survivor, Larry Layton, has addressed himself to the question. “First, discipline became so austere that people were afraid to speak their minds. Second, religious states of mind and politics don’t mix well . . . Third, power corrupts absolutely.” A liberal, impassioned leader — one who genuinely cared about suffering people — lost his faith but kept the “Christian connection” as a secular means to achieve media and political exposure, raise money, and establish a power base. He became a megalomaniac and a despot. Finally, when he clearly found life intolerable, and had made it so for everybody around him (“I am the only God you’ve ever seen,” he shouted on one of his tapes), he engineered the mass suicide/murder of 913 adults and children.

It is the sheer logicity of Jonestown that is so chilling. Unbridled rage at injustices *plus* a mix of ideology *plus* a merely passionate response to overpowering events (over which one seems to have no control) *plus* a sudden heightening of intolerable tensions *equals* Jonestown. It is, of course, not at all a singular event in a remote part of a distant place called Guyana. Jonestown is legion. It is in the very bloodstream of human experience in the '80s.

As 1984/“1984” draws closer, one ponders many aspects of it.

So, I was touched by the prophetic words of Jacobo Timerman, the Argentinian editor and publisher who was imprisoned and tortured for 30

months before being deported to Israel.

Speaking of "a struggle between civilization and barbarism," he offered chapter and verse for his description of the "mechanism of terror and violence." He recalled that as his torturers applied electric shocks to his body, they clapped their hands and shouted "Jew! Clipped prick! Jew! Clipped prick! Jew! Clipped prick! Jew!"

The Jew becomes intolerable. And, the black. One who is "different." The gay, the lesbian. One who symbolizes or represents diversity. "The totalitarian mind obsessively needs the world to be clear-cut and orderly," Timerman has

warned. "Any subtlety, contradiction, or complexity upsets and confuses this notion and becomes intolerable." One who questions, or epitomizes a question, also becomes intolerable, as well as one who dissents, or whose persecution prompts dissent. Rigid nationalism is abetted by its counterpart and willing servant, fundamentalist religion.

We *can* change negatives into positives.

We *can* voluntarily give up the ritual sacrifice of scapegoats.

We *can* look unflinchingly at the

barbarism in ourselves instead of identifying it as 3,000 miles away.

We *can* try ceaselessly to provide alternatives for hopelessness, which finds inevitable expression in exploding rage about a dead-end human condition. *Change* the condition.

We *can* say a firm "No" to demagogues-with-demons, passionate electronic hucksters with packaged apocalyptic visions, and smiling haters who hawk simplistic slogans as gospels, even as they arrogantly betray God's truth. ■

Plowshares 8 Update

Four of the Plowshares 8 remained in jail and the other four were out on bail as Sept. 9 marked the first anniversary of their entering a GE plant in Pennsylvania and beating on missile nosecones with hammers.

In prison as THE WITNESS went to press were Phil Berrigan in Camp Hill, Pa.; John Schuchardt, in Pittsburgh; and the Rev. Carl Kabat, O.M.I., and Elmer Maas in Graterford, Pa. On bail were the Rev. Dan Berrigan, S.J.; Molly Rush, Sister Anne Montgomery and Dean Hammer.

For their protest against nuclear weaponry, the Berrigans, Kabat and Schuchardt drew sentences from Judge Samuel W. Salus of 3 to 10 years with 10 years probation; Rush, 2 to 5 years with 5 years probation; and Montgomery, Hammer and Mass, 1½ to 5 years with 5 years probation.

Liz McAlister, who founded Jonah House in Baltimore with Phil Berrigan and six others, said that "most outrageous was the judge's articulation of his preference for sentencing: to send them to serve in a leper colony in Puerto

Rico or to send them to demonstrate in Moscow so they might get a taste of Siberian death camps."

THE PLOWSHARES 8



Ironically, Kabat once worked in a leper colony. Former Attorney General Ramsey Clark said of the sentencing, "It was a moral outrage."

From Jonah House, Liz McAlister asked, "Please keep the eight and all of

us in your prayers. And together let's try to carry on with the important work of witness against the nuclear madness and with the most legal and legitimate behavior possible today — resistance to the madness." McAlister and Phil Berrigan are expecting their third child in October.

Jonah House houses a community of nonviolent resisters and hosts visitors whose commitment is mostly focused against nuclear weapons. As Sept. 9 marked the first anniversary of the GE action, peace activists planned other resistance acts to continue, rather than to commemorate, the witness of the Plowshares 8.

Those interested in non-violent resistance may write for further information to Jonah House, 1933 Park Ave., Baltimore, Md. 21217.

Resource

A booklet, *The Plowshares 8*, contains material on the Plowshares action and trial and is available for \$2 and 50¢ postage from Plowshares 8 Support Committee, 168 W. 100th St., New York, N.Y. 10025.



Where Have All the Flower Children Gone?

by Miriam Pickett

In 1978 my daughter's elementary school PTA held a fund-raising carnival. Parents were asked to participate by volunteering to run the booths and create crafts to sell. Since I have never been good with my hands, I volunteered to take charge of refreshments.

I remember standing in the booth, selling hot dogs and punch, mulling over the changes in my life in the 10 years since I had married. A decade before, I had been campaigning for the election of Eugene McCarthy to the presidency. I was attending demonstrations and forming moral values that I believed were going to be with me always. I was about to be married and while I knew that eventually I would have children, I had no way of knowing that that would mean a softening of my political stance and compromising of my values.

At the school carnival, I began to

wonder if it was inevitable that my life had to be so apolitical, so caught up in personal economic concerns. Was this what happened to all the children of the '60s?

For two years since, I have been trying to understand how the concerned generation of the '60s had become the mindless, self-centered middle class of the '80s. And more importantly how had I become part of it? To get closer to the answer, I began a long and emotional self-examination that culminated in my political reawakening.

The process took me back to my childhood. I am a first generation American. My mother arrived in this country in 1923 at the age of 16. Like many Russian Jews, her father was an ardent socialist, totally opposed to the Communists. For my mother's family, America was indeed the promised land. She instilled in me a great love of country. But her patriotism was not a blind and unthinking acceptance. Early on I knew that poor people, blacks in particular, were discriminated against. I knew that women were second-class

citizens and that there was a great deal of inequity in our economic system. I was brought up to respect people as individuals. My parents were Stevenson Democrats — generally pro-labor, progressive people. I still hold many opinions that I first heard from them at the dinner table.

My involvement in politics began in the early '60s. I was a teenager, ready for a cause, and it was logical that it would be civil rights. For as long as I can remember I had been taught that blacks and Jews were inexorably linked and that when blacks were beaten, it wasn't far in the future when Jews would be beaten. Therefore, went the wisdom, not only was it the right thing to do, it was in our self-interest to campaign for civil rights. I went a few steps further and quickly became emotionally involved, and "We Shall Overcome" became a way of life.

It was a logical extension of my commitment to civil rights, that almost as soon as the Gulf of Tonkin Resolution was passed in 1964, I became anti-war. I attended my first demonstration in 1965. It was a

Miriam Pickett is a free lance writer whose very first article appeared on the Op-Ed Page of the *New York Times*. This is her second article.

Women's Strike For Peace March on the Pentagon. As we stood in the cold chanting "Thou Shalt Not Kill," I began crying, unable to stop. The words went through my heart as sharp as a knife blade. "Thou Shalt Not Kill!" From that moment on I was totally committed to ending the war in Vietnam. I went to teach-ins, handed out leaflets, wrote letters and became engrossed in anti-war work.

During this heavy political involvement, I did find time to be young. I listened to the Beatles and folk music; I discovered Mencken, Hesse and Mann. I smoked pot, but having a strong sense of self-preservation, I never went into heavy drugs. I wore beautiful hand painted clothes, gorgeous handmade jewelry. My hair was long and I wore it pulled back by a single barrette. I loved to feel it on my back. I spent a lot of time watching obscure foreign films.

I was proud of the creative talents of people my age. I admired the skilled crafts-people who were beginning their own cultural revolution. I naively believed that all young people were linked to each other by virtue of mutual concern for the welfare of humankind. I really believed that we would reject materialism and join together in remaking our country. I realize now that I totally misread what was happening around me.

In 1968 I really believed that my contemporaries were caring people, concerned with the quality of life, worried enough about the threat of nuclear holocaust that it could never happen. I believed that my generation would never kill animals for their skins, keep children out of school because of race or religious reasons, or willingly allow our government to involve us in any more Vietnams. One of my disappointments has been the realization that most people my age never really considered any of these issues. Then, and now, as always, most

people seem to be interested only in satisfying their own personal needs.

I see now how I so easily misunderstood what was happening around me. By the end of the war, most people wanted the United States to withdraw from Vietnam; the style of life that I was living had become the life of middle America. I didn't understand then that people wanted the war to be over not because it was morally wrong, but because they were tired. They adopted much of the counter-culture life style because it was pleasurable; e.g., relaxed sexual mores, soft drugs. As far as racism is concerned, I totally misinterpreted feelings. I am appalled at the strong racist thread that still permeates our society.

"I found myself looking at the women in designer jeans and fur coats, the men with fashionable short haircuts and beautifully tailored suits. They were on the way up the middle-class ladder. I was overcome by despair for myself and for them."

I must say, however, that my own naivete was nothing compared to those who became completely radical and in some cases violent. It was in the early '70s that I began to wonder why I never turned to violence. Perhaps it goes back to my early upbringing that stressed love of country. My rage over Kent State is never ending; but at the time when I was faced with the choice of violence over peaceful demonstration, I chose the latter. We attended the massive demonstration in Washington that was held in protest over the murders at Kent State. One companion who went with my husband and me became involved in a large violent confrontation with the police. He had gone to Washington looking for a

violent outlet for his frustration and anger. We, on the other hand, decided that we would leave the United States, live somewhere else. It was no longer possible for us to stay in a country that murdered its children.

We left for Europe in September, 1971. We planned to stay a year. We would look for a new place to live, away from a government that glibly perpetrated atrocities against its own people as well as those of other, poorer, countries. We never expected what happened to us. Almost as soon as we arrived we realized how American we were. In every country we traveled in, we never felt completely comfortable. We stayed in Europe three months, enveloped by homesickness. We returned home disillusioned. Our journey to find ourselves led us straight back to where we began.

Instead of becoming expatriots, we decided that four years was long enough to wait for children. In September, 1972 we had our first child. I don't think we have ever fully adjusted to the reality of children. We never realized that so much of what we had incorporated into our lives had to be jettisoned. We had to change our life-style, give up drugs, cut out late hours, readjust totally.

We had always had a non-traditional marriage. We both cooked, cleaned and worked. Once our baby was born, gradually we assumed the traditional roles of mother and father. When I was pregnant we had opened our own small camera shop with the hopes that when the baby was born, I would stay home with her three days a week and my husband would stay home for three days a week. My mother's death shortly after our daughter's birth, put an end to our plans. My father was extremely ill and we had to move in to care for him. I found myself home with the baby and my father, and my husband became the traditional wage earner.

After leaving my father's home, we found that our lives revolved almost

totally around our daughter. Our second child was born less than two years later and we had to struggle to keep our marriage and sanity intact. As we lost our joint solitude, our languorous sex and our shared pleasure in books and music, we found solace in our confidence that our children would have a better upbringing than most children of middle-class parents. We would instill them with our values and teach them to be aware of the world around them. We were certain that being parents and sharing the pleasures of child rearing would replace what we had lost as a couple.

Our five room flat became crowded with baby toys, furniture and clutter. We began looking for a house. In 1976 we purchased our own home. Almost immediately, we began needing *things*. We bought a lawn mower, lawn furniture, a dining room set. Where once we were happy to make do with what we had, it became more and more important to us that our home have a certain "look" about it.

For the first time in years, I began to feel the need for friendship with other women. Now that I was at home I sought out the company of women in similar situations. Having been isolated from women for so many years, I was surprised, once I had friends, that many of them seemed to have spent the turbulent years of the '60s and early '70s preparing for marriage, motherhood and middle-class life. If I tried to bring up the agony of Cambodia, and the U.S. responsibility for what happened there, I was most often ignored. Politics was never discussed. Minorities were referred to in conspiratorial whispers. The husbands were just as vapid as the wives. These men, many in their early 30s, had already become carbon copies of their fathers, running after money, having little to do with their children, concerned only with getting ahead.

I don't want to be too hard on the people I met the first year we were in our

house. They had never wanted to be anything more than what they had become. All their formative years they had been taught that the middle-class life was the desirable way to live. They found their American dream in the possessions with which they surrounded themselves.

For three years I spent my days talking about toilet training, children, school, teachers. Gradually, I began changing my own life-style. I began to wear makeup and be concerned with appearances. I began slowly to melt into the uncaring, unfeeling atmosphere of the late '70s. But I always felt that something very important was lacking in my life. Every few months I was enveloped in a stifling emptiness and loneliness. I found it difficult to hide behind my new persona. I began to wean myself away from those I found exceptionally bigoted or grasping. I decided that I was not influencing them to see the world differently; my association with them was affecting *me* adversely.

I live in a very affluent county in New Jersey. Recently, I was walking through one of the more exclusive shopping malls and I found myself looking at the people around me — the women in designer jeans and fur coats; the men with fashionably short haircuts and beautifully tailored suits. They were on the way up the middle class ladder. I was overcome by despair for myself and for them. These were my contemporaries.

**THIS IS WHAT
YAHWEH ASKS OF YOU:
ONLY THIS
TO ACT JUSTLY
TO LOVE TENDERLY
TO WALK HUMBLY
WITH YOUR GOD**

MICAH 6:8

These grown up imitations of each other were the children of the '60s who were going to change the world. I was positive, as my heart was breaking for what might have been, that many of these people had held when they were younger, the same views as I. Somewhere along the way, material things had gotten in the way of their ideals. They had capitulated to the lure of goods.

What happened to us? I really don't know. Is money the culprit? Does having children change our priorities so totally? Has the abysmal economic situation overshadowed all but personal considerations? Or have I been wrong all along? Maybe our parents were right when they said that as soon as we had children of our own we would come around to their way of thinking. Or maybe most of the people my age never wanted anything more than what they have now.

Whatever the reasons, I believe very strongly that there are an awful lot of people like me who are searching for meaning in their lives. When John Lennon was killed I couldn't help but feel that the outpouring of grief was in reality a mourning for that part of us which he represented. He was, for many of us, a spiritual leader, an interpreter of our times. I had hoped that he would help me to better understand what had happened to all of us during the past turbulent years. I had hoped that he would help me cope with my changing role in a changing world. We did all come together for a few quiet moments when we mourned for him. If only there was a way to galvanize and keep together all those people who cared about the world, the quality of life and future generations. If only there was a way to get people interested again in issues other than personal concerns. I refuse to give up hope. If I can be brought back to reality, I believe there are thousands of others who are willing to get back into the real world. ■



From Conscience to Consciousness

Regrouping for a New Decade

by David and Darlene Kalke

The '60s emerged as turbulent years when students, women and minorities began to articulate their convictions for a new morality through a variety of expressions. Demonstrations, marches, blue jeans, long earrings, head bands, the Beatles, Afros, Black Power and long hair became the cultural symbols of legitimate struggles against the war in Vietnam, against racism and against sexism. Like the prophets of old, the children of the '60s stood arm-in-arm denouncing a system whose moral

values were corrupt. Moral arguments challenged the value systems of previous generations.

For some, the cultural symbols were the media for communicating political messages of a larger, deeper nature. For others, the cultural symbols became the message in and of themselves. "Head shops," "the peace sign," and "fine threads" flooded an affluent counter-culture market eager to display the visual aids of a new morality, the new age of Aquarius. While the morality being expressed had similar symbols, the political content or understanding was not always the same. The "movement" included participants who are now Wall Street lawyers, suburban mall shoppers and chain restaurant managers, not to overlook a few female and male pastors/priests of a different vintage. Many of these "weekend marchers" never came to grips with the political and economic issues that mass movements were coming close to

articulating in the late '60s.

For some, integration of napalm factories represented an advance. For others the cry "U.S. Out of Vietnam" was silenced with the Vietnamization of the war. And for others still, the styles of the movement were all that mattered. Dashikis, peace medallions and leather bags became the mass line for a new generation of mass consumption. A political analysis that penetrated deep into the exploitation of America's poor and working people was lacking. The popular movements of the '60s represented only a ripple of turmoil — distant enough from the alienated workers to allow them to be organized by conservative forces to beat civil rights workers and peaceniks with American flags in an effort to preserve the "American Way of Life."

The individualism of U.S. society reflected itself in the scattered movements of blacks, women, students and professionals. For the most part, the poor and working class remained

David and Darlene Kalke are co-directors of a specialized ecumenical ministry called the New York CIRCUS. David is a worker-pastor ordained in the Lutheran Church of America, and he and Darlene have lived in Chile and traveled extensively in Central America. Their work in social justice issues brings them in touch with New York's Latin American and undocumented community, and with churchpersons related to them. The Kalkes live in a collective in Manhattan's Upper West Side with 3-year-old daughter, Carina.

marginal to the "movement." The poor and working class provided the "boys" for the front lines. Be they black, Hispanic or other ethnic extraction, the poor and the working class continue to be exploited and continue to be the bulk of persons behind growing statistics of unemployment, malnutrition, inadequate housing. For these persons the "movement" was a rich kids' movement, a movement whose drugs, blue jeans, dashikis and homemade earrings were still too expensive. The few blacks who "made it" hardly satisfy the aspirations of black workers who are worse off today than in the '60s.

The cultural symbols were divorced from the political, economic and social realities of the persons most affected by racism, sexism and the war. The "new morality" remained just that: prophetic statements designed to prick the conscience of a system gearing up for war, a war in Vietnam and a war against the poor (more politely called the war on poverty).

As a couple, we, too, experienced the "down" at the end of the '60s. The Nixon-Agnew-Ford era represented a mediocrity on the public level that cleverly divided the "movement" once again against itself. The self-interest groups re-emerged and we slipped into a period of isolationism and refinement of the cultural symbols. Jeans became denim suits; global awareness replaced international solidarity. The new morality denounced the system, raised the issues on some levels and speeded U.S. disengagement from Vietnam. The "movement" did not, however, provide an alternative political and economic solution to racism, sexism and the war. It provided a counter-culture that has left many of its participants apolitical, suspicious of "new societies," frustrated and cynical.

Those of us in that "movement" with a deeper integration of the symbols (the media) with the political and economic system (the message) have not retreated, but are regrouping for a new decade.



We have seen the forces at work dividing us. We have experienced the frustration and pain of being divided. We know our anguish and disappointment with brothers and sisters who have sold out. For us, moral arguments are no longer enough. Our struggle is not for a new morality. It is for a new political, economic and social system. We cannot be satisfied with prophetic denunciations. No longer can we only be the conscience of a sick society.

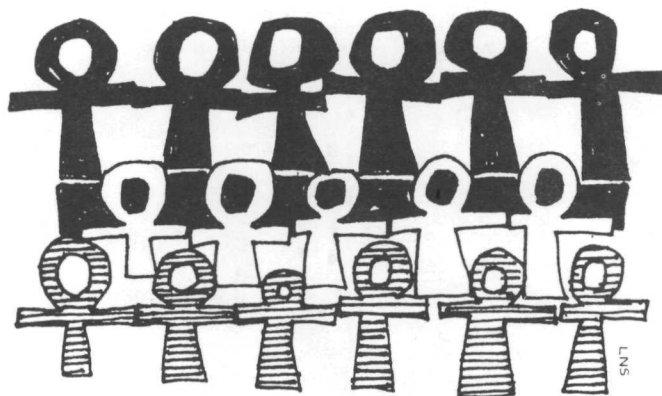
We are being called by the poor and exploited of our nation and the world to be a new consciousness. Consumption and life style are a part of the new consciousness. But more important are the patterns of production and the flow of capital from the periphery (i.e. Third World, developing nations) to the center (U.S., Japanese, Western European banking interests) and the way this affects peoples' lives.

While racism and sexism continue to be important for us to denounce, we can only effectively work against them if we can synthesize our analysis to include class exploitation. Racism and sexism

are the cultural symptoms of a dominant ruling class which needs to be understood and unmasked. They are the symptoms of a political and economic system in crisis. While it is true that periods of intense economic crises augment racism and sexism, we believe it is also true that racism and sexism cannot be overcome by merely substituting new cultural symbols preaching harmony, peace, love, "Black and White together," and unity. They can only be overcome if their root cause is looked at, discovered and organized against.

We are approaching an era where moral arguments will no longer suffice. Moral arguments appeal to the self-interest and the conscience of the individual within society. We are moving towards a consciousness that takes us back to our Judeo-Christian heritage and challenges us to seek our liberation in the Exodus. The Exodus was a political, economic and social transformation of a people, a nation that altered the balance of power in the ancient world. Yahweh's revelation to the Hebrews was not a new morality nor a new set of cultural values. It was a new covenant, a new way to carry on political, economic and social relationships. God's challenge to the early church was not a new morality, but a challenge to preach the Kingdom of God and to announce a new heaven and a new earth.

The '60s are over. Our political and spiritual leaders have died or have been assassinated by the system's executioners. The torch has indeed been passed and it is a burning torch of hope in struggle for a new society. From conscience to consciousness; from moral persuasion to political solution; from way of life to new life. Our journey this decade, as children of the '60s who now have our own children, is different as we regroup and look at our nation-in-the-world in a critical way. We struggle with a long-range vision that posits not only new cultural symbols, but also new political, economic and social realities.



It Happened in Sisterhood

by Caroline Drewes

Here is a small story for your delectation, or your disapproval, or your despair, as the case may be. It concerns sisterhood.

The story is told by a Berkeley free spirit named Louise Lacey, who is a writer and a thinker, a researcher and an experimenter, a composer of exhaustive questionnaires and thus a compiler of significant statistics, a feminist whose particular area of interest at the moment happens to be what is loosely called womantalk — the intimate and intuitive way in which women communicate with one another.

The story:

Frances Peavey was walking on the Stanford campus with a male companion one day when she saw some people gathered in a loose circle around a natural glen. These people, apparently press and scientists, were holding cameras and videotape equipment. In the center of the circle, a male

chimpanzee was being introduced to a female chimp shackled on a long chain. The male made grunting "mow, mow, mow" noises. The female whimpered and backed away.

The male grabbed at her chain, pulling her toward him. She pulled back. He hauled her toward him again. She pulled back. He hauled. She pulled. The suspense was building. And Peavey was noticing how expressive the chimps' faces were. She began to feel an agony of sympathy for the female; especially since the crowd of onlookers was predominantly male.

At last the female chimp yanked loose, walked straight to Peavey and took her hand. Then this chimp led her across to the only two other women in the assembly, grasped one of their hands and huddled against them facing the crowd of males.

The two groups stood looking at each other, the larger one in what must have been amazement. Finally the scientists and press representatives got the message and called it a day. They departed "in disgust," taking the chimpanzees their separate ways.

"Talk about biological sisterhood!" exclaimed Peavey, in retrospect still aware of the chimp's rough hand against her palm. Turning to her companion, she spoke of her admiration for the powerful statement made by this animal that had organized her own support group. The companion stared at her blankly. He hadn't noticed. What he had noticed was the conclusion: No action. The male chimp had been unable to have his way with the female. Therefore, nothing had happened.

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Letters . . . Continued from page 2

could ever pass for a socialist economy. India's industrial economy has been protected from some forms of external competition through strict trade barriers but the beneficiaries of the barriers are those who represent the owners and managers of India's businesses. These are generally in private hands. If India were on a socialist path, it would not be in its present situation of having a grain surplus even as millions remain hungry.

Ms. Steele and others who promote a free enterprise solution for underdeveloped nations would do well to examine the reasons why these countries are poor in the first place.

When Richard Antle asserts in his criticisms of James Cone (May Letters) that the Marxist socialists of Mozambique drove out the capitalists who could have helped build the country, he is indulging in the repetition of South Africa's rhetoric. After the end of Portuguese mis-rule in Africa, many Portuguese who had become wealthy or at least privileged due to their status as "masters" in colonial systems could not accept the end of their power. And, when they left of their own free will, they sabotaged much of what technical resources existed in a country they had already crippled through centuries of

repressive policy.

Balancing freedom and equity, social values and individual rights, production and justice; these are not easy tasks. But they will have to be faced with the light of history, not the distortion of easy ideological answers.

The Rev. Stephen Commins
Santa Monica, Cal.

Boon in Exams

As I looked through my collection of WITNESS magazines recently, I recalled how helpful they were to me in taking the General Ordination Exam. The examiners were succinct in praising my knowledge of church and society.

Louise Forrest
Arlington, Mass.

No Redeeming Value

In the few months that I have received your magazine it has come to my attention that perhaps you are more interested in promoting a political line (i.e., socialism), than in spreading the Gospel of Christ.

As a Christian and an American citizen, I cannot help but feel that your magazine supports ideas that are contrary not only to the teachings of Christ, but also to the law of the land, the Constitution of the United States of America. As a police officer and an officer in the Marine Corps Reserve, I have taken oaths to support and defend that Constitution.

In my humble opinion your magazine has no redeeming social value; unless

POETRY NOOK

Women Behind Walls

Sisters, is conspiracy our crime,
that song of dolphins who tell each other danger
across oceans of silence?
Our knowing hammered to the heart mute and bloody.
Every woman who does not shut up is guilty.
Every silence unremarkable as a dark lagoon. Dangerous.

One by one we're seized:
the colored ones who show meanness at their primal deal;
welfare shuffles the deck, the hand is predictable as hunger.
They call these thieves who bounce food checks at Jewel and A&P.
This gathering of mothers,
like wounded blackbirds in cages for a year without trial.
The state "places" their children
like the dumping of soiled laundry.
The white ones rot like decayed teeth
in the stink of mental wards.
Their breath was bad, their floors weren't waxed,
their husbands' collars were grey, grey.
These turn state's evidence against themselves;
like frightened animals they sense violence
rising like a Kansas twister, then they give away their minds.

Ancient justice is the blind scorekeeper:
"She's not a real woman, she's a whore,
she's not a good momma, lock her up, she's crazy."
Who judges us condemns themselves.
Our freedom is your only way out.
On the underground railroad
you can ride with us or you become the jailer.
Harriet Tubman never lost one of those entrusted to her.
Neither will we.

— Renny Golden

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— Charles August

one places social value on promoting discord and disunity in our country and worse yet in our church. Please cancel my subscription.

Michael P. Flynn
Grand Rapids, Mich.

Pleasure to Renew

It gives me pleasure to renew my subscription to THE WITNESS. In an ever increasing conservatism, the magazine is a breath of fresh air! One slight point — do at times have a bit of humor; the danger of taking ourselves too seriously is as bad as the danger of not taking ourselves seriously enough.

Ruth Fiesel
Merion, Pa.

Kuhn, Brewster Favorites

While I always find THE WITNESS challenging and thought-provoking, the May issue was outstanding. Being dedicated to the Gray Panther goals, I admit I read the Maggie Kuhn article first, but I also read the entire issue at one sitting which is rather unusual for me. I found myself going back time after time to Mary Jane Brewster's

"Dedication." I would like to print this in our Yamhill County Gray Panther Newsletter.

I am also enclosing \$2 for copies of your issues on Christian Alternatives to Business as Usual and on Hispanics. I still find it difficult to believe the position our government took on the UN after Nestle's boycott for all these years. I have often intended to express my appreciation for your courage and open-mindedness in challenging readers to look at so many issues we who call ourselves Christians too often try to ignore. Thank you and carry on!

Magdalene R. Lobo
Amity, Ore.

Wants to Educate

Enclosed is \$6 for a year's subscription (I am over 65 and on limited income) and

Credits

Cover, p. 4, Beth Seka; pp. 6, 10, Peg Averill, LNS; p. 8, *Rocinante*, Quixote Center newsletter; p. 9, *Movement*, Student Christian journal; pp. 12, 15 Rini Templeton; p. 16, Vicky Reeves; p. 17, LNS.

\$6 for five copies of the April WITNESS. The articles on the Plowshares 8, El Salvador, and Robert DeWitt's editorial, "Life and Death Struggle" are so good that I want to use them to educate a few people in charge of our affairs in Washington.

Forrest E. Coburn
Doylestown, Pa.

Helpful to Urban Work

I want to thank you for the excellent series on the "urban apocalypse." I feel that the series might be of considerable use to a task force I chair — a United Methodist group working to develop an urban strategy for our church in the southeast. Please send me 10 copies each of the March, April, and June issues.

Thank you for the outstanding job you are doing on lifting up the social concern of the church. May God continue to bless you and lead you in your exciting ministry.

Mark R. Sills
Greensboro, N.C.

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